Youth for What?
New Generations
and Social Change

per Antonio de Lillo

« La grandeur d'un métier est peut-être, avant tout, d'unir des hommes :
il n'est qu'un luxe véritable, et c'est celui des relations humaines »
Terre des hommes (1939)

« L'essentiel est que demeure quelque part
ce dont on a vécu »
Lettre à un otage (1943)

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Youth for What? New Generations and Social Change
a cura di Andrea Pirni

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Youth matters. An introduction

Andrea Pirni

Youth and sociological imagination

Why should one address the subject of youth? If the question, in the opening of an issue entirely dedicated to this subject, is expected, the answer appears to be much less; and the question itself needs to be articulated much more.

First of all: what is the cognitive objective at the bottom of the study of youth? The – traumatic – understanding of the deep transformations of European societies that began taking place in the XIX century, has deeply carved an awareness in – not only scientific – culture, fulfilled repeatedly in the recently passed century, of – possible – continuous change; this awareness – that has been extensively very generous in the production of values – generates a need – and, today, with the on-going of the financial crisis, a hope – of seeing change, sometimes with the wish of guiding it. Understanding social change, as a cognitive objective, leads the researcher in many directions but we cannot overlook that newer generations are, as a matter of fact, what of new is generated by societies: it is clear that children are the first form of a society's renovation – and conveniently sociological deliberation focuses on childhood – but it is just as evident that these are completely conditioned by society, through their parents, that generated them. New generations are the bridge between before and after, where the crucial game of continuity – or discontinuity – takes place: this game's object is the negotiation of autonomy, in other words one's ability to define him/herself as agency and delimit their own field of action. It consists of a dialectic that develops on different levels, intertwining: among individual actors – sons/daughters and parents – where educational process and socialization are particularly relevant; among individuals and society where the overriding process is the formation of one's individual identity among group actors – youth and society – which develops around the process of cultural change. Studying youth therefore means, first of all, wanting to study change.

Secondly: which cognitive orientation in the study of youth is tied to this newly identified objective? To study youth one can essentially draw upon two criteria: attempting to outline, through the production of true statements, a few traits of the considered population (epistemic orientation focusing on agencies) or attempting to elaborate new hypoteses that relate new generations with society's becoming (heuristic orientation focusing on society). The variable composition of the two criteria appears to be the most effective coordinate to come close to the mentioned cognitive objective. This composition appears necessary, as youth in European societies has greatly changed in the past decades, just as their societies have. The transformations of youth reflect – in a usually deformed way – the liveliness of societies and identifying the code that binds their relation together could represent an important interpretive contribution to social change. Studying youth requires, therefore, a mercurial commute between the in depth analysis of youth's specific traits in defined contexts, and the analysis of forms of interaction between new generations, the others and society.

Thirdly: which analytic categories are used in the study of youth? The idea itself of youth is matter of great debate and a crossroad among many disciplines of social science; a sociological elaboration of youth *à la* Comte requires synthesizing different perspectives that stimulate the identification of new analytic resources and the refinement of traditional ones, defined in relation to a context that, as of today, has greatly varied. Youth favours, furthermore, the formulation of new hypoteses – as well as control over the previously formulated ones – in face of the transformation dynamics that concern it – just as its extension as a phase of life –. Studying youth requires, therefore, the elaboration of everchanging interpretative methods, the elaboration of which has to take place in harmony with the relentlessly unedited phenomenology of youth.

Essentially, it seems important to study youth and new generations because it fully allows, more than in other fields of research, to exercise "sociological imagination" while approaching the specific object of research, while stimulating the renewal of hypoteses, of analytic categories, of the representation of change and on how to sociologically grasp it. The desire of this monographic issue, therefore, is to contribute, on one side, to the debate surrounding the study of youth, and on the other, to the critical consideration on sociology of youth.

Affirmation of the European Youth Studies

Is it important to study youth according to the scientific community? To answer this further question, important for the legitimation of the present

issue, it is possible to observe the affirmation of the field of studies on youth considering as the Youth Studies have structured themselves inside of the international scientific sociological community. The associations referred to are the American Sociological Association (ASA, founded in 1905), the International Sociological Association (ISA, founded in 1948) and the European Sociological Association (ESA, founded in 1992). Without delving too far in the characteristics that differentiate these associations, it is noticeable how at the present time sections especially dedicated to youth are active in all three[1]: their genealogy is, however, different and it is possible to understand this by considering the years in which the specific sections and the ones closer to the subject of youth have been founded (tab. 1)[2].

The fertile terrain for Youth Studies seems to be identifiable in the Sociology of Education section (founding dates: ASA – 1967; ISA – 1971; ESA – 1992): just a few years after the Sociology of education section's birth, the ISA and ESA activate their section dedicated to Youth Studies (ISA: Sociology of Youth – 1975; ESA: Youth and Generation – 1995) and at the same time for the ISA and almost immediately after for the ESA their symmetrical sections dedicated to Aging (ISA: Sociology of Aging – 1975; ESA: Aging in Europe – 1998) are founded; it is only later that a section on Childhood is activated within both (ISA: Sociology of Childhood – 1998; ESA: Sociology of Children and Childhood – 1999). Although the reference years and the time lapses are noticeably different – the ESA is founded almost 50 years after the ISA – it is possible to observe how the differentiating and structurising paths of Youth Studies among the ISA and ESA are fundamentally akin. The ASA, instead, proposes a different path: the Sociology of Aging (Aging and the Life Course – 1980) develops autonomously from the Sociology of Education and the section dedicated to Childhood (Sociology of Children – 1992) is born with an incentive from the first and as a specialization of the second; this section will later enrich its subjects also opening to Youth Studies and changing its name (Children and Youth – 2000).

Considering the objectives declared in the statutes of the three sections it is possible to notice how the ASA, on the subject of Youth Studies, focuses its

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[1] The ASA is articulated in Sections (52), the ISA in Research Committees (55), the ESA in Research Networks (37). The number of sections all together is already an indication to how the relative weight of Youth Studies is greater inside of the ESA.

[2] I would like to thank Loretta E. Bass (University of Oklahoma), Kelly Musick (Cornell University), Maddalena Colombo (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore – Milano) e Vasiliki Kantzara (Panteion University) for the valuable informations. For a more in depth contextualization of the studies on Childhood from a sociological point of view, please refer to L.E. Bass, *Childhood in Sociology and Society: The US Perspective*, in «Current Sociology», 58 (2), 2010: 335-350.

Table 1: *Youth Studies among the international associations of sociology*

	ASA (1905)	ISA (1948)	ESA (1992)
Sections	Sociology of Education (1967)	Sociology of Education (1971)	Sociology of Education (1992)
	Children and Youth (2000)	Sociology of Youth (1975)	Youth and Generation (1995)
	Aging and the Life Course (1980)	Sociology of Aging (1975)	Aging in Europe (1998)
	Sociology of Children (1992) [became Sociology of Children and Youth in 2000]	Sociology of Childhood (1998)	Sociology of Children and Childhood (1999)
Aims	"The purpose of the Section on Children and Youth is to encourage the development and dissemination of sociological perspectives on children in the areas of research, theory, policy, practice, and teaching. Here, the term 'children' includes every human being from infancy through the transition to adulthood".	"The aim of RC 34 is to contribute to the development of theory and practice of youth sociology and trans-disciplinary youth research on an international level, uniting professional knowledge, scientific consciousness, and social commitment of its members to work on problems and issues of youth on a local, regional, and international level".	"Its purpose is to promote international research in the fields of sociology of youth, trans-disciplinary youth studies, intergenerational issues, and to provide the main forum for sociological advancement and debate within these fields in Europe".
Perspective	Sociological	Sociological, trans-disciplinary and international	Sociological, trans-disciplinary and international
Object	Children (from infancy through the transition to adulthood)	Youth	Youth

	ASA (1905)	ISA (1948)	ESA (1992)
Areas	Research, theory, policy, practice, and teaching	Problems and issues of youth	Intergenerational issues
Context		Local, regional and international level	Europe
Affiliations		Professional knowledge and social commitment	
Topics (2014)	Children/Youth/Adolescents Experiences and Strategies of Minority and Immigrant Youth: How immigrant and minority youth negotiate their lives through such things as language, school settings, parental interaction and emotion regulation. Children/Youth/Adolescents: Youth Identities. Voices and Perspectives: Ways in which youth craft identities out of tensions and dimensions in everyday lives, such as gender and peer relationship.	Global sociology and youth studies; Work Transitions: Inequalities and Precariousness; Collective Behaviour and Political Movements; Youth Culture and Individual Political Involvements; Transitions: Residence/Family/Education; Other Methodological and Theoretical Advances, including youth identity, subjectivities, and agency as they relate to global inequalities.	Youth agency and its expressions within the post-crisis reality, to identify the proactive strategies undertaken by young people and their social spaces; The tensions between structural and agency-based approaches to studying young people's lives; Diverse methodological approaches to study youth agency and allowing self-expression of young people, giving young people voice in research.

Source: Official websites of the respective associations.

attention mostly on Childhood extending its reach from infancy to the transition to adulthood. The ISA and ESA, on the other hand, speak of youth explicitly and exclusively as a specific field of research. Also, while the ISA and ESA highlight the interdisciplinary perspective they intend to adopt, the ASA identifies specific areas of study such as research, theory, policy, practice and teaching. Although the ISA and ESA also share an internationalization of studies, they present some programmatic differences: the ISA intends to develop their studies from both a theoretic and applicative point of view, and following this path it intends to combine "professional knowledge, scientific consciousness, and social commitment" to face "problems and issues" that youth poses at an also local and regional level; the ESA, instead, presents "intergenerational issues" in the European context as a specific trait[3].

Overall, and in short, it can be said that Youth Studies are important for the international sociological community and well established among scientific associations. The firm positioning of Youth Studies is furthermore noticed at the foundation of the affirmation processes that offer two different trajectories (the ASA on one side, the ISA and ESA on the other). Lastly, a certain liveliness of these studies is noticeable, starting from an internal differentiation to a point of view that is taking place in the specific research orientation of European Youth Studies.

Another index of the appreciation of the structurisation of Youth Studies can be identified by considering the existence of dedicated scientific journals and book series. A detailed exposition of the bibliographic resources of this kind would exceed the amount of space available for this introduction, but considering the scientific production, in English, of some of the most important social science publishers and of periodicals expressively dedicated to the subject of Youth Studies, it is possible to delineate an initial, partial and non-exclusive, scenario[4]. The book series dedicated to Youth Studies are neither many nor prolific considering the, by now, consolidated presence of the active sectors within scientific associations (tab. 2). Furthermore, the two series that in the past years have published the most volumes, have dedicated their attention prevalently to matters connected to childhood that, on the other hand,

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[3] The ESA's Youth and Generation Research Network has been systematic in the past few years. ESA Mid-term Conferences: *Negotiation, navigation, resistance – young people's agency in post-crisis reality in Europe* (Kluszkowce, Poland 2014); *Youth in crisis? Linking research, policy and practice* (Manresa, Spain 2012); *Youth, Economy and Society* (Disley, UK 2010); *Youth and Youth Sociology in Europe* (Roosta, Estonia 2009); *Youth, Globalization and Migration – Local Diversity in Transition* (Bratislava, Slovakia 2007).

[4] Naturally, it is not exclusively on dedicated journals and book series that scientific production of sociological nature regarding youth finds its space.

fall into the programmatic objectives of the series itself. The other two book series are almost exclusively focused on youth, promoting a trans-disciplinary and international perspective.

Table 2: *Book series*

Publisher	Book Series	Titles	Topics
Palgrave Macmillan	*Studies in Childhood and Youth*	25	Multidisciplinary perspective; Childhood and youth as social phenomena culturally located; Children's and young people's perspectives on their everyday lives
Emerald	*Sociological Studies of Children and Youth*	25	Methodological aspects of research on Childhood
Routledge	*Critical Youth Studies*	16	Cultural dimensions of young people's everyday lives; Trans-disciplinary area of inquiry; Intersection of education, sociology, and media studies
Brill	*Youth in a Globalizing World*	2	Adolescence and youth from an international and comparative perspective; The emergence of transnational shared practices, values, norms, behaviours, cultures and patterns among young people all over the globe

The overview of journals (in English) is wider and complexly characterized by the predominance of the psycho-social perspective on Childhood and Youth, and by the specialization in some defined thematic settings. There are two journals with a sociological matrix and trans-disciplinary interests that focus on youth: *Young. Nordic Journal of Youth Research* and *Journal of Youth Studies* (tab. 3).

From an editorial standpoint, scientific production on Youth Studies offers a partial structurisation, but a growing one. It appears that the book series of very recent activation *Youth in a Globalizing World* (Brill) and the *Journal of Youth Studies* (Routledge) – particularly relevant resources for the critic and trans-disciplinary perspective and fully aimed at the field of research – denote a significant step forward along the path of elaboration of the original orientation of the Research network on Youth and Generations (ESA, RN 30) with which European Youth Studies are affirming themselves.

Table 3: *Journals*

Journal	Begin	Aims/Subjects
Young. Nordic Journal of Youth Research	1993	The aim of the journal is to contribute to developing a truly interdisciplinary youth research field, where it is both possible to apply approaches of a single discipline and to integrate insights, perspectives and methods from different disciplines. Young has a strong anchorage in the consolidated and respected research communities of the Nordic countries. It also has a keen interest in innovative developments and dedicated participation in the ongoing building up of European research networks, with the aim of globalising all areas of youth research
Journal of Youth Studies	1998	Journal devoted to a theoretical and empirical understanding of young people's experiences and life contexts. It is focused upon young people within a range of contexts, such as education, labour market and family, and highlights key research themes such as the construction of identity, the use of leisure time, involvement in crime, consumption and political behaviour. Health and Social Care; Social Class; Social Sciences; Social Work and Social Policy; Sociology and Social Policy; Sociology of Culture; Supplementary material; Youth Culture; Youth Work
Youth Justice. An International Journal	2000	Journal that engages with the analyses of juvenile/youth justice systems, law, policy and practice around the world. It contains articles that are theoretically informed and/or grounded in the latest empirical research. Youth Justice enjoys an ever-increasing international presence in recognition of the developing interest in juvenile/youth justice theory and system formation within the national and international academic, policy and professional practice communities. It focuses on effective policy and practice, drawing lessons from pioneering approaches to juvenile/youth crime from around the world, in a context of children's rights
International Journal of Adolescence and Youth	1987	Adolescent Development; Behavioural Sciences; Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy; Child and Family Social Work; Developmental Psychology; Education; Educational Psychology; Health and Social Care; Mental Health; Multicultural Education; Psychological Science; Psychotherapy; Social Work and Social Policy; Sociology of Education

Journal	Begin	Aims/Subjects
Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies. An International Interdisciplinary Journal for Research, Policy and Care	2006	AIDS and HIV; Behavioural Sciences; Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Clinical Psychology; Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy; Child and Family Social Work; Children & Childhood; Children and Youth; Developmental Psychology; Health and Society; Health Conditions; Health and Social Care; Medical Sociology; Mental Health; Physical and Sexual Abuse in Children and Adolescents; Psychological Disorders - Children and Adolescents; Psychological Science; Psychotherapy; Public Health - Medical Sociology; Public Health Policy and Practice; Social Policy; Social Sciences; Social Work and Social Policy; Sociology and Social Policy; Supplementary material; Welfare; Youth; Youth Work
Children, Youth, and Environments	1984	The Journal provides easy access to authoritative research articles, in-depth analyses, cutting-edge field reports, and critical book and film reviews on children, youth and the environments where they live, learn, work, play, discover the natural world, participate in their communities, and find basic services

Source: Official websites of the journals.

The subjects of research

Which thematic guidelines characterize the penetration of Youth Studies within the sociological community and what is their relative weight? To indicatively answer this question one can consider the scientific production of book series and journals with a prevalently sociological matrix[5] together with the research projects financed by the Framework Programmes of the European Union whose primary or secondary objective was connected to the subject of youth condition[6].

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[5] All of the book series and only the two journals focused on youth and of "generalistic" nature are considered: *Young. Nordic Journal of Youth Research* and *Journal of Youth Studies*.

[6] The research data for building these charts has been developed with the use of the European Union's official search engine for consulting the archive of financed projects (http://cordis.europa.eu/projects/home_en.html): the archive has been consulted searching for the key word "youth" within the title, abstract and project. The results have been filtered by selecting projects regarding "social aspects". The projects financed through the Frame Programmes 5 (1998-2002), 6 (2002-2006) and 7 (2007-2013) have been considered. There are 66 projects

A brief – and still approximate – overview shows which are the priority fields in the subject of research on youth (fig. 1)[7].

Almost one fourth of the considered scientific production has treated youth condition in relation to the dynamics concerning education and schooling: this can also be read in light of the previously discussed affirmation process of the studies on youth as a specialization and consecutive autonomisation of the researches starting from the great number of researchers that are part of the sections dedicated to sociology of education. This macro-subject firmly remains the centre around which the majority of research on youth is conducted. Next in the suggested ranking are two more recent subjects of affirmation that have had a large development in the past few years: the subjects connected to political participation – in a wider sense of the term – and to gender mainstreaming. These two subjects are, for different reasons, emerging and indirectly suggest the coordinates of research development. Work, inequality, immigration and family make up the third position in the ranking of subjects that are examined by scientific research of predominantly sociological nature: they are traditional subjects that stably maintain their relevance. Youth condition studied in relation to urban context, to new communication technologies and to deviance – in a wide sense of the term – bring to the end of the ranking: these are lines of research towards which the structurisation of sociological reflection doesn't seem, at least for the time being, to focus on – as much as it did in the past –.

altogether, of which 15 (FP 5), 17 (FP 6) and 34 (FP 7) to demonstrate the growing attention of the European Commission and scientific community on the subject. The topics of each project have then been identified: since some have resulted in covering multiple topics the total amount of results exceeds the overall project number. The topics with the highest frequency rate have been selected: education and school; political participation, public sphere, citizenship and civic engagement; gender and women; work, unemployment, labour market; inequalities and exclusion; immigrants and ethnic; family and parents; cities and urban; ICT and new media; justice, crime, violence and human rights. These same topics have been used as key words to catalogue the volumes of the book series and to try to count the articles published on journals through the available online archives. In order to obtain percentage values, the data has been normalized on the total occurrences divided by the research programs, volumes in series and articles on journals. The results are inevitably only approximately accurate but they are considered to deliver an orientatively effective picture on the structurisation of research on Youth Studies.

[7] The important research efforts of two important trans-disciplinary networks such as the European Network for Social Policy Analysis (ESPAnet) and the European Consortium for Political Research (Ecpr) must not be forgotten in this picture. The most recent occasions dedicated to Youth Studies have been, respectively: the 12th Annual ESPAnet Conference, *Beyond the Crisis in Europe – New Opportunities for reconciling sustainability, equality and economic robustness* where the *Generations and Intergenerational Relations* workshop also took place (Oslo 2014); the VII Ecpr General Conference, *Civic and Political Participation of Young People in a Context of Changes* (Sciences Po, Bourdeaux 2013).

Figure 1: *Youth Studies' topics*
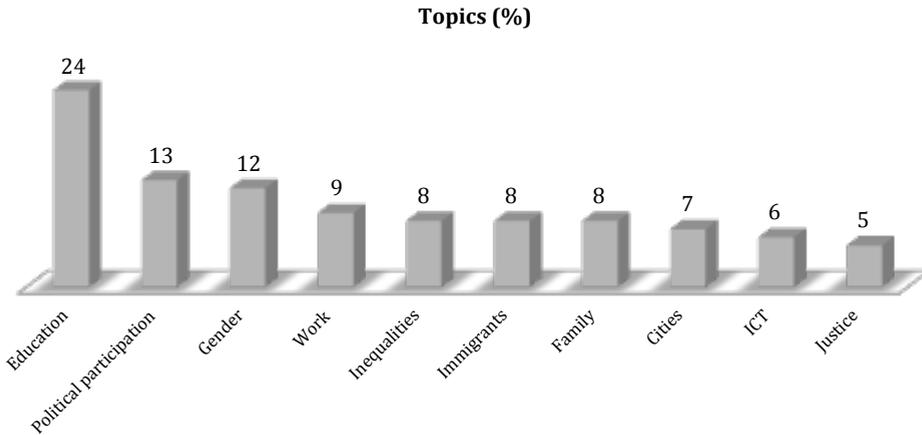
Topics (%)

Considering the disaggregated data for each field of research, more considerations can be made (fig. 2). With the exception of the overall weight of each topic compared to the other a thematic distribution among channels of scientific production is noticeable: the European Union's research programs, book series and specialized journals. Research sponsored by the European Union focuses on ICT and inequality; scientific journals on family and work; book series on political participation and gender. The way the rest are partitioned appears to be more consistent.

A certain structurisation of subjects connected to education is noticeable in reference to the previously explored topics of scientific production on youth, also considering research methods and the way they tend towards possible policy interventions. We can also say that the two fields that appear to be closer to a certain structurisation, considering the interest of the scientific community expressed through the resources we are here examining, are the political sphere and gender relationships. And this should not come as a surprise considering the deep transformations that have been taking place within European societies: the political sphere, in a wider sense, and gender relationships are deeply connected, the social consideration around these fundamental bonds and the way they intertwine is growing at the social basis of the European context.

A field of research is considered to be structured – in a still vague and approximate way – when it is covered by all three of the aforementioned channels – European Union research programs, book series and specialized journals – in an overall harmonious way. Figure 2 shows how there are still many fields in the Youth Studies research that do not reach this full structurisation,

in the way it is here intended. From this point of view gender relationships and education appear to be structured in an homogeneous way. Studies on political participation, on citizenship and on civic mindedness are not far from this objective. The intention of this issue is to contribute to the structurisation of this last field of research within the international debate; it also wishes to intervene – although SMP is not a journal dedicated exclusively to the study of youth conditions – on the relative weakness of journals on this subject, in relation to the research sponsored by the European Union's Framework Programmes and book series, that appear to be greater compared to other fields of research.

Figure 2: *Topics through Framework Programmes, Book series and Journals*

Topics (%)
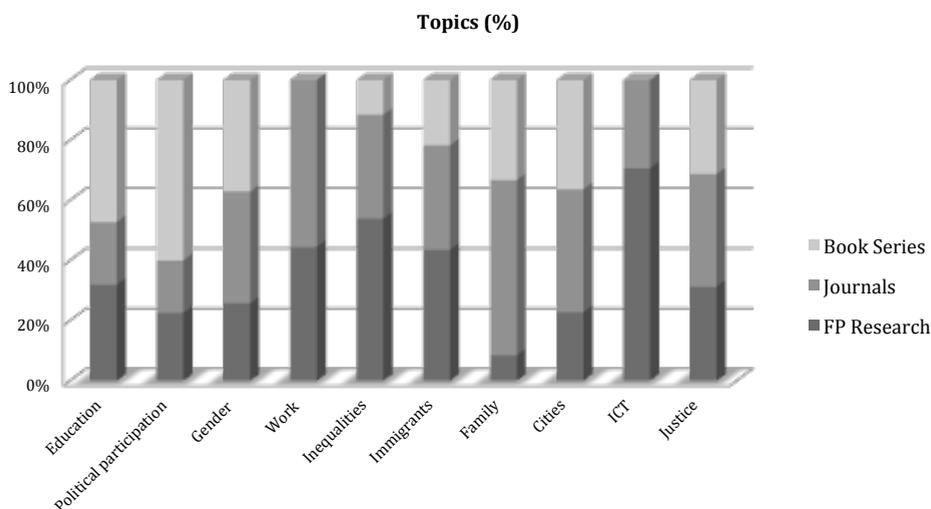
This Issue

Therefore, the key in which this article should be read is the re-elaboration of the political sphere on the behalf of newer generations. This subject is analysed in continuity with the idea of developing a political sociology of new generations that was born in the Centro Interuniversitario di Sociologia Politica of Florence[8]: this point of view – a sociological one, but with a trans-disciplinary orientation – wishes to make the study of youth its objective, paying close at-

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[8] Pirni A., Monti Bragadin S. and Bettin Lattes G., *Introduzione. Per una sociologia politica delle nuove generazioni*, in Idd. (eds.), *Tra il Palazzo e la strada. Gioventù e democrazia nella società europea*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2008.

tention to trans-generational and intergenerational relationships, considering young people's identity as both social actors and future citizens, and offering the elaboration of new and appropriate kinds of analysis associated with an empiric study – through both quantitative and qualitative techniques – of comparative nature, applied to different, but contingent social fields. This appears to be a promising path to go down while attempting to understand the direction in which the process of social change, and in relation to this, the emerging of a civic identity among young Europeans, is proceeding; a process that once again openly reveals the uncertain, temporary and immature nature of their aspirations and of their political experience in a world that, ironically, still ignores them too much.

This issue comprises of 5 portions. The first one offers a wide-angle perspective on youth condition, to favour the elaboration of new analytic categories, articulating itself around the use of different disciplines, of the new biographies of the current young generations, of the problems that these encounter during their socio-political integration in the new European context and the mobilization of youth associations all across Europe that took place after World War II: the common ground consists of the deeply ever-changing context that European societies – also considering the on-going financial crisis – offer new generations. The article by Andrea Pirni (University of Genova) offers a trans-disciplinary map of points of view of the research on youth. Taking note of different contributions from social history, developmental psychology, social anthropology, political science and demography, he attempts to structure three separate guidelines of sociological research of youth; he then offers a final guideline for the understanding of social change from a transformations surrounding young people's universe standpoint. The formation of their own biographies on the behalf of these new generations consists of a central point in these transformations: the article by Carmen Leccardi (University of Milano-Bicocca) analytically faces this subject focusing its attention on the dialectic relation between life time and social time. The hastening of change in contemporary societies significantly impacts the biographical constructs of young people, favouring the affirmation of new values and, along with these, new semantics of the future. This dynamic takes place in a definitely difficult context: Jorge Benedicto (National Distance Education University) shows in his article how some forms of economic reasoning have deeply compromised the social and cultural texture on which the idea itself of democratic society is based upon; the financial crisis has further aggravated the situation. The trans-generational contract, based on the double paring of autonomy-independence and education-work, appears to have been betrayed and new generation are left with no other way than to search for other means of integration. Almost suggesting a potential solution to the marginalization

of current new generations, the article by Daniela Preda (University of Genova) recalls the activism shown by youth, following World War II, in committing to Europeanist associations. From the historical analysis of the evolution of different organizations presented by Preda a strong and transnational common feeling, that was able to converge in a moment of particular importance of European history, emerges.

The second portion of articles offers some deeper analysis of three Mediterranean countries where, also in light of the on-going financial crisis, some specific dynamics of change regarding youth condition on a socio-political level are taking place. Vincenzo Cicchelli (University Paris Descartes) and Valérie Germain (Laboratoire d'Economie et de Sociologie du Travail) focus on French youth. Using levels of education as a referring variable, the authors notice a growing divergence between graduate and non graduate students in transition to adulthood: French youth appears to be heavily irregular and the policies the state has carried out so far appear to be inadequate to facing this phenomenon. The growing gap between the younger portion of society and the institutional dimension appears to be even wider when facing the political sphere: Francisco Francés and Oscar Santacreu (University of Alicante) show, through the use of a multivariate analysis, how Spanish youth is tending more and more towards non conventional forms of political mediation: the financial crisis strengthens this phenomenon and the negative perception of the country's situation further reduces young people's trust towards traditional political agents opting for emerging political parties that offer new resorts. The conclusion of the second portion deals with the Italian situation. A subject that lately has scarcely been taken in consideration by European sociological research is here faced: the values of today's youth. This subject remains of central importance while studying the transformations of youth condition, as central is its placement within the issue that is dedicated to Antonio de Lillo, Professor of Sociology at the University of Milan-Bicocca: Gianfranco Bettin Lattes (University of Firenze "Cesare Alfieri") connects the most important interpretational results from the vast research itinerary covered by de Lillo in almost forty years of work. The concept of "socialità ristretta" is one of the most significant among these: one's native family, friendly and sentimental relationships, represent a bond that grows tighter and more solid for the young people considered in different surveys; around this core, however, some values connected to "collective life" that represent founding elements of individual identities[9] are closely found.

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[9] Antonio de Lillo's studies and the intentions with which he conducted them are a precious guidance, on a both scientific and human level, for the writer of these words and – it is as-

The third portion of articles offers a more in depth analysis of Italian youth in relation to the political sphere through different points of view. Pierluca Birindelli (Gonzaga University) utilizing non-quantitative methods of research – through the analysis of autobiographies written by college students – further explores the values of young generations: values concerning one's family and self remain central, friendly and sentimental values are still rather important, but beyond this every aspect of social life gets weaker, translating itself in a widespread particularism that leaves little room to a feeling of society. Alessandro Martelli and Ilaria Pitti (University of Bologna) analyse how youth interprets citizenship through a trans-generational point of view: the qualitative research allows the authors to observe a deep civic sense among younger generations that is, however, fulfilling itself in proactive terms only in particular situations. Dario Tuorto (University of Bologna), utilizing quantitative data, studies the evolution of turnout in Italy during the transition to adulthood: the analysis shows how living with their parents has a positive (not negative or null) effect on the probability to vote, but only for young people whose age is lower than the average age for leaving home (the "right" age for staying at home). Simona Gozzo (University of Catania) in her article tries to explain the current configuration of juvenile social involvement and political participation starting from opportunities, desires and beliefs, defined from a relational point of view. Using a national survey on college students, Gozzo shows the differences within the sample itself based on relational, social and cognitive dynamics.

The fourth portion of articles exits the Italian situation, bringing the discussion back to a point of view dimension, considering two specific contexts,

sumed – for young researchers and all those interested in the subject of youth. Antonio de Lillo was also among those who directed the enormous and systematic research of the Iard Institute of Milano on youth condition, a research of which today's sociological scientific community is suffering the lack of. Two monographic issues dedicated to de Lillo and his work have recently been published: *Per capire la società che cambia: scritti in ricordo di Antonio de Lillo*, edited by Alessandro Cavalli and Roberto Moscati, «Quaderni di Sociologia» (2/2013) and *Per una sociologia pubblica. La traccia di Antonio de Lillo nella ricerca sui giovani*, «InFormazione. Studi e ricerche su giovani, media e formazione» (11/2013). Both, somewhat resembling the six editions of Iard's *Rapporto Giovani*, dedicate precious studies on specific subjects connected with youth condition to de Lillo, without focusing in depth, however, on his specific contribution to the subject of youth values. This issue does not adopt the same schematics as Iard – that was noteworthy for its ability to deeply examine, by prismatically breaking them down, many of the subjects connected to youth, from the transition into adulthood to work, from political participation to spare time, from family to friendship, from association to love – attempting to trace some of the guidelines that combine many thematic fields at the same time: this is a tentative effort to take a further step foreword in the study of youth through Antonio de Lillo's encouragement.

one real and one virtual: Europe (and its politics regarding youth) and the web (and social networks). Riccardo Guidi (University of Pisa) deals with current innovation trajectories in European youth policies exploring European Union policy addresses on youth condition and the youth policies of four EU Countries (Germany, Denmark, United Kingdom and Italy) belonging to different welfare and youth transition regimes. Chiara Moroni (University of Viterbo "La Tuscia") analyses social networks as activators of exponential relations and new formulas of self-representation. She considers social networks as real laboratories for experiencing different possibilities of construction and reconstruction of one's Self. This construction process is very common among young people, called "digital natives"; they use social networks to define themselves and their social relationship[10].

The final portion of the issue consists of an interview to two illustrious researchers of youth condition: their considerations are full of ideas to push the development of youth studies towards new directions with a further-reaching key of interpretation. Alessandro Cavalli (University of Pavia) as President of the Scientific Council of the Iard Institute (Milano) has lead masterful studies in the field of youth sociology, working closely with Antonio de Lillo. Andy Furlong (University of Glasgow) has recently completed a fundamental interpretative systematization of the studies on youth condition[11] and founded the *Journal of Youth Studies*, one of the richest scientific journals on the subject. Both, in however different ways, linger on the tension that is intrinsic and defines youth condition: Cavalli on the relationship between younger and older brothers, but also between teachers and students, Furlong on the relationship between dependency and independency. It, clearly, appears to be a matter of one single problematic tangle connected to trans-generational relations on which we should continue to sociologically reflect, acknowledging Italo Calvino's sharp and lucid sensibility:

> Credo che continuerà questa crisi di discontinuità tra le generazioni, dato anche che i padri sono sempre più insicuri su quello che devono insegnare, o insegnano delle cose che poi non servono. L'ideale sarebbe che il "potere di repressione" che ogni educazione deve avere e il "potere di liberazione" che

[10] Although there are no article in this issue that look at gender relations and young migrants, it is believed that both fields should be deeply nurtured for the development of Youth Studies: both, as a matter of fact, present particularly interesting dynamics referring to the re-elaboration of the political sphere on the behalf of new generations. The author of this issue is, naturally, responsible for their absence here as for all of the considerations that are here proposed.
[11] Furlong A., *Youth Studies. An introduction*, Routledge, London and New York 2013 and (ed.) *Handbook of Youth and Young Adulthood. New perspectives and agendas*, London and New York 2009.

deve essere il suo effetto trovino un equilibrio. La repressione non dev'essere tale da soffocare, perché allora il suo effetto educativo è nullo o catastrofico, ma altrettanto deleterio è il rifiuto di esercitare un'autorità, di rappresentare una figura di guida, di assumersi la responsabilità di fornire delle indicazioni che servano. Come si è sperimentato in questi anni, questa incapacità di educare crea soltanto degli infelici. Ma chissà quando si arriverà a un nuovo dosaggio tra una forma di autorità e il potere liberatorio che deve venire dall'educazione. Certo tra vent'anni è troppo presto perché qualcosa cambi; speriamo che almeno tra duecento anni la situazione migliori[12].

[12] I believe that this discontinuity crisis among generations will persist, as fathers are growingly more insecure on what they must teach, or they simply teach things of no use. Ideally the "force of repression" that every education should pose and the "force of liberation" that should be its goal should somewhat find their balance. Repression must never be such to suffocate, because otherwise its educative effect is null or catastrophic, and just as harmful is refusing to exercise authority, to be a leading figure, to take responsibility and give the needed guidance. As we have witnessed in these past years, the inability to educate simply creates unhappiness. Who knows when we will reach a new dosage between forms of authority and the liberatory power that should emerge from education. Of course, twenty years is too soon for something to change; let's just hope that in two hundred years the situation will get better. Interview with Italo Calvino by Alberto Sinigaglia in *Vent'anni al Duemila*, Eri, Torino 1982.

Youth through social sciences. A kaleidoscopic view

Andrea Pirni

The article's intention is to stimulate the identification, among the scientific literature that covers youth, of coordinates of synthesis. Different trans-disciplinary paths of research, that are partially overlapping in scientific reflection, are synoptically presented to offer some elements for the elaboration of a perspective that sees in youth not only a field of research, but a starting point to contribute to the study of social change.

Youth, from field of research to perspective

In an attempt to reflect on the way in which sociological study on youth is conducted, it is important, first of all, to establish if Youth Studies represent a defined field of research where it is possible to exercise interpretative resources of various nature, or an autonomous research perspective that focuses, especially but not exclusively, on a specific portion of society. The scientific literature of reference appears to show a propensity towards the first option: youth and young people – at times, the two terms are inaccurately considered synonyms[1] – define a particular field within society, with their own personal traits, that differentiate them from others. The affirmation of sociological interest on this subject within international sociology associations (see *supra*) appears to support this tendency, showing how youth studies differentiate themselves among the conceptual constellation that consists of education, childhood and ageing. Sociology of youth's affirmation path emerges from the necessity to define the specific object of its study in a clearer way: it consists, after all, of a well-established process that different disciplines have undertaken at the time

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[1] This article will not linger on the distinction between youth and young people nor on the use of the two terms in scientific literature. It is not, however, useless to remark what is clearly evident: "youth" refers to a specific phase in the course of life, while "young people" refer to equally specific social agents that intervene in social change.

of their methodological foundation and, in these, of multiple points of view. If, therefore, youth consists of a specific field of research, it seems important to gather some of its characteristic traits. It is a field that, *prima facie*, presents at least four characterizing factors, considering European Youth Studies: it is extraordinarily vast, it is of very high institutional interest, it offers many specific phenomenons to analyse, it is in the interest of many different disciplines of social science. It should immediately be cleared that the scope of the field of interest is in no way tied to the amount of young population in European societies: in the Old Europe, in fact, it appears rather modest and decreasing in number[2]. Instead, the field of research is very extended because it interests the processes of reproduction of society on all levels: economical, political and cultural. This is also the reason behind the substantial interest on behalf of the institutions, not only educational ones, that necessarily hold these processes in high regard. Within this field, as many phenomenons as those that make up the sphere of everyday life are noticeable: from school to work, from friendship to sentimental relations, from family to intergenerational relations, from religious faith to political values, from consumption to spare time, from solidarity to individualism, from interaction with society to the formation of ones own personal individual identity and many more. Each one of these fields, that represents one or more specific phenomenons to analyse, is open to being considered in relation to youth condition. With such a wide array of reasons that make this field of research so scientifically rich, it does not surprise that there are multiple disciplines of social science that cover the subject of youth.

Each of these characterizing factors, however, poses a couple of specular issues. The wideness of this research field could generate erroneous hypostatisation of the dynamics tied to specific contexts or phenomenons, neglecting the heightened internal differentiation of the youth universe, on one side, or limit the interpretation of youth condition to targeted case studies that offer little relevant empirical contribution on a more generic theoretic level, on the other. The very high institutional interest, that translates into an approach that tends towards policies, can focus its attention on the deviant or anomic

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[2] Provisional data offered by Eurostat shows that in 2013 the percentage of European population (28 countries) consisting of ages between 15 and 24 was 11,5% of a total of approximately 505 and half million inhabitants. Considering youth population, for conciseness and merely quantitative means, as part of this cohort, one can notice how it is the smallest amount compared to the rest of the population (without considering the percentage, 5,1%, that is over 80 years old): 0-14: 15,6%; 25-49: 35%; 50-64: 19,7%; 65-79: 13,1%. One can notice how the amount of 15-24 year-olds has drastically reduced itself of at least one decimal point since the beginning of the new millennium (ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/population-demography-migration-projections/population-data/main-tables).

traits of newer generations, favouring a paternalistic attitude (at times benevolent, at times punitive) on one side, or on the difficulties – circumstantial or structural – shown by youth to fully reach adult roles, favouring an excessively supportive attitude, on the other. In both cases the chosen approach appears to be only partly capable of grasping the younger portion of the population in a selective way, considering well defined subgroups or specific traits, and only depicts a partial image of youth. Furthermore, the institutional tension tends to generally perceive youth condition in an overall problematic way, considering the spoilage that, time and time again, separates it from the ideal type of adult condition. The multiplicity of phenomenons that develop inside of this field of research offers further issues, partially similar to those deriving from the heightened institutional interest. This field's prosperity could favour a hyper-specialisation in well-established phenomenons, making it rather difficult to reassemble the dynamics that are noticeable for each of these into a coherent picture on one side, or the reduction of the discussed phenomenon to a juvenile one, overlooking the way in which the other cohorts that are part of the referred context are also interested into it, on the other. Lastly, the fact that various disciplines other than sociology – as social psychology, social history, anthropology, political science and demography – cover this field of research, however certainly strengthening the comprehension of youth, also produces many doubts in the adoption, at times in a simplistic manner, of analytic categories elaborated in different disciplinary contexts, and in the receiving of medium-term results through paths of research structured with different objectives.

These problematic aspects could represent a solid ground for most of the methodological criticism Youth Studies might receive: these studies have, in fact, rapidly proliferated in the past decades, offering a sort of *manteu d'arlequin* where it is difficult to draw up an overall view.

This article's intention is to stimulate the elaboration of these coordinates while suggesting a map of paths of research that, in retrospect, can be identified in the scientific literature of reference. These paths are very clearly distinguished to present some of their characterising factors as they are often overlapping and interconnected in sociological reflection. Four paths of research shall be identified in the attempt to highlight the research question that stimulates each one's development and initial disciplinary and conceptual texture. This – illustrative and incomplete – exercise's objective is to move towards an autonomous research perspective, inspired by the Research Network on Youth and Generation of the European Sociological Association, to allow the production of more resources, to better acknowledge an understanding of a social change that is capable of surpassing the uncertain limits of youth. It is strongly believed, in fact, that the moving from a field of research to a research

perspective consists of one of the fundamental steps towards the affirmation – and further structurisation – of Youth Studies within the European scenario.

Paths of research

The affirmation of Youth. The first path of research is developed with the objective of analysing youth's affirmation process in contemporary societies: in which ways has society produced youth? Assuming this as research question implies surveying the dynamics that intervened in the differentiation of youth as a new phase in the course of life. This path of research is of a macrosociological kind and considers youth as a portion of the population: the observation and the analysis of this new portion of society is developed in tight correlation with the need to face the criticalities that accompany the youth-phenomenon. The importance of historic contextualisation qualifies this path of research: together with infancy (Ariès 1960) – maybe earlier – youth is also "discovered" in modern times.

The discontinuity marked by the rapid Napoleonic phase and the launch of the industrialisation process, is crucial for the formation of youth in Europe. The eighteenth century ends with the affirmation of a growingly nationalistic sentiment that accompanies the principle that all capable citizens have the right and the obligation to defend their country: compulsory enlistment finds its place in almost all European countries, as well as voluntary one – usually backed by a need of autonomy or sustenance –, strengthening the young composition of armies. This phenomenon goes on at least until Napoleon's definitive demise (1815) moment from which a progressive reduction of armed forces begins – at least until the twentieth century –. The rationalisation of armed forces favours the exit of its younger component, that offers lack of discipline – and in relation to this – a higher mortality rate in combat. The expulsion of the younger elements is sided by the elaboration, on their own behalf, of complex pre-military training processes (Loriga 1994). In the meantime, in Europe, the long process of educational re-elaboration is taking its place: the principle according to which it is necessary to educate a child and an adolescent – indiscriminately – to *homme honnete* or *gentleman* values, in order to favour socialisation and integration in a society divided in orders and classes, is progressively replaced by the right to education and by its mandatory aspect accompanied by a new pedagogic culture that aims at building integrated but autonomous personalities. The severe respect towards authority gives way to a metabolisation of the sense of discipline that requires an extension of the schooling age (Marrou 1948; Cavalli 1980; Caron 1994). Very briefly, the exit of younger elements from the military at the beginning of the

nineteenth century and the partial assimilation of these into a renewed educational system prototype, begins not only the affirmation process of youth in Europe, but also its internal differentiation: and it is especially starting from this century that school attendance intertwines with social background, pushing schooling onto a binary course that envisions a school for the masses (primary education) on one side, and high schools and colleges for the middle class (secondary education), on the other (Ariès 1960). It should not be forgotten how these dynamics take place during the unstopping industrial acceleration that indirectly starts pressuring the scholastic organisation to increasingly obtain competence from young people in formation, and even more, starting in the second half of the nineteenth century, a progressive regulation of minor labour begins in factories escorted by the first investigations on the correlation between factory labour and physical deformities as well as urban poverty (Gillis 1974).

Following this path of research the affirmation of youth in Europe revolves around the intersection of three macro-phenomenons: war, education and work. Inadequacy from a physical point of view – in factory labour – and in discipline – from a military setting – is received by the institutional level that favours the emergence of youth from the rest of society. The institutional elaboration of youth immediately transmits an ascriptive connotation to it: incompleteness. This incompleteness – that does not necessarily transmit into a social issue – requires, on the behalf of the institutions, some guided efforts: from here we have the realisation of an institutional approach to youth, leading to the definition of policies, that focuses on the relationship between youth and the rest of society. The contribution of social demography to this path of research denotes its relevance through the elaboration and the use of the concept of cohort (Henry 1966) that perfectly lends itself to the planning of policies: a cohort is a group of individuals, within a specified population, that has experienced the same event in the same period of time (Ryder 1965). The cohort, therefore, identifies a macro-unit of observation in which it is possible to find, on an aggregate level, the real characteristics of demographic experiences lived on an individual level (Santini 1992).

Political action of youth. The second path of research develops around the objective to analyse how youth intervenes in society through political action: how does youth change society? This question of research implies a survey of the young portion of society's forms of involvement in the public sphere and their political protagonism. This path of research is of a meso-sociological kind and considers youth as a group actor: the observation and analysis of youth groups develops in relation to political change. This path of research is qualified by its politological aspect: political action of youth groups is considered for its innovative value compared to the rest of the population (Habermas *et al.* 1961).

The elaboration of this path of research is stimulated by the studies on youth cultures that strongly affirm themselves in urban contexts of the beginning of the twentieth century: during the 20's the school of Chicago begins a pioneeristic overseas research commitment – soon to be systematic – on the *gangs* of turbulent adolescents that populate some of the metropolis' neighbourhoods. It consists of an "interstitial" social group, with an internal solidarity and its own characteristics that make up an organised and not formalised autonomous organisation (Park, Burgess and McKenzie 1925). These emerging group identities soon become object of the privileged research of the Cultural Studies that, elaborating new categories such as "subculture" and "youth culture" (Hebdige 1979), focus on its innovative and partially alternative capacity: groups like the Teddy boys, the Mods and Punks consist, in fact, of a merely symbolic violation of social order without engaging in delinquency (Brake 1980). The analysis of youth subcultures efficiently fits into the use of the concept of generation from a political point of view, already masterfully suggested by Karl Mannheim (1928-1929). Mannheim attempts to clarify the nature of the social bond that ties individuals in a generational ensemble and the substance of its specificity compared to the phenomenon of the formation of tangible groups. The generational collocation based on being born and growing up in a certain time and period implies a limited amount of possible experiences that can be lived and developed or that can be compressed and nullified: for the realisation of this generational bond, however, it is necessary that individuals born in the same period and in a homogeneous historical and cultural context, take part in one common destiny. In this case the actors belonging to the same generation take part in the problems of their times with full consciousness and responsibility. This does not prevent the possibility of having different points of view: within the same generational bond there could, therefore, be more than one units of a generation. The core that bestows its consistency and from which coherent behaviours, with a tendency to innovation or to conservation, emerge, true "entelechies", consists of well-established political values that develop in even smaller contexts, such as real groups where effective bonds and direct interactions take place. These are the groups that allow the realisation of historical change (Ortega y Gasset 1947; Jennings and Niemi 1981). Different political generations that have alternated themselves from the end of World War I until now offer their own peculiar characteristics, strongly connected to their specific context of reference, and express a complex and various phenomenology, also from a political participation-disinterest standpoint (Bettin Lattes 2008). Scientific reflection has widely received the most significant political expressions of some generations – particularly the one of 1968 – promoting the affirmation of an articulated branch of studies on social movements – and later new so-

cial movements – (Melucci 1982; Braungart and Braungart 1993; Kriesi *et al.* 1995; della Porta and Diani 1997; Diani and McAdam 2003). This branch of studies soon made itself independent from the in-depth analysis of youth and, in particular, student composition that laid its foundations (Habermas *et. al.* 1961; Lipset 1967; Touraine 1969).

Following this path of research, then, the intervention of youth within their own society establishes itself through the elaboration of new political values in the context of groups of equals joined together by belonging to the same generation. Even in this case, a primary aspect of youth is identifiable: the noticeable visibility – noisy and violent at times – with which political dispute manifests itself and that characterises youth's political behaviour. This aspect still influences the research on the relation between youth and the political sphere, highlighting time and time again – occasionally reproducing scientifically infertile echoes – the absence or, at least, the reduction of that political passion in contemporary generations.

The transformations of youth. The third path of research develops with the objective of capturing how youth modifies itself in the face of social change: how does being young change? This question implies a survey of social phenomenons that intervene in the re-elaboration of youth as a phase in the course of life as well as unprecedented forms of personal identity development in the process of transition to adulthood in a different context compared to the past. This path is of a micro-sociological type of research and considers youth as individual actors: the observation and the analysis of young subjects develop in correlation with social change. A psycho-anthropological connotation defines this branch of research: the transition towards adulthood is considered in light of the biography of the individual actor (Mitterauer 1986).

The elaboration of this path of research begins from the fundamental studies of Jean Piaget (1923) who immediately recognised the importance of social interaction in the theory of development – even if this has rarely emerged from the research inspired by his work (Chapman 1986) –. Based on how children build and organize their own knowledge, evolutive psychology arrives to the point of defining youth as the final phase (from the age of 20 to 25) of the process of development and organisation that an individual begins at birth. This is characterised by sexual maturity and the progressive achievement of individual autonomy and of personal responsibilities. Developmental age is marked by moments of crisis where one's own vision of the world has to face newer, more complex, forms of reality (both interiorly and exteriorly); different processes of maturation that involve the emotional, cognitive, moral and social dimensions are attempted, and this last one is to be intended as the ability to experience a satisfactory social relationship based on past experiences that an individual has stored by taking them from others and has shared with

them and from the dynamic balance of aggressiveness, dominance, dependency, isolation, cooperation, collaboration and idea of one's self that through all of this has been reached (Galimberti 1999). However apparently well defined the boundaries of youth may be considered, chronological age is not enough to be a *marker* of a phase in the cycle of life – or "life-course", as sociologists prefer (Bagnasco, Barbagli and Cavalli 1997; Giele and Elder 1998) –: the definitions of age are, in fact, of scarce use in the understanding of challenges and risks that from time to time a subject has to face, considering how many categories of life overlap (Hendry and Kloep 2003). In this sense it is more common to speak of first adult age (from around 20 to 40 years of age) anticipated by adolescence (from ages 12 to 20) and followed by intermediate adult age (from ages 40 to 65) (Erikson 1986). Youth, therefore, especially assumes the aspects of a transitional phase, even if manifesting its own personal characteristics, the axis of which is leaning more towards its successive phase as it stabilizes some traits that will reveal themselves as a characteristic of adult personality: there appears to be much better continuity between the first and intermediate adult age rather than between adolescence and the first adult age (Rutter and Rutter 1995). It is, however, anthropology that concentrates its attention mostly on the transition into adulthood, focusing this discontinuity through "rites of passage" based on the typical aspects of the modern age: it consists of one of those ceremonies that mark and accompany the transition from one phase of life to another, simplifying the changes of condition without violent shocks to society or grinding halts to individual and collective life (Gennep 1909). These rituals have a similar structure and articulate themselves in three moments: in the first one, of "separation", a person abandons previous positions and forms of behaviour; in the second, of "margin", the subject is neither in one place nor the other, finding himself in an intermediate space; in the third, of "aggregation", an individual is reintroduced into society through a relatively stable positioning. Rites of passage have been sociologically re-elaborated into the system of "levels", in other words, of subsequent, linear and definitive – from job positioning to the separation of the original family up to the construction of an autonomous family – acquisitions. The social change that has taken place in European societies during the past decades has radically impaired this interpretative scheme on the basis of the continuous renegotiation of these limits: scientific literature has in this way developed different configurations of youth (Cieslik and Pollock 2002; Arnett 2004 and 2014; Furlong and Cartmel 1997; Furlong 2009 and 2013; Kelly and Kamp 2014) that, while highlighting its progressive extension on one side, focuses its attention on the processes of building individual identities starting from biographies (Giddens 1991; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1994; Leccardi and Ruspini 2006).

Following this branch of research, the transformations of youth as a phase of life-course take place at the bottom of the social change that remodels the contexts of reference and implies noteworthy – and unprecedented for previous generations – efforts in building one's own personal identity. Its lengthening is a characterising factor of today's youth with everything it implies in the process of renovation of adult roles. Based on this, research considers the variety of existential strategies – in an everyday life perspective – offered by the universe of youth as an attempt of answering to new social conditions.

Towards a new perspective

The three paths that have briefly been presented lead the studies towards specific fields inside the universe of youth: the first one is functional to the elaboration of social policies aimed at the younger portion of population, the second one stimulates the interpretation of the political sphere and of their transformations, the third one analyses the new morphologies of everyday life and intergenerational relations.

Each of the paths seems to be both stimulating and enriching to take. Actually, the three subjects, appear to be crossed, in a however different measure, by a common latent objective: the integration of new generations in society. The path that covers the affirmation of youth offers this objective in a rather explicit way: it covers, in fact, the relations between youth and society and, in particular, how the processes that take place in it relating to affirmation can be interpreted for the elaboration of *ad hoc* policies. The point of view from which the relations between society and the universe of youth are received, centres on the incompleteness of new generations, the interpretation of which oscillates between being considered, at times, a resource, and at times a problem. The current circumstance, in particular beginning with the economical and financial crisis in Europe, is especially directed at focusing on the social problem of youth unemployment. The path that covers youth's political action, once again poses the question of the integration of new generations, even if in a much less evident manner: it covers, in fact, the political action of youth, emerging from a partially autonomous elaboration of new political values, impacts on the political system and culture of society. The viewpoint with which the interactions between youth's political action and society's political sphere are prevalently captured, lingers on mobilisation, especially of confrontationalist nature, especially considering its presence or absence from the public sphere: this also implies re-discussing about how the progressive individualisation in contemporary societies could realise the solidarity necessary in the formation of group collective consciousnesses. The current circumstance, considering the

scarce – and ulteriorly diminishing – political participation rate among youth, especially suggests concentrating on the absence from the political sphere. The path that covers the transformations of youth also, indirectly, poses the question of integration: it covers, in fact, how the processes of transition to adulthood have changed – looking further into the phenomenon of youth's lengthening – and the implications of which are for individual biographies. The point of view from which these dynamics are usually looked at, inside of the sphere of everyday life, implies that the tension between autonomy and dependency is at the centre of the realisation of individual identities. The current circumstance, considering the reduction in the number of marriages or in the exits of individuals from their families of origin together with the slow rate of exchange of old generations with new ones in positions of a certain relevance within society – just for the sake of using two sketchy, but not improper, indicators – brings us to highlighting how youth's condition is today penalised compared to the past.

An overall penalisation, therefore, appears to emerge as a summary representation of the paths of research; the contingent situation of penalisation of youth condition, appears to consist of, in fact, the coordinate of value guiding the research in this field. In short: it is necessary to study youth as a weak subject. Considering as solid the reasons to sustain this, it appears beneficial, for heuristic means, to mark the elements of an ulterior path of research – looking to affirm itself – to favour the elaboration of a research perspective. This intends to put a sociology of contingency on youth condition side by side with a sociology that aims at "unveiling society ad interpreting its change" (SMP 2010, 4). A first step in this direction is to consider how the latent objective of the presented paths of research – of the integration of youth within society – could be synthesised into a perspective oriented to the reproduction of society. The expression wishes to highlight – in Touraine's terms (1965) – as the predominant interest is the observation, the description, the interpretation of the phenomenons relative to the youth universe in relation to societies ability to transform itself, adapting to the changes that interest it without deviating significantly from the well-established structure on which it is based. A perspective of this kind tends to maintain a certain normative aspect that comes from the fact that it – necessarily – adopts the criteria for the understanding of contemporary juvenile universe, an ideal type elaborated from the current "adult" society – and, in this sense, accomplished – or starting from the youth of previous generations. This perspective undoubtedly poses some advantages as well as some limits. Among the first, without delving too much into the specifics of each path of research, the possibility to control the hypotheses that have been formulated around generational transformations and intergenerational relations is without a doubt of a certain relevance. Among the second, the scarce possibility of advancing new hypotheses on the change of society referring to

its fundamental structures. In this sense it is believed that sociology of change would gain fruitful incentive from a perspective elaborated from the naturally innovative – however still potential – characteristics of new generations. A perspective that covers new generations aimed, therefore, at the production of society, in other words, at the innovating processes – including the apparently absent ones – that, somewhat problematically, are activated by youth as an alternative or as an integration of the traditional means that defined it. This does not mean only considering the conformity or otherness of youth – in its proactive or inactive aspect – compared to the rest of society, but researching – and imagining – the heritage and the implications of both one and the other, in all of their unedited composition, within social texture (tab. 1).

Table 1: *Youth Studies – Perspectives and paths of research*

| Path of research | Perspective | | | |
| | Reproduction of society | | | Production of society |
	Affirmation of youth	Political action of youth	Transformations of youth	Social change
Question of research	How society produced youth	How youth intervenes in society through political action	How youth transforms in relation to social change	How society changes
Approach to the field of research	Portion of the population	Group actors	Individual actors	Cultural incubator
Conceptual matrix	War, education, work	Subculture, political generation, social change	Transition to adulthood, lengthening of youth, identity	Europeanisation, social reflexivity, "socialità ristretta"
Specific field of observation	Policies	Political sphere	Everyday life	Social change
Interpretative tangles	Youth/society: incompleteness of youth (resource/problem)	Collective consciousness/individualism: presence/absence of youth's political participation	Autonomy/dependency: new generation's penalisation	Overcoming the dichotomic criteria

A viable path of research within this perspective assumes social change as its primary research question: how does contemporary society change? This path aims at combining different levels of sociological research – macro, meso and micro – considering new generations in relation to other segments of the population, other groups, institutions and phenomenons that compose and

qualify the rest of their contemporary society: the analysis of this field should focus its attention – to differentiate itself from the other perspective – not as much on the influences of consolidated factors on weaker subjects in a short/ medium period of time – as, for example, youth's flexibilisation of work on the building of a personal family – rather than the transformations of these factors in a medium/long period in the face of their prolonged exposure to subjects of that type – covering, therefore, how work, its ethic, its social and socialising function can change –. In this path of research, new generations, or better, the relations that these have with other generations and with what they bear, are considered a social incubator, where a tendency to change is developed. These tendencies are naturally destined to completely affirm themselves: many would result in being absorbed by the processes of reproduction of society. This practice, however, would allow the running of unprecedented and sociologically stimulating scenarios.

The starting conceptual matrix for a path of research on social change connected to a field of research on new generations could also be identified and developed around three phenomenons. In first place, Europeanisation. This macro phenomenon qualifies a group of contiguous contemporary societies in a growing manner: this does not imply that the twenty eight countries of the European Union are homogeneous and simplistically comparable (Bettin Lattes and Recchi 2005). However, the belonging to the Union and the juridical, economical, cultural and political processes that come from it all merge into a deep transformative tension that has been affecting European societies in different ways and for a long time (Delanty 2013; Therborn 2010; Eder and Spohn 2005). The economical crisis of the past few years has further strengthened this tension. The phenomenon that translates into another conceptual benchmark for this branch of research is the growth of social reflexivity. Reflexivity means the characteristic for which social practices are constantly examined and reformed – through its progressive elaboration (Gouldner 1970; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Burawoy 2003) – in light of the new data concerning these same operations, substantially altering its character. This way the social sphere assumes the ability of being a centre for the re-elaboration of not only the information but also of all the operations that begin from and return to it. This has always happened in all cultures, but in contemporary societies the revision of conventions becomes a radical phenomenon that applies, in principle, to all aspects of human life (Giddens 1991; Giddens, Beck and Lash 1994). Social reflexivity is a continuous re-discussion of society's planning and of its dynamic and unstable current configuration. In short, reflexivity, affects social change as it re-discusses the foundations of society (Bauman 2000). This process, however, should be intended not as a well thought out and planned transformation in the name of a strategic acting, but as an uncontrollable and

unforeseeable change. The operations and the well established certainties introduced by enlightened dialectic and the affirmation of industrial society, lose their institutional standpoints. The mentioned dynamism is for a great deal increased by the globalisation phenomenon. The third phenomenon-concept to bond this path of research with is tied to the affirmation of the younger portion of the "socialità ristretta" population (de Lillo 2002)[3]: young generations' system of values, which revolves around their private life, progressively tends to the sphere of interpersonal relations – especially the friendly and affective ones together with the familiar ones – of collective employment at the expense of collective participation, especially political one. However, it appears that recently, the reclusion to privacy and avoiding the values of collective life favouring the I, are slowly reducing or inverting their tendency (de Lillo 2007, 153). It should still be established if this tendency goes beyond national borders – the survey conducted by de Lillo is only referred to a sample of young Italians – and characterises other portions of the European youth population.

Europeanisation, social reflexivity and "socialità ristretta" consist, therefore, of the starting grounds for the elaboration of an ulterior path of research that is able to go beyond the interpretative point of view of young generations, based on a dichotomic criteria that, however still allowing important in-depth analyses on youth condition, does not effectively answer the – as of today, dramatically crucial – need of effectively capturing the coordinates of change in contemporary European societies. Investing on this path of research and on the perspective that inspires it, it is believed that it will be possible to elaborate kaleidoscopic scenarios of societies on their way to affirmation.

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[3] Refer to Bettin Lattes' article inside of this issue for the concept of "socialità ristretta".

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Young people and the new semantics of the future[1]

Carmen Leccardi

Young people in the new century find themselves having to define their existential choices within a social landscape that is strongly characterized by the acceleration of change. Contemporary time seems to erase temporal continuity and the notion of the life-plan as developed in the modern era. The article analyses how this process impacts on the biographical constructs of young people and how the changing experience of time affects the transition to adulthood and the spread of new values. The hypothesis is that the positive relation among life-plan, biographical time, and identity encounters difficulties when the future is shortened. Planning capacity is compromised and life-projects depend more on subjective factors than on completion of the canonical life-stages marked out by institutional times-frames. As a result young peoples "navigate by sight", dealing with uncertainty, rather than following pre-established routes. The restructuration of the relationship between identity and social time do not consist only in absolutization of the present reflects in a positive redefinition of the relationship with the future. The "new youth" possesses sufficient capacities to be able to govern the dynamics of the high-speed society in which they find themselves living.

Introduction

If over the course of the 20th century the image of the future as a field open to possibility became more and more evanescent, it is above all the new century that has rendered increasingly evident the interconnection between the two processes of social acceleration on the one hand and the crisis of the future (and of the modern temporal experience) on the other. It is not just that there is in fact a spread in the sensation of living in an epoch of uncontrollable risks and of correspondingly great uncertainties, such as to render the idea of the future as *undesirable* in itself; the growth in the speed of the rhythms of life together with the acceleration in the processes of economic, social and techno-

logical transformation also profoundly influences our very experience of time (Rosa 2003). In using the expression "speed of the rhythms of life" we refer to the results at the level of actions of the contraction in temporal horizons and the dominion of the short term; to the out-and-out hegemony of the deadline, elaborated as a principle of action; to the discrediting of perspectives founded on the idea of "once and for all" (i.e. irreversibility); and to the spread of a culture of the provisory. Together, these factors impact negatively not only on the ways in which we work, interact, and construct our actions in the present but also on our ways of looking at the future.

The consequence of living in a high speed society (Rosa and Scheurman 2009) is that the future is, so to say, burned up: it folds back into the present, it is absorbed within it and is consumed before it can really be conceived. The present in its turn becomes "all there is" (Harvey 1990: 240). Within the temporal frameworks redefined by the compression of time-space it appears as the only dimension available for the definition of choices, a fully-fledged existential horizon which includes and substitutes the future (and the past). The acceleration of social life and its various times renders these two dimensions ever more evanescent as reference points for action. To put it more precisely: although the evocation of the future continues to constitute a routine both for social systems and for subjects, it is in fact the present that is now associated with the principle of potential governability and controllability that modernity – through its normative ideal of progress – associated with the future.

Contemporary time therefore seems to erase not only temporal continuity but also the notion of the life-plan as developed in the modern era. In order to explain this process and its impact on the biographical constructs of young people today we must dwell further on the relationship between biographical time and planning (see: Anderson *et al.* 2005; Brannen and Nielsen 2002 and 2007; Machado Païs 2003; Woodman 2011). Then we must consider the essential features of the transition to adulthood today; and finally we must resume the theme of the changing experience of time connecting it with young people's new values. The new semantics of the future will help us in understanding them.

Biographical time and the life-plan

The analytical point of departure here is *biographical time*, understood as the unitary temporal dimension that emerges from the processes by which people consider the past, live the present, and look to the future. Biographical time and identity are closely bound up with each other – nor could it be otherwise. Personal identity, just like time-of-life, is the outcome of the dialectical relationship between permanence and change, between continuity and disconti-

nuity, among past, present and future. Because it takes shape on the variegated terrain delimited on the one hand by the person's need for autonomy, and on the other by one's need for recognition, passing through a delicate mixture of identification and dis-identification, the raw material of personal identity is by definition time, both existential and social (Luckmann 1993).

If we adopt this perspective, biographical time must necessarily be compared with the social-temporal norms that determine and define the various life-stages from childhood to old age, set them in relation to each other, condition the transitions among them, and above all construct their meanings. The duration of these phases, the order in which they occur, their degree of constrictiveness, and so on, may vary according to the historical moment. Suffice it to consider, for example, how representations of the ages of life have changed since the Second World War. Though more diversified and certainly less cogent, the temporal norms which regulate life-courses still condition biographical construction – as they do every other aspect of social life (Zerubavel 1981). They play an ambivalent role: on the one hand, they prevent individuals from exercising complete control over their personal time because they force them to comply with temporal orders external to that time; on the other, and in parallel, they provide important support to development of the life-plan by allowing, in general, subjective options to be transformed into socially legitimated life trajectories.

It should be stressed in this regard that the possibility itself of conceiving a dialectical relationship between time of life and social time is considered a historical product of modernity. In fact, it was modernity that furnished a representation of time consonant with a conception of the time of life as (auto) biography (Leitner 1982): an abstract and empty dimension within a temporal flow depicted as linear, directed, and irreversible.

But a paradox arises. The "subjectification" of time embodied by the concept of biography is one of the outcomes of modernity's exteriorization and objectification of time whereby the latter is considered a thing separate from its perceiver, a dimension which flows autonomously, overwhelms human beings, and is articulated by the unstoppable movement of the instruments used to measure it (Adam 1995). This is a power more emotionally to be feared than space (Jaques 1982), with which, though, it is inextricably bound up[2].

As said, a particularly sensitive analytical tool with which to analyse biographical time and its change consists in the life-plan, which results from a perfect overlap between planning and biography. To adopt the perspective of social phenomenology, the life-plan can be considered emblematic of both

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[2] This is mainly due to the fact that time by definition postulates death.

biographical time – "an individual's biography is apprehended as [...] a plan" (Berger, Berger and Kellner 1973: 71) – and of personal identity[3]. On this view, where long-term planning exists, there arises both a biography in the proper sense and a full-fledged sense of personal identity. Accordingly, biography and identity have an irrepressible need for the medium-to-long term future (and before that, a linkage among past, present and future).

This positive relationship among life-plan, biographical time, and identity, however, encounters difficulties when the future is foreshortened – as happens in the acceleration society – and mastery over time becomes more problematic, also because of the unpredictability of courses of action in our era. Put otherwise, when the accidental, the possible, the fortuitous can no longer be controlled by means of planning (as a form of insurance against the future) because of the exponential growth of social uncertainty (Rampazi 2002), then planning capacity in the traditional sense of the life-project is compromised. Yet even if the life-project is understood simply in terms of an intention, design, scheme or programme (Boutinet 2003, 23), and even if one separates the noun "project" from its qualifier "life" and considers medium/short-term planning, the contemporary time requires that this key dimension of self-construction be re-thought.

The ungovernability of the future which largely accounts for present-day uncertainty, therefore, not only renders long-term plans potentially obsolete and predictions impracticable; it also alters the temporal structure of identities, creating fertile ground for redefinition of their postulates, and primarily among these the connection between identity and life-plan.

On discussing these matters, Hartmut Rosa has emphasised the close connection between the acceleration society and "biographical de-temporalization". He writes,

> life is no longer planned along a line that stretches from the past into the future; instead, decisions are taken 'from time to time' according to situational and contextual needs and desires […]. Thus, a conception of the good life based on long-term commitments, duration, and stability is thwarted by the fast pace of social change (Rosa 2003: 19).

The severing of the connections among the different dimensions of biographical time – among memory of the past, choices in the present, and ex-

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[3] The interest of Berger, Berger and Kellner (1973) in the life-plan stems directly from the attention traditionally paid by phenomenological sociology to planned action. Schütz (1971), who resumed Husserl's interest in the anticipatory character of action, analysed it in relation to action considered as "planned behaviour", and studied its temporal structure.

pectations regarding the future – reverberates at the individual and social levels. At the individual level, it creates space for people to search out new forms of anchorage to the present for their expression of the self; at the social level, it uncouples life trajectories from the institutions as guarantors of individual and collective continuity. As a result, inner autonomy and social independence, that is the achievement of increasing degrees of independence made possible by a positive relationship with credible and non-fragmented social institutions, tend to split apart. The conclusion of the juvenile life-stage increasingly depends on wholly subjective factors which redefine the priorities and horizons of life rather than on completion of the canonical life-stages marked out by institutional time-frames such as education, work, and couple formation (Heinz, Weymann and Huinik 2009).

The institutional system as such – that is, independently of the concrete relationships which individuals establish with it – is increasingly averse to the future. As a consequence, young people tend not to receive support from the institutions in regard to their entry into adulthood. In other words, key social institutions like the school, work, or the family no longer guarantee the success of that transition. Whatever the level of individual commitment may be, the outcome is uncertain. Young people must individually negotiate the manner and timing of their entry into adulthood.

The inability of the social institutions to ensure that entry into adulthood follows a predictable pattern, notwithstanding a positive relationship of young people with these institutional times, is today entirely evident. Its impacts on biographical time appear to be profound. The existential discontinuities that it produces radically redefine the modes and forms of biographical narrative: As a result, *anticipation*, a crucial part of the construction of action, is prevented. Hence, whilst in the "tradition of modernity"

> (s)tretches of time used to acquire their meaning from the anticipation of further sections of the time-continuum still to follow, they are now expected to derive their sense, so to speak, inside – to justify themselves without reference, or with only perfunctory reference, to the future. Time-spans are plotted beside each other, rather than in a logical progression; there is no preordained logic in their successions; they may easily, without violating any hard and fast rule, change places – sectors of time-continuum are in principle interchangeable. Each moment must present its own legitimation and offer the fullest satisfaction possible (Bauman 1999: 78).

The fragmentation of the experience of time distinctive of our era, and which young people experience through the progressive separation between times of life and institutional times (less at the level of everyday routine than

at that of overall meaning), therefore means that people "navigate by sight" rather than following pre-established routes.

It is essential, however, not to restrict the discussion to the loss, or the reduction, of possibilities for action associated with contemporary processes of time redefinition. In fact, these processes also have a positive, visible side which should be carefully analysed. Values undergo modification while people devise their strategies for coping with these transformations and, as far as possible, controlling them. The result of these important processes whereby the relationship with social time is restructured do not necessarily consist only in absolutization of the immediate present. Perhaps with the exception of a minority of young people, identities are not exclusively declined in the present. Young people seem more to be frequently engaged in a search for new relations between personal production and personal creation – which is anyway associated with the future – and the specific conditions of uncertainty that today define them.

Before dwelling on this positive redefinition of the relationship with the future, however, it is advisable to consider more closely the form assumed by these conditions of uncertainty for young people "in transit" to adulthood.

The uncertain transition to adulthood

The uncertainties of the transition to adulthood today seem to be due to a set of conditions. Firstly, the temporal duration of the transition has extended (young people become adults increasingly later in their lives), and it has fragmented. The various stages in this transition – conclusion of full-time education, exit from the parental home, stable entry into the world of work, and construction of an autonomous household – tend to "de-synchronize" themselves: that is, they abandon the traditional temporal order. That order foresaw a practically perfect overlap among three crucial stages in the transition: exit from the parental home, entry in the world of work, and couple formation (Galland 2001). Secondly, not only do young people undertake these transitions at an older age, but they frequently interrupt or delay them. In certain respects, as Cavalli and Galland (1993) put it, young people do not seem in a "hurry to grow"[4].

The tendency for a prolonged transition to adulthood is therefore accompanied by its destandardization (Walther and Stauber 2002) and its fragmen-

[4] *Senza fretta di crescere* (*In no hurry to grow up*) is the title of the Italian version of the book Cavalli and Galland published in French in 1993.

tation into discontinuous phases with no discernible connections between one and the next, as well as being reversible[5]. Salience is thus acquired by biographical patterns increasingly distant from linear life-trajectories (Côté 2000; Wyn and White 1997; White and Wyn 2008), and internally to which there arise, according to some authors (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002; du Bois-Reymond 1998; Fuchs 1983), biographical constructions marked by both strong individualization and the prominence of specifically risky features[6] due to the need to take decisions in a social context characterized by high degrees of discontinuity (as well as bureaucratic constraints).

This transition, amid the weakening of the consolidated trajectories of entry into adulthood, therefore tends to emphasize individual abilities to cope with the changes of course imposed by rapid shifts of circumstances, external and internal. We refer here not just to the continuous changes, big and small, that punctuate everyday life in an epoch, like our own, characterized by a rapid acceleration in the processes of transformation but also to the marked changeableness in "internal landscapes". As a matter of course, the changes in the interior ways of considering and evaluating situations are especially accentuated in the life phase of youth.

This particular emphasis on the individual capacity to control the world obviously leaves intact the differences among young people in the social and cultural resources available to them to deal with the world: differences in resources that determine *a priori* the likelihood of whether or not the confrontation with uncertainty will be successful (Roberts 2003). In other words, the emphasis on the obligation to define the choices which ensure the success of the transition to adulthood subjectively does not off-set the weight of the inequalities with which young people have to cope (primarily of class and ethnicity, but also of gender and geographical area of residence: for example, as regards Italy, being young in the North or South still makes a difference; and the combination of individual differences reinforces it).

In general, a feature distinctive of our time is the emphasis on the *personal assumption of responsibility* for one's social circumstances (Martuccelli 2001). This representation of individuality (and subjectivity) as a *deus ex machina* in regard to external difficulties appears particularly powerful among the young people of the new century, whose crucial years of political socialization have coincided with a historical period in which collective belongings have been singularly unfocused compared with those of the final decades of last century.

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[5] This trend is apparent in all the European societies (Sgritta 1999; Wallace and Kovatcheva 1998), albeit with some specific characteristics in the countries of Northern, Central and Southern Europe. See on this Van de Velde (2009). See also Cavalli and Galland (1993).

[6] In this regard, Furlong and Cartmel (1997) used the expression "risk biography".

This representation, moreover, appears symmetrical to the internalization of forms of social exclusion and marginalization regarded as "natural" on the basis of a doctrine which holds that individuals are masters of their fates unaffected by social factors and inequalities.

The features of contemporary transition to adulthood should also be understood in terms of visions of the world produced by the disappearance of collective referents able to link individual times and extra-individual times. This is the case, typically, with the loss of force in our time of social institutions, today less and less capable of offering themselves as a model for action. And for this reason less and less capable of tying personal times and social times in a long-term perspective. The loss of the future as governable time also coincides, as we know, with the demise of politics as the ability to exercise collective control over change. Thorough understanding of the critical relation with the future now taking shape among young people, and the cultures that they express (Nilan and Feixa 2006), centred on the celebration of the present and the cult of immediacy, requires us to set them in relation to this demise of politics as openness to the future. This means that, if the belief that it is possible to envisage a different, and better, future for all is decreasing, the way of dealing with personal and social time will also profoundly change.

Young people, new values and the new semantics of the future

The young people of today therefore live their lives amid a social climate in which a person's right to choose who s/he wants to become is accompanied by the difficulty of identifying benchmarks for biographical construction which make it possible to evade uncertainty (Bynner, Chisholm and Furlong 1997). Moreover, the imperative of choice for young people is not flanked by their conviction that personal decisions will be effectively able to condition future biographical outcomes, owing to both the accelerated pace of change and the evanescence of institutions as models for action.

Hence, the future is related above all with indeterminateness. However, two aspects of this latter feature should be distinguished: on the one hand, unpredictability – what Grosz (1999: 17) aptly calls the "anarchization of the future"; on the other, the virtuality which by definition characterizes the future (what is in potency, not in act). Given the parallel growth of both these aspects, apparently crucial is the capacity of every young man and woman to devise cognitive strategies able to guarantee their autonomy despite the growth of contingency: for example, by developing the capacity to maintain a direction or a trajectory notwithstanding the impossibility of anticipating the final destination.

A survey conducted in the first decade of the new century on young French and Spanish people, which found a similar form of biographical behaviour, aptly termed this an "indetermination strategy" (Lasen 2001: 90). This expression is intended to highlight the growing capacity of young people with greater reflexive resources to interpret the uncertainty of the future as a proliferation of virtual possibilities, and the unpredictability associated with it as additional potentiality instead of a limit on action. In other words, faced with a future increasingly less connectable to the present through a linkage which reinforces both their meanings, a proportion of young people – perhaps not the majority, but certainly the most culturally innovative of them – develop responses able to neutralize fear of the future. Thus, a number of young people, young men and young women to an equal extent, display a willingness to embrace unpredictability, while also anticipating sudden changes of direction and responses constructed in real time as and when occasions arise. The training in the rapid responses required by the acceleration society is fruitfully exploited in this case: rapidity enables young people to "seize the moment", to begin experimentation with positive impacts on life-time as a whole.

This view appears consistent with the above-mentioned emphasis on the individual's responsibility for his/her future. Biographical continuity springs primarily from the individual's capacity to define and redefine a set of choices of sufficient openness to allow revision of the priorities for action in light of the changes that occur. For young people, developing this capacity enables them to conquer new spaces of freedom and experimentation.

In sum, to understand new youth values in relation to the changing time experience it is necessary to focus on the predominance among young people of a particular cultural vision of action and strategies of action. This requires them to conceive themselves as autonomous actors, to assume constant responsibility for themselves, to impute the results of their actions only to themselves. A new figure emerges from this scenario: that of the hyper-activist individual able to construct his/her own biography, willing to explore and re-explore the present so greatly emphasised by the acceleration society. The "unplanned biographies" that young people seemingly pursue today appear congenial to the increasing frequency of this representation. At the same time, they suggest the desire and the determination not to be overwhelmed by events, to keep uncertainty at bay, to gain mastery over one's own time.

Time in one's grasp

For the above reasons, the more stereotypical notions of youth life-times must be abandoned. For example, those notions that unduly emphasise the pure

and simple erasure of the past, or those that identify the present as the only domain in which, by definition, the search for gratification takes place, and in which the spontaneity of desires is paramount. These tendencies exist, as has been repeatedly emphasised, but they should not be generalized.

For example, young people appear aware of the fundamental changes taking place in their social age. They endeavour to enter this new scenario by negotiating, if necessary, forms of the active management of the contradictions that they face. Even when the time of their lives provokes worries – this is visibly the case of those who engage in education or work but nevertheless live in fear that they have wasted their time or will do so – one once again finds response strategies which indubitably signal a desire to regain control over time.

As said, the relation with time replicates this pattern. Young people reflect critically (individually and together) on the best ways to maintain firm control over their lives despite the uncertain and fast-moving social time in which they are embedded. They adopt a plurality of "damage-control" strategies so that they can maintain their bearings amid the precarization of the future (Leccardi 2005; Woodman 2011).

In the new century, characterized by strong deregulation of time and by an equally intense process of individualization, it is increasingly widely believed that every individual has time in his/her grasp. This means that biographical success or failure, the capacity to stay on course in a baffling landscape which hampers forward projection in time, depends essentially on the individual's own decisions. From this also derives the widespread anxiety about failure to identify the shortest and most direct route, the fear of losing one's way in pointless explorations, the fear of falling behind.

Besides differences in the extents of time horizons, in abilities to cope with contemporary uncertainties, and in relations with the future, one is especially struck by the growth of what one may call an affirmative "state of mind" towards time among young people. This centres on rejection of every form of submissiveness, the determination not to be overwhelmed by the speed of events, to control change by equipping oneself to act promptly, not to waste time by "letting things happen", not to be cowed by widespread insecurity.

Not all young people appear able to turn this state of mind into suitable biographical responses. External social conditions and internal conditions may separately or jointly thwart these responses. Nonetheless, one may state that the desire not to succumb either to the acceleration of time and change, or to the objective slowness (and fragmentariness) of the transition to adulthood, is today the most distinctive feature of young people's relationship with time.

To conclude, new relations between present and future (and among past, present and future) are arising, ones suited to the short time-frame in which we are embedded and to an acceleration of social life. This last, it has to be

underlined, is intertwined with the marked deceleration, for young people, of entry into adulthood. But which is the relation between these changes in temporal experience and values? If we consider values as a criterion of evaluation – a general principle through which we approve or disapprove certain modes of action and ways of thinking (Sciolla 1998) – which are the new values associated with this *Zeitgeist*? Values related to the positive evaluation of speed and flexibility (as well as to non-stop activities, for example in consumption) gain ground; flexibility in action, ability to seize opportunities – in short, being "fast" in life – are all aspects of these new cultural horizons. Thus, short-term undertakings seem to be preferred to long term commitments; quick reactions in facing changes to long decision taking processes. This affects biographies as well as the definition of the criteria to make use of in their construction.

Concluding remarks

Young people in the new century find themselves having to define their existential choices within a social landscape that is strongly characterized by the acceleration of change. As a consequence, openness to the new and to the "everyday-ization" of the processes of transformation constitutes an unquestioned given in their biographical construction. Of course, the growing weight that the new technologies of communication have assumed in collective living play a relevant role in this respect. However, this reality is not simply a fact that youth submit to. Rather, "the new youth" (Leccardi and Ruspini 2006) shows that in general it possesses sufficient capacities to be able to govern the dynamics of the high-speed society in which they find themselves living.

It is possible to argue that the very training for velocity imposed by the historical time in which young people today become adults pushes in the direction of a definition of a new suite of values. At their centre stand autonomy, self-determination, experimentation and creativity but also openness towards the other (Barni and Ranieri 2010). The biographical constructions of the 21st century, less and less founded on the idea of the life project transmitted by early modernity, place these values at their very centre. Many young people rely on these to confront the loss of the long-term future without retreating from the expression of their own subjectivity. In this way they seek to transform the social pressure towards acceleration into a form of personal empowerment.

But what are the youth policies[7], we might ask ourselves by way of conclusion, that could most effectively work in harmony with this suite of values

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[7] For a recent reflection on youth policies in Europe see Wallace and Bendit (2009).

and with the new ways of living biographical time that correspond to them? Without doubt all those policies that are capable of developing and promoting the support of young people's autonomy and their expression of personal creativity, and that for this reason are capable of facilitating their integration into the social world.

Within this framework an element of great strategic importance that policies cannot forget to take into consideration is the contemporary obsolescence of the principle of deferred gratification. A principle, as we know, that up to a few decades ago constituted a fully-fledged point of reference in processes of socialisation. In a highly presentified environment like our own, in which the relationship with the future (and here the global economic crisis is an accomplice) appears to be objectively problematic, it is necessary to construct new forms of support in favour of young people. We need forms of the integration and socialisation of young people that are attune to our changed collective temporal orientations. In concrete terms this means support for the capacity of individual young people (and their associations, where they exist) to come to grips in an active manner with a transition to adulthood that is as slow as the social climate in which it unfolds is fast and uncertain. It requires maintaining an acute awareness, for example, of the centrality in young people's biographical construction of the dimension of the extended present, the temporal area that borders on the present without simply identifying itself with the here-and now (Nowotny 1996), and of the short-term future.

More generally, it is possible to argue that the very support for active citizenship and the participation of young people, one of the cornerstones of youth policies, can achieve greater effect in the moment in which it takes on board the contraction in biographical temporal horizons. This means, for example, recognising and valorising those cultural practices and forms of sociality among the young that are founded on reciprocal recognition, on dialogue and exchange in the present and for the present. Practices that guarantee forms of gratification that are not deferred but that at the same time appear oriented towards the reconstruction of public space: unleashing in this way a range of positive processes capable of recuperating a non-contracted temporality, one that is not exclusively entrenched in the present.

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La integración sociopolítica de los jóvenes en tiempos inciertos[1]

Jorge Benedicto

The structural transformations experienced by western societies in last decades and the hegemony of neoliberal policies have modified the patterns of social reproduction which guaranteed the youth social integration in adulthood. The most evident consequence of this new context is the breakdown of intergenerational contract that organized the coexistence and legitimacy of European democracies in the phase of welfare capitalism. The effects of this "unfulfilled promise" of integration, now emphasized by big crisis, are experienced with frustration and uncertainty for many young people, forcing them to seek new ways of integration. This article analyses the characteristics of youth integration in the global capitalism, the meanings young people attribute to it and the strategies that they develop to survive in "unsettled times".

Introducción

> es la idea que nos vendieron cuando éramos pequeños: tú trabajas, o sea, tú estudia, hijo, haz una carrera, licénciate, y ya si tienes eso te va a venir todo, te va a venir la casa, la novia, el piso, el perro y el coche. ¡No es así! Esa es la idea que nos vendieron… Y ahora todos tenemos no sé cuántas carreras, no sé cuántos máster, idiomas… Y no viene ni la casa, ni el coche, ni el perro ni nada[2].

Este fragmento de una entrevista realizada a una joven madrileña en el año 2013 resume a la perfección el sentimiento de decepción y frustración predominante entre amplios sectores de la juventud en estos momentos de crisis. Como muy bien expresaba nuestra entrevistada, el pacto implícito en el que

[2] Entrevista: mujer, 30 años, Máster en Sociología, Madrid, agosto 2013.

las nuevas generaciones habían sido socializadas consistía en que a cambio de dedicar un periodo amplio de sus vidas a la formación se les aseguraba la incorporación a la sociedad adulta en unas condiciones sociales y vitales favorables. Esta promesa de éxito diferido que lleva implícita también la idea del ascenso social se habría roto afectando a todos los ámbitos de la vida juvenil, a sus experiencias más inmediatas y a sus expectativas de futuro. El resultado es que, dicho de una manera simplista, los jóvenes como nuestra entrevistada se sienten en buena medida engañados generacionalmente porque a pesar de haber cumplido su parte del pacto, aceptando además la posición subordinada que lleva implícito el periodo de formación, aquellos que tienen el poder, los adultos, no les han proporcionado los beneficios prometidos. Para entender hoy la integración juvenil y, por extensión, los procesos de reproducción de las sociedades democráticas contemporáneas es necesario profundizar en esta nueva realidad que dibuja una diferente correlación de fuerzas entre las generaciones y exige a todos los actores nuevas estrategias de ser y actuar que sustituyan a las tradiciones y hábitos conocidos.

A primera vista, lo más lógico sería considerar esta situación como una más de las consecuencias negativas de la gran crisis socioeconómica que sufre Europa desde 2008. Y es que esta crisis está afectando de manera especialmente intensa a los jóvenes debido entre otras muchas razones al creciente proceso de precarización laboral y vital al que se ven sometidos, que dificulta sus procesos de transición y su incorporación a la sociedad (Fortino *et al.* 2012). Ahora bien, la virulencia de la crisis no puede hacer olvidar que las raíces del problema responden a procesos de más largo alcance que han provocado la modificación de las pautas de reproducción social que aseguraban la integración de las nuevas generaciones en el capitalismo del bienestar. La crisis nos permite visibilizar las inconsistencias y contradicciones del diseño institucional encargado de la integración juvenil, pero sin por ello olvidar el contexto más amplio de las transformaciones estructurales experimentadas por las sociedades occidentales en las últimas décadas (globalización, erosión de los pilares básicos del sistema de bienestar, nueva posición relativa del Estado) y el predominio de los planteamientos ideológicos y las políticas neoliberales. Ambos fenómenos están íntimamente relacionados y no pueden entenderse uno sin el otro.

Con este planteamiento de partida, el objetivo que aquí se pretende es analizar cómo se están modificando los mecanismos de integración social, política y cultural de las nuevas generaciones europeas que han desembocado en la ruptura del contrato intergeneracional sobre el que se había venido asentando la legitimidad de nuestras sociedades democráticas. Y las consecuencias que este nuevo entorno en el que los jóvenes desarrollan sus transiciones a la vida adulta tiene sobre sus experiencias vitales y sobre las es-

trategias que adoptan para hacer frente a la incertidumbre y fragmentación derivadas de las políticas neoliberales. Todos estos procesos tienen un carácter socioestructural que les hace comunes a la gran mayoría de las sociedades europeas. Sin embargo, las circunstancias específicas de los distintos contextos nacionales y la diferente gravedad de la crisis introducen algunas especificidades a tener en cuenta. En concreto, mi argumentación encuentra su referencia más inmediata en aquellos países del Sur de Europa como España o Portugal[3], por poner sólo dos ejemplos, donde las elevadas cifras de paro juvenil y la creciente vulnerabilidad del colectivo joven acentúan su sentimiento de marginación de la vida sociopolítica[4] y donde los efectos negativos de lo que hemos denominado la promesa incumplida de la integración se hacen mucho mas visibles.

Para alcanzar estos objetivos, el presente artículo se organiza en cuatro grandes apartados. En el primero de ellos abordaré el contexto de transformaciones estructurales producidas en las sociedades occidentales durante del tránsito desde el capitalismo de bienestar al capitalismo global que modifican el escenario macro en el que tiene lugar la integración sociopolítica de las nuevas generaciones. En el segundo apartado, se analiza la quiebra del modelo clásico de la integración juvenil y las consecuencias que se derivan de la ruptura de ese contrato intergeneracional en términos de incremento de la precariedad vital juvenil y deterioro de su posición social y política. Cómo viven y se imaginan los jóvenes su integración como miembros de la sociedad en este nuevo entorno de incertidumbre e incremento de riesgos será el propósito del tercer apartado. Y, por último, en el cuarto apartado plantearé las que, a mi juicio, son las principales estrategias a través de las cuales los jóvenes tratan de integrarse en la sociedad a la que quieren pertenecer al tiempo que dan sentido a sus procesos de transición a la vida adulta.

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[3] De acuerdo con los datos de Eurostat, España junto a Portugal, Grecia y en menor medida Irlanda se incluyen en un mismo grupo de países europeos a tenor de la compleja interrelación entre educación y participación en el mercado de trabajo de los jóvenes entre 15 y 34 años. Este grupo se caracterizaría por una elevada tasa de desempleo juvenil y un escaso solapamiento entre educación y mercado de trabajo (Eurostat, Statistics Explained, (epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Participation_of_young_people_in_education_and_the_labour_market).

[4] Este sentimiento de exclusión de la vida social y económica de su país a causa de la crisis es mayoritario entre los jóvenes europeos (58%), pero las diferencias entre unos países y otros son muy significativas: el 87% de los jóvenes griegos, el 84% de los españoles, el 79% de los portugueses y el 72% de los italianos tienen esta percepción frente a sólo un 34% de los alemanes o un 31% de los daneses (Eurobarómetro 395, marzo-abril 2014).

El contexto de la integración juvenil en el capitalismo global

En las últimas décadas del siglo XX se ha producido tal aceleración del cambio social que muchos de los fundamentos sociopolíticos sobre los que venían funcionando las democracias capitalistas se han puesto en cuestión. Uno de los más significativos en relación a los procesos de integración sociopolítica es la radical modificación de la dialéctica Estado-Mercado, tal y como la conocíamos hasta el momento. Las relaciones de reciprocidad y dependencia que unían a estos dos componentes constituía la base sobre las que se desplegaban las democracias capitalistas modernas. A través del juego combinado de la acción estatal y del funcionamiento de los mercados se construía un tipo de integración de la sociedad en el que los individuos y los grupos participaban de la vida colectiva, desde sus diferentes posiciones sociales.

Esta integración pivotaba sobre el mecanismo de la ciudadanía (Schnapper 2007; Benedicto y Morán 2007) y la atribución al Estado de la tarea de garantizar la igualdad básica que define a los miembros de la comunidad cívica. Esta tarea se realiza a través de dos vías: por una parte, el reconocimiento, defensa y puesta en práctica de los derechos asociados a la condición de ciudadano y, por otra parte, la promoción del bienestar colectivo que permita disfrutar a todos los miembros de la sociedad de unas condiciones materiales de vida dignas. En ambos casos, sin embargo, la labor estatal no se realiza a espaldas o en contra del mercado. Como de manera muy certera explicaba en su momento Marshall, el tipo de igualdad proporcionado por la ciudadanía tiene que ser compatible con las desigualdades provocadas por la acción de la economía de mercado. La ciudadanía se convierte de esta forma en el instrumento para gestionar el inevitable conflicto entre la tensión igualitaria de la democracia y la desigualdad inherente a la lógica del mercado capitalista, aportando la legitimidad necesaria al sistema sociopolítico imperante.

Esta dialéctica, que encuentra en el Estado del bienestar su plasmación más certera y eficaz, empieza, sin embargo, a modificarse a partir de los años '70-'80 del siglo pasado en el que se suceden una serie de procesos de cambio socioeconómico, político e ideológico que modifican no sólo las condiciones en las que se produce la integración de las nuevas generaciones sino también la correlación de fuerzas entre los diferentes actores que allí participan (Streeck 2011). Entre todos estos procesos, sin duda, el fenómeno de la globalización es el que mayor repercusión tiene en la dinámica sociopolítica de nuestras sociedades. Desde hace ya bastantes décadas asistimos a un creciente proceso de interdependencia e interconexión entre las distintas partes de nuestro mundo que pone en cuestión la determinación nacional que caracterizaba la vida social y política de las sociedades modernas. La progresiva desterritorialización de lo social y lo político provocada por la generalización de los flujos globales

(Sassen 2007) trae como consecuencia el cuestionamiento del Estado-nación como principio de delimitación de la sociedad y, por tanto, contenedor de los procesos sociales que allí tienen lugar. El resultado es la pérdida en buena medida de la posición hegemónica que hasta ahora se le atribuía. En el nuevo sistema global, el Estado sigue siendo un actor influyente, un nodo de la densa red del poder global (Castells 2009) pero su poder de decisión y su capacidad de gobernar se ha transformado profundamente.

En esta situación, los vínculos de los ciudadanos con el Estado que otorgaban significado a las lealtades y pertenencias cívicas necesitan replantearse en nuevos términos. La ciudadanía democrática, entendida en clave nacional, encuentra muchas dificultades para desarrollar su función de integración, debido a las limitaciones de la acción estatal. El Estado-nación, enfrentado a los requerimientos sistémicos de las instituciones transnacionales y del mercado global, no es capaz de garantizar la efectiva puesta en práctica de algunos de los derechos tradicionalmente asociados a la condición de ciudadano ni de desarrollar por sus propios medios políticas de bienestar social que aseguren unos niveles de vida dignos a todos los sectores sociales e incrementen los niveles de igualdad dentro de la sociedad.

Sin entrar en el largo debate sobre la orientación política-ideológica de estos cambios estructurales, parece evidente que hoy existe una forma dominante de globalización, la globalización neoliberal, basada en el desarrollo de un mercado global y de aquellas instituciones que le dan apoyo y cobertura (Jessop 2000). Esta hegemonía de las fuerzas del mercado, la constante búsqueda del beneficio privado como eje alrededor del que gira la dimensión socioeconómica de nuestras existencias y la erosión de la capacidad del Estado para promover la justicia social y el bienestar colectivo en los estrechos confines de su territorio nacional, constituyen las señas distintivas de una nueva dialéctica Estado-Mercado. La interdependencia de ambos componentes, característica del capitalismo del bienestar, se ve sustituida en el capitalismo global neoliberal por la subordinación de la acción estatal frente a los intereses y requerimientos de las fuerzas del mercado global, sobre todo las grandes corporaciones. Las políticas de liberalización comercial, desregulación y privatización que proliferan a partir de la década de los '90 constituyen el principal exponente de esta nueva dialéctica (Crouch 2003; Streeck 2011). Unas políticas que precisamente encuentran en el Estado a su principal impulsor y garante.

Los planteamientos y políticas neoliberales, hegemónicos en el sistema global, han modificado drásticamente los principios reguladores de la vida social y política de las democracias contemporáneas y, por supuesto, los marcos y condiciones en los que se lleva a cabo la integración de las nuevas generaciones (Hornstein 2008; Wyn 2013). Entre estos cambios cabría referirse a dos de especial trascendencia. El primero de ellos tiene que ver con la transfor-

mación de la naturaleza de los vínculos cívicos. La globalización neoliberal ha incentivado el individualismo en todos los ámbitos de la existencia personal y colectiva en detrimento de la lógica colectiva del modelo clásico de la ciudadanía en la que esos vínculos anteriormente encontraban sentido. Y lo ha hecho aprovechando en su favor el proceso de desinstitucionalización y fragmentación de la vida social propio de las sociedades postindustriales, en el que la pérdida de capacidad socializadora de las instituciones clásicas ha obligado al individuo a construir su propia biografía, responsabilizándose de los eventuales fracasos que puedan producirse (Beck 1998; Furlong y Cartmel 1997; Dubet 2002).

La centralidad del individuo, de sus necesidades y deseos, ha sido utilizada por las políticas neoliberales para impulsar la creación de identidades alejadas de la conciencia y la actividad que implica lo colectivo. Los tradicionales valores cívicos basados en el sentido de pertenencia grupal y en la implicación colectiva se ven sustituidos por la lógica de la biografía individual y la búsqueda incesante de la coherencia vital. En vez de fomentar las experiencias compartidas, las fuerzas ideológicas hegemónicas impulsan la acción individual, el esfuerzo y la responsabilidad, las preferencias personales (White 2007).

Junto a esta individualización de los valores cívicos también asistimos a la transformación de las bases y principios de la cohesión social. La promoción del bienestar colectivo y la búsqueda de una mayor igualdad relativa entre los ciudadanos a través de la acción estatal, características del Estado de bienestar keynesiano, es puesta en cuestión en esta nueva etapa. Hoy la lógica privatizadora y consumista del capitalismo global ocupa un lugar preferente en detrimento de la acción redistributiva de los estados. El resultado es la creación de nuevos modelos de bienestar donde los derechos universales de ciudadanía son sustituidos progresivamente por los criterios del mérito, el esfuerzo, la necesidad, y el objetivo de la igualdad por el de la protección frente a la exclusión. La mercantilización del bienestar se traduce en la creciente privatización de los servicios sociales anteriormente prestados por el Estado con las consecuencias conocidas (Crouch 2003).

A lo que en último término apuntan todas estas transformaciones es hacia una profunda redefinición de la noción de justicia y solidaridad sobre la que se construye la propia idea de sociedad, así como su articulación sociopolítica. De esta manera las democracias contemporáneas se ven enfrentadas al complicado reto de asegurar el bienestar colectivo y la integración social en un entorno de incremento de la desigualdad y de constante presión por parte del mercado y de las grandes empresas para defender sus intereses. El incremento en las últimas décadas de la desafección y desconfianza de los ciudadanos hacia los gobiernos e instituciones democráticas, una y otra vez puestos de manifiesto por la literatura especializada (Torcal y Montero 2006), suponen un

evidente riesgo para la legitimidad de unas democracias que tienen muchas dificultades para compatibilizar las necesidades de acumulación capitalista y la legitimación del sistema mediante la integración sociopolítica. La crisis iniciada en 2008 en vez de alterar el panorama descrito no ha hecho más que reforzarlo, mostrando la incapacidad de la política democrática para imponer una agenda específica de reconstrucción de la ciudadanía social frente a un mercado capitalista dominado por las grandes corporaciones financieras, que se confirman como los actores centrales de la economía global (Crouch 2011).

La ruptura del contrato intergeneracional y "la promesa incumplida"

Este contexto de transformaciones estructurales dirigido por la estrategia económica neoliberal ha quebrado muchas de las seguridades y certidumbres sobre las que se sostenía el sistema sociopolítico construido durante la etapa del capitalismo del bienestar. Este sistema sociopolítico estaba organizado alrededor de la figura del contrato social, una idea que afectaba a varias dimensiones de la vida colectiva y que delimitaba tanto el papel del Estado como el del resto de actores presentes, lo que dotaba de previsibilidad a sus acciones. Así como se habla habitualmente de un pacto capital-trabajo, también podemos referirnos a un contrato implícito entre las generaciones que busca construir un proceso de reproducción social armónico, en el que tanto las generaciones adultas como las generaciones jóvenes adquirirían la seguridad de poder alcanzar sus objetivos inmediatos.

Este contrato intergeneracional remite a un modelo específico de integración social de las nuevas generaciones, basado en dos componentes fundamentales. En primer lugar, la figura del ciudadano autónomo como referente ideal de la integración, esto es, el individuo que transita desde la situación de dependencia propia de la adolescencia y la juventud a la de la independencia laboral y personal propia de la vida adulta. Autonomía e independencia, sobre todo económica, prácticamente se convierten en sinónimos, a la vez que pre-requisitos para llegar a ser un sujeto político. El segundo componente es una concepción de la juventud como fase de preparación para la vida adulta, articulada alrededor de la relación educación-trabajo, que prepara a los jóvenes para realizar los ritos de paso a la vida adulta (Conde 2014).

La plasmación en la práctica de este modelo de integración presenta diferencias en función de variables como la clase social o el género de los protagonistas que orientan los recorridos transicionales en sentidos diversos (Casal *et al.* 2006), si bien en todos los casos los puntos de partida (la transición escuela-trabajo) y sobre todo la llegada (el acceso al status de adulto) están claramente definidos. La incorporación temprana al mercado de trabajo o el alar-

gamiento del periodo formativo a través de los estudios universitarios definen desde un punto de vista analítico las dos grandes estrategias a través de las cuales los jóvenes tratan de hacer realidad la promesa de la integración y del ascenso social (Benedicto 2011). Dos estrategias que, a pesar de sus aparentes diferencias, tienen un mismo referente: el ideal de ascenso social a través de la formación propio de las clases medias profesionales Un referente, además, respecto al que cobran sentido las estrategias del resto de clases sociales. Este ideal de las clases medias define una dinámica intergeneracional según la cual los jóvenes alargan su periodo formativo, retrasando su entrada al mercado de trabajo y aplazando la definición de su proyecto vital. A cambio los poderes públicos deberían crear las condiciones necesarias para que puedan vivir en mejores condiciones que su progenitores y no exigir durante esta etapa de espera a los jóvenes más responsabilidades que las imprescindibles para la vida en común, de ahí que no pasen de ser considerados más que meros aprendices de ciudadano (Benedicto y Morán 2003).

Esta relación de intercambio entre los adultos y los jóvenes que define el contrato intergeneracional del capitalismo del bienestar lógicamente ha experimentado cambios según han ido variando las circunstancias sociopolíticas de su realización, así como entre unos contextos nacionales y otros. Pero a pesar de estos cambios, sus características básicas se han mantenido vigentes durante décadas consolidando una concepción de la juventud como etapa de transición a un nuevo status, el de adulto, bien definido institucionalmente y del joven como persona poco preocupada por aquello que rebasa su esfera de intereses más inmediatos, entre otras razones porque sus responsabilidades al igual que las gratificaciones por el esfuerzo de formarse están diferidas al momento de la integración.

El contrato intergeneracional que había demostrado ser un instrumento eficaz de reproducción social empieza a ser puesto en cuestión a partir de la década de los '70-'80 junto al resto de componentes centrales del capitalismo del bienestar dominante hasta entonces[5]. La progresiva pérdida de centralidad de las políticas keynesianas en las que el Estado desempeñaba un papel activo como garante del buen funcionamiento del pacto social y su sustitución por políticas monetaristas en las que las fuerzas del mercado se convierten en el principio básico de estructuración de la vida social y política termina modificando radicalmente las posibilidades de supervivencia del contrato

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[5] En algunos países como España, tanto la construcción del contrato social como su posterior crisis siguen unas pautas temporales diferentes, debido a que habrá que esperar a la transición democrática y más en concreto a los años '80 para que empiece a construirse un Estado del Bienestar homologable al que se puso en pie en otros países como Reino Unido, Francia, Alemania o Italia tras la II Guerra Mundial (Rodríguez Cabrero 2004).

intergeneracional en el nuevo escenario socioeconómico que se dibuja en el último tramo del siglo XX. Las consecuencias de este profundo cambio en el modelo socioeconómico y en los planteamientos ideológicos que lo sustentan tienen un poderoso impacto sobre muchos aspectos de la vida de los jóvenes. Los discursos neoliberales enfatizan la idea del individuo racional que realiza continuamente decisiones libres en un proceso de auto-realización del que él es el principal responsable (Oliver y Heater 1994).

Las reformas socioeconómicas que se ponen en marcha en el mundo occidental en la década de los '80 y las posteriores transformaciones asociadas a la hegemonía del capitalismo global se traducen en profundos cambios en la naturaleza del empleo, el mercado de trabajo y las relaciones laborales que inciden directamente en los procesos de transición juvenil, especialmente en los recorridos escuela-trabajo y en los niveles de bienestar alcanzados (Helve y Evans 2013). El incremento de la precariedad laboral a través de la generalización de trabajos temporales y esquemas retributivos inestables, el fenómeno del desempleo juvenil, la enorme dificultad para vincular los empleos con proyectos laborales a largo plazo ocasionan graves problemas en las transiciones que siguen los jóvenes hacia la vida adulta. Y estos problemas se observan en múltiples aspectos de sus vidas, de tal manera que hoy puede decirse que el cambio en las condiciones de entrada en la vida activa constituye para los jóvenes actuales una verdadera experiencia generacional que estructura sus perspectivas vitales (Chauvel 2006).

Desde una perspectiva colectiva, estas nuevas realidades socioeconómicas implican una notable pérdida de poder social y político de las nuevas generaciones dentro del sistema de relaciones intergeneracionales. De acuerdo con los análisis de James Côté (2014), entre los años '70 y '90 se habría incrementado sensiblemente la desigualdad económica entre jóvenes y adultos, expresada de forma visible en la caída de los salarios juveniles, produciendo como consecuencia una redistribución del bienestar en base a la edad. La edad se convierte así en uno de los criterios fundamentales de estratificación socioeconómica, superando en ocasiones al criterio de género o de origen étnico que recibe mucha mayor atención por parte de las políticas públicas.

Aunque en ocasiones se tratan de explicar las dificultades de los jóvenes para alcanzar una seguridad financiera y unas condiciones de empleo favorable a partir de un discurso psicologizante, como si se tratara de una opción individual que sólo pretende postergar las responsabilidades adultas mientras se prioriza la búsqueda de la realización personal[6], no se puede olvidar la in-

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[6] Uno de los debates más interesantes de los últimos años ha girado precisamente en torno a la propuesta de J. Arnett de distinguir una nueva etapa dentro del recorrido vital de los individuos

fluencia determinante de las políticas económicas neoliberales en la construcción de las condiciones materiales en que los jóvenes viven hoy su juventud. Una juventud que ha dejado de ser concebida como una etapa de preparación para la vida adulta para adquirir nuevas significaciones vinculadas en su mayoría a la construcción por parte de los individuos de biografías que permitan dar sentido a una realidad cambiante y fragmentada, desprovista en buena medida de pautas de acción institucionalmente definidas. Biografización, responsabilidad individual y consumismo constituyen los rasgos fundamentales de una nueva condición juvenil en la que las certidumbres de antaño, ancladas en la reproducción de valores, normas y estatus se ven progresivamente sustituidas por las incertidumbres y los riesgos. La juventud en el nuevo capitalismo global es una etapa de experimentación y provisionalidad en la que la integración se revela como un proceso incierto e inestable.

La evidente quiebra del pacto que había sustentado la reproducción social en las sociedades democráticas desarrolladas y sobre todo sus consecuencias más evidentes no se harán del todo explícitas hasta el estallido y desarrollo de la gran crisis a partir de 2008, especialmente en los países donde está teniendo más intensidad. En efecto, a pesar de que en los años alrededor del cambio de siglo la situación de precariedad en la que se movían amplios sectores de la juventud ya era una realidad constatable – tal y como acabo de mostrar – y las contradicciones que dificultaban su integración eran cada vez mayores, la etapa de crecimiento y optimismo que vivía la economía mundial – acrecentada en algunos países por el boom inmobiliario y la expansión del crédito – enmascaró las consecuencias negativas derivadas de esta situación: creciente polarización de los sectores juveniles en función de su posición social de origen, deterioro de las condiciones de integración en el caso de jóvenes con formación no universitaria, progresivo incremento del número de jóvenes excluidos del mundo laboral y formativo (NEETs) y de las "misleading trajectories" (Egris 2001; López Blasco *et al.* 2003; Chavuel 2006; Bynner 2013; Côté 2014).

A pesar de las dificultades cada vez mayores, el ideal de éxito diferido y ascenso social de las clases media parecía aún vigente y orientaba el comportamiento de las distintas clases sociales. Podía ser que se necesitara un mayor esfuerzo formativo, que la inserción laboral fuera mucho más compleja y discontinua, que los riesgos a sortear en unos procesos de transición cada vez más largos también fueran más elevados, pero las nuevas generaciones procedentes de las clases de servicio y de las clases intermedias seguían confiando

denominada "emerging adulthood", durante la cual los individuos maduran psicológicamente antes de alcanzar la vida adulta. En esta etapa predominarían los factores psicológicos individuales frente a los determinantes estructurales Para seguir este debate consultar entre otros Arnett (2004), Bynner (2005), Molgat (2007), Côté y Bynner (2008).

en que su integración sociopolítica les iba a reportar una situación superior a la que habían disfrutado sus padres. La gran crisis va a alterar definitivamente todos estos esquemas heredados de la etapa anterior.

El brusco deterioro de las condiciones económicas de los países europeos, especialmente del Sur de Europa, y las políticas impulsadas por los gobiernos para tratar de superar la situación de recesión han tenido una especial incidencia en las vidas de los jóvenes. Las elevadísimas tasas de desempleo juvenil son la mejor demostración de estas consecuencias negativas: en países como España o Grecia el porcentaje de jóvenes entre 15 y 24 años que son activos pero no encuentran trabajo viene superando desde 2012 el 50%. Pero lo más significativo es que las repercusiones también han llegado a los sectores juveniles que habían apostado por la estrategia formativa, poniendo de manifiesto que la inversión en capital humano a través de la educación superior ya no es suficiente para asegurar la integración exitosa. En unos casos, los universitarios experimentan directamente las barreras que impiden el acceso al mercado de trabajo, como se demuestra en el hecho de que en 2010, según los datos de Eurostat, el 21% de los jóvenes griegos con estudios superiores no tenían trabajo, algo que también le ocurría al 18% de los italianos y de los españoles (Moreno 2012: 47)[7]. En otros casos, se tienen que enfrentar al problema del subempleo y la sobrecualificación, provocado por la retracción de la oferta de trabajo y por los desajustes entre las competencias adquiridas en el periodo formativo y las exigencias de un mercado cada vez más cambiante y fragmentado (McDonald 2011). La promesa de éxito diferido que había funcionado como eje organizador del proceso de integración sociopolítica de las nuevas generaciones se torna en una especie de "promesa incumplida" que genera frustración, desconcierto e incertidumbre entre la gran mayoría de los jóvenes.

Esta experiencia de "promesa incumplida" desde la que se afronta el proceso de integración constituye una verdadera experiencia generacional que estructura y dota de una cierta homogeneidad las perspectivas vitales de los jóvenes actuales. Sea cual sea su situación socioeconómica, la sensación generalizada entre muchos de ellos de que no van a poder mejorar la posición social de sus padres – e incluso que van a empeorarla – refleja el desconcierto ante una situación en la que las estrategias habituales de integración, como la educación, no sólo no ofrecen los resultados esperados sino que tampoco proporcionan un horizonte de seguridad vital.

[7] Las diferencias entre unos países uy otros es muy significativa, así por ejemplo en Alemania este porcentaje baja hasta el 4,1% y la media de la UE-15 era del 9%. Para los jóvenes entre 30 y 34 años, los porcentajes de los países meridionales pasan al 12,5% en el caso de Grecia, el 11,5% en el de España y el 9,1% en el de Italia, mientras la media europea pasa al 6% y el porcentaje de Alemania baja al 3,1% (Moreno 2012: 47).

Los significados de la integración: experiencias y expectativas de futuro

La profundidad de todos estos cambios no es posible calibrarla en toda su extensión haciendo referencia exclusivamente a la variación de las condiciones estructurales e institucionales. Cuando se estudian los procesos de integración desde las propias experiencias, reales y ficticias, de los jóvenes se descubre un panorama aún más complejo. Se entremezclan los valores tradicionales en los que les han socializado sus mayores (la importancia del esfuerzo, la centralidad del trabajo, el modelo meritocrático, la identificación entre democracia y bienestar, etc.) con una conciencia cada vez más acusada de la necesidad de encontrar nuevas vías, acordes con la situación en la que viven, que hagan posible la integración en la sociedad adulta en unas condiciones aceptables para sus expectativas. En una reciente investigación llevada a cabo con jóvenes universitarios españoles de clase media dirigida a estudiar los procesos de integración cívica de las nuevas generaciones desde sus propios contextos de experiencia[8]. se comprobó cómo lo jóvenes responden al desconcierto e incertidumbre que les provocan las profundas transformaciones – económicas, sociales, culturales y políticas – existentes con flexibilidad y pragmatismo (Benedicto *et al.* 2013) En unos casos, tratan de adecuar sus expectativas a los cambios que perciben, en otros tratan de enfrentarse a los mismos, pero en general construyen sus biografías en el juego combinado de oportunidades personales y limites estructurales (Furlong 2009), tratando de poner en pie estrategias de supervivencia adecuadas a la situación.

Los recursos personales, familiares y sociales con que cuentan los jóvenes les ayudan –de distinta manera según el contexto del que se trate (Côté 2013) – a gestionar sus transiciones, a tomar decisiones, a diseñar sus caminos hacia la integración. Más allá de la inevitable diversidad de los sectores juveniles, la mayoría de las narraciones biográficas presenta una serie de coincidencias que apuntan hacia una cierta especificidad generacional. La más destacable es sin duda que todo lo relacionado con el mundo del trabajo aparece una y otra vez en el centro de los relatos juveniles sobre sus proyectos biográficos. A pesar de que el acceso al mercado de trabajo se ha complicado sobremanera y que la precariedad laboral se ha convertido en la norma predominante, aún más en esta etapa de crisis, la perspectiva de conseguir un empleo, las capacidades que pueden permitir acceder al mismo o el desarrollo – real o ficticio

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[8] Los resultados empíricos de la investigación se basan en el análisis de 30 entrevistas en profundidad a jóvenes universitarios de clase media entre 24 y 30 años con distinta situación laboral y 40 narraciones biográficas redactadas en forma de cartas ficticias por jóvenes universitarios entre 20 y 27 años.

– de una experiencia laboral que sea gratificante para el individuo y que cumpla con las expectativas constituyen un elemento de referencia imprescindible cuando se piensa en la integración. Aunque hoy la idea de trabajo ya no posee los mismos significados que tenía para generaciones precedentes y los jóvenes son conscientes de que la inserción laboral no asegura ni la independencia económica ni una transición armoniosa, el mundo del trabajo continua siendo considerado el principal agente de integración social y un componente clave dentro del recorrido vital. Alrededor del tema del empleo surgen una gran cantidad de significaciones conexas que se vinculan con múltiples experiencias vitales.

La centralidad del trabajo en las narraciones biográficas juveniles pone de manifiesto el contexto de contradicciones en el que se mueven. Por una parte, en un momento de profundas transformaciones socioeconómicas, la capacidad del sujeto para ir construyendo algún tipo de biografía laboral, aunque sea inconexa y caótica, aparece como la herramienta más eficaz para poder integrarse en la sociedad. Pero por otra, este empeño en seguir centrando la integración en el ámbito laboral pone de manifiesto la pérdida de poder social de las nuevas generaciones. Todos los esfuerzos que realizan por desarrollar su empleabilidad o por acceder al mercado de trabajo aún en posiciones precarias y temporales, no aseguran la integración y su éxito depende en último término de fuerzas y procesos macroeconómicos que escapan de sus posibilidades de acción. El resultado es que el sujeto se termina responsabilizando de una situación que cada vez escapa más a su control, con las consecuencias ya conocidas de frustración, desconcierto e inseguridad vital.

La constante referencia que hacen los jóvenes a la importancia de tomar decisiones que orienten su recorrido vital no sólo en el terreno laboral sino también en otros terrenos decisivos como el de la emancipación familiar, los nuevos tipos de relaciones afectivas y personales o los lazos con sus comunidades de pertenencia constituye otra de las experiencias generacionales que permiten comprender mejor que significa hoy la integración para los jóvenes (Benedicto *et al.* 2013). Frente a los modelos más o menos lineales, predominantes en épocas anteriores, en los que las instituciones establecían las pautas de acción a seguir, en estos momentos las biografías juveniles se construyen a retazos, sobre la base de decisiones individuales que buscan dotar de sentido al recorrido que se sigue. Pero tomar decisiones – una idea que tiene mucha fuerza en sus discursos – no supone en la mayoría de los casos libertad de elección, ni tampoco voluntariedad, sino necesidad de enfrentarse a dilemas entre opciones cuya naturaleza e implicaciones muchas veces no son evidentes, responsabilizándose sin embargo del resultado.

Integrarse en la sociedad adulta aparece a los ojos de los jóvenes como una aventura individual, carente de pautas evidentes a seguir y sobre todo cuyos

resultados no aparecen claros. Es lógico, por tanto, que les resulte bastante difícil imaginarse el futuro que les espera (Benedicto *et al.* 2013). Una vez que la promesa futura de movilidad ascendente ha dejado de funcionar como ideal de integración, que el capital humano acumulado durante la etapa formativa se devalúa y que la precariedad se ha convertido en una experiencia vital decisiva, se instala el desconcierto y la incertidumbre en torno al futuro. Un futuro – que al igual que el pasado – tiende a ser reemplazado por el presente inmediato que aparece como la "única dimensión temporal disponible para definir opciones" (Leccardi 2011: 111).

Pero esta dificultad para representarse el futuro que les espera no implica necesariamente resignación ante las posibles consecuencias negativas derivadas de una situación incierta. Frente al futuro prefijado de las transiciones clásicas, la incertidumbre actual también impulsa a algunos jóvenes a tratar de aprovecharla en su favor, a reconocerla como una oportunidad de ir construyendo sus biografías conforme se suceden los acontecimientos, sin que tenga que existir previamente un plan o proyecto previo. La metáfora del movimiento en oposición a la idea de lo estático resume a la perfección la actitud que consideran imprescindible para integrarse en el mundo que les ha tocado vivir.

Las estrategias de integración de los jóvenes: una pluralidad de espacios de actuación

A lo largo de este texto hemos podido ir viendo cómo la nueva situación en la que los jóvenes tienen que desarrollar sus procesos de transición a la vida adulta crea muchas dificultades e inseguridades. A pesar de estos problemas que para algunos jóvenes, los más desventajados, suponen obstáculos casi insalvables que les acercan a la exclusión, la gran mayoría, gracias al apoyo de la familia y a sus propios recursos, resistirán los efectos más perversos de la actual recesión económica y, en general, de la globalización neoliberal predominante (Bynner 2013). Pero, como es lógico dada la heterogeneidad del colectivo juvenil, no van a responder de la misma manera, ni con las mismas herramientas ni las mismas pautas de acción, aunque en todos los casos lo que si se observa es un propósito de negociación con la realidad social que les permita dar sentido a la incertidumbre que pesa sobre su futuro.

La noción de "unsettled times" utilizada por A. Swidler (1986 y 2003) puede ser muy útil para entender el reto al que tienen que hacer frente los jóvenes, el tránsito desde los hábitos conocidos a las nuevas ideas. Swidler al analizar la relación entre cultura y acción distingue dos coyunturas contrapuestas: aquellos momentos donde predomina la estabilidad ("settled times")

en los que la gente sabe cómo actuar gracias a la tradición y el sentido común y, en el extremo opuesto, los momentos de cambio e incertidumbre sociocultural ("unsettled times") en los que los actores se ven forzados a reorganizar los marcos culturales por medio de los cuales atribuyen significados a la realidad que les rodea. En este caso no existen hábitos que seguir sino que se trata de aprender nuevas formas de ser y actuar. La gente tiene que utilizar las herramientas culturales a su disposición para construir nuevas estrategias de acción cuya influencia en último término estará limitada/enmarcada por las oportunidades estructurales.

Este segundo escenario es sin duda en el que se encuentran los jóvenes actuales. Los marcos culturales tradicionales ya no sirven como guía de acción ante la profunda transformación del proyecto de integración. Por el contrario, para poder entender el nuevo panorama que surge tras la quiebra de las promesas hechas por las generaciones adultas y resolver las contradicciones entre lo esperado y lo percibido, los jóvenes necesitan redefinir sus estrategias de acción, utilizando para ello algunas de las herramientas tradicionales, desechando otras que ya no sirven y sobre todo recurriendo a otras nuevas.

Basándome en los resultados de la investigación antes mencionada (Benedicto *et al.* 2013) y de una manera aún provisional propongo la existencia de cuatro grandes estrategias de supervivencia que utilizan los jóvenes para hacer frente a la incertidumbre que les rodea. La primera de estas estrategias es la de *la competición individual*. En este caso, los jóvenes se enfrentan a la incertidumbre de sus procesos de integración aprovechando las potencialidades que se derivan de los principios que rigen la globalización neoliberal y el nuevo mundo tecnológico. El cosmopolitismo, la movilidad social y cultural, la flexibilidad y adaptabilidad a las demandas del mercado, el consumo transnacionalizado o un nivel extremo de conectividad tecnológica son las características predominantes entre unos jóvenes que están en una permanente competición con sus coetáneos por conseguir el éxito. "La única condición para pertenecer a este grupo es que cualquier actividad que trates de hacer o proyecto que empieces debes hacerlo SOLO, por tus propios medios. La individualidad es la única estrategia para competir en este juego…" (Pérez Islas 2008: 311). Las instituciones que sustentan la economía global – desde las grandes universidades a las multinacionales o las organizaciones internacionales – alientan esta carrera donde las reglas se supeditan a la competición y a la consecución de los resultados. Al fin y al cabo lo único que interesa es ganar y a ello se subordinan todos los aspectos de la vida, también los más personales con los costes relacionales que ello puede suponer (por ejemplo, en el caso de constitución de las parejas). El joven competidor es el gran protagonista, el responsable del éxito en la tarea de integrarse en la vida adulta pero también del fracaso cuando éste se produce.

La segunda estrategia es la de la *adaptación individual*. Este camino sin duda es el más transitado en la juventud actual. Ante los problemas y obstáculos que continuamente dificultan la integración en la sociedad adulta, ya no valen las expectativas transmitidas por los padres o las instancias tradicionales de socialización. Es preciso acomodarse a la realidad existente, tratando de negociar soluciones que se acerquen lo más posible a lo esperado o, por lo menos, no impliquen una renuncia completa a las aspiraciones iniciales. Este trabajo de adaptación adopta la forma de un proceso de aproximaciones sucesivas, mediante continuos ensayos y errores en sus decisiones biográficas sobre los más distintos aspectos de sus vidas (trabajo, educación, emancipación familiar, formas de relación afectiva, etc.). Unas decisiones que van modificando sus expectativas hasta que sean acordes a las posibilidades del entorno (Casal *et al.* 2006). Esta estrategia adaptativa también tiene un carácter individual, tal y como ocurría en el caso anterior, pero en este caso no es una situación buscada por el joven para ganar una competición por el éxito. Por el contrario es la consecuencia de un marco ideológico e institucional que hace depender la integración de una serie de capacidades y recursos psicológicos del joven y que apenas ofrece estructuras de apoyo para aquellos que tienen que hacer frente a las consecuencias de la precarización cada vez más intensa. Precisamente la precariedad laboral y vital constituye la principal amenaza en esta estrategia de adaptación ya que puede terminar provocando trayectorias erráticas, sin dirección ni sentido, que abocan a una situación permanente de incertidumbre e inestabilidad.

La tercera estrategia de integración juvenil que se puede distinguir es la de *la resistencia*. Contrariamente a las dos anteriores, esta estrategia supone una alternativa a los valores predominantes en la globalización neoliberal y, en cierta forma, un intento de recuperación de la importancia de las identidades, del sentimiento de pertenencia. La idea central de esta pauta de acción es que solamente en compañía de otros se puede sobrevivir, sean amigos, vecinos, compañeros de ideales o integrantes de comunidades, reales o virtuales. De ahí que frente a las soluciones individuales se prioricen las de carácter grupal. Las formas de resistencia se abren paso de forma más bien anónima en ámbitos muy distintos, desde el laboral al de las formas de convivencia. Pero donde empiezan a tener más significatividad es en aquellos casos en que grupos de jóvenes tratan de enfrentarse al individualismo y la inestabilidad predominantes en el entorno sociocultural mediante la búsqueda de nuevos "paraísos comunales" (Castells 2009), esto es comunidades construidas al margen de las formas predominantes de convivencia donde se pretende recuperar los viejos valores de la solidaridad y la vida en común (el neorruralismo juvenil o algunos fenómenos okupas son ejemplos a tener en cuenta)

La última de las estrategias a considerar es la de *la innovación alternativa*. En este caso, los jóvenes mantienen una posición ambivalente respecto a la

sociedad global en la que viven, tratando de aprovechar las enormes posibilidades que abre pero con una orientación alternativa a la predominante en el capitalismo neoliberal. Los principios del cosmopolitismo, la flexibilidad, la movilidad o la conectividad son rasgos fundamentales en las pautas de acción que definen la estrategia de la innovación, pero no para ser los primeros en la competición por el éxito sino para construir, a través de la experimentación, formas de existencia alternativas que se rebelan contra las imposiciones de una cultura individualista y competitiva. Estas estrategias de innovación surgen sobre todo entre los sectores sociales más dinámicos, social y culturalmente, al disponer de mayores recursos para ensayar nuevas trayectorias vitales. Pero también encontramos innovación desde los márgenes, como ocurre con algunas culturas juveniles que con grandes dosis de creatividad y emancipación dibujan caminos alternativos de integración (Machado Païs 2008).

Las cuatro estrategias descritas, que al plasmarse en la práctica muchas veces se solapan, cabe entenderlas como diferentes respuestas que los jóvenes ponen en marcha para enfrentarse a situaciones que sienten fuera de su control. Son estrategias que utilizan los jóvenes para "pertenecer" (Wyn 2013), esto es, para determinar quiénes son y dónde pertenecen. Pero no son caminos alternativos que siguen de manera excluyente unos u otros jóvenes en función de sus desiguales recursos o de decisiones individuales. Por el contrario, estas estrategias hay que interpretarlas como escenarios de actuación que los jóvenes manejan, combinan y hacen suyos en función de sus entornos vitales, sus marcos de referencias o sus aspiraciones. A partir de su "bounded agency" (Evans 2007) los jóvenes se convierten en actores que tratan de desarrollar distintas soluciones con las que hacer frente a la incertidumbre, inestabilidad y fragmentación provocadas por las transformaciones estructurales de la sociedad global, hoy agudizadas en este entorno de crisis y recesión.

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Youth and the United Europe

Daniela Preda

The Second World War marked a turning point in European history, leading to a shift from the European to the world system of states and decreeing the historical failure of the absolute national state. The idea of European unification, which in the interwar period still appeared as unrealistic, became concretely achievable in the immediate postwar period, beginning to take shape with the theoretical reflections of many Europeans, who organized associations to promote the idea of a united Europe. The article intends to analyze the history of the birth and of the ideas of the first Europeanist youth organizations in this postwar context.

Youth, Peace, Europe

The Second World War marked a turning point in European history, leading to a shift from the European to the world system of states and decreeing the historical failure of the absolute national state.

The idea of European unification, which in the interwar period still appeared as unrealistic, became concretely achievable in the immediate postwar period, beginning to take shape with the theoretical reflections of many Europeans, who, facing with the disaster of war, wondered about the future, setting forth hypotheses and new proposals that were very similar in nature.

The war and the immediate postwar era witnessed the widespread dissemination of unitary ideals throughout the continent. More specifically, the ideas of peace, solidarity and the cooperation among European peoples were destined to develop in the crucible of the Resistance, with the devastations war and totalitarian degeneration had brought upon the national state still a recent memory.

It was the war and the yearnings for peace that gave many young people a thirst for politics, the desire to get involved in changing society, and the exalted emotions of those who feel they are protagonists in a changing history.

Faced with the catastrophe that brought sudden acceleration to changes in the international context, political thought freed itself of doctrines that

could not keep pace with history, abandoning false solutions and utopias and reflecting on the paths for "constructing" peace and the approach for dealing with the issues of international anarchy, the conception itself of statehood and its relation with "Nation" from a new perspective.

Consideration was given as to how to preserve individual and collective liberty, how to prevent new conflicts and construct a peaceful world, how to avoid repeating past errors. It was the crisis of the national state that led to the cultivation of many Europeanists and European federalists, who were joined together by the identification of a new supranational institutional model capable of overcoming boundaries and barriers in order to lay the basis for a new European order, which could potentially be applied globally as well.

All countries witnessed the endemic flowering of movements, writings, initiatives, journals and true constitutional projects whose goal was the creation of the United States of Europe.

These developments represented a constellation, Europeanist and federalist, vast and disperse, which still today is difficult for the historian to analyze in its totality, despite the fact that, in the last twenty years, historiography – in particular, German (Lipgens 1968, 1977 and 1986-1991), Belgian and Italian (Pistone 1992 and 1996; Landuyt and Preda 2000) historiography – has undertaken a systematic study of these topics, beginning with research on the movements for European unity and its main protagonists.

Nevertheless, while we can state that the pioneering phase of these studies has ended, it is not yet possible to paint a complete picture of the panorama of movements that have worked for European unification, both because in some countries historiography has only recently begun, continuing to favor research on government and party activities, and because the number of movements is so large and their Europeanist strategies so heterogeneous that any systemic recognition of them is an arduous task. Moreover, while some movements have carried on continuously during the postwar period, others have had a brief and often ephemeral existence. Finally, we should add the difficulty in finding documentation, in a context where the pioneering activities of the main groups was not equaled by a need to preserve the historical records.

More specifically, the vast and uneven world of Europeanist youth associations remains obscure in many respects[1], both because historiography has until now favored the more consolidated activities of "adult" groups and because of the difficulty in finding documentation on youth activities. An Europeanist or federalist youth group will arise where there are people convinced of its importance and willing to sacrifice part of their free time to maintain con-

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[1] Among the first essays to appear on this topic, see Preda (1996) and Levi (2000).

tacts, organize meetings and conferences, and deal with basic administrative tasks. When these individuals are actively involved, the group often becomes a center of pro-active initiatives, even at times becoming a cultural reference and place for political and theoretical debate. However, once this youth phase is over there is a shortage of time, so that slowly the reigns are left to others, or the group even dies out, slowly and imperceptibly, due to negligence. The lack of active participation in the country's political and party life and the resulting lack of influence in political matters heighten organizational weakness and the continual flux in membership and discontinuity regarding commitment, a discontinuity which in turn lies behind the difficulty in finding sources of first-hand information. To this must be added, on the one hand, the innate predisposition of young people for action, which tends to relegate to second place the more monotonous administrative and archiving tasks, and on the other the uncertainty in terms of the location and shifting of group headquarters, which surely does not facilitate the preservation of documents.

Therefore, given the absence of widespread historiographical research, those writing about youth and Europe immediately after the war cannot provide a thorough account. Nevertheless, I shall try to present an initial overview of the situation.

The first continental Europeanist youth organizations

As at any important moment when plans and ideals are ready to be transformed into concrete action, the activities of young people as part of the widespread Europeanist fervor that hit Europe immediately after the Second World War was crucial. After the war and the nationalistic hangover at the start of the 20th century, many emerged with a desire to take part in improving society, embracing at the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s organized Europeanism and European federalism, choosing this as their ideal homeland. Often this was a compelling, unconditioned choice, the kind that deeply changes a person's life, while at times representing a fleeting choice that vanished as quickly as it arose.

There thus arose all over the continent numerous groups, leagues and Europeanist youth associations under the most varied supervision. One needs only mention the Bureau Européen de la Jeunesse et de l'Enfance (BEJE), the Jeunes des Nouvelles Équipes Internationales, the Jeunes du Mouvement Fédéraliste pour les États-Unis d'Europe, and the Jeunesse Ouvrière Catholique (JOC). In the Saar alone there was a Coordinating Committee that included 21 youth movements, most of which belonging to the European Movement or the Mouvement Universel pour une Confédération Mondiale. Involvement

in these groups took many forms, perhaps the most significant of which the participation at meetings of youth from various countries organized precisely with the aim of overcoming the barrier of "diversity": the participation by Helmut Kohl at a meeting at the Franco-German border at Kehl has become emblematic in this regard.

However, it was only beginning in 1948, with the concrete initiation, after the launching of the Marshall Plan, of the process of European unification, when Europeanist and federalist groups began to form a liaison among the various groups already in existence in Europe, based on common ideals regarding the objectives and strategies for unification. The attention paid to young people is also testified to by the cultural resolution approved by The Hague Congress in May 1948, which called for the creation of a European Institute for Youth.

That same year the Union Fédéraliste Interuniversitaire (UFI) was created to provide continuity regarding information on federalist matters disseminated within universities. Initially based mainly in France, the Union would spread to the other major countries in Europe. Its president was Michel Mouskhély, with Georges Rencki as secretary general. Beginning with the Freiburg Congress (March 31-April 5, 1950), the UFI would become affiliated with the Union Européenne des Fédéralistes (UEF).

Also in that year the situation of young people became the focus of attention of the International Coordinating Committee, out of which arose the European Movement (EM), which organized a large youth rally. In 1949 the American Committee on United Europe (ACUE) began discussions with the leaders of the ME, Paul-Henri Spaak and Joseph Retinger in particular, assuring their support for initiatives aimed at sensitizing young people to the European ideal. These preliminary discussions led to ME contact with the most representative youth organizations: the international youth movements tied to the political parties (demochristian, liberal and socialist) and the World Assembly of Youth (WAY), which until then had not dealt much with the deeply innovative process represented by the start of European integration. These contacts resulted in the organization in 1951 of a youth association linked to the ME: the Campagne Européenne de la Jeunesse. The secretary general was Jean-Charles Moreau, who, in July-August, organized at the Europahaus in Marienberg, Germany, several "rencontres européennes de la jeunesse" (Palayret 1996: 338)[2] over five successive ten-day periods, gathering together thousands of youth, French and German in particular. The Campaign was initially slated to last one year, but then a complex structure was created that called for

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[2] See also Lipgens (1987).

the opening of national secretariats in the 15 member countries of the European Council, under the coordination of an international secretariat in Paris.

Alongside widespread educational initiatives, in 1952 the CEJ also took on a more political direction regarding the battle for the European union of The Six. Two separate sectors were formed: an "educational campaign" service, which would deal with the actions of the 15 member countries, and a political bureau. The main activities were collaborating with the Comité d'Action pour la Communauté Supranationale Européenne to initiate that part of the program reserved for youth in the six ECSC nations; a pilot program in a single country (in France in 1954 regarding the ratification of the CED and the CPE, with more than 30 meetings organized in February-March alone) or region; demonstrations during major events[3]; the setting up of internships and camps for the selection and political training of future cadres; and study sessions for specialized groups (students, teachers, the youth press).

Between 1954 and 1955 a particularly topical effort was made to develop an "esprit civique Européen". Of significant importance in this regard was the production and distribution of thousands of copies of journals such as the "Jeune Europe", "Jugend Europas" and "Giovane Europa".

Several important figures played a role in the CEJ from 1951 to 1959, such as Philippe Deshormes, who was first assistant secretary general and then, after Moreau's resignation, general secretary, and Luciano Sibille, vice-president and supporter of a *Comité d'animation* that served as an important fulcrum of Europeanist activities in the youth sector.

The Jeunesses Fédéralistes Européennes

At the end of the 1940s even the UEF had taken specific steps to spur on the creation of a unified youth movement that adhered to the political direction of the organization. In February 1948 the movements associated with the UEF were invited to each designate a head of the youth area; in June the young Germans of the Europa Union organized an international convention of federalist youth at Cochem Castle[4] along the Moselle, under the coordination of Magda Nielsen. It was decided at that time to create a new body, the Jeunesse

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[3] Among the most important the youth march at the meeting of the ministers of the Six at Baden Baden in August 1953 and the participation at the congress of the European Movement at The Hague in 1953.

[4] See the *Risoluzione del convegno della Gioventù a Cochem sulla Mosella* and Malan G., *Si sta costituendo la Jeunesse européenne*, liason body of UEF youth activities, in «Bollettino d'informazioni del Comitato direttivo nazionale del MFE», 23 August 1948, special issue.

Européenne-Juventus of France, which was to immediately set up a "Bulletin" of the association, at least three issues of which would be published in 1948.

In addition to the German and French movements there arose a Jeunesses Fédéralistes in Luxembourg, while in Switzerland negotiations were under way for a merger of the Mouvement Fédéraliste Universitarie, presided over by Georges Rencki, and the UFI; at the same time the Comité Provisoire d'Action, elected in Berne on September 18, 1948, pushed for the creation of a Mouvement Suisse de Jeunesse en faveur de la Fédération Européenne. A Belgian federalist youth organization was organized by Jean Buchmann and Jacques Toint; in Austria, Peter von Konrad and Elisabeth Habermann began publishing a bulletin on youth and federation issues; in Denmark, Een Verden promoted the idea of European integration in a unified world; in Italy, where the first federalist youth groups had already been informally created at the end of 1946[5], the first national federalist youth organization was formed in September 1948, taking the name Gruppi Giovanili.

There often were strong globalist tones to this *Europeanism* owing to the natural propensity of young federalists to look beyond national boundaries, which accounts for the interest in the annual international congress of the Jeunesse Fédéraliste organization at Hastings (August 28-September 4, 1948)[6] and in the international congress of the Mouvement Universel pour une Confédération at Luxembourg (September 5-12, 1948).

Despite all this ferment, after only a few months the Jeunesse Européenne-Juventus had nearly disappeared into thin air, due both to the difficulty of bringing together national groups, often sectorial in nature, composed of individuals belonging to politically diverse parties and ideologies, and characterized by weak structures and a lack of resolve regarding the actions to undertake, and to organizational and administrative problems, not least of all financial in nature.

A year later the Central Committee of the UEF decided nonetheless to try again, entrusting to Jean Buchmann (who, in 1975, would become one of the closest associates of Leo Tindemans at the time of the drafting of the famous report) the task of preparing the ground for unification, at a moment when the European unification process had begun and it appeared federalists might play a leading role. The hope of obtaining the election of a European constituent assembly became day by day less remote, opening up distinct prospects for the Campaign for a Federal Pact of Union promoted by

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[5] There is evidence in those years of the participation, though not yet formalized, of a Milanese youth group and a student committee from Turin, two of whose most important members were Anna Anfossi and Pina Casassa.

[6] Cfr. Jeunesse européenne-Juventus, «Bulletin», n. 3, August-September 1948.

the UEF in connection with the Council of Europe's consultative assembly initiative. There were thus good reasons to believe in the success in the youth area; that is, in an area that, as has already been underscored, favored concrete actions in the struggle for a European federation above and beyond any political, social and cultural division.

The inaugural meeting of the JEF – Département Jeune of the UEF was held in Paris on February 3, 1950, attended by 15 youth from all over Europe, including some in exile from Eastern Europe, representing the Bulgarian, Serbian, Hungarian and Rumanian federalist movements. Initially there were seventeen movements that decided to join the group: from Germany, the Bund Europäischer Jugend, Internationaler Studentenbund Studentenbewegung fur übernationale Föderation (ISSF) and the Junge gemeinschaft der liga fur weltregierung, the Austrian Jeunes de l'Europa Union, the Belgian Jeunes du Mouvement fédéraliste européen, the Danish Jeunes de Een Verden, the French Jeunes de La Fédération, the Dutch Jeunes du B.E.F., the British Jeunes de Federal Union, the youth groups from the Movimento Federalista Europeo in Italy, the Jeunesses Fédéralistes from Luxembourg, the Swiss Jeunes de l'Europa Union, the exiled youth groups from the Bulgarian and Hungarian federalist movement, the Groupement Roumain pour une Europe Unie, the Union Yougoslave des Fédéralistes (Mouvement Serbe), and the youth from the Basque federalist movement. Soon to be added to these were the youth from the Union des Fédéralistes Tchécoslovaques and the Union Polonaise des Fédéralistes. In August 1951, at the Kleine Lorelai, the Europe House in Marienberg, the Committee approved the entry of the youth from the Europäische Action in Austria, the Nederlandse Jongeren Federalisten, the Dutch Stichting Europaes Jongeren Contact, the youth section of the Lithuanian federalists, and the Jeunes Cercles Européens.

Wolfgang Schaedla Ruhland from Germany was elected President, René Dupriez from Belgium Vice-President, Roland Müsser from France Secretary-General, with Norman Hart from Britian, Daniel Damov from Bulgaria and Thomas Philippovic from Hungary rounding out the *Bureau*. The latter would later hold important positions in Europeanist circles, among which that of Secretary of the European Municipalities and Regions. Here, too, a "Bulletin d'Informations" of the new organization was immediately set up, whose main activities were the international preparation of federalist "cadres", the organization of summer camps for member movements throughout Europe, the launch of certain initiatives that would involve all members, such as spreading the referendum drafted by students in Losanne regarding federation issues, participation in exploring the topic of European unity, organized by the Bureau Européen de la Culture, and the spreading among youth of

initiatives undertaken at universities, for example, the action initiated in Paris by the young members of La Fédération.

The first JEF congress at Strasbourg in November 1950, at the same time the Consultative Assembly of the European Council was called to take a stance on whether or not to convene a European Constituent Assembly, marked the official creation of the Movement and the first true contact among the representatives of the various sections, with the election of Buchmann as president and Anna Anfossi from Italy as secretary-general. On the evening of November 24th, the last day of the Consultative Assembly, when it failed to propose action to create a European political authority, some 5,000 youth, mobilized from all over Europe by the Gioventù Federalista Europea, demonstrated for the first time at the Maison de l'Europe, launching leaflets in the air. In the following months the youth would deal with the JEF's internal organization. There would also emerge the initial problems and tensions both as regards the relationship with the UFI, on the one hand, and the Front des Jeunes Européens (which several months later would become the Mouvement Jeune Europe) on the other. The main difficulties of the JEF's actions were the lack of cohesion among the sections and the nearly total lack of ties with the European organization[7].

At the conference at La Lorelay on the Rhine in August 1951, which brought together 10,000 youth, the JEF was the only federalist organization with a large representation. In addition to a commitment to the European Federal Constituent Assembly, the conference also decided on the organization of a *Campagne d'Amitié internationale*[8] under the direction of Muesser. The campaign, conceived of at the Strasbourg Conference and approved by the CC of the JEF at La Lorelei on August 22, 1951, aimed at getting members of various youth organizations to adopt the topics of European federalism. Scout groups were particularly targeted; these groups had participated as observers at the Congress (Scouts France, Boy-scouts de Belgique, Eclaireurs Luxembourgeois, Eclaireurs de France, Scoutisme International, Ligue Française des Auberges de Jeunesse, Union Nationale des Étudiants de France). In addition to allowing youth from the organized movements to work together, the Campaign had an influence on the networks of cities, providing incentives for relations with the local authorities and initiating permanent ties among some of these (the first between the cities of Troyes and Tournai in November 1951), thereby creating a "de facto" Europe.

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[7] *Activité des JEF depuis novembre 1950. Perspectives d'avenir*, Rapport de M.lle Anna Anfossi, Sécrétaire générale des Jeunesses Européennes Fédéralistes, in the Historical Archives of Pavia University (ASUPV), «JEF. 2° congr. Aix-la-Chapelle», f. GM (Gianni Merlini).

[8] Cfr. *La Campagne d'Amitié internationale*, Rapport de Roland Muesser, Délégué général, in ASUPV, f. GM (Gianni Merlini).

Along with this educational activity of sensitizing youth to European issues there was political activity aimed at providing support for UEF initiatives. Of note in this area are the demonstration organized by the Gioventù Federalista Europea (GFE) in February 1951, during a meeting on the CED among De Gasperi, Schuman, Sforza and Pleven, at Santa Margherita Ligure (Preda 2007), where young federalists took to the streets to ask for a European Constituent Assembly, and the demonstrations in various German cities during ratification of the Schuman Plan by Germany. Also of significance were the traditional local meetings and international camps, which provided an opportunity for direct contact among young federalists. Among the most important of these were the gatherings in La Lorelei in the summer of '51, in Bardonecchia in December 1952, in Gmunden in August 1952, in Viareggio in the summer of '53, and in Trautensfeld. Also significant were the relief activities for the people in the Polesine area in the autumn of '51 and in the Netherlands in February '53. There were also "dramatic" demonstrations, such as the torchlight procession organized by the European youth organization at The Hague in October 1953 and, in particular, the border crossing infringements, the first at Wissembourg, in Alsace, along the Franco-German border, followed by the Franco-Italian border rally at Clavière on December 31, 1952, the conclusion of the international camp at Bardonecchia, and the contemporary Italian-French demonstration at Ponte San Luigi and the Italian-Austrian-German one at the Brenner Pass on April 25, 1954.

Nevertheless, the difficulties in creating a truly international organization remained. Elected president at the second JEF congress at Aquisgrana in 1952, at the end of his yearlong mandate, Hans-Wolfgang Kanngiesser was forced to admit that "la notion d'activité internationale des jeunes est tout à fait nouvelle"[9]. It was not possible even to create a common symbol, and uncertainty persisted surrounding the means for achieving and the meaning itself of international collaboration within the organization.

The collapse of the CED represented a turning point for the JEF as well, which, while deploring the failure of the European army, tried to take a strong position on the issue of isolation and the desire to remain in contact with all the democratic forces that were quick to applaud the Western European Union (WEO). By the spring of '55 the JEF leadership began to dissipate and the entire organization became immobilized due to internal divisions – as well as to the subsequent breakoff between the Action Européenne Féderaliste (AEF)

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[9] *Activité politique des JEF depuis le congrès d'Aix-la-Chapelle* (1952), Rapport du Président Hans-Wolfgang Kanngiesser, in ASUPV, f. GM (Gianni Merlini).

and the UEF (from 1959 on the supranational MFE) – in the UEF among, on the one hand, the German and Dutch movements and the French group of La Fédération, supporters of the government policy of "European re-launch", and on the other the Italian and in part French movements, convinced of the need to move to the opposition based on the "new course" policy set by Spinelli. With a full-blown identity crisis the JEF was immobile in the middle of the ford. The passive stance by the secretary-general was only in part mitigated by the action of the international regional centers, which were created at the Congress of Paris and were able to offer militants the occasion for international contacts and theoretical deepening. By the time of the sixth congress of the JEF at Moulhouse the scission among the youth organizations had become a reality.

Despite all this, youth activities continued to be quite energetic, with a number of federalist initiatives that owed their success to the enthusiasm and commitment of young activists. Worthy of note in this regard was the participation of youth linked to the supranational MFE in the activities of the Congress of the European People, which sought to transfer directly to the people the responsibility for working to convene a European constituent body through the popular election of assemblies made up of political and cultural figures representing the federal claims of European citizens. Initiated in 1957, the CEP went on to represent an exceptional training ground for the federalist generation at the end of the 1950s. It was this experience that allowed young people to be included in the adult organization, thereby creating the conditions under which a large part of the federalist leadership of the '70s and '80s would acquire their political maturity.

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La jeunesse française : paradoxes et polarisations

Vincenzo Cicchelli et Valérie Germain

This paper aims at portraying an overall picture of young people's condition in France. In an attempt to provide an overview of the social changes that are occurring in their lives, it endeavours to highlight the main features of contemporary youth. First, this paper draws on the perspective of the regimes of youth transitions in Europe (Walther 2006), in order to illustrate the specificity of the French case. It then takes a distinctive position in the analysis of the recent important shifts by exploring the paradoxes that shape the lived experiences of young French people, especially the dialectic between their autonomy and dependency. Finally, the increasing divergence of the paths to adulthood between educated and uneducated young people is explored, using the two relevant examples of the transition from school to work and the process of leaving parental home.

Introduction : un modèle de socialisation de la jeunesse

Au cours des trente dernières années, bien des éléments de la condition juvénile ont changé. La scolarisation massive et la généralisation du modèle lycéen et étudiant, la force de la culture juvénile dans la structuration des comportements, l'éloignement culturel entre les générations, l'essor d'une autonomie pédagogique au sein des familles, le fort souci de la réussite scolaire ont été maintes fois soulignés (Cicchelli et Galland 2008).

Ces changements ont affecté l'ensemble de la jeunesse européenne. En dépit de la diversité des formes de socialisation en Europe, un modèle transnational de la jeunesse s'est imposé : l'entrée dans la vie adulte est précédée aujourd'hui d'une phase de préparation assez longue durant laquelle les individus rassemblent par étapes les atouts nécessaires au succès de cette entrée (Galland 2011). Une jeunesse étendue ne saurait plus être considérée comme un temps entre l'enfance et la vie adulte. Elle devient (tout comme plus récemment l'adolescence) un temps à part entière de la vie, placé sous l'enseigne d'une formation longue et un long apprentissage de la vie en société, par le biais de tâtonnements et d'expérimentations (*ibid.*). On ne s'étonnera guère ainsi que l'autonomie des jeunes se soit imposée comme une question centrale

dans l'expérience subjective de cette population, dans l'analyse sociologique et dans le débat public. Il y a dix ans déjà, une proposition émanant du Youth Forum Jeunesse définissait l'autonomie comme un principe structurant l'ensemble de la condition juvénile : « l'autonomie est la situation où les jeunes ont le soutien, les ressources et les débouchés nécessaires leur permettant de vivre de manière autonome, de faire leurs choix de vie et d'avoir accès à une participation sociale et politique totale dans tous les secteurs de la vie quotidienne, ainsi que de prendre des décisions de manière autonome »[1].

Plus largement, ce modèle européen de jeunesse se fonde sur l'existence de quatre traits majeurs (Cicchelli 2013).

Primo, les jeunes acquièrent rapidement une autonomie qui renvoie à l'affirmation de leur individualité, à la construction de leurs appartenances groupales, à la consommation de produits culturels. En même temps, ils font l'objet de politiques publiques plus nombreuses, étendues et variées, notamment dans le domaine de la difficile transition formation-emploi.

Secundo, parce que l'orientation est consubstantielle à l'allongement de la jeunesse entendue comme phase d'expérimentation, l'intégration sociale des jeunes se réalise par la *médiation* des adultes, par l'intermédiaire de dispositifs de nature institutionnelle. Si les jeunes bénéficient de plus grandes marges de libertés, leur transition à l'âge adulte se fait à l'aide d'un encadrement diffus. C'est dans cette situation d'une plus grande autonomie relationnelle et culturelle de la jeunesse et de sa plus grande prise en charge par la collectivité, ce qui se laisse voir par l'étendue du maillage institutionnel enserrant cet âge de la vie, que doit être comprise la place que les sociétés contemporaines font aux jeunes. L'avenir de ces derniers est plus que jamais placé sous la responsabilité des adultes. Les récessions économiques que les sociétés européennes traversent depuis la fin des Trente glorieuses, et la période d'expansion faisant suite à la fin de la seconde guerre mondiale, ont été à l'origine d'une plus grande difficulté d'intégration des jeunes dans le corps social, si bien que les anciennes inquiétudes des adultes à l'égard des jeunes, vus tour à tour comme un péril pour la société et un péril pour eux-mêmes, ont été rejointes par un souci inédit, devenu central : comment les accompagner vers l'âge des responsabilités ?

Tertio, nos jeunes contemporains voient en leurs parents des partenaires actifs, des figures de médiation, tout au long d'un parcours plus long, sinueux et parfois réversible d'insertion sociale. Pris également en charge plus que par le passé par des dispositifs d'insertion, les jeunes se retrouvent fréquemment en situation d'être accompagnés : ils échappent donc rarement à l'évaluation de

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[1] Youth Forum Jeunesse, *Prise de position pour l'autonomie des jeunes*, Adoptée par le Conseil des Membres, 23-24 avril 2004, Bruxelles.

leurs compétences par les adultes, ils sont astreints au devoir de responsabilité. Ils doivent montrer qu'ils méritent l'assistance, qu'ils maintiennent l'assistanat à distance, qu'ils réussissent dans les études.

Quarto, les jeunes ont intériorisé l'importance de la médiation des professionnels de la jeunesse dans leur intégration sociale, c'est la raison pour laquelle ils expriment parfois un sentiment d'abandon lorsque des dispositifs spécifiques sont inexistants ou se révèlent inefficaces. Pourtant, s'ils ne rejettent pas l'encadrement et peuvent même le souhaiter, ils refusent d'être assignés au statut d'assistés et demandent des formes souples et surtout efficaces d'accompagnement, leur permettant de trouver leur voie.

En s'inscrivant dans ce modèle général, cet article souhaite montrer les spécificités de la jeunesse française à l'égard de ses homologues des autres pays européens, en s'attachant plus particulièrement à explorer la façon dont les jeunes ont connu aussi bien une plus grande valorisation de leur autonomie qu'une plus grande difficulté à s'insérer socialement.

La jeunesse française à l'épreuve des comparaisons

A l'origine de ce modèle général de socialisation de la jeunesse européenne, il y a un élément fort bien connu : le report des âges auxquels sont franchis les cinq seuils d'entrée dans l'âge adulte, c'est-à-dire la sortie du système scolaire, l'accès au premier emploi, le départ de la famille d'origine, le mariage et la constitution d'une nouvelle famille avec la naissance des enfants. Le moratoire psycho-social, issu de cet allongement de la jeunesse a eu pour effet de différer la prise de responsabilités typiques de l'âge adulte. Toutefois, il n'a aucunement exempté les jeunes de devoir faire des choix biographiques avertis pouvant engager leur avenir, dans les contextes scolaire et universitaire notamment (Cicchelli 2001a).

Malgré ces éléments transversaux, la jeunesse se caractérise en Europe par une grande diversité interne. Un large pan de la littérature s'est penché sur la compréhension des variations au sein de l'Europe des nouvelles formes du passage à l'âge adulte par l'articulation des trajectoires biographiques, y compris dans leurs significations subjectives, et des données plus structurales, comme le marché du travail, le système scolaire, les formes familiales de la prise en charge, les politiques publiques.

Quatre régimes de transition

Certains auteurs ont même mis en évidence l'existence de types de jeunesse, en distinguant quatre régimes de transition censés expliquer la variété des

trajectoires juvéniles dans les pays européens. Désormais moins standardisées que par le passé, ces trajectoires seraient devenues de type « yo-yo ». Dans le régime universaliste (typique des pays scandinaves), les jeunes sont encouragés à expérimenter des transitions « yo-yo », en faisant des allers-retours vers le marché du travail, possibilité fournie par une formation individualisée et diverses prestations sociales. Dans le régime de transition centré sur l'emploi (et donc en France, Allemagne, Pays-Bas), les transitions « yo-yo » se traduisent par le fait que les jeunes adultes doivent naviguer entre des contraintes fortes en matière de trajectoires standardisées et la construction d'une carrière personnelle, exigences qu'ils doivent concilier individuellement en dépit du poids normatif des attentes institutionnelles à leur égard. Dans le régime libéral de transition (que l'on retrouve en Grande-Bretagne et en Irlande), les trajectoires « yo-yo » sont en revanche le résultat d'un processus mettant en parallèle la flexibilité du système et l'individualisation des risques. Dans le régime sous-protecteur (qui caractérise les pays de l'Europe du sud), les trajectoires « yo-yo » se développent à cause d'une carence de politiques publiques de soutien qui se trouve compensée par une dépendance prolongée à l'égard de la famille d'origine (Walther 2006).

D'autres travaux ont dégagé quatre logiques d'expérience du devenir adulte. Cécile Van de Velde (2008a) les nomme respectivement : « se trouver », « s'assumer », « se placer » et « s'installer ». La première serait typique du Danemark, pays où la jeunesse s'envisage comme un temps long d'exploration, inscrit dans une logique de développement personnel. La deuxième, qui renvoie à une émancipation individuelle et se traduit par des trajectoires courtes, se retrouverait en Grande-Bretagne. La troisième relève plutôt d'un processus d'intégration sociale au sein de trajectoires dominées par l'enjeu des études et du premier emploi; cette logique caractériserait la France. La dernière renvoie au prolongement de l'appartenance familiale, elle serait représentative de l'Espagne.

La France à l'issue de la comparaison : double dépendance, famille et collectivité

Au terme de ces comparaisons, où peut-on situer la jeunesse française à l'égard de ses voisines européennes ? L'idée qu'il y aurait dans le fonctionnement de la société française, de ses institutions, du marché du travail, des éléments entravant l'accès à l'autonomie a acquis encore plus de force grâce aux comparaisons internationales : certaines sociétés européennes semblent mieux favoriser la prise d'indépendance des jeunes (scolarisés ou non) de leurs familles d'origine. Comment être jeune en France quand les étapes de l'insertion s'allongent ? « Grâce aux solidarités familiales, mais à condition d'en bé-

néficier » affirme on ne peut plus clairement Daniel Cohen (2007 : 20). Ainsi, « dès lors que s'allongent les durées entre les différentes étapes du parcours, la dépendance à l'égard de la famille d'origine s'en trouve renforcée » (*ibid.*). La « singularité du modèle français est d'être « une forme d'accompagnement familial progressif vers l'âge adulte » (Galland 2009 : 75). Ce modèle se voit d'ailleurs plus particulièrement chez les étudiants, qui durant la semaine vivent leurs vies d'étudiants et leurs vies de jeunes, en sortant le soir et en profitant de l'offre culturelle des grandes villes universitaires où ils résident. Loin de garantir comme dans les pays nordiques l'indépendance des individus majeurs, la logique française de socialisation de la jeunesse consacre plutôt un principe de prise en charge parentale du temps des études (Cicchelli 2001a), tout en se distinguant des pays méditerranéens par quelques traits universellement « défamilialisants », tels que l'aide au logement par exemple (Van de Velde 2008b). Cette politique envers les jeunes adultes relève majoritairement d'une inspiration « corporatiste », nuancée toutefois par quelques composantes d'inspiration « social-démocrate » (*ibid.*). La jeunesse française bénéficie d'une double prise en charge, à la fois des familles d'origine et de la collectivité à travers de nombreux dispositifs publics.

Autonomie et dépendance

La dialectique entre l'autonomie et la dépendance, commune à la jeunesse européenne, a été lue en France en termes de disjonction entre une forte aspiration de la jeunesse française à vouloir obtenir une vie autonome et une plus grande difficulté à la réaliser en raison d'une dégradation des conditions d'insertions sociales et professionnelles au cours des dernières années (Cohen 2007). L'allongement de la dépendance a donc été appréhendé de façon spécifique : on a largement insisté sur ce phénomène de *familialisation* et *institutionnalisation* de la jeunesse découlant de l'allongement de sa prise en charge par la famille, la collectivité des adultes et par l'extension d'une certaine intervention publique à son égard que ce soit pour les jeunes chômeurs ou les étudiants (Cicchelli 2001b).

Une forte autonomie relationnelle

Si la jeunesse s'allonge partout en Europe, la plus grande précocité de l'adolescence, y compris en terme de début de la puberté, réduit la période de l'enfance proprement dite et autorise de nouvelles formes de subjectivité (Octobre *et al.*, 2010). Les jeunes construisent leur autonomie relationnelle en la négociant

à l'intérieur de leurs familles, à l'appui d'une culture juvénile partagée avec leurs pairs, culture de plus en plus prégnante et dont on connaît les prémisses dans les années 1960. Cette prise d'autonomie a été favorisée sans doute par une transformation profonde de la socialisation familiale. En essayant de rendre compte des changements intervenus au sein des familles européennes depuis la fin des années 1960, certains auteurs, ont pu mettre l'accent sur les nouvelles priorités des parents, dont les pratiques éducatives seraient davantage tournées vers le développement de l'individualité des enfants, à partir de l'enfance jusqu'à leur départ définitif du foyer parental (Mørch et Andersen 2006).

Mais l'obtention d'un espace interne à la famille où les adolescents disposent de plus grandes marges de liberté renvoie plus profondément à une plus grande autonomisation vis-à-vis de la société des adultes sur le plan des goûts culturels (dans les choix musicaux et vestimentaires notamment), et de la vie intime (dans le domaine des relations sentimentales et sexuelles, avec même la reconnaissance d'un droit à l'intimité). Cette prise d'autonomie relationnelle de la jeunesse se voit donc par l'importance grandissante du groupe des pairs au niveau de la régulation des conduites individuelles (Pasquier 2005).

La prise en charge familiale

En même temps, la dépendance des enfants des ressources familiales s'étire, si bien qu'on a pu parler de l'essor d'une nouvelle figure sociale, « le jeune adulte dépendant pécuniairement » (Schehr 2008).

En France, l'allongement général de la scolarité à des âges inédits est en grande partie à l'origine du prolongement de la socialisation familiale des jeunes, y compris ceux appartenant à des catégories sociales autrefois exclues des cycles supérieurs de l'enseignement (Erlich 1998). La contribution des familles à la vie étudiante est capitale. Les transferts familiaux représentent la moitié du budget mensuel moyen des étudiants français, alors qu'ils ne représentent respectivement qu'un dixième, un quart et moins d'un tiers des budgets de leurs homologues finlandais, britanniques et hollandais (Eurostudent 2005).

L'importance des familles s'observe également dans le cadre de la prise d'autonomie résidentielle des étudiants. « D'après Eurostat, la France est l'un des Etats membres où le départ des jeunes du foyer parental est le plus aidé par la famille, les parents prenant en charge en moyenne 61% du coût du logement de leurs enfants étudiants » (Guichet 2013 : 9). Entre 19 et 24 ans, neuf ménages étudiants sur dix bénéficient d'une aide régulière de leur famille, qu'elle prenne la forme de versements monétaires, d'une aide au logement ou de la participation aux dépenses alimentaires (Robert-Bobée 2002). D'ail-

leurs, le taux de pauvreté des ménages étudiants est très sensible à la prise en compte des aides reçues. Si l'on ne tenait compte que de leurs seuls revenus, 90% d'entre eux seraient en dessous du seuil de pauvreté; mais ils ne sont plus que 20% lorsque l'on inclut l'ensemble des aides apportées par la famille, occasionnelles ou régulières, financières ou en nature.

Les jeunes français acquièrent ainsi leur autonomie résidentielle tout en étant dépendants financièrement de leurs parents. Les études supérieures, aussi paradoxales que cela puisse paraître, constituent un élément favorable à l'autonomie résidentielle des jeunes (Bendit, Hein et Biggart 2009). L'autonomie résidentielle, si elle s'acquière grâce à la famille d'origine est aussi limitée par cette dernière. En effet, tous les étudiants n'ont pas les mêmes probabilités de décohabiter. Plus que les ressources financières de la famille d'origine ce sont aussi les dispositions culturelles à l'égard des études supérieures qui encouragent ou limitent la décohabitation des étudiants. Ainsi, plus les études supérieures sont perçues soit comme un moyen de maintien de sa position sociale, soit au contraire comme un moyen d'ascension sociale, plus les parents sont prêts à se mobiliser pour que leurs enfants décohabitent et suivent les études supérieures qu'ils souhaitent (Germain 2014). Finalement les aides de la famille pour permettre aux jeunes de s'insérer du point de vue résidentiel sont aussi un moyen pour lutter contre le déclassement.

Etirement de la dépendance vis-à-vis de la collectivité

En dépit de ces considérations, ce serait faux d'affirmer que l'intervention de la collectivité en direction de la jeunesse est négligeable en France (Charvet 2001). En effet, à mesure que la part des étudiants bénéficiaires d'une aide familiale augmentait, et cela dans tous les milieux sociaux, le pourcentage des étudiants recevant une bourse s'élevait également (en passant entre 1963 et 1992 de 30% à 44% pour les milieux populaires et de 5% à 11% pour les milieux supérieurs). Si l'on prend en compte l'ensemble des aides publiques, en 1970-1971, 16,4% des étudiants étaient concernés (soit 117 993 individus), contre 22,2% en 2007-2008 (soit 495 208 individus) (Zilloniz 2009). En 2001, la commission « Jeunes et politiques publiques » (Charvet 2001) calculait que 75% des 16-25 ans faisaient l'objet, à quelque titre que ce soit, d'une intervention publique – proportion qui avait triplé en 25 ans. L'intervention publique en direction de la jeunesse concerne désormais des domaines aussi variés que le logement, la santé, la formation, l'emploi, l'aide sociale, la mobilité, les loisirs et la culture (Lefresne 2011).

L'insertion professionnelle est devenue l'un des objets privilégiés des politiques publiques. Déjà en 1994, Mireille Elbaum et Olivier Marchand souli-

gnaient la spécificité de l'emploi juvénile en France : au cœur du problème, il y a le recours de plus en plus faible du secteur productif à la main-d'œuvre juvénile. En 2001, plus d'un jeune sur deux passe dans les années qui suivent sa sortie du système scolaire par au moins un des dispositifs d'insertion professionnelle et 40% des 16-25 ans qui sont en emploi bénéficient d'emplois aidés ou des dispositifs généraux de la politique de l'emploi, notamment les mesures d'allégement des cotisations sociales (Charvet 2001). En 2009, les contrats aidés concernent plus du quart des jeunes en emploi (16-25 ans), alors que cette proportion n'était que de 3% en 1974. Plus largement, et en prenant en compte les jeunes non diplômés, ils sont plus de 4 sur 10 à être passés par une mesure de politique publique en faveur de l'emploi au cours des sept années qui ont suivi leur sortie de formation initiale (en 1998)[2] (Insee 2013). Pour 16 % des non diplômés cette expérience est même fortement structurante de ces premières années sur le marché du travail (Gasquet et Roux 2006). La politique de l'emploi est devenue « une véritable composante structurelle du processus d'insertion tentant aussi bien d'atténuer les obstacles à l'entrée dans la vie active que d'éviter l'exclusion durable de l'emploi stable » (*ivi* : 18).

Les turbulences du passage à l'âge adulte

Un élément décisif ayant conduit à une plus grande importance attribuée à la question de l'autonomie en France a été la mise au jour d'une forte diversification interne au monde juvénile, avec la persistance et même le renforcement d'inégalités sociales et une plus grande fragilisation d'une partie de la jeunesse et du monde étudiant. On assiste ainsi à une forte polarisation interne de la condition juvénile, qui éloigne de plus en plus les jeunes diplômés des jeunes non qualifiés. « La jeunesse française est coupée en deux et cette césure s'accentue » (Cahuc *et al.* 2011 : 10).

Incertitudes dans la transition formation emploi

La place occupée par les jeunes dans le cycle de vie ferait en sorte que ceux qui arrivent sur le marché du travail « ressentent plus directement, et dans tous les pays, la montée de l'incertitude constatée à l'échelon mondial » (Blossfeld *et al.* 2005 : 6). Les jeunes entrant dans le monde du travail sont donc plus

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[2] Il peut s'agir d'une formation, d'un contrat en alternance, d'un contrat emploi solidarité ou d'un emploi jeune durant leurs sept premières années de vie active.

exposés à l'incertitude générale, alors que les individus déjà intégrés seraient relativement mieux protégés des conséquences de la globalisation. En France, au moins depuis le rapport de Bertrand Schwartz (2007 [1982]) qui pointait déjà la dégradation de l'insertion professionnelle des jeunes au début des années 1980, on a associé à cette période de vie un risque de précarité, alors que les économistes américains l'interprètent plutôt « comme une occasion d'acquérir des expériences et d'élargir l'éventail des emplois potentiels des débutants » (Mansuy et Marchand 2005 : 4). Il est certain que les transitions formation-emploi sont devenues plus complexes.

Depuis 1978, le taux de chômage des jeunes actifs sortis depuis 1 à 4 ans de formation initiale n'a cessé de croître, en passant de 8,4 à 19,2% en 2012 pour les hommes et de 16,2% à 18,2 pour les femmes. On observe ainsi une certaine stabilité pour les secondes et une forte augmentation pour les premiers (Insee 2013). Le risque de chômage des jeunes français, plus sensible aux fluctuations conjoncturelles que le chômage des adultes (Minni 2009) est fonction de leur diplôme : ainsi si en 1978, 17,6% des jeunes (tous sexes confondus) ayant un Brevet ou pas diplômés du tout étaient à la recherche d'un emploi (entre 1 et 4 ans après leur sortie de formation initiale), ils sont désormais 45,7% en 2012 (Insee 2013). Pour les diplômés du second cycle du secondaire, ces taux étaient respectivement aux mêmes dates de 9,5% et de 22,1% et enfin pour les diplômés de l'enseignement supérieur, ces taux descendaient à 5,5% et 9,4%. Les enquêtes génération du Centre d'Etudes et de Recherche sur les Qualifications (Céreq) confirment la force de la formation initiale en France sur la transition vers l'emploi : pour la Génération 2004, le risque de chômage est de 20 points plus important pour les non-qualifiés que pour les diplômés de l'enseignement supérieur et il est de 27 points pour la Génération 2007. La cause est bien une dégradation générale de la situation des jeunes et en particulier des non qualifiés (Rose 2005).

Les jeunes non qualifiés restent plus que les autres fortement soumis aux aléas de la conjoncture. Ces jeunes non diplômés sont plus fréquemment que les autres embauchés sur des contrats moins protégés (Contrat à Durée Déterminée, CDD, intérim) : parmi la Génération 2007, ils sont seulement 22% à être embauché en Contrat à Durée Indéterminée (CDI) directement à la sortie des études contre 41% pour les diplômés du supérieur (Arrighi 2012). Ces contrats précaires constituent en cas de retournement de la conjoncture (intervenu en 2001, et plus récemment à la suite de la crise financière de 2008) les premières variables d'ajustement des employeurs (Mazari *et al.* 2011), contribuant à creuser l'écart entre diplômés et non diplômés. Ainsi, trois ans après la fin de leurs études, 43% des jeunes de la Génération 2007 non diplômés ont passé un an et plus au chômage, alors que cela concerne seulement 9% des titulaires d'un doctorat.

En dehors du risque de chômage, la trajectoire d'insertion varie elle aussi fortement selon le niveau de formation : au sein de la Génération 2007, 75 % jeunes sortis avec un master ont connu une trajectoire que l'on peut qualifier d'accès rapide et durable à l'emploi, contre seulement 29% des jeunes non qualifiés (Arrighi 2012 : 34). Les jeunes qui accèdent plus facilement au monde du travail et à de meilleures conditions d'emploi sont les plus diplômés.

Les différents dispositifs « Génération » du Céreq confirment au fil des enquêtes que les jeunes ayant des diplômes de deuxième et troisième cycle universitaire ont un avantage par rapport aux autres que ce soit en termes d'accès à un premier emploi au bout de trois années de vie active, à un CDI. Ils ont une meilleure rémunération également, ont quitté plus souvent leur région et connu moins souvent une mobilité professionnelle. Comparés aux jeunes sortants de l'enseignement secondaire ou à ceux qui ont échoué dans un premier cycle universitaire ou un BTS, « ceux qui ont décroché un diplôme du supérieur sont dans une situation plutôt favorable par rapport aux autres sortants du système éducatif » (Giret 2009 : 333).

Pour le dire avec Eric Maurin (2009), on n'assisterait pas à une érosion tendancielle du statut des diplômés, mais à « un accroissement très net de leur avantage sur les non diplômés en matière d'accès à l'emploi » (*ivi*: 56). Il existe donc une forte polarisation en France de la condition juvénile : « les destins des jeunes qui poursuivent des études, même courtes, mais sanctionnées par un diplôme ou un titre professionnel, et ceux qui abandonnent leur scolarité le plus tôt n'ont rien en commun et sont de plus en plus divergents » (Galland 2000: 223).

A l'inégalité de diplôme s'ajoute l'inégalité entre les sexes : les femmes (à l'exception notable des docteures et des licenciées) sont toujours moins bien payées que les hommes et elles représentent environ les 2/3 des jeunes considérés aux marges de l'emploi (Couppié, Gasquet et Lopez 2007).

Une inégalité dans l'accès au logement

L'allongement des études supérieures en France a eu pour corollaire de retarder l'accès à l'indépendance financière des jeunes, du simple fait de leur entrée sur le marché du travail à temps plein plus tardive. Pour autant, avec un âge médian de 23 ans, l'accès à l'autonomie résidentielle des jeunes français s'effectue relativement tôt par rapport aux pays de l'Europe du sud. Toutefois selon leur situation vis-à-vis des études, leur accès à l'autonomie résidentielle est plus ou moins facilité, plus ou moins rapide.

En prenant en compte les étudiants, on observe une tendance à une prise d'indépendance générale. Les modes de logements familiaux (chez les pa-

rents et chez d'autres membres de la parenté) baissent depuis 1997, alors que d'autres formules comme le logement en cité U, l'internat, la colocation, et le fait de vivre seul ou en couple ont eu tendance à augmenter (Vourc'h 2009). Cette tendance s'explique mécaniquement par la présence plus forte des jeunes femmes dans le cursus supérieur (et l'on sait qu'elles sont plus inclines que leurs homologues masculins à quitter le logement parental, voir Thiphaine 2002), par la croissance du poids des étudiants étrangers (qui sont surreprésentés parmi les étudiants vivant dans un logement indépendant) et par une augmentation de la part des inscrits au niveau master et plus (la prise d'indépendance au niveau du logement suit de façon croissante la courbe de l'âge). Pourtant, les enquêtes de l'Observatoire national de la vie étudiante (Ove) ont montré une plus grande difficulté pour les étudiants à accéder à un logement.

A l'instar de ce qui se passe dans la transition formation-emploi, dans le cas du logement on voit également se dessiner une nette différence entre jeunes scolarisés et non. Ainsi les situations résidentielles des jeunes les plus diplômés et ceux qui le sont moins sont fortement inégales. Le modèle du jeune faisant progressivement l'expérience de la décohabitation est tout d'abord un cas de figure associé aux études. Les étudiants connaissent très souvent, notamment en province, une première forme d'indépendance résidentielle à l'occasion du début de leurs études supérieures. Contrairement à des pays comme l'Italie où le maillage universitaire est très dispersé sur le territoire et permet aux étudiants de rentrer chez leurs parents tous les soirs, la concentration des universités françaises dans les grandes capitales régionales contraint souvent les étudiants à prendre un logement en ville (Cavalli, Cicchelli et Galland 2008).

A l'inverse, les jeunes qui ne suivent pas d'études supérieures retardent le moment de la décohabitation. Pour ces jeunes, le maintien au domicile parental pourrait s'expliquer par les difficultés rencontrées sur le marché du travail. En effet, l'obtention d'un CDI accélère la décohabitation. Toutefois l'effet de l'obtention d'un CDI sur la décohabitation est loin d'être comparable à celui du niveau de formation (Dormont et Duffour-Kippelen 2000). Plus que la situation sur le marché du travail c'est le faible niveau de diplôme de ces jeunes qui retarde l'accès à l'autonomie résidentielle. Ainsi « la moitié des hommes sans diplôme décohabitent dans les 60 mois qui suivent leur sortie de formation initiale, chiffre qui chute à 19 mois pour les jeunes hommes de niveau bac +2 […] Parmi les sortantes sans diplôme de 1998, la moitié décohabitent dans les 26 mois suivant leur sortie de formation initiale, chiffre qui s'abaisse à 4 mois pour les femmes de niveau bac +2. » (Mora *et al.* 2008 : 17). L'accès à l'autonomie résidentielle des jeunes faiblement diplômés et qui de surcroît sont confrontés à la précarité du marché du travail (chômage, contrats courts) n'est pas sans conséquence. En effet, ces jeunes peu indemnisés en cas de chômage et faiblement aidés par leur famille ont un risque de pauvreté élevé : après

prise en compte des aides familiales, près de 50% d'entre eux sont pauvres (Robert-Bobée 2002).

La France est l'un des pays « où le maintien au domicile des parents apparaît le plus corrélé avec la précarité de l'emploi des jeunes: la part des 18-34 ans vivant chez leurs parents et ayant un emploi précaire dépasse 50% en France en 2008, contre 36% en moyenne dans l'UE » (Guichet 2013 : 9). Quel que soit le niveau de diplôme, les jeunes français, dans un contexte de difficultés accrues sur le marché du travail, voient leur accès à l'autonomie résidentielle entravé. En effet, l'instabilité professionnelle limite la décohabitation. L'accès à l'autonomie résidentielle est plus compliqué lorsque les jeunes n'ont pas de contrat stable : les garanties demandées par les propriétaires sont élevées (les revenus des jeunes doivent être égales à trois fois le loyer, les jeunes doivent payer une caution équivalente à un mois de loyer), sans compter qu'avec un contrat à durée déterminée les parents doivent bien souvent se porter garants pour permettre l'accès à l'autonomie résidentielle. Ainsi la proportion des jeunes qui occupent un emploi à durée indéterminée est plus importante lorsqu'ils vivent seuls ou en couple que lorsqu'ils vivent chez leurs parents (Arrighi 2012). L'ancienneté dans l'emploi occupé tout comme le niveau de salaire joue aussi sur l'accès à l'autonomie résidentielle. « Parmi les jeunes hommes percevant un salaire inférieur à 1.400 € (salaire médian masculin), 62% vivent chez leurs parents. En revanche, ceux qui perçoivent un salaire supérieur ne sont plus que 32% à ne pas avoir décohabité. Pour les jeunes femmes, les proportions sont moindres mais l'écart est sensiblement du même ordre. En effet, parmi celles qui gagnent moins que le salaire médian des femmes (1 300€), 41% vivent chez leurs parents contre 16% lorsqu'elles gagnent plus » (Arrighi 2012 : 50).

Les situations de recohabitation témoignent bien à quel point les difficultés d'insertion professionnelle freinent l'accès à un logement autonome mais aussi l'aide que la famille est prête à consentir. En effet, durant leurs études une grande majorité de jeunes sont décohabitants tout en étant dépendants financièrement de leurs parents. Pour autant une fois les études terminées, un certain nombre d'entre eux reviennent au domicile parental. Autant la décohabitation durant les études supérieures pouvait se justifier par un objectif précis (obtenir un certain diplôme), pour lequel les parents étaient prêts à se mobiliser, autant en l'absence de ressources et d'objectifs professionnels disposer d'un logement autonome est moins justifié aux yeux de ces derniers. Dans cette optique, le retour chez les parents est utilisé « comme un moyen d'amortir et de surmonter les effets de la diminution des perspectives d'avenir » (Mitchell et Gee 1996 : 21). Cette recohabitation parentale qui s'effectue dans une situation de transition d'un statut social à un autre, en l'occurrence de celui d'étudiant à celui de jeune actif, est d'autant plus facilement accepté

dans un contexte sociétal qui combine difficultés d'accès à l'emploi stable et difficultés d'accès à un logement indépendant (Germain 2012).

Le patrimoine immobilier des parents sert également à loger gratuitement les jeunes ménages. En prenant l'exemple de l'Ile-de-France, parmi les ménages qui bénéficient d'un logement gratuit, la part de ceux qui le sont grâce à leur famille est importante et croissante (50%, dont les trois quarts prêtés par les parents en 2010, contre 42% en 1978). Ainsi, les familles sont devenues les « propriétaires prêteurs les plus nombreux » (Kesteman 2010).

Plus largement et en ce qui concerne l'accès aux biens immobiliers, de nombreuses études montrent que le niveau de vie des parents, l'importance de leur patrimoine et leur propension à aider leurs enfants ont un impact fort sur la réalisation des projets immobiliers des jeunes. Aussi bien aux Etats-Unis qu'en Italie ou aux Pays-Bas, les transferts financiers de la part des parents ont une grande incidence dans l'accès à la propriété (Wolff et Attias-Donfut 2005). En France, l'exploitation d'une enquête déjà ancienne (« Actifs financiers » de 1992) confirme le poids du logement et de la propriété dans la transmission familiale, « le logement constituant le principal des biens transmis et aussi le plus important usage des transmissions reçues : la forte relation entre le lien et le bien s'accomplit d'abord dans le logement » (*ivi*: 157). En particulier, « les donations et héritages reçus des parents permettent d'être plus facilement propriétaire de son logement et de disposer d'un bien immobilier d'une plus grande valeur » (*ibid.*). La réception de transferts réduit le temps d'attente pour l'achat du logement.

Conclusion : une autonomie contrariée

Tout au long de cet article, on a remarqué une forte différenciation interne entre les jeunes non diplômés et les jeunes diplômés. Ces tendances se sont accentuées avec l'entrée de la société française dans le cycle des crises et récessions économiques. Le processus d'autonomisation de la famille d'origine, élément fondamental de l'entrée dans l'âge adulte, s'est donc radicalement modifié pour les nouvelles générations, et n'à pas le même sens pour les étudiants, les jeunes qualifiés et les jeunes non qualifiés. On voit à l'œuvre une forte dissociation entre les aspirations des jeunes et les contraintes des réalités sociales qui agissent plus fortement pour certaines franges de la population juvénile. En regardant les jeunes les moins bien dotés, on constate que ce nouveau « repli contraint et forcé sur le foyer des parents entre en contradiction avec à la fois les modèles d'émancipation traditionnelle des milieux populaires et avec les tendances générales d'évolution des sociétés modernes vers toujours plus d'individualisme » et d'expérimentation dans l'accès à l'âge adulte (Baudelot

et Establet 2007 : 30). Ainsi, « perdant sur les deux tableaux de la tradition et de l'innovation, la majorité des jeunes garçons d'origine populaire se retrouve en porte à faux dans la société d'aujourd'hui » (*ibid.*). Ces jeunes seraient les grands perdants de la forte compétition entre les familles pour l'obtention des diplômes et la bonne transition vers le marché de l'emploi. Les places sont peu nombreuses, elles sont devenues plus chères et la concurrence féroce. Pourtant, ces jeunes globalement oubliés du débat public, ne constituent pas une priorité pour l'intervention politico-administrative (Cerc 2008).

Quelles sont les actions menées par les pouvoirs publics ? La réponse est contrastée. En France, sous le principe d'égalité d'accès aux études supérieures, les aides publiques accordées aux étudiants sont fonction du niveau de revenu des parents afin de permettre de compenser les inégalités liées aux origines sociales. Pour autant, sous couvert de l'intervention de l'Etat, les aides allouées aux familles sont universelles. Ce pays s'inscrit donc dans un système hybride entre aides privées et aides publiques. Le développement des aides publiques en faveur de l'autonomie est allé de pair avec l'accroissement des aides de la famille (Labadie et Amrouni 2002). L'aide publique au cours de cet âge de la vie, d'obédience majoritairement « corporatiste », encourage indirectement les transferts intergénérationnels (Van de Velde 2007). Le contexte actuel de crise économique ne semble pas favorable à un développement des aides publiques, tout comme le poids de la solidarité intergénérationnelle en France demeure important. Les réflexions en faveur de la mise en place d'une allocation universelle pour les étudiants sont freinées par la crainte d'un affaiblissement des solidarités familiales. Comme le notait déjà le rapport de Foucauld « l'ensemble des équilibres actuels ne peut être amélioré d'un coup de baguette magique. L'autonomie est une question complexe et ne peut faire l'objet d'une solution immédiate et définitive » (2002 : 143).

Ce que l'on déplore depuis les travaux de la Commission « Jeunes et politiques publiques » (Charvet 2001) est moins l'absence ou la pauvreté des interventions de l'Etat français que l'incohérence voire l'inefficacité des dispositifs, trop nombreux, lacunaires et difficiles à gérer. Pour le dire avec les chercheurs du Centre d'Analyse Stratégique, « la France, avec des vecteurs et des outils très divers, sédimentés sans grande logique, dépense plus de deux points de PIB en faveur de ses jeunes adultes. Il est loin d'être certain que ces dépenses soient de la plus grande efficience, ne serait-ce qu'au regard de la permanence de certaines inégalités intragénérationnelles que ces dispositifs sont pourtant censés diminuer » (Cas 2007). Ainsi face aux difficultés d'accès à l'autonomie des jeunes, les réponses des politiques publiques en France restent inadaptées, que ce soit principalement du point de vue du logement ou de l'accès à l'emploi.

Au vu de ces éléments, la société française paraît triplement ambiguë dans la place qu'elle réserve à sa jeunesse (Cicchelli 2013). Cette dernière ferait preuve d'aspirations individualistes – ce qui rapproche ce pays de ses homologues scandinaves –, mais les régimes de transitions se révèlent encore trop continentaux (et donc peu universalistes), ce qui a entrainé une importante familialisation (de type quasiment méridional) du traitement des problèmes que traverse cette classe d'âge. Ce tiraillement est le signe majeur d'une transition inachevée entre un modèle de protection qui fait porter à la jeunesse le poids de la flexibilité et un autre établissant plus d'équité intergénérationnelle. La France ressemble à certains égards à ses voisins latins, par exemple l'Italie (Cavalli, Cicchelli et Galland 2008), dans la façon dont elle socialise sa jeunesse et construit des parcours typiques vers l'âge adulte. Tout ce passe comme s'il y a avait un hiatus tel que les parents s'occupent du bien-être de leurs enfants jusqu'à des âges inédits, alors qu'à un niveau plus macro-social, la collectivité ne promeut pas de politiques qui permettraient un accès rapide à l'indépendance, en laissant le marché du travail utiliser la jeunesse comme une variable d'ajustement. Ainsi, dans ces pays, la famille devient l'espace de protection de la jeunesse tout au long du processus de prise d'indépendance et cela semble d'autant mieux fonctionner que les jeunes pris en charge sont en études.

La jeunesse française est loin d'être homogène: entre les jeunes qui suivent des études et ceux qui se sont déjà insérés sur le marché du travail, et même parmi eux entre les jeunes actifs occupés et les jeunes chômeurs ; entre les jeunes très diplômés et ceux faiblement diplômés ; entre ceux qui bénéficient du soutien parental et ceux qui doivent composer avec son absence, autant d'éléments qui montrent à quel point la jeunesse française est une jeunesse extrêmement polarisée. Face à cette divergence interne les réponses de la société française sont inefficaces : la volonté politique d'élargissement aux études supérieures a montré ses limites par la plus grande sélectivité du système scolaire et son incapacité à former de façon adéquate le plus grand nombre (Baudelot et Establet 2009) ; les aides publiques pour permettre aux jeunes de prendre leur envol sont limitées, les contraignant ainsi à rester largement dépendants de leur famille d'origine.

Toutefois, si de forts clivages internes séparent désormais les deux jeunesses, les mêmes paradoxes les caractérisent. Autonomes plus précocement et dépendants plus longtemps, les jeunes demandent à pouvoir maîtriser leurs destins, tout en formulant des attentes longues de soutien. Leur long processus d'acquisition de l'autonomie et leur intégration sociale se réalisent désormais par la médiation des adultes (parents, enseignants et autres professionnels), censées accompagner, souvent par l'intermédiaire de dispositifs institutionnels, aussi bien les jeunes scolarisés que ceux qui sont en difficulté d'insertion.

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Crisis política y juventud en España: el declive del bipartidismo electoral

Francisco José Francés García y Oscar Antonio Santacreu Fernández

This paper shows the increasing trend of Spanish young people towards non-conventional mechanisms of political expression, in a crisis context which has reduced its reliance on traditional political actors. As an alternative to bipartisanship, political participation moves towards increased interest and attention to new players, such as emergent political parties. Using a covariance structural model, factors such as political activism, awareness and understanding of country problems, and trust in the political system, are explored in order to explain an electoral behavior that is undergoing deep changes.

Introducción y estado de la cuestión

Las formas en que la academia, y más allá, las instituciones, los medios de comunicación y los diferentes agentes sociales han afrontado la problemática relación entre política y jóvenes, han sido protagonistas de mutaciones constantes en las últimas décadas.

En la actualidad se cuestionan determinados enfoques, esencialmente vinculados a políticas institucionales, que proyectan en la población juvenil determinadas características de las que frecuentemente resulta una visión sesgada y adultocéntrica (Benedicto 2008; Alvarado *et al.* 2009; Agudelo 2013) de las capacidades participativas de esta población, por la que los jóvenes se encontrarían en una situación de semi-ciudadanía o de ciudadanía incompleta, pasiva y desinteresada en torno a lo que ocurre en el ámbito político. Así, desde determinadas ópticas del diseño institucional se vincula la imagen de los jóvenes con una idea negativa del contexto juvenil, una idea que atendería a visiones unidimensionales del ciudadano joven, que aparece volcado en el mundo privado, con escasa voluntad de compromiso con los problemas que le rodean, ausente de responsabilidades e inmerso en todas las dificultades que encuentra en el proceso de transición hacia la edad adulta (Moral y Ovejero 1999; Martín 1999) y en su integración dentro de la esfera productiva (Agulló 1998). Todos estos condicionantes harían perder peso a la importancia que

los sujetos jóvenes otorgan a su implicación en la esfera política. De acuerdo a estas explicaciones, a ello respondería la desafección de las instituciones y de las prácticas tradicionales de participación social. En el caso de los jóvenes españoles, parece que asistimos a un aumento de la abstención en el voto, a un descenso en la militancia en partidos políticos y organizaciones ciudadanas tradicionales, a un alejamiento generalizado de las actividades convencionales del espacio participativo, y a una creciente desconfianza en el funcionamiento práctico de las instituciones políticas democráticas. Esta concepción choca con la de otros autores que consideran que la sociedad genera un sentimiento de atracción hacia los jóvenes, quienes generalmente desean, más que transformar la sociedad, participar en ella de forma activa (Alaminos 2008), incluso desde un planteamiento solidario (Santacreu 2008).

No es de extrañar el interés de la academia en el estudio de las relaciones entre juventud y política, al considerar que la edad tiene una correlación efectiva con el interés político (Santoni 2013). Muchos autores han afrontado dicho estudio, a la vez que un proceso de transición a la edad adulta, desde la perspectiva reflexiva que aporta el concepto de condición juvenil. Ello ha llevado a observar la juventud, además de un proceso de transición entre el la infancia y la edad adulta, como una etapa vital, vivencial; la juventud sería al mismo tiempo estadio y estado: estadio en tanto que el mundo adulto enmarca al joven en una serie de espacios institucionalizados (familia, sistema educativo, trabajo) a través de los cuales el joven realiza una socialización política progresiva; estado a la vez, porque la condición juvenil poseería una significación propia como categoría política específica a efectos de análisis sociológico (Margulis 2001; Coll 2008; Krauskopf 2010), que no se agota en el dato biológico (Bourdieu 1997), con sus propias dinámicas internas y factores explicativos intrínsecos a los que es necesario acudir para comprender sus conductas en el espacio público y privado, aunque eso sí, fragmentada en términos de posicionamiento político (Gómez 2003). Estaríamos hablando, de acuerdo a este enfoque, de la juventud como una condición y no únicamente como una situación (Fernández 1999). Aquí, el objetivo de las investigaciones aplicadas no sería tanto confrontar, en los distintos asuntos objeto de análisis politológico, los resultados de los jóvenes en relación a los adultos, sino profundizar en las claves endógenas que desvelen el comportamiento, las motivaciones y las actitudes de este segmento de población, concediendo entidad propia a los estudios de juventud en sus múltiples orientaciones. Es desde esta última perspectiva desde la que intentaremos dar cuenta de los procesos de participación institucional de la juventud española en este texto.

Para el ámbito estatal español, si seguimos los datos del sondeo de opinión realizado por el Instituto de la Juventud de España sobre Jóvenes, Participación y Cultura Política, realizado en 2012 (InJuve 2012), se nos muestran

resultados que apuntan en el sentido esbozado al inicio de la introducción, aunque ciertamente con contenidos ambivalentes. Así, los jóvenes españoles muestran un escaso interés por la política (7 de cada 10 afirman que le interesa poco o nada). Los sentimientos que inspira esta actividad se centran en los calificativos de desconfianza, indiferencia, aburrimiento e irritación, y aproximadamente el 75% afirman que la sociedad española necesita reformas profundas o radicales. Paralelamente, los jóvenes españoles despliegan un apoyo sólido a la democracia como forma de gobierno, si bien la puntuación media que otorgan al funcionamiento de la democracia actual no alcanza el aprobado (media de 4.73 sobre 10). Los datos por lo visto apuntan no tanto a un cuestionamiento de los principios democráticos del estado, que aparecen afianzados en el imaginario juvenil a pesar del descontento social, sino más bien a una crítica, significativa y prolongada en el tiempo, hacia los agentes tradicionales de socialización política (Martí i Puig 2011), así como hacia el sentido de la política que se circunscribe únicamente a su carácter electoral-partidista. Consecuentemente, los partidos políticos o los sindicatos son instituciones que apenas alcanzan una valoración media de 3 puntos para los jóvenes españoles.

Esta desafección de los canales instituidos de participación política, combinada con una visión inclusiva del espacio democrático, ha desembocado en una nueva perspectiva de la política desde los segmentos juveniles de población, que en los últimos años han desplazado su interés hacia espacios no institucionalizados de acción política a través de vías informales y actividades aplicativas con base comunitaria, algo por otra parte escenificado en la mayoría de las sociedades occidentales desde hace ya algún tiempo (Barnes y Kaase 1979; Jennings y Deth 1990; Inglehart 1997; Dalton 1999; Norris 1999; Pharr y Putnam 2000; Chareka y Sears 2006; Fisher 2012; o ejemplos para el caso español Anduiza 2001; Montero, Font y Torcal 2006; Benedicto 2008; Ganuza y Francés 2008a y 2008b) y cuyas acciones asociadas se han convertido para algunos autores en una forma común de participación (Dalton 1999 y 2004; Norris 1999). De acuerdo al análisis de estos autores, en el caso de los jóvenes estaríamos asistiendo a un abandono progresivo de la implicación en la política tradicional, a favor de un aumento significativo de su presencia en otro tipo de actividades políticas no convencionales con mayor significación en su forma de concebir la vida cívica y la naturaleza de la condición ciudadana. De ahí se comprende, por ejemplo, el amplio apoyo popular de los jóvenes hacia movilizaciones ciudadanas de protesta como las desarrolladas con motivo del movimiento 15-M en la primavera de 2011 en España y otros países (Flasco 2013), que han hecho reformular su sentido práctico de la ciudadanía, la política y las formas de interacción y organización en el espacio público, utilizando principalmente para ello Internet como plataforma

de activación política. Estas y otras muchas formas de acción política de los jóvenes abren la puerta a una concepción distinta de la relación entre juventud y política de la esbozada al comienzo de la introducción. Algunos autores incluso han sintetizado una serie de criterios de participación en el ámbito juvenil, en los ámbitos de la interacción comunicativa, información, apertura participativa, deliberación, decisión, apropiación y compromiso institucional (Francés 2008). Nos hallaríamos, de acuerdo a esta visión alternativa, ante un segmento de población que, lejos de abstraerse de la esfera pública, pone en cuestión los significados y pautas de socialización política que proponen los agentes tradicionales (Bendit 2000), emergiendo así nuevos dispositivos de organización, comunicación, interacción y movilización que resignifican los objetivos clásicos de la ciudadanía (Offe 1996; Martín 2006; Ganuza y Francés 2008a; Flasco 2013). Ello a menudo se confunde equivocadamente, tanto desde las instituciones como desde la academia, con un rechazo o abandono de los compromisos colectivos (Benedicto 2008). Pero lejos de protagonizar un alejamiento de lo público, las nuevas actitudes, al menos en un segmento de la población joven y no tan joven, apuntan hacia un nuevo modelo de ciudadanía en busca de espacios de influencia e inclusión que transforme el modelo hasta ahora predominante de implicación política juvenil, que supongan una respuesta de activa a una lectura frecuentemente simplista de desafección política (Hirschman 1970). En efecto, al comprobar el arco de conductas participativas no institucionalizadas de los jóvenes, se nos muestra un "imaginario participativo que comienza a presentar divergencias respecto a la hipótesis de desafección generalizada de los jóvenes respecto a la esfera pública. Nos hallamos más bien ante un contexto de la participación crítico pero no pasivo" (Francés 2008: 42). Afortunadamente, sobre todo si consideramos que la participación "es el instrumento de la democracia, el antídoto a la desconfianza" (Santoni 2013: 169).

De acuerdo a todo ello, el presente artículo entiende a los jóvenes españoles como unidad de análisis no tanto proyectando su condición como objeto de estudio, sino más bien como sujeto de cambio político. Asumiendo la idea generada por Reguillo (2000), el sujeto tiene contornos imprecisos y prácticas que colocan en el centro de los análisis a los jóvenes, no necesariamente como tema, sino como planteamiento metodológico de partida. Sus percepciones, motivaciones, acciones, y en definitiva todas las acciones que confieren al hecho juvenil una condición identitaria en lo político, aportan justificación suficiente para estudiar la estructura subyacente al universo político juvenil. Máxime cuando en el caso español nos encontramos ante una generación de jóvenes que un nivel educativo mayor que la generación precedente, que han crecido en un período de normalidad democrática y que no sufrió la alienación desmovilizadora que sus progenitores vivieron en la dictadura franquista (Galais 2012).

Dado que el marco de expresiones políticas de este segmento de población es extremadamente heterogéneo, el análisis va a tomar como elemento central una de las acciones en que cristaliza las preferencias políticas: el voto electoral, considerado "el instrumento clásico de participación" (Santoni 2013: 159). Entendiendo eso sí el voto no como una acción única y aislada en la esfera política enraizada en la motivación del sujeto, sino como producto del entramado de significaciones que los jóvenes infieren al hecho político. O tal como lo entiende Verba (1995), dependiente de otros aspectos tales como los condicionantes del contexto cotidiano, la capacidad de movilización, el conocimiento de los incentivos existentes, el grado de interacción con las redes sociales afines, el manejo de recursos individuales (Rosenstone y Hansen 2003) incluso los *issues* políticos del momento (Anduiza 2001). Visto así, la orientación del voto responde a un sustrato estructural del que queremos dar cuenta en este artículo, constituyendo el principal objetivo analítico del texto. Y más allá, la justificación de los jóvenes como protagonistas del análisis viene dada por el hecho de que el sentido del voto enmarca a la juventud como una categoría especifica de interés analítico, tanto por su nivel particular de participación electoral (Mateos y Moral 2006) como porque la decisión electoral de los jóvenes, con independencia del sentido del voto o si desemboca en participación o en abstención, se ve sometida a factores explicativos que son cada vez más difíciles de prever y controlar (Muxel 2008).

En relación al efecto pragmático del voto como objetivo (que no objeto, como ya hemos comentado) de análisis, la realidad española podríamos describirla bajo el hecho característico de la existencia de una arquitectura institucional y unos mecanismos electorales que ciertamente inducen a la prevalencia del bipartidismo, generando una estructura de oportunidades asimétrica para la eventual emergencia de poder por parte de otras opciones partidistas. El resultado de esta concentración de opciones políticas hace del juego político-electoral un contexto definido por el corporativismo y, en ocasiones, por la consolidación de relaciones clientelares entre todos los actores con representación en el ámbito institucional. Esta realidad ha actuado como uno de los principales resortes de crítica de los jóvenes hacia la esfera política, asignando indistintamente a los dos grandes partidos (Partido Popular – PP – y Partidos Socialista Obrero Español – PSOE –) atribuciones de *establishment* político inamovible e indiferente a las disonancias entre las demandas ciudadanas y el circuito político de rendición de cuentas. Por ello no es infrecuente observar en las manifestaciones juveniles o en los actos de propuesta carteles y mensajes donde unen las siglas de ambos partidos bajo un mismo acróstico ("PPSOE").

Por su parte los procesos electorales, como instrumentos centrales en el marco de las democracias representativas que distribuyen el poder entre los partidos políticos concurrentes, y unidad de medición en este estudio, articu-

lan en los sistemas contemporáneos tres funciones fundamentales (Font 2001: 24): permitir la formación de un gobierno, renovar la legitimidad democrática, y lograr una representación las preferencias e intereses de los distintos segmentos sociales o ciudadanos. Las reglas del entramado institucional en España facilitan el primer objetivo, la formación un gobierno estable con amplios márgenes de decisión. Pero lo que las encuestas de opinión indican es que la ciudanía no percibe un logro satisfactorio de los otros dos objetivos del mecanismo electoral, impidiéndose de facto opciones alternativas de influencia de la ciudadanía fuera de las pautas institucionales y los mecanismos de participación que ofrecen las poliarquías electorales (Navarro 2002). Es por ello que el análisis en torno a las preferencias de los jóvenes por la opción de voto bipartidista puede constituir un buen indicador indirecto de enjuiciamiento sobre la legitimidad y satisfacción con la situación democrática. Las tendencias de voto joven hacia la concentración de voto bipartidista estarían hablando de una valoración legitimadora, o cuando menos no sancionadora, de las oportunidades participativas de los sujetos, además de un reconocimiento de la capacidad de estos grandes partidos para registrar las preferencias de la mayoría de votantes. Por contra, resultados electorales donde se reduzca la proporción de voto bipartidista, o tendencias en ese mismo sentido, actuarán como un indicador perceptivo de las disfunciones del sistema democrático de participación por parte de los jóvenes, ya sea la salida del voto hacia otros partidos minoritarios, hacia la abstención o hacia el voto nulo. Además, el análisis planteado permitirá observar si existen diferencias significativas en las tendencias de voto a partir del despliegue de variables contextuales clásicas en el estudio de la política, lo que inducirá un análisis diferencial a partir de los distintos perfiles de segmento juveniles en función de su percepción, actitud y grado de implicación en la esfera pública.

El análisis planteado se justifica adicionalmente en el notable cambio de tendencia del voto joven en relación al espectro bipartidista electoral, que muestra en los últimos años un acusado descenso en la concentración de voto joven dentro de los dos grandes partidos políticos. Un descenso, por otra parte, que se adivina con mayor calado tras las elecciones europeas de 2014. En el gráfico 1 se representa cómo ha evolucionado el voto bipartidista en los jóvenes y en los adultos a lo largo de las últimas elecciones generales celebradas en España, así como la evolución de la abstención en ambos segmentos de población.

Como se puede observar, el gráfico recoge las dos grandes tendencias para la juventud española manejadas en el planteamiento del presente trabajo. En términos generales podemos afirmar que el comportamiento electoral de adultos y jóvenes ha seguido tendencias similares, aunque en diferente grado. Pero específicamente en relación a población juvenil, la evolución histórica

Gráfico 1: *Evolución del porcentaje de voto bipartidista (PP + PSOE) y de la abstención en España, para jóvenes y adultos*
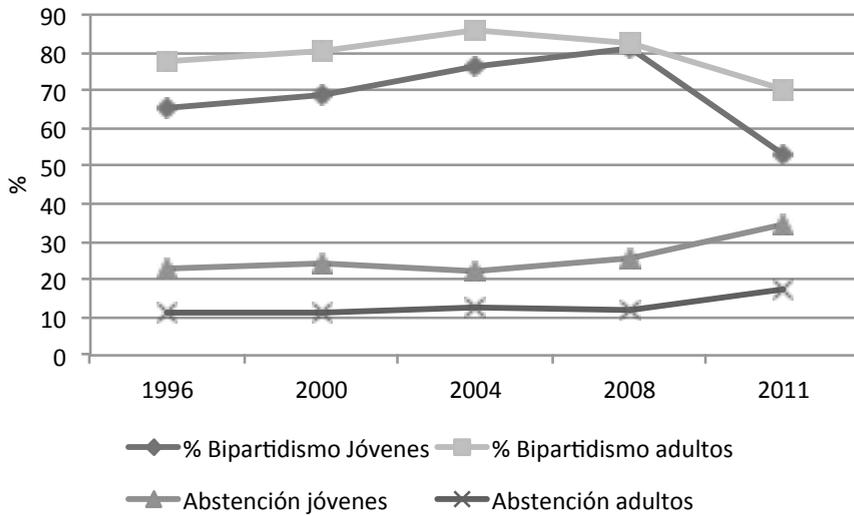
Fuente: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (Cis), estudios n. 2.285, 2.415, 2.570, 2.769 y 2.948.

refleja un descenso en los últimos años de la opción de voto vinculada a los dos grandes partidos españoles, pasando del 80,3% en las elecciones de 2008 al 53,1% en 2011. Este porcentaje de voto bipartidista baja hasta el 27% en la intención de voto expresado directamente en el cuestionario del Barómetro de abril 2014 del Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (Cis) (58,1% en la estimación que hace este organismo). Paralelamente, el patrón abstencionista del voto joven ha ido en aumento, creciendo desde el 25,8% en 2008 hasta alcanzar el 34,6% en 2011. Ambas tendencias revelan un cambio de comportamiento electoral dentro de la población juvenil española que conviene analizar detenidamente, a fin de explorar las claves explicativas que subyacen a este fenómeno, y dicho análisis es precisamente el objetivo investigador que ocupan las siguientes páginas.

Metodología

Para la aproximación empírica a la determinación de la estructura de factores influyentes en la explicación del comportamiento electoral de los jóvenes españoles, considerando como tales a aquellos ciudadanos con 30 años

de edad o menos[1], en relación a las preferencias de voto bipartidista, se ha hecho uso de un método de análisis multivariante conocido como modelado de ecuaciones estructurales (SEM), utilizando para ello la herramienta estadística LISREL, una técnica estadística multivariante utilizada habitualmente para estudiar y analizar las relaciones de dependencia que se establecen entre las variables que forman parte en un proceso social. Una de las principales ventajas en el uso de esta técnica frente a otras técnicas de análisis multivariante es la posibilidad de analizar relaciones múltiples entre subconjuntos de variables, a la vez que nos permite introducir en el análisis conceptos teóricos o variables latentes, de tal modo que podemos plantear una estructura relacional empírica dentro del contexto de nuestra propuesta teórico explicativa, para el caso que nos ocupa las variables con influencia significativa en la explicación del voto joven en España. La información estadística a partir de la cual se plantea el análisis procede de Barómetro correspondiente al mes de abril de 2014 realizado por el Cis (estudio n. 3.021).

Análisis y resultados

Nuestra propuesta de modelo considera como variables explicativas de la intención de voto bipartidista la confianza en el sistema político, la valoración de la situación del país, la frecuencia con la que se habla de política, la importancia que se le da a los problemas del país directamente relacionados con el tema de estudio y, por último pero no menos importante, el activismo político.

En primer lugar, la intención de voto bipartidista se ha construido a partir de la variable del Barómetro de Abril 2014 del Cis, que recoge la intención espontánea de voto en las próximas elecciones generales dirigida a cualquiera de los dos grandes partidos de España, el Partido Popular (PP) y el Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE).

Para medir la confianza en el sistema político, tomamos en consideración las variables de la batería en la que se valoran dieciséis instituciones de la democracia. A fin de seleccionar las más adecuadas para medir el grado de confianza en el sistema político, se planteó un análisis factorial exploratorio, cuyo principal resultado reproducimos en la tabla 1.

Como se puede comprobar, el análisis factorial reveló tres dimensiones principales que, a grandes rasgos, podían corresponder a:

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[1] Para definir la tipología de juventud, la realidad de la emancipación tardía en España nos lleva a considerar al tipo "juventud" hasta los 30 años (Alaminos 2008).

- Una dimensión política, que englobaría Gobierno y Parlamento nacional y autonómico, Tribunal Constitucional y partidos políticos.
- Una dimensión que incluiría a instituciones como la Monarquía, Fuerzas Armadas, Policía, Guardia Civil, Iglesia católica y CGPJ.
- Una tercer dimensión que agrupa principalmente a "actores sociales" como organizaciones empresariales, sindicatos y medios de comunicación.

Tabla 1: *Análisis factorial: matriz de componentes rotados, población general*

Matriz de componentes rotadosa	Componente		
	1	2	3
La Monarquía	.481	.588	
El Gobierno	.742		
El Parlamento	.751		
El Gobierno de su comunidad autónoma	.845		
El Parlamento de su comunidad autónoma	.852		
El Tribunal Constitucional	.497		
El Defensor del Pueblo			
Las Fuerzas Armadas		.853	
La Policía		.866	
La Guardia Civil		.890	
Los partidos políticos	.569		.519
Las organizaciones empresariales			.588
Los sindicatos			.842
Los medios de comunicación			.665
La Iglesia católica		.526	
El Consejo General del Poder Judicial		.469	.486

Método de extracción: Análisis de componentes principales.
Método de rotación: Normalización Equamax con Kaiser.
a. La rotación ha convergido en 5 iteraciones.

Sin embargo, al seleccionar como muestra únicamente a los encuestados de 30 años y menos, descubrimos que el análisis factorial extrae únicamente dos factores, como se ve en la tabla 2, quedando en uno de ellos los políticos

y los actores sociales, y un segundo grupo compuesto por Fuerzas Armadas, Policía y Guardia Civil.

Tabla 2: *Análisis factorial: matriz de componentes rotados, población de 30 años y menos*

Matriz de componentes rotadosa	Componente	
	1	2
La Monarquía	.535	.501
El Gobierno	.708	
El Parlamento	.815	
El Gobierno de su comunidad autónoma	.862	
El Parlamento de su comunidad autónoma	.886	
El Tribunal Constitucional	.679	
El Defensor del Pueblo	.660	
Las Fuerzas Armadas		.848
La policía		.863
La Guardia Civil		.917
Los partidos políticos	.772	
Las organizaciones empresariales	.634	
Los sindicatos	.598	
Los medios de comunicación	.545	
La Iglesia católica	.451	.493
El Consejo General del Poder Judicial	.553	.583

Método de extracción: Análisis de componentes principales.
Método de rotación: Normalización Equamax con Kaiser.
a. La rotación ha convergido en 3 iteraciones.

Significativamente, el hecho de que los jóvenes no diferencian entre partidos tradicionales y organizaciones tradicionales (como sindicatos), coincide con la idea de "casta" planteada por el partido político *Podemos*, surgido en las elecciones Europeas de 2014. Ello plantea, como mínimo, la idea de que el alejamiento no solo se limita al bipartidismo sino también al entramado institucional establecido.

Partiendo de la organización política territorial española, y a fin de minimizar los sesgos, se cruzó la opinión sobre gobierno y parlamento, en los ámbitos nacional y autonómico, con la ubicación ideológica, sin que se encontraran diferencias significativas entre ambos ámbitos, incluso controlando si el partido que gobierna en la Comunidad Autónoma es el mismo que en el Gobierno central. Ciertamente se produce un sesgo respecto a la ubicación ideológica, pero no así en cuanto a la confianza en las instituciones del ámbito central y autonómico. Basándonos en toda la información mencionada, se decidió construir un índice de confianza en el sistema político a partir de la valoración media de los partidos políticos, Gobierno y Parlamento en los ámbitos central y autonómico.

La siguiente variable, importancia de los problemas del país, se construyó como variable latente que utiliza como variables indicadoras dos índices que recogen la importancia que se le da a los problemas económicos y políticos, respectivamente, en función de si son mencionados como primer problema del país (con un peso de 1), segundo (con un peso de 1/2) o tercero (peso de 1/3). Paralelamente, la siguiente variable en consideración, valoración de la situación del país, utiliza como indicadoras tanto la valoración de la situación económica como la valoración de la situación política del país.

La frecuencia con la que se habla de política toma en consideración la frecuencia de debate político en dos ámbitos diferenciados: la familia y las amistades. Tiene que ver con el interés por la política, elemento importante en tanto que mediador en el grado de participación general (Santacreu 2008).

Por último, el activismo político se construyó también como variable latente, utilizando como variables indicadoras la participación, durante los últimos 12 meses, en alguna manifestación, huelga o firma de peticiones.

A partir de todas estas variables y de su ajuste empírico surge el modelo propuesto (figura 1).

Este modelo posee una vocación evaluativa con el objetivo de determinar qué variables dentro del contexto sociopolítico explican en mejor medida el refuerzo o la inhibición de los sujetos en su intención de voto hacia la opción bipartidista (PP+PSOE). En este sentido, el resultado del modelo plantea las relaciones explicativas que se muestran empíricamente significativas entre las variables que ponemos en juego, siguiendo una lógica deductiva a partir del manejo y la disposición de las hipótesis previas de trabajo, así como del establecimiento de un orden explicativo entre dichas variables. El modelo estructural lo compone el conjunto de las variables latentes, tanto endógenas como exógenas, y las relaciones que resultan entre ellas, mediante las cuales podemos observar vínculos de dependencia múltiple. Como se aprecia, el resultado se concreta en un modelo no recursivo en el que el voto bipartidista y la confianza en el sistema político mantienen una relación recíproca, de carácter

Figura 1: *Modelo estructural sobre la explicación del voto bipartidista en la población juvenil española*

Chi-Square=35.13, df=37, P-value=0.55711, RMSEA=0.000
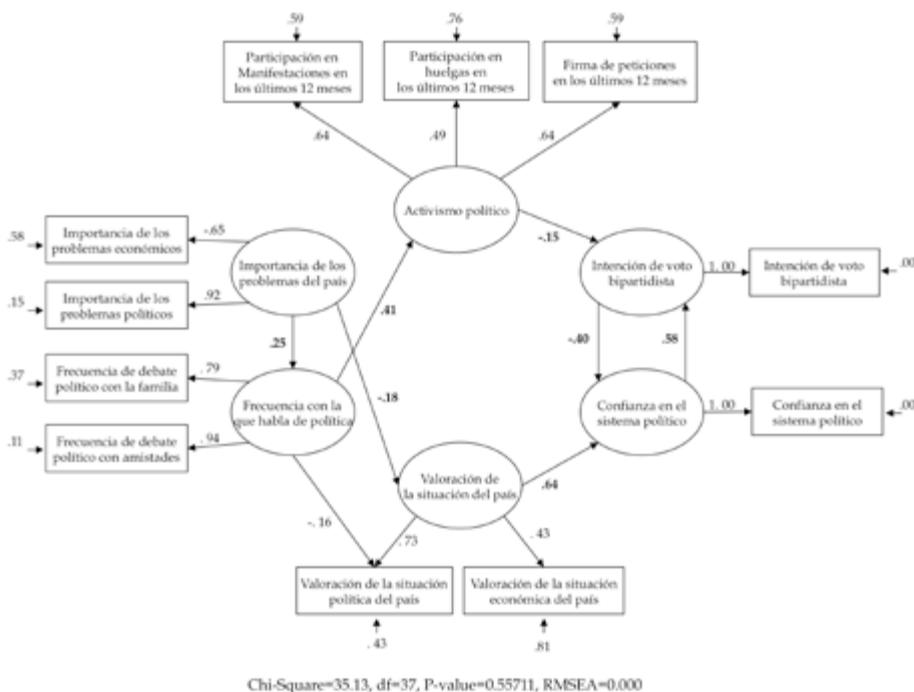
inconsistente en cuanto a su signos, lo que constituye uno de los principales hallazgos del estudio como más adelante veremos.

Valoración del modelo

El proceso de validación del modelo se ha realizado a partir de diferentes fuentes. En este trabajo presentamos tres de ellas: en primer lugar, los coeficientes globales de bondad de ajuste del modelo, con el fin de mostrar diferentes estadísticos que nos cercioran la validez empírica de nuestra propuesta. En segundo lugar, el examen de la significación de los coeficientes de las relaciones que componen el diagrama del modelo, que nos ayuden a evaluar de una forma gráfica las relaciones de dependencia entre las variables que forman parte del modelo, y que en este caso se presentan en su forma estandarizada. Esta información se complementa, finalmente, con el análisis de las diferentes ecuaciones estructurales resultantes del modelo, que nos proporcionarán información entre otras cuestiones de la significación de cada una de las relaciones propuestas.

a) Coeficientes globales de bondad de ajuste

Los índices de ajuste más habituales que se utilizan para la validación de modelos son los siguientes: Chi-cuadrado, grados de libertad, RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) y *p-Value*. El Chi-cuadrado es una medida de ajuste global del modelo sobre los datos. En nuestro modelo, la magnitud de los grados de libertad es de 37 y la magnitud del Chi-cuadrado es de 35.13, lo que nos indica un buen ajuste (para 35 grados de libertad y $\chi^2_{.95}$ se espera un valor inferior a 49.80). Los test estadísticos basados en Chi-cuadrado son muy sensibles a errores pequeños en el caso de muestras grandes. En nuestro análisis, dado que estamos trabajando con la población de 30 años y menos, contamos con una muestra reducida (336 casos), pero en cualquier caso, dada la sensibilidad que esta medida tiene con respecto al tamaño muestra, muchos investigadores han propuesto toda una variedad de índices para evaluar el ajuste de los modelos. Todas las medidas de bondad de ajuste son funciones de Chi-cuadrado y de los grados de libertad, y muchos de estos índices no solo consideran el ajuste del modelo, sino también su simplicidad (Hox y Bechger 1998). Jöreskog y Sörbom, creadores del programa LISREL, que es el que hemos utilizado para la realización del modelo, recomiendan también el uso de dos índices de bondad de ajuste llamados GFI (Goodness of Fit Index) y AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index) (Jöreskog y Sörbom 1989). Rex Kline (1998), en la valoración de ajustes de modelos estructurales, recomienda además la lectura de los resultados de otros tres test estadísticos: NFI (Normed Fit Index), NNFI (Non Normed Fit Index) y SRMR (Standarized Root Mean Square Residual). En la tabla 3 podemos ver los resultados de todos estos índices para el modelo propuesto.

Como se puede observar, los índices de ajuste poseen valores dentro de los márgenes asumidos como aceptables. Las pruebas de ajuste muestra un

Tabla 3: *Coeficientes de bondad de ajuste*

Estadísticos	Variación	Valores recomendables	Valores del modelo
RMSEA		< 0.05	0.000
p- Value	0 − 1	> 0.05	0.55711
GFI	0 − 1	> 0.90	0.98
AGFI	0 − 1	> 0.90	0.97
NFI	0 − 1	> 0.80	0.96
NNFI	0 − 1	> 0.95	1.00
SRMR		Valores cercanos a 0	0.04

RMSEA muy bajo (0.000), así como una probabilidad muy superior a 0.05 (0.55711), lo que nos indica que el modelo que proponemos ajusta correctamente sobre los datos.

b) Coeficientes de relaciones en el diagrama

La lectura de los diagramas nos puede ser de mucha utilidad para describir y evaluar las relaciones de dependencia que se establecen entre las variables. En el diagrama que presentamos, que se ofrece en su solución estandarizada, podemos distinguir entre el modelo estructural (compuesto por las variables latentes y sus relaciones) y los modelos de medición (los sistemas de variables indicadoras para cada una de las variables latentes).

Los modelos de medición referidos a las variables latentes siguen mostrando un ajuste empírico correcto, manteniendo en conjunto una carga importante sobre las variables indicadoras, y expresando por lo tanto una medición adecuada de las variables latentes que las explican. Respecto al modelo estructural, representado por las relaciones entre las variables latentes, el primer resultado a considerar es la no recursividad del modelo. Existe, en este sentido, una relación recíproca e inconsistente entre la variable confianza en el sistema político e intención de voto bipartidista (con un coeficiente estandarizado de 0.58 desde la confianza en el sistema político hacia la intención de voto bipartidista) y viceversa (coeficiente de -0.40 desde la intención de voto bipartidista hacia la confianza en el sistema político), lo que se puede interpretar como que entre ambas variables presiden una situación de cambio (frente a los sistemas consistentes, que implican un sistema de *statu quo*). Cuanta mayor es la confianza de los jóvenes en el sistema político, mayor intención de éstos se registra en el espectro compuesto por los dos partidos políticos mayoritarios. Por el contrario, el aumento de voto bipardista de los jóvenes incide en una mayor desconfianza de esta población hacia el sistema político. El dato viene a indicarnos que nos hallamos ante una situación de cambio que explica el descenso de intención de voto bipartidista. Ante una contexto generalizado de desconfianza de los jóvenes hacia la política, esta dirección de voto, lejos de ser un refugio electoral para esta población, redunda precisamente en una mayor desconfianza, lo que plantea un escenario de escisión entre las intenciones políticas de los jóvenes y el garante de confianza que deberían suponer las dos grandes fuerzas políticas tradicionales en España.

Respecto a las variables exógenas e intervinientes propias del contexto sociopolítico, cabe destacar varias cuestiones. El argumentario del modelo asume como variable exógena explicativa la importancia que los sujetos otorgan a los problemas políticos y económicos como ejes fundamentales de preocu-

pación ciudadana en la marcha del país, cuestiones que en la actualidad se encuentran en el centro del debate público en un país como España, inmerso todavía en una crisis política y económica de profundo calado. A partir de esta variable, los resultados del modelo muestran dos trayectorias o caminos internos que conducen a explicar el sentido del voto bipartidista, uno de carácter valorativo o evaluativo de la situación de la esfera pública, y otro más ligado a la acción participativa.

En el primer caso podemos apreciar que la importancia otorgada a los problemas económicos y políticos del país explica en gran medida la valoración que los jóvenes hacen de la situación del país (-0.18). Una valoración positiva o negativa se halla directamente vinculada a la confianza que éstos desarrollan sobre el sistema político como espacio motriz en la gestión de los problemas sociales. Una consideración positiva de la situación actual se hallaría por lo tanto relacionada positivamente con la confianza en el parlamento y en los partidos políticos (0.64), y ello favorece la concentración de voto joven dentro del espacio electoral bipartidista. Por el contrario, la cadena de refuerzos explicada se invierte en el caso de que aquellos jóvenes que desarrollan una percepción negativa de la situación del país. Una visión desaprobatoria de los problemas económicos y políticos explica directamente un aumento en la desconfianza hacia el sistema político, atribuyendo a este espacio gran parte de la responsabilidad de los problemas, y castigando mediante el voto a las opciones políticas mayoritarias con experiencia en el gobierno del país.

El segundo trayecto que describía el modelo se halla más ligado a la acción participativa que a cuestiones evaluativas. Aquí, la importancia atribuida por los jóvenes a los problemas políticos y económicos existentes en España influye en la frecuencia con que la juventud habla y discute sobre política en sus ámbitos cotidianos, la familia y los amigos (0.25). Por su parte, el aumento de la presencia de la política en la vida cotidiana de los jóvenes, favorecido por la importancia otorgada a los problemas políticos y económicos existentes, contribuye a explicar la activación de éstos a través de acciones de protesta pública (0.41) tales como la participación en huelgas, manifestaciones, o la contribución con su firma a peticiones de carácter político. Y a su vez, un mayor activismo reivindicativo hacia el poder político se traducirá en un abandono de la oferta electoral de los dos grandes partidos políticos (-0.15). Pero de la misma forma que en el caso del componente evaluativo que registra el modelo, una percepción aminorada de los problemas políticos y económicos expondría, a través de una cadena explicativa, en primer lugar una menor presencia del debate político entre los jóvenes, con lo que consecuentemente se reducirían las expresiones de protesta, y abriría la puerta a una mayor concentración de voto bipartidista.

c) Matriz de efectos y ecuaciones estructurales del modelo

Las ecuaciones estructurales y la matriz de efectos ofrecen una representación alternativa de las hipótesis causales presentes en el modelo que puede ayudarnos a sistematizar las relaciones antes expuestas. Así, el modelo cuenta con las siguientes ecuaciones estructurales:

$$y_1 = 0.25x_1 + 0.94$$
$$y_2 = -0.18x_1 + 0.97$$
$$y_3 = 0.41y_1 + 0.83$$
$$y_4 = -0.40y_5 + 0.64y_2 + 0.95$$
$$y_5 = -0.15y_3 + 0.58y_4 + 1.04$$

Donde:

x_1 = Importancia de los problemas del país
y_1 = Frecuencia con la que habla de política
y_2 = Valoración de la situación del país
y_3 = Activismo político
y_4 = Confianza en el sistema político
y_5 = Intención de voto bipartidista

Las pruebas *t* para cada coeficiente nos indican que las relaciones propuestas son significativas. Así, en primer lugar, la frecuencia con la que se habla de política en los ámbitos familiar y de amistad estaría explicada de manera significativa (t=3.88) por la importancia que se le otorga a los problemas de índole económico y político del país. Así, a mayor importancia, podemos predecir una mayor probabilidad para hablar de política.

Por otro lado, la importancia que se le da a los problemas del país explicaría también la valoración de la situación del país, en el sentido de que cuando más importancia se le otorga a estos problemas, peor es la valoración de la situación (t=-2.21), siempre hablando en términos probabilísticos.

En cuanto al activismo político, según nuestra hipótesis inicial, hemos considerado que estaría explicado de forma significativa (t=4.03) por la frecuencia con la que se habla de política en el ámbito familiar y de las amistades. Así, un entorno en el que se habla de política favorece la aparición de los comportamientos que hemos utilizado como indicadores del activismo político (como por ejemplo participar en una manifestación o firmar una petición de carácter político).

Pasamos así a una de las variables centrales del modelo, la confianza en el sistema político, que estaría explicada de forma significativa por una menor

probabilidad de voto bipartidista (t=-2.55) y una mejor valoración de la situación del país en términos políticos y económicos (t=4.89)

Finalmente el voto bipartidista vendría caracterizado, en términos probabilísticos, con un menor activismo político (t=-1.98) y una mayor confianza en el sistema político (t=4.28), conformando así la relación recíproca que se encuentra en el núcleo del modelo no recursivo.

Al modelo presentado en este trabajo le corresponde, además, la siguiente matriz de efectos que nos permite analizar su estructura:

Tabla 4: *Matriz de efectos del modelo*

	y1	y2	y3	y4	y5	x1
y1	-	0	0	0	0	1
y2	0	-	0	0	0	1
y3	1	0	-	0	0	0
y4	0	1	0	-	1	0
y5	0	0	1	1	-	0

La matriz de efectos nos muestra de forma visual la existencia (1) o no (0) de relaciones entre variables, así como las variables con un mayor grado externo (aquellas que más explican en cuanto al número de variables) y un mayor grado interno (las variables que son explicadas por un mayor número de variables). En el caso que nos ocupa, las variables y_4 e y_5, confianza en el sistema político e intención de voto bipartidista respectivamente, son las que presentan un mayor grado interno (2) a la vez que presentan un grado externo cada una, teniendo por tanto una posición central en el modelo. Por su parte, la variable exógena x_1, importancia de los problemas del país, es la que presenta un mayor grado externo (2). Por último, el modelo presenta una densidad de 0.28, que subraya el criterio de parsimonia en la explicación que el modelo ofrece.

Conclusiones

Los resultados del estudio realizado vienen a confirmar de manera empírica las hipótesis manejadas en la introducción del artículo. La lectura del modelo refuerza la idea de la progresiva inclinación de los jóvenes españoles por la utilización de mecanismos no convencionales como forma de mediación de

su voluntad política ante una situación de crisis. En el caso de una percepción negativa de la situación del país, la confianza de la juventud en los agentes políticos tradicionales se ve mermada y buscan canales alternativos para vehicular las necesidades y preferencias en la esfera pública. Este hecho cuestiona hasta cierto punto las tesis manejadas sobre el abandono progresivo de la participación electoral de los jóvenes que enraíza este comportamiento en una supuesta apatía o desinterés por los asuntos políticos.

Más bien, a partir de la lectura de los resultados, lo que los jóvenes abandonarían son las soluciones institucionalizadas y la democracia de mayorías como espacio en el que dirimir la política, desplazándose en consecuencia hacia dos ámbitos diferenciados. El primero lo constituye el aumento del interés y atención de la juventud hacia nuevos actores, lo que llevaría el voto joven hacia partidos políticos emergentes. Este caso es especialmente propicio en España, donde desde el movimiento ciudadanista del 15-M se ha multiplicado el número de nuevas opciones partidistas. Dada la apertura de los jóvenes a nuevos enfoques políticos, constituyen el segmento de población más receptivo a la aparición de terceros partidos adicionales al bipartidismo. En todos los casos, cuando emerge un partido independiente significativo se produce un trasvase de voto joven hacia él, cuestión que ha sido registrada ya en múltiples países occidentales como Reino Unido, Canadá, Irlanda o Noruega (Wattenberg 2011). La segunda vía de cambio en los patrones de voto de los jóvenes pasa por el afianzamiento de formas alternativas de acción política distintas al voto, motivada por la desconfianza que generan los partidos políticos tradicionales, lo que llevaría a los jóvenes a votar cada vez menos. Nos hallaríamos aquí ante un cambio motivado por la reacción de los jóvenes ante la oferta electoral que se les presenta en el mercado político, generada desde atribuciones negativas a la esfera política tradicional, y a la incapacidad de las instituciones políticas para reaccionar a las diferentes expectativas del electorado (Pharr y Putnam 2000), más que desde el deseo explícito de abrir nuevos cauces democráticos.

Pero en cualquier caso, en ninguna de las dos opciones de cambio cabría hablar, al menos en términos amplios, de desinterés o alienación en la socialización política de la juventud española. Simplemente los jóvenes definen la política de una forma diferente (Hill y Louth 2006). Sí podríamos, en cambio, hablar de crisis de los grandes partidos en su respuesta ante una generación socializada en gran medida durante tiempos de crisis, y en una época caracterizada por el riesgo y la incertidumbre. El abandono del bipartidismo, visto así, y utilizando la tipología creada por Hirschman (1970) para describir las estrategias de respuesta a situaciones de desafección política, no podría encuadrarse en los jóvenes españoles dentro de una respuesta de marginación o autoexclusión del sistema político. El declive bipartidista por el contrario sí

sería explicable en unos casos desde respuestas de escape por parte de algunos segmentos juveniles, o bien desde respuestas de voz activa en otros casos. Lo que parece claro, siguiendo esta tipología, es que la cuarta posibilidad de respuesta, esto es, la fidelidad de los jóvenes hacia el sistema político aceptando que el ámbito político tradicional debe ser apoyado incluso en contextos de desafección o descontento, no refleja la realidad de la percepción de los jóvenes españoles, más aún perteneciendo a un segmento de edad con una especial movilidad electoral (Jowell y Park 1998; Hill y Louth 2006). Ello no quiere decir en absoluto que rechacen el voto. Incluso en contextos de amplia desconfianza o cinismo político, la población puede estar interesada también en el voto y las elecciones (Dermody *et al.* 2010), aunque su comportamiento electoral presente profundos cambios.

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I giovani e i valori nella sociologia di Antonio de Lillo

Gianfranco Bettin Lattes

The article focuses on Antonio de Lillo's contribution to the sociology of new generations. His studies are considered by showing their originality and methodological rigour as the result of his masterful experience. The topic of young people's values – which is de Lillo's main research field – is presented through his theoretical synthesis and the results of the research work conducted from 1974 to 2012. Particular attention is devoted to the analysis of "socialità ristretta" by young people, which is one of the most scientifically rich stimulus for the sociology of new generations.

La sociologia delle nuove generazioni

Una premessa, sia pur breve, è necessaria. Le ricerche empiriche sulle nuove generazioni hanno una loro storia consistente di cui si ha scarsa consapevolezza, perfino tra gli addetti ai lavori. Questo settore di ricerca copre un arco di tempo di oltre mezzo secolo nel quale la sociologia italiana si è esercitata, con successi alterni, nello studio del mutamento sociale e del mutamento politico anche, e forse soprattutto, grazie ad una riflessione sui giovani. Si sente, allora, l'esigenza di fare un bilancio critico complessivo – ancora assente in una forma sistematica – dei risultati in questo campo di ricerca che costituisce una vera e propria sociologia speciale. Un bilancio di questo tipo permette di rilanciare la questione giovanile come tema centrale per una società che aspiri ad una fase innovativa capace di superare la crisi economica e morale che la sta tragicamente opprimendo. Se volessimo avviare un bilancio potremmo dire che le stagioni più significative di questo lungo ed articolato processo di indagine sono almeno cinque (Cavalli e Leccardi 2013). Naturalmente non va dimenticato che ogni periodizzazione ha una sua validità relativa in quanto dipende dai criteri adottati per disegnarla. Una prima stagione è quella degli anni del primo Dopoguerra e degli anni Cinquanta del secolo scorso. Le poche ricerche allora effettuate su territori ed ambiti istituzionali differenti ci parlano di una gioventù in attesa di una nuova Italia dove si manifestavano i

primi segnali di benessere e dove le divisioni politiche erano molto nette. Gli anni immediatamente successivi sono gli anni del "miracolo economico" che stimolano anche nel mondo giovanile stili di vita nuovi insieme al bisogno di emancipazione dall'autorità familiare, scolastica ed ecclesiale. Lo scoppio del Sessantotto, tuttavia, trova tutti pressoché impreparati, anche i sociologi che pure respiravano questo clima, specialmente nelle aule universitarie. Negli anni Settanta la mobilitazione collettiva giovanile con finalità egualitarie si irrobustisce grazie al movimento delle donne e alla loro lotta contro il regime di genere. I sociologi percepiscono per la prima volta che la stratificazione sociale si complica e che accanto al conflitto di classe si pone con forza il mutamento che scaturisce dalle differenze generazionali e dalle differenze di genere, sospinto dagli attori che rappresentano questi nuovi interessi e sostenuto dai valori culturali che li motivano. I sociologi allora progettano ed attuano spesso delle ricerche sui movimenti giovanili, anche dall'interno, basate sull'osservazione partecipante. La seconda stagione della ricerca sui giovani si chiude alla fine degli anni Settanta e getta le basi teorico-metodologiche per un filone di studio, i *social movement studies*, che si consolida e che si aprirà a nuove prospettive negli anni Duemila e seguenti con il contributo di sociologi e scienziati politici ormai interamente dedicati a questo segmento particolare della gioventù. La terza stagione si apre con gli anni Ottanta ed è segnata dalle ricerche della scuola di Alberto Melucci. Questi studi testimoniano della fase in cui i movimenti giovanili assumono un andamento di tipo carsico e riportano in primo piano la dimensione micro-sociale della soggettività, oltre ad essere fortemente *issue-oriented*. Le ricerche riflettono la perdita di protagonismo dei giovani e la crucialità della categoria della presentificazione del tempo per cogliere una nuova, riduttiva e problematica dimensione dell'essere giovani. Gli anni Ottanta sono fondamentali perché, a partire dal 1983, prendono avvio le rilevazioni periodiche dell'Istituto Iard su un cospicuo campione nazionale di popolazione giovanile. Lo Iard con le sue sei indagini (l'ultima sarà effettuata nel 2004) ed i relativi rapporti di ricerca costruirà un patrimonio unico di dati che descrive in modo approfondito e rigoroso la pluralità di aspetti che caratterizza il mondo dei giovani e le sue più significative trasformazioni. Trasformazioni tipiche di una modernità avanzata lungo una transizione valoriale che, nel caso italiano, conferma solo in parte la direzione materialismo/post-materialismo tratteggiata su scala globale dai lavori di Ronald Inglehart. Lo studio dello stato di moratoria e dei suoi effetti caratterizza la quarta stagione, etichettata anche come la fase delle indagini sui giovani considerati nei termini di una "categoria penalizzata" che è impedita nell'ingresso nella vita adulta. Questa stagione vede l'interesse di economisti e demografi per un *topos* che sembrava di esclusiva competenza dei sociologi. Vengono messe in luce le carenze di istituzioni importanti sul piano forma-

tivo, come la scuola e l'università, che sono inefficaci perché troppo autore-ferenziali, ma si sottolinea anche la scarsa attenzione del mondo economico per i bisogni dei giovani: tutti aspetti che dichiarano la perniciosa tendenza gerontocratica della società italiana e la mancanza di equità tra le generazioni. Si conferma così l'ipotesi mannheimiana sulla statiticità delle società tradizionali che perseguono l'obiettivo del depotenziamento sistematico delle nuove generazioni. La quinta stagione si caratterizza per l'introduzione di un nuovo elemento metodologico: la prospettiva comparativa transnazionale. La ricerca considera la relazione tra i giovani e l'Europa come contesto che propone una nuova forma di cittadinanza e offre delle chance di vita inedite. In particolare si tiene conto del livello d'istruzione delle nuove generazioni e delle sue implicazioni sociali, degli orientamenti dei giovani rispetto alla cultura politica democratica come dato tipico della cultura nazionale ed europea, delle forme di mobilità giovanile nel territorio europeo e delle relative opportunità di studio e di lavoro. Il filone che tematizza la difficile europeizzazione dei giovani viene coltivato con sistematicità in particolare dai ricercatori del Centro Interuniversitario di Sociologia Politica (Ciuspo) di Firenze a partire dal 1999[1]. Queste sono le tappe di una storia che meriterebbe di essere ricostruita nella complessità tipica di un settore di ricerca plurilivello.

Quel che preme qui sottolineare è che Antonio de Lillo è stato indubbio protagonista almeno di tre di queste cinque stagioni, con lo stile di un raffinato e generoso direttore d'orchestra. Il suo contributo merita una valutazione critica a una distanza ravvicinata perché rappresenta un punto di partenza

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[1] Sia consentito rinviare a G. Bettin Lattes (a cura di), *Giovani e democrazia in Europa*, Cedam, Padova, 1999 (2 tomi); G. Bettin Lattes (a cura di), *Giovani Jeunes Jóvenes. Rapporto di ricerca sulle nuove generazioni e la politica nell'Europa del Sud*, Firenze University Press, Firenze, 2001; E. Caniglia, *Identità, partecipazione e antagonismo nella politica giovanile*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, 2002; J.F. Tezanos e G. Bettin Lattes (a cura di), *Los nuevos europeos: tendencias en ciudadania, identidades y exclusion social en los jovenes europeos*, numero speciale della rivista «Sistema», 197-198, 2007; L.G. Baglioni (a cura di), *Una generazione che cambia*, Firenze University Press, Firenze, 2007; M. Bontempi e R. Pocaterra (a cura di), *I figli del disincanto. Giovani e partecipazione politica in Europa*, Bruno Mondadori, Milano, 2007; G. Bettin Lattes e M. Bontempi (a cura di), *Generazione Erasmus? L'identità europea tra vissuto e istituzioni*, Firenze University Press, Firenze, 2008; A. Pirni, S. Monti Bragadin e G. Bettin Lattes (a cura di), *Tra il Palazzo e la strada. Gioventù e democrazia nella società europea*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, 2008; L.G. Baglioni (a cura di), *Scegliere di partecipare*, Firenze University Press, Firenze, 2011; C. Wagemann (a cura di), *La democrazia, i giovani, il Mediterraneo*, «SocietàMutamentoPolitica. Rivista Italiana di Sociologia», 3 (5), 2012; L.G. Baglioni, *Prometeo in catene. I dottorandi italiani tra scienza, politica e società*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, 2013; E. Recchi, M. Bontempi e C. Colloca (a cura di), *Metamorfosi sociali. Attori e luoghi del mutamento nella società contemporanea*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, 2013; A. Pirni, *Giovani e politica in Italia: gli studenti e la rielaborazione silenziosa del politico*, «Obets. Revista de Ciencias Sociales», 8 (2), 2013, pp. 315-341.

per proseguire un itinerario di ricerca ancor oggi indispensabile per capire le direzioni più generali del mutamento sociale (de Lillo 1984; 1988; 1993; 1997; 2002; 2005; 2006; 2007; 2009; 2010).

I giovani e i valori: il tema di studio di una vita

Antonio de Lillo nasce come metodologo ed il suo interesse per il metodo e per le tecniche della ricerca empirica, a partire dai primi studi sull'analisi del contenuto, lo ha accompagnato per tutta la sua vita di studioso. Ciò unitamente all'approfondimento originale di alcuni temi centrali nel dibattito sociologico come la stratificazione sociale ed i processi di mobilità, con particolare attenzione ai mutamenti del mercato del lavoro e delle professioni per l'analisi delle quali ha messo a punto importanti strumenti di rilevazione. Tuttavia, come scrive Antonio Schizzerotto,

> con ogni probabilità il più incisivo contributo che Antonio de Lillo ha dato alla crescita della sociologia italiana è costituito dalla lunga serie di rilevazioni – esempio raro, e forse unico, di indagini trasversali ripetute nel panorama nazionale della nostra disciplina – sulla cultura e sulla condizione giovanile, condotte con Carlo Buzzi e Alessandro Cavalli presso l'Istituto Iard. Si è trattato di un'iniziativa di grande importanza non solo per ragioni di metodo e per le importanti pubblicazioni alle quali ha dato luogo, ma anche perché – esempio, anche questo, rarissimo nella sociologia italiana – Antonio de Lillo fece in modo che i dati raccolti in tutte le rilevazioni Iard sui giovani italiani fossero messi liberamente a disposizione dei colleghi interessati a condurre analisi secondarie su di esse (Schizzerotto 2012)[2].

Perché e come Antonio de Lillo ha deciso di dedicare una parte (forse la più consistente) delle sue energie di sociologo, allo studio dei giovani? Il suo interesse originario per il tema risale all'inizio degli anni Settanta quando le scienze sociali optano per lo studio pluridisciplinare e sistematico di questa zona complessa della società italiana, allora immersa in un ciclo di rapida e radicale trasformazione socio-economica e culturale. Merita sottolineare che Carlo Tullio Altan nella *Introduzione* al suo *I valori difficili. Inchiesta sulle tendenze ideologiche e politiche dei giovani in Italia* esprime "un ringraziamento particolare al professor Antonio de Lillo, la cui collaborazione sul piano statistico è stata

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[2] I dati rilevati nelle sei indagini Iard sono disponibili presso il laboratorio Sociodata del Dipartimento di Sociologia dell'Università Milano-Bicocca (www.sociologiadip.unimib.it/sociodata/).

Facoltà di Scienze Politiche "Cesare Alfieri"
SCUOLA DI DOTTORATO IN SOCIOLOGIA

SEMINARIO DI STUDIO

Antonio de Lillo
Ordinario di Sociologia presso l'Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca

Valori
Questioni teoriche e analisi empiriche

23 marzo 2007 – ore 11.00

Firenze - Polo delle Scienze Sociali
Edificio D4, Sala riunioni 1.01, I piano

indispensabile e preziosa" (Tullio-Altan 1974: 8). Non a caso de Lillo risulta essere l'autore della parte III dello stesso libro-ricerca (de Lillo 1974). I suoi primi passi in questa direzione si muovono, dunque, mentre è docente di statistica sociale all'Università di Trento come esperto metodologo. Nello stesso periodo si impegna nello studio della relazione insegnanti-studenti, così come si configurava al livello dell'istruzione elementare, per passare successivamente, con le indagini Iard, ad una fascia giovanile di livello d'età più elevato. Ciò sempre senza dimenticare l'esplorazione, da lui prediletta, degli esiti dei processi di socializzazione e di formazione scolastica che preparano i giovani al loro ruolo di nuovi cittadini, nonché di possibili membri della classe dirigente di un'Italia moderna[3]. La ricerca dei motivi che spingono uno studioso a scegliere un'area di ricerca non è comunque agevole perché spesso la dimensione latente e più autentica di questo percorso resta completamente ignota. Va ricordato, per esempio, che de Lillo ha firmato pagine importanti di uno studio empirico originalissimo sulle modalità di uso del tempo dei bambini tra i 18 mesi ed i 6 anni quando lui stesso era un giovane e più che promettente sociologo (Livolsi, de Lillo e Schizzerotto 1980). Così come ha lavorato sulla preadolescenza, una fascia d'età tra gli 11 e i 13 anni praticamente inesplorata dalla sociologia che corrisponde alla frequenza della scuola secondaria di primo grado (de Lillo 2013). Quel che è certo è che de Lillo appartiene, in una posizione di spicco, alla piccola ma agguerrita pattuglia di scienziati sociali che si è dedicata allo studio empirico dei valori nell'Italia contemporanea. Anche il *frame* teorico che lo ha orientato nelle sue analisi sui giovani è radicato nella letteratura specialistica sui valori che conosceva molto bene[4]. Il dilemma teorico fondamentale riguardante la natura e la definizione dei valori reclama un'operazione preliminare di chiarezza concettuale. Si tratta di distinguere tra valori, atteggiamenti, tratti della personalità, norme e bisogni. Articolandola con raro nitore, de Lillo conduce in porto la necessaria specificazione concettuale tra categorie contermini e, quindi, perviene ad una definizione secondo cui " i valori sono concetti o credenze, intorno a stati

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[3] Questo riferimento storico in chiave di sociologia dell'educazione è rintracciabile nell'intervista di Roberto Moscati rilasciata nel corso del Convegno *Per una sociologia pubblica. La traccia di Antonio de Lillo nella ricerca sui giovani* celebrato in sua memoria il 19 aprile 2013 presso il Dipartimento di Comunicazione e Ricerca Sociale della Sapienza, Università degli Studi di Roma. Si veda: www.mediamonitorminori.it/AV_Antonio_De_Lillo.html, in part. Rassegna video (4).

[4] Antonio de Lillo progettava un lavoro teorico sui valori che purtroppo non ha visto la luce, ma parti significative della sua elaborazione sono state ritrovate grazie alla dottoressa Federica Pacini che ha registrato e trascritto il testo di una sua *lectio magistralis* dal titolo *Valori. Questioni teoriche e analisi empiriche* pronunciata il 24 marzo del 2007 presso la Scuola di Dottorato in Sociologia della Facoltà di Scienze Politiche "Cesare Alfieri" di Firenze. Le successive citazioni senza indicazione bibliografica sono tratte da questo materiale.

o comportamenti desiderabili, che guidano la selezione e la valutazione di comportamenti e di eventi, trascendono le situazioni specifiche e sono ordinati secondo la loro importanza relativa". Vengono qui ripresi alcuni elementi della classica definizione di Kluckhohn (1951) che sottolinea la dimensione della "desiderabilità" ma si recupera anche la visione di Rokeach (1973) che introduce l'aspetto della "condotta preferibile" e che dice che i valori sono degli elementi che danno significato all'azione. Gli autori che fanno da suo vero punto di riferimento sono però Schwartz e Bilsky (1987) che dei valori propongono una definizione *in progress*. Schwartz, in particolare, con la sua analisi empirica fatta in venti diversi paesi in tutto il mondo (1992) consente a de Lillo di avanzare una definizione in chiave di mappe semantiche legittimate empiricamente e dunque gli consente di costruire un discorso teorico che dia dei valori "una rappresentazione adeguata in termini di confini tra insiemi sfocati, perché questo sono appunto i valori". Antonio de Lillo sottolinea anche la componente cognitiva dei valori: "i valori definiscono i parametri entro i quali i comportamenti sono definiti accettabili e sono, in un qualche modo, delle strutture mentali attraverso le quali noi strutturiamo le nostre esperienze. I valori, a differenza degli atteggiamenti, sono solo positivi, perché sono l'unica guida, criterio di base dell'agire". La dimensione della relativizzazione dei valori insieme alla nozione di "sistema di valori" gli sono, poi, indispensabili per l'operativizzazione empirica del concetto e gli permettono di affrontare un nodo cruciale: come si rilevano i valori? Il dibattito è tra gli studiosi che sostengono il *ranking* (Inglehart, Rokeach) e quelli che optano per il *rating* (Schwartz). A parte i vantaggi e gli svantaggi sul piano pratico della rilevazione empirica e della elaborazione statistica dei dati[5], in realtà si tratta di due visioni diverse sulle caratteristiche di base del mondo dei valori. Una visione sostiene che i valori sono in competizione tra di loro e che reclamano da parte dell'attore una scelta in termini di priorità. L'altra visione sostiene, invece, che nell'agire concreto l'individuo non ordina i valori e non è consapevole della contraddittorietà di alcuni di essi. Antonio de Lillo opta per questa seconda prospettiva, ma è decisamente consapevole del fatto che non sia realmente possibile risolvere se un approccio sia migliore dell'altro, perché "diventa cruciale la concezione che il ricercatore ha del sistema dei valori e

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[5] Il *ranking* comporta un compito difficile per l'intervistato, non solo è inapplicabile nelle ricerche CATI, ma il carattere ipsativo della scala (si ha tale carattere quando si chiede all'intervistato di scegliere fra più alternative: in *items* di questo tipo si considerano i risultati in relazione ai valori del soggetto stesso piuttosto che ai valori di altri soggetti) rende impossibile l'uso di molte tecniche statistiche, possibili invece con il *rating*. Naturalmente anche il *rating* ha i suoi problemi: uno dei più grossi è il *response set*, quando l'intervistato usa un *range* più ristretto di quello proposto. Talchè la proposta di combinazione tra i due approcci risulta del tutto plausibile.

come ce li rappresenta". In questo modo ci viene ricordato che le scelte di tipo tecnico comportano sempre delle implicazioni teoriche di notevole rilievo. In concreto, nei differenti rapporti Iard si parla di valori perché si tenta di rispondere ad una domanda cruciale e complessa: "a che cosa i giovani attribuiscono valore, quali sono le cose che essi ritengono importanti per la loro vita e che definiscono l'orizzonte rispetto al quale costruire le proprie scale di priorità, i criteri in base ai quali compiere le scelte fondamentali che danno un senso all'esistenza?" (de Lillo 1988: 71).

L'irresistibile ascesa della socialità ristretta

Tra i dati costanti rilevabili nel lungo periodo c'è la centralità di interesse dei giovani per le aree della "socialità ristretta" che coinvolgono la famiglia di appartenenza, le relazioni amicali e sentimentali. La categoria della socialità ristretta è una delle tante proposte concettuali originali che dobbiamo a de Lillo e su questa categoria sarebbe bene esercitarsi ulteriormente. Ciò allo scopo di comprendere meglio le complesse forme identitarie di una gioventù che respinge o meglio diffida, non da oggi, della dimensione collettiva e che sembra prediligere un recinto protettivo senza elaborare progetti ed orizzonti aperti sull'esterno. Nella quinta indagine Iard (dati rilevati nel 2000) de Lillo formula la tesi della "irresistibile ascesa della socialità ristretta". "I dati confermano e rafforzano una tendenza che avevamo già rilevato nelle passate edizioni: il crescente peso dato dai giovani alle relazioni interpersonali, in particolare a quelle amicali ed affettive accanto a quelle familiari. È come se intorno alla famiglia si andasse progressivamente strutturando un nucleo forte di valori tutti riferiti all'intorno sociale immediato della persona. Nucleo che pervade di sé e qualifica l'intero sistema valoriale delle giovani generazioni" (de Lillo 2002: 41). Antonio de Lillo propone quattro dimensioni utili per classificare e poi situare in una sorta di mappa i valori dei giovani: 1. valori relativi alla vita individuale (famiglia, lavoro, amicizia, amore, carriera, autorealizzazione, vita confortevole); 2. valori di tipo evasivo (attività sportive, svago e tempo libero, godersi la vita); 3. valori della vita collettiva (solidarietà, eguaglianza sociale, libertà e democrazia, patria); 4. valori legati all'impegno personale (impegno politico, impegno religioso, impegno sociale, studio e interessi culturali). In estrema sintesi: i punteggi medi delle quattro aree valoriali espressi in percentuale per l'ampia fascia giovanile 15-34 anni e su una base campionaria di 3.000 intervistati evidenziano che i valori legati all'impegno personale hanno medie assai più basse delle altre aree (51,1%). Inoltre i valori etichettati "vita collettiva" raggiungono medie piuttosto elevate (76,2%). Il dato suggerisce che i giovani, seppur molto legati alla dimensione familiare ed affettiva (86,9%)

e ai piaceri dell'evasione (78,1%), non trascurano i temi della società civile e hanno una certa propensione alla cultura civica. La procedura dello *scaling* multidimensionale consente la ricostruzione dello spazio concettuale e semantico entro cui si collocano le risposte degli intervistati. Vi è un nucleo forte di valori come famiglia, amore, amicizia e lavoro che rappresentano un punto di riferimento fondamentale e che si collocano al centro della costruzione concreta della vita dei giovani. Fin qui la mappa non ci fa scoprire niente di nuovo. La novità, o meglio la sorpresa, riguarda i valori dell'area "vita collettiva" che si collocano anch'essi nella zona della socialità ristretta e molto vicini ai valori della vita individuale. Il che "porta a concludere che tali temi non vengano tanto visti come esercizio di virtù civiche o riconoscimento di diritti generalizzati, quanto piuttosto come elementi costitutivi della propria identità personale. In altre parole, la libertà e la democrazia sono intese più come diritti personali da far valere, che come conquiste collettive. I valori conquistati in nome di tutti vengono così piegati alle richieste di sicurezza e di rassicurazione che solo l'intorno sociale più vicino e tranquillizzante può garantire" (*Ivi*: 47-48).

La mole di dati sui valori dei giovani analizzati ripetutamente da de Lillo, a partire dai primi anni Ottanta fino al 2004, viene ordinata e interpretata tramite una griglia che è utile anche al fine di valutare criticamente la ricchezza euristica di un lavoro di studio dalla impareggiabile sistematicità. La griglia prevede quattro aspetti interdipendenti: "la gerarchia dei valori, l'articolazione dei valori, il loro mutamento nel tempo e, infine, una rappresentazione di sintesi dell'atteggiamento dei giovani verso la vita". Il primo aspetto viene indagato tramite delle domande che riguardano, per l'appunto, "le cose importanti della vita". L'adozione di una scala Likert e la ricostruzione a posteriori di un'inevitabile graduatoria corrisponde all'esigenza, fondamentale per de Lillo, sia di ottenere la maggiore spontaneità possibile dagli intervistati, sia di valorizzare al massimo grado la struttura latente che presiede alla formazione e all'espressione dei valori. Nella ricerca Iard più recente (dati rilevati nel 2004) il ruolo del lavoro (molto importante per il 67,2%) perde la sua persistente priorità rispetto a valori come la salute (91,9%), la famiglia (86,5%), la pace (80,2%), la libertà (79,6%), l'amore (76,0%) e le amicizie (74,3%). L'interesse verso l'attività politica (per niente o poco importante per il 73,8%) e l'orientamento verso la sfera pubblica toccano livelli minimi che fanno scricchiolare le basi di una nuova cittadinanza partecipe e responsabile, nonostante che la democrazia sia dichiarata molto importante per il 66,1%. I sociologi devono naturalmente decodificare i meccanismi che conducono a questi esiti ed approfondire le dinamiche soggettive ed anche societarie che alimentano la socialità ristretta e i suoi perniciosi effetti. Come si articolano i valori? Un'interpretazione sociologica dello studio dei valori in quanto criteri guida dell'azione (o dell'inazione) di un tipo di identità giovanile, di per sé in una fase di assestamento, non può

prescindere dalla valutazione di come le diseguaglianze influenzino i modi di pensare e gli stili di vita dei giovani. Come si vede, de Lillo tiene conto soprattutto di come il genere, l'età e il capitale culturale nonché la correlazione tra questi tre fattori configuri la variabilità delle risposte degli intervistati. Dato che si tratta di giovani, immersi in uno stato di moratoria che sembra senza fine, è importante valutare l'influenza della famiglia di origine[6]. Più in generale, le appartenenze ascritte prendono spazio su quelle acquisitive: si tratta di un indicatore empirico nella prospettiva di un mutamento regressivo che depotenzia ogni chance di sviluppo innovativo a beneficio delle giovani generazioni. In breve, l'articolazione sociale dei valori nella sua problematicità mostra come i singoli fattori esplicativi (genere, età, capitale culturale) influenzino con differente intensità la rilevanza attribuita agli aspetti più importanti della vita[7]. Dato lo spazio disponibile che non permette una rassegna analitica estesa del panorama valoriale e delle sue dinamiche si può solo sottolineare che il valore della solidarietà, che viene considerata come molto importante da quasi la metà degli intervistati, sia invece considerato basso per i giovani delle classi alte e massimo per i giovani delle famiglie di una classe operaia allargata, sia inoltre più valutato dalle ragazze, dai più anziani e da chi proviene da ambiti familiari con un minore livello di scolarità. Ma il dato che più stupisce, lo si è già accennato, è che la solidarietà, usualmente ritenuta una pietra angolare delle virtù civili, viene percepita dai giovani più nei termini di una delle proprie "esigenze identitarie personali che come impegno verso gli altri". Inoltre, l'autorealizzazione, che è uno dei valori maggiormente apprezzati, mentre rappresenta per le ragazze un bisogno diffuso, per i ragazzi è un bisogno di cui si diventa consapevoli con il passare degli anni. Le famiglie con il capitale culturale più elevato alimentano maggiormente nelle loro nuove generazioni i valori dell'impegno sociale e politico così come il culto delle virtù civili mentre i cosiddetti valori materialisti del benessere economico e della carriera sono appannaggio piuttosto di chi parte dai gradini inferiori della stratificazione sociale. A questo punto merita aprire una breve parentesi per osservare che

[6] In realtà de Lillo, confermando la sua raffinata e scrupolosa sensibilità di studioso, insiste sulla cautela con la quale si devono considerare i dati relativi agli orientamenti verso la famiglia nelle aspirazioni dei giovani perché "famiglia" è un termine intriso di forte ambiguità semantica. Sul punto cfr. de Lillo (2007: 148-149; in particolare la nota 15 di pagina 149). Meritano una sottolineatura anche le importanti osservazioni sulle trasformazioni dei rapporti tra genitori e figli a partire dall'inizio del XX secolo e la transizione tipologica dalla famiglia autoritaria alla famiglia autorevole, dalla famiglia negoziale alla famiglia affettiva tratteggiata nel suo saggio-ricerca *Preadolescenza: un'età problematica* (de Lillo 2013: 14-15).

[7] I modelli deducibili dall'influenza del genere, dell'età e del capitale culturale su ciascuno degli aspetti importanti della vita sono descritti analiticamente da de Lillo (2007: 144-151).

de Lillo da sempre ha assunto, in modo empiricamente motivato, una certa distanza dalla tesi originaria di Inglehart (1977). Già nel 1988, infatti, de Lillo ci proponeva una distinzione tra giovani liberal-democratici (i più vicini alla polarità post-materialistica e solo il 2,7% del campione Iard); i liberal-materialisti (26,6%); i democratico-materialisti (14,2%); i materialisti (20,8%) ed infine i materialisti-autoritari (35,2%). "La tipologia mette ben in luce come tra i giovani italiani di questa generazione si possa parlare di un forte bisogno di ordine e di sicurezza economica e come i cosiddetti valori post-materialistici stentino ad affermarsi come dominanti" (de Lillo 1988: 83).

Il mutamento dei valori nel tempo, lo si è detto, è il terzo elemento della griglia interpretativa applicata ai dati Iard che, compatibilmente con le diversità degli *items* e del campione indagato con regolarità ogni quattro anni nel corso di oltre vent'anni, permette di valutare la stabilità del quadro valoriale per una popolazione tra i 15 ed i 24 anni[8]. La sostanziale stabilità degli orientamenti di valore appare, nella indagine Iard più recente, parzialmente scossa. Il costante ripiegamento nel privato con una forte opzione per i valori dell'amore, dell'amicizia ed in generale con una centralità della sfera delle relazioni intime viene confermato, ma viene ora riequilibrato da un certo slancio, non senza contraddizioni, rivolto ai valori dell'impegno sociale e religioso. Per quanto concerne le istituzioni viene confermata la fiducia verso le agenzie che presiedono al mantenimento dell'ordine (esercito, polizia e carabinieri), mentre molto scarsa è la fiducia verso le istituzioni politiche (partiti e sindacati), di rappresentanza (parlamento) e di governo. Tuttavia, nonostante significative differenze, nella sostanza l'orizzonte valoriale delle giovani generazioni spalmato nello spazio di vent'anni non appare molto dissimile da quello vissuto dai loro genitori al tempo della loro gioventù. Questa deduzione è una conferma della persistente ricerca della felicità in un cantuccio e dell'incapacità innovativa dei giovani, della loro triste tendenza al *bowling alone*, di un orientamento verso il sé che conduce verso un quadro societario dalla esasperata, quanto sterile, individualizzazione.

Esser giovani tra autodeterminazione e fatalismo

Il quarto elemento della griglia interpretativa è quello dell'atteggiamento verso la vita che de Lillo propone nell'intento di "caratterizzare una generazione,

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[8] Si veda in particolare la tabella 1.3 e i commenti di de Lillo (2007: 152-155). È noto che le classi di età in questo intervallo sono state intervistate nelle indagini del 1983 e del 1987. Nelle indagini successive il campione ha riguardato l'intervallo 15-34 anni: lo stato di moratoria si riflette, ovviamente, sulle modalità di campionamento.

le linee culturali dominanti o, se si vuole, lo spirito del tempo" (de Lillo 1988: 12). È appena il caso di osservare che, pur senza citarlo, de Lillo qui riprende un elemento cruciale nella teoria delle generazioni di Mannheim (1928-1929) quello (aristotelico) dell'entelechia che, sia pure in altre forme, appare anche nella teoria delle generazioni di Ortega y Gasset (1947). Ma la declinazione che ne fa de Lillo è particolare sia per la sua preoccupazione di operativizzare empiricamente ogni categoria sia per la sua stretta osservanza ai canoni della sociologia. Non a caso leggiamo nei suoi scritti che

> non ci sembra possibile parlare della condizione giovanile, come se fosse una proprietà generale o una struttura di fondo che caratterizza le persone per il solo fatto di trovarsi in una certa fase della vita. In realtà, accanto ad alcuni comportamenti ed atteggiamenti che possono considerarsi propri dell'età, troviamo notevoli diversificazioni in termini di stili di vita, di propensioni, di livelli di progettualità, di attese. Il modo di essere giovani è profondamente segnato da condizioni che non dipendono dalla volontà dei singoli attori-soggetti: il sesso, la condizione sociale della famiglia d'origine e l'area geografica nella quale si è nati (de Lillo 1988: 158).

Ed ancora, "considerare le giovani generazioni come un tutto unico è fuorviante, perché il sistema di diseguaglianze che caratterizza le nostre società si riflette in modo diretto sui giovani" (de Lillo 2007: 155)[9]. L'età, il genere, il livello d'istruzione dei genitori (e il livello d'istruzione acquisito dagli stessi giovani), come si è visto, differenziano la popolazione giovane in modo assai significativo nelle modalità del vissuto dei valori ed alimentano scelte e comportamenti non omogenei e, più in generale, producono un dato atteggiamento verso la vita. Questo indicatore complesso, ma molto utile sotto il profilo della definizione identitaria, viene elaborato tramite una batteria di domande relative ad alcuni aspetti fondamentali cruciali del vivere: la fiducia verso il prossimo, la percezione del futuro, la progettualità, la reversibilità delle scelte, il gusto del rischio. I dati esprimono una visione della vita che vede i giovani messi in un angolo, privi di desiderio di protagonismo, bisognosi di protezione. Più precisamente: più della metà del campione è diffidente verso gli estranei; solo poco più della metà dei giovani intervistati vede nel proprio futuro delle chance positive; il rischio va vissuto con moderazione e le scelte devono essere sempre reversibili. Ne consegue che la sola ipotesi che si può formulare è che

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[9] Va notato che de Lillo amava occuparsi dello studio delle varie fasce di età in cui si poteva scomporre il mondo dei giovani tra i 15 ed i 34 anni. Anche nell'intervista citata *infra* nella nota 12, de Lillo sottolinea che "condizione giovanile" è un concetto troppo ampio.

l'atteggiamento complessivo nei confronti del futuro, degli altri e della vita in generale, è legato principalmente a fattori espressivi delle condizioni materiali di vita delle persone, oltre che ad elementi culturali di fondo. L'atteggiamento con il quale si affronta la vita varia molto a seconda delle condizioni in cui ci si trova a viverla e degli strumenti che si hanno a disposizione per affrontarla (de Lillo 2007: 156)[10].

La dimensione latente di questa ipotesi si rintraccia nell'opposizione concettuale tra autodeterminazione e fatalismo, una coppia di concetti che, adottata ripetutamente nelle ricerche Iard, diventa una chiave di lettura significativa dello "spirito del tempo" che specifica l'esser giovani oggi.

Autodeterminazione significa fiducia nella società e nel ruolo che vi si può svolgere, accompagnata da una visione positiva del futuro. Capacità progettuale e di rischio spingono il giovane verso orizzonti di vita incoraggianti. Fatalismo vuol dire, invece, incertezza nelle scelte e rassegnazione. La visione pessimista della vita comporta la chiusura verso ogni esperienza che richieda del rischio. L'interpretazione dei dati in una chiave squisitamente sociologica dimostra che la collocazione del giovane nello spazio del fatalismo o in quello dell'autodeterminazione è effetto di una sindrome sociale e non certo di tratti caratteriali avulsi da condizionamenti. Il modo di affrontare la vita viene naturalmente molto influenzato dalla condizione occupazionale. I giovani inattivi ed i giovani disoccupati sono i più fatalisti. Gli studenti e chi ha un lavoro si situano, preferibilmente, nell'area dell'autodeterminazione. Anche la qualificazione culturale della famiglia di origine ha un'influenza considerevole: chi è cresciuto in una famiglia culturalmente debole è preda del fatalismo, mentre chi è cresciuto in una famiglia con dei genitori dotati di un buon livello di istruzione è in grado di progettarsi una vita in modo autonomo. In breve, buona parte dei giovani viene messa in un angolo per effetto delle appartenenze originarie. Privi di opportunità di mobilità i giovani sono costretti al pessimismo. Lo stato di moratoria si trasforma in una condizione di marginalità sociale e psicologica da cui sembra assai difficile poter sfuggire. Come si può pretendere allora che i giovani siano soddisfatti della loro vita?

La questione giovanile è stata inserita, purtroppo con riprovevole ritardo, al centro dell'agenda politica e dell'azione di governo, o per lo meno ne viene dichiarata la priorità. Antonio de Lillo ha sviluppato la sua sociologia dei giovani avendo da sempre piena consapevolezza della grande valenza politica del tema che studiava. Nelle pagine conclusive di *Giovani Anni 80*, vale a dire il secondo rapporto Iard, in coerenza con questa visione del suo ruolo di so-

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[10] Il tema era stato già affrontato e approfondito (de Lillo 1988: 77-79 e 163).

ciologo scriveva "la 'buona' società è quella che consente ai suoi giovani di guardare al futuro con fiducia e speranza" (Cavalli e de Lillo 1988: 163)[11]. Il suo lavoro è di assoluto rilievo per delineare con chiarezza i problemi dei giovani e per interpretarli con lo scopo di costruire le politiche più idonee ad affrontarli e risolverli. Gli interrogativi che lo stesso de Lillo ci suggerisce sono molti e pressanti. Apatia e distacco inibiscono ogni sforzo che permetta ai giovani di affermarsi? La socialità ristretta alimenta un'identità autoreferenziale e rassegnata? L'isolamento e la conclamata apatia dei giovani è un motivo in più per sostenere che le nuove generazioni sono a-sociali e metterle così sul banco degli imputati? Chi indossa la toga dell'accusa verso i giovani non si accorge di essere un giudice frettoloso, quando non in mala fede, un insegnante miope, un genitore non responsabile, un imprenditore gretto, un politico incapace o corrotto: insomma non si accorge di essere uno dei protagonisti dell'egoismo gerontocratico che inibisce lo sviluppo futuro della società e concorre ad abbassarne il livello etico. Lo stato di moratoria che dilata la fase della giovinezza al di là di ogni plausibile confine è l'esito di un processo di conservazione che dimostra la debolezza di un ordine sociale e politico mal costruito dalle vecchie generazioni che non hanno saputo, né voluto, impegnarsi per prevedere e per arginare gli effetti perversi della loro ricerca di benessere, costi quel che costi, sulla vita delle generazioni successive. Recentemente de Lillo dichiarava:

> Secondo me c'è una tendenza generale da parte del mondo adulto a considerare i giovani minacciosi: ma questo non avviene solo oggi, è sempre stato così. Nel campo delle politiche giovanili vi sono due strade possibili: la prima è considerare i giovani come minaccia, e attuare quindi politiche di tipo repressivo, che poi si manifestano anche verbalmente. Oppure si possono scegliere le politiche che concepiscono il giovane come una risorsa. Sto parlando di tutte le politiche attive: quelle per la casa, per la costituzione di una famiglia, per il lavoro, eccetera. L'Italia si caratterizza per le sue politiche repressive: i giovani sono visti come una minaccia, come un gruppo da tenere a bada… il problema è politico, perché se il politico si adagia sugli stereotipi – tipo quello dei bamboccioni – è evidente che non ha in mente una politica per i giovani: ha in mente invece una repressione e un contenimento della spinta innovativa che viene espressa naturalmente (per ragioni anagrafiche) da parte dei giovani. E questa innovazione a molti può far paura[12].

[11] *Giovani Anni 80* è stato pubblicato nel 1988 e ha la particolarità di essere il solo rapporto di ricerca redatto interamente da Antonio de Lillo insieme ad Alessandro Cavalli, mentre tutti gli altri rapporti hanno la struttura di volumi collettanei.
[12] Cfr. l'intervista di G. Mattioli del 13 ottobre 2009, *Antonio de Lillo: una città orizzontale aperta ai giovani* riportata in «Inchiesta» del 30 maggio 2012 a p. 1.

Antonio de Lillo viene ricordato da chi ha avuto la fortuna di frequentarlo per la sua costante speranza nei giovani; chi lo conosceva bene ricorda anche che de Lillo amava particolarmente una famosa poesia di Konstantinos Kavafis: *Itaca*[13]. Questa poesia, il cui significato più profondo potrebbe essere quello di un'esortazione ai giovani ad affrontare con coraggio e dignità le difficoltà del mondo di oggi, rappresenta forse il modo migliore per concludere poche pagine dedicate a uno studioso colto e gentile, ironico e appassionato del suo lavoro ma, soprattutto, un amico saggio e buono.

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devi augurarti che la strada sia lunga,
fertile in avventure e in esperienze.

I Lestrigoni e i Ciclopi[14]
o la furia di Nettuno non temere,
non sarà questo il genere di incontri
se il pensiero resta alto e un sentimento
fermo guida il tuo spirito e il tuo corpo.

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[13] Questa delicata testimonianza di Sonia Stefanizzi è accessibile all'indirizzo www.unimib.it/ open/news/Antonio-de-Lillo-il-sociologo-attento-ai-giovani/8645459781742224428.

[14] Nella mitologia greca, i Lestrigoni sono un popolo di giganti antropofagi presso i quali approda, imprudentemente, Ulisse. Antropofagi e giganti sono anche i Ciclopi, dotati, come tutti sappiamo, di un solo occhio situato in mezzo alla fronte. Nell'*Odissea* sono descritti come un popolo di giganti sprezzatori degli Dei, che vivono in caverne allo stato selvaggio; sono pastori e il loro capo è Polifemo.

In Ciclopi e Lestrigoni, no certo,
né nell'irato Nettuno incapperai
se non li porti dentro
se l'anima non te li mette contro.

Devi augurarti che la strada sia lunga.
Che i mattini d'estate siano tanti
quando nei porti – finalmente e con che gioia –
toccherai terra tu per la prima volta:
negli empori fenici indugia e acquista
madreperle coralli ebano e ambre
tutta merce fina, anche profumi
penetranti d'ogni sorta; più profumi inebrianti che puoi,
va in molte città egizie
impara una quantità di cose dai dotti.

Sempre devi avere in mente Itaca –
raggiungerla sia il pensiero costante.
Soprattutto, non affrettare il viaggio;
fa che duri a lungo, per anni, e che da vecchio
metta piede sull'isola, tu, ricco
dei tesori accumulati per strada
senza aspettarti ricchezze da Itaca.
Itaca ti ha dato il bel viaggio,
senza di lei mai ti saresti messo
sulla strada: che cos'altro ti aspetti?

E se la trovi povera, non per questo Itaca ti avrà deluso.
Fatto ormai savio, con tutta la tua esperienza addosso
già tu avrai capito ciò che Itaca vuole significare.

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Keeping it in the family:
the absence of young Italians from the public piazza

Pierluca Birindelli

The author analysed autobiographies written by university students, comparing his impressions with the results of studies on young people carried out by Italian sociologists. The picture that he pieced together of this generation "without fathers or teachers", and of the related responsibilities of the previous generation, is far from encouraging. The modern generation of young Italians nurtures values pivoting on the family and on self-fulfilment, and acts within spheres of friendship and sentiment at short radius. The rest of the social world is mediated, experienced through films, internet and holidays. The universalist attitude has been supplanted by a widespread and rooted particularism. The collective dimension that transcends the experience of the individual and his reference group has lost relevance.

Short leashes: from the universal to the particular

In Italy it seems as if a potent nucleus of values, all referring to the immediate social environs of the person, is being progressively built up around the lodestone of the family. This nucleus pervades and conditions the entire value system of the young generations. Comparing the data of the six Iard[1] surveys for the subgroup of 15-24 year-olds[2], we can clearly see how the value system has progressively clustered in the sphere of private life at the expense of collective commitment: young Italians are absent from the public piazza. Religious and social commitment followed a negative trend up to 2000 and

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[1] The Iard is a research institute in Milan that periodically performs research on young people. See: Cavalli (1984); Cavalli and de Lillo (1988 and 1993); Buzzi, Cavalli and de Lillo (1997; 2002; 2007).

[2] Shown in brackets are the respective percentages for each value in the six surveys of 1983, 1987, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004: Family (82, 83, 86, 85, 86, 83); Work (68, 67, 60, 62, 61, 62); Boy/Girlfriend/Friends (58, 70, 71, 73, 75, 80); Leisure pastimes (44, 44, 54, 54, 52, 54); Study and cultural interests (34, 32, 36, 39, 34, 40); Sport (32, 32, 36, 34, 33, 38); Social commitment (22, 18, 23, 22, 18, 25); Religious commitment (12, 12, 13, 14, 11, 19); Political activity (4, 3, 4, 5, 4, 6).

then began to rise again in 2004 (indicating a possible inversion of the trend); the importance attributed to friendship and sentimental relations has shot up (increasing by over 20% since the 1996 survey). Work, which came second in the first two surveys, has dropped to third place since 1992, overtaken by love and friendship with a broad lead. Between the first survey of 1983 and that of 2004, the importance attributed to the family went up by 2%; friendship and sentimental relations went up by more than 21%. Work, on the other hand, dropped by 5 percentage points.

De Lillo (2002 and 2007) made a significant breakdown of the values into four main categories: 1) values connected with individual life: family, work, friendship, love, career, self-fulfilment, affluent and comfortable lifestyle; 2) values of a recreational kind: sport, leisure pastimes, entertainment and enjoying life; 3) values linked to personal commitment: political activity, religious commitment, social commitment, study and cultural interests; 4) values of collective life: solidarity, social equality, freedom and democracy, nation. Interestingly, the values linked to personal commitment actually have lower averages than those of "collective life". However although the latter are considered important by young people, there is also a sort of proviso: important for them or the people close to them. In other words, these are not seen as generalised rights of the collectivity but as personal rights belonging to them and their short-radius circle, in a *particularisation of universal values*. Thus, even the values of collective life refer back to the personal social world: to their nearest and dearest, within the cosy web of primary relations that they have spun, and solidarity and freedom are harnessed to defence of that web. The values acquired in the name of all are bent to the demands of security and reassurance that only the very closest and most tranquillising social milieu can guarantee.

And so, the modern generation of young Italians nurtures values pivoting on the family and on self-fulfilment, and acts within spheres of friendship and sentiment at short radius. The rest of the social world is mediated, experienced through films, internet and holidays. The universalist attitude has been supplanted by a widespread and rooted particularism. The collective dimension that transcends the experience of the individual and his reference group has lost relevance. A society emerges, as distinct from a clan, when the individuals acknowledge their duties and responsibilities not only towards themselves, their families, friends or other members of their clan, or group, but to any unfamiliar and anonymous member of that society. As horizons open up further they come to perceive duties and responsibilities even towards foreigners, aliens, non-human animals and nature.

In the autobiographies I have studied[3] there is no trace of this sense of society, or even of a local sense of community. When a young person complains

[3] Between 2001 and 2004, working as an Adjunct Professor of Sociology at the University of Florence, I collected 60 autobiographies written by young Italian students aged 22-29 (22 females and 38 males). As a final research paper, I asked them to choose between writing an autobiography or an essay on a subject of their choice. They all chose the autobiography, reacting enthusiastically to the idea of writing about themselves. If anything, these young people had difficulty writing about the Other. On each course, I devoted two lessons to a discussion on what, according to the students, ought to be included in an autobiography. During these meetings – a sort of focus group – I encouraged students to talk freely about themselves and their experiences, starting from the perception of their identity. The biographical approach comprises the collection and analysis of the life stories (written and oral) of individuals who are particularly significant for the research topics. The heuristic capacity of the narration and of the language, understood as both vehicle and builder of meaning, are at the hub of this approach. Thomas and Znaniecki were the first to introduce biographies as a tool for analysis in sociology ([1918-1920] 1958). They saw them as the best means for understanding social reality: a person's biography reflects the social context he or she belongs to and points up the changes in the same. For an updated, comprehensive and extensive review of the biographical approach see Miller (2005). The narrative dimension of the Self is essential for the construction of individual identity. The story of the self is the general means proposed in this investigation for the continual construction and reconstruction of an identity: knowing oneself to acquire consistency, so as not to dissolve and to achieve not only the sense of one's own confines, but also of one's own continuity and discontinuity over time. On the other hand, I also noted how all the autobiographical accounts lend themselves to deception (or self-deception) introduced to convince others (or oneself) about the good reasons, the positivity and the logical consistency of one's life story (Brooks 1984). The principal means for achieving this is through the construction of false links: in other words, narrative versions that artificially smooth over the discontinuities in the personal history. These links are used to knit up coherent and rigid autobiographical fabrics that in effect violate the autobiographical pact that obliges the writer not to tamper with his or her own story (Lejeune 1975). Taking my cue from these reflections, I analysed the topics that emerged from the autobiographies collected. The material was wide-ranging and dense (the average length was 50 pages). The best way of extracting something without getting lost is the analytic induction approach: by reading and rereading the material the crucial elements related to the cognitive interests of the researcher eventually come to the surface. The educational itinerary and that of sentimental relations are the Cartesian axes that allow us to discern the biographical progress of these young people. For a minority, a sojourn away from the family and their hometown, or even abroad, offered an ulterior crucial opportunity for a redefinition and enhanced awareness of the Self. Pondering on all this, I arrived at the creation of a framework within which I could analyse the autobiographies; it was constructed on the basis of various concepts and theoretical propositions from sociological, anthropological, psychological and psychoanalytical literature. Another crucial source of inspiration were the various surveys about young people carried out over the last thirty years at both Italian and European level, such as Oecd, Eurostat, Eurobarometer. An extensive explanation of the method developed in this study is given in the first chapter "Mapping the Land of the Young: Developing a Method" of the book *The Passage from Youth to Adulthood: Narrative and Cultural Thresholds* (Birindelli 2014).

about the shortage of good jobs, he is not thinking of other young Italians: he means the lack of good jobs for himself.

The short-radius world is the collective benchmark of the young Italians: they play safe, falling back on the familiar relations that are a source of security. And they seem to swiftly draw the curtains on even the famous windows of the communication society open on the Other, as if the visions they reveal are a source of anxiety. The young Italians banish the heterogeneous from their living spaces. Above I referred to the family as a lodestone and as a cosy web (not the big one with the frightening windows!), and elsewhere I have used the word *coagulate* to indicate this tendency (2014). The image is effective in indicating how the young people appear to have tightened the strings, narrowed the mesh of what counts in life, around a wound. Both the wound and the cure continue to be the family, and they remain clinched to the latter because the big world outside is rife with insecurity. They are focused on themselves and on the present while the unfamiliar Other – the neighbour, the stranger – and the future are both repressed, or at best considered remote.

The results of my own research confirm de Lillo's vision, and place the young people I met firmly on the particularist side of the equation. Any Other beyond that short radius of primary and secondary affections is an absolutely vestigial presence in the biographies: the subjects of the research simply did not narrate any issues or experiences with a universalist significance. The experience of the other is an exercise in decentralisation, undermining the closure within ourselves. In reality, rather than meaning the end of the ego, the arrival of the others signifies the beginning of adult life. The centrality of the "other" stemmed from the conviction that there were two responses to the crisis of the "we": jumping onto the "ego-orgy" bandwagon, passionately embracing radical individualism, or instead a gradual reacquisition of an ethical dimension of experience (Cassano 1989: viii-xii).

Beyond the nest: the jungle, God and religion

Nevertheless, some of the comments question the value centrality of the family for the young Italians. The family would be a real value if, from the aspect of social reproduction, we were to observe a sort of evolution in the meaning attributed to it by an adolescent and by a thirty year-old: from the family as a nest to the thought of building one of your own. Instead what emerges is an instrumental and egoistic vision of the family.

> The value of the family seems to me to be purely that of the nest, totally unconnected with any future project and all the risks that brings with it. There

appears to be no change at all in what 'family' means to a 15-17 year-old or a 25-29 year-old. [Mario, M, age 25]

With a touch of cynicism, one is almost led to think of the centrality of the family as a sort of ennoblement or hallowing of what is actually a choice of convenience: that of remaining a child as long as possible rather than becoming the creator of another family nucleus. [Carla, F, age 23]

Another student, Sara, sees the self-absorption and the resulting lack of social commitment and the disengagement from public life as generated by a society that forces one to become hard: a jungle. The young people feel that they have to defend themselves to survive, and they see no way out. Only a generational change in the ruling classes could yield some positive effect.

Compared to previous generations, the world we live in is really tough, highly competitive; to do the simplest thing, we young people have to move mountains, far more than in the past. There's a lot of talk about civilised and evolved societies; but down here, very often you feel like you're in a jungle where only the strongest animal can win. We're turning into animals that have to put feelings to one side if we want to achieve our ambitions, realise our dreams [...] We are simply adapting to survival as best we can in a society that's been handed on to us in this condition by previous generations. We've grown up with the watchword of "success at all costs" without any consideration for others. Those who can't survive in this jungle are marginalised and considered as misfits, and then they really do become misfits [...] I don't think at this stage there's any way of changing things until there's a generational change at the top levels of the political scene [...] The world that has been built is one where to move forward you have to harden yourself. [Sara, F, age 25]

It seems that the few young people who do try to get beyond themselves turn to religion. In the Catholic ambits they succeed in forging strong and rich human relations with adults, something the autobiographies show to be extremely rare.

It was through the Church that I got to know older people that became my friends. Even though we don't always understand each other, even though we each have our weaknesses and often make mistakes, the relationship between us is alive, and for me they represent a strong example of humanity. [Alessandro, M, age 23]

In a time of cultural relativism, and individualism taken to extremes, it appears that the religious institutions continue to provide a compelling

idea or ideal. The observant Catholic students tend to display more open-ness towards others along with greater trust in the institutions. At the same time they are more intransigent and more critical of craftiness, evidently being more conscious of the negative repercussions of such a talent (Cartocci 2002: 228). A full-blown existential crisis brought Lorenzo back to God: in a sort of reawakening, he independently rediscovered the faith previously experienced as an imposition of his family. It's the return to a soil sowed by his parents.

> At that time I really had hit rock-bottom – in the sense that I was continually tormented by grief and anxiety – I had absolutely nothing left to cling to; I felt so lost and confused that I could see no way forward. I felt abandoned and I instinctively turned for help to something which, at the time, I didn't believe in the existence of. I started to pray fervently and read Christian books, and they gave me relief and comfort. Gradually I also started going to mass again. I had completely stopped going […] except occasionally, and even then simply going through the motions for the sake of my family and of society rather than out of any real interest. Suddenly I found myself overwhelmed by a sense of peace and serenity: leaving doubts and fears behind me, I was transformed into someone who was always cheerful and full of initiative. I realised that I had re-ceived the gift of faith, which allowed me to understand and appreciate things I didn't even know existed. My priorities have changed, or rather completely reversed. I give less importance to material things; I'm always looking for the soul behind them. [Lorenzo, M, age 23]

Alessandro discerns considerable changes in values between his generation and that of the 1960s-70s. He believes in his family of origin, and also in the possibility of building one of his own.

> When I hear people talking about my generation, sometimes I find it hard to immediately understand exactly what they're talking about, because I see it as devoid of identity. For us young people of today there's no common ground of identification, something we can unanimously believe in. Something started in the 60s and 70s that has led to the loss of certain very important values. I can't help noticing the hypocrisy of people who take up arms against the death sentence while being in favour of abortion. Abortion seems to be seen more as a convenience for couples than a form of suppression of a human life. Lots of girls even have more than one abortion; this makes me think that too much freedom, the achievement of too many rights, can actually damage the entire social fabric and future generations. I'm aware that such ideas run against the grain of current ideologies, but they're the values I believe in. Maybe they

don't identify a generation, but they do identify me. For me marriage still has a meaning, it's something I believe in, that I aspire to and hope to achieve. Moreover, I also think that to succeed in building a life and a family together with another person should be a source of satisfaction and pride, as it must have been for my parents. [Alessandro, M, age 23]

Alessandro's very clear ideas make him an exception to the majority of the other young people in the research. Whether or not one shares his convictions is beside the point: the point is that he actually has convictions that go beyond his personal life. His father, clearly another exception, has set him a good example, and Alessandro aims to try to follow in his footsteps. His father has taught him that in life you often have to make sacrifices to achieve something worthwhile. He has schooled him in the harsh facts of life, pointing out his privileged position and putting the candy-coated influence of the media into perspective. Behaving like a father rather than a friend, Alessandro's father talks to his son, and tells him about his own life. As we shall see later on, this is essential for the meaningful transmission of values and visions of the world, and as a consequence crucial for the young person's very identity.

I believe that we all have models and figures that we take inspiration from. I learnt – and am still learning – from my father that life is very hard: it's made up of sacrifices and it's not a bowl of cherries like they make out. I'm learning from him that the things closest to my heart are very hard to achieve, but that they give you enormous joy when you do attain them. I think that these are values more typical of his generation than of mine, maybe because, as my parents never tire of telling me, my generation got it all handed to them on a plate. [Alessandro, M, age 23]

Forays from the nest: crisis, love and friendship

As also emerges clearly in the Iard surveys, sentimental life is central for Italian young people. The two biographical turning-points[4] found in their biographies are: 1) the passage between secondary school and university which is experienced in different ways and profoundly influences the transition to

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[4] An effective approach to the analysis of the texts is to focus attention on the biographical turning-points (Strauss 1959), that is the moments that the subject sees as watersheds, where he or she glimpses a before and after in the itinerary.

adulthood. Although in Italy it is not publicly endorsed as such, it is the closest thing to a rite of passage that emerges in these stories; and 2) the end of a love affair, perceived as a moment of profound change and redefinition of the self.

In the lives of the young people I met, the end of a love story was the only time they felt they had their backs against a wall; the only test of the stability of their identity was in the sentimental sphere. It represents a watershed, a crossroads on the other side of which the individuals redefine their identity, change their lifestyle and sometimes completely revolutionise the way they are. They may adopt a new hairstyle and dress code as outward signs of this change; their cultural tastes may alter, they may go out more, with new groups of friends, or read more. But focusing all your efforts on yourself, or at most on the person or people you love, is not good news for the process of constructing a persona. The young people in the autobiographies do not reveal any form of social engagement. Often friendship makes up for the shortcomings of family, sentimental relations and even in the sphere of self-fulfilment. The important things are to do well in school, find a job (in actual fact, one would happily do without), find a partner. When this self-set itinerary bordering on solipsism throws up some disappointment (failed exam, difficulty in finding work, end of a love story), depression is just round the corner.

Before I started this research I was labouring under the misapprehension that the sentimental sphere was more important for young women than for their male counterparts. But as I found relationships are the most important turning-points in the biographies of the males too. "I think that being with someone, living the relationship to the full, is one of the best things that has ever happened to me" [Marco, M, age 23]. The differences that did emerge were, perhaps, the greater detail with which the females describe the relationships, and more importantly the fact that for them the correspondence of affection is projected more towards the future creation of a family[5].

The end of one relationship casts Lorenzo into despair:

> During my first semester I became completely depressed; even now the very thought of it ties my stomach in knots and paralyses me with fear. The last straw was the breakdown of a relationship with a girl I got to know during one of my courses, whom I'd been going out with for about four months. [Lorenzo, M, age 23]

[5] The sentimental sphere is the only domain where I recognized gender differences in the young people's life stories. For other identity dimensions, the "family imprinting" (within the Italian culture and social structure) supersedes by far any other possible interpretations.

Then the start of another brings him back to life, and also generates a more intense and altruistic social life, so that even engagement in public life appears to be a spin-off from the sentimental sphere.

One of the happiest times of my life was when, in Florence, I got to know a Mexican girl […] She had a very feminine and charming way with her. At that time, I'd had quite a few girlfriends, always short affairs, and I'd gone out with girls that were physically more attractive than her; but never before had I experienced the feelings, emotions and excitement that she made me feel. In the five months that we went out together – after that she had to return to her parents in Mexico – I was happy and carefree, jolly and cheerful and overflowing with love for everyone. Nothing got on my nerves, nothing intimidated me. Everything paled by comparison with the interest I felt in her. At that time, I felt I was important and fortunate, I felt invulnerable and unassailable; at the same time there was so much love pouring out of me that I continued to be humble and altruistic, grateful to everyone and for everything, feeling a lack of interest in material things that I had never experienced before. I became altruistic and I began helping my neighbour. [Lorenzo, M, age 23]

The encounter with people of different values and lifestyles is an experience that is essential for focusing your own, but even these appear to be circumscribed to the realm of the sentiments. Initially disconcerting because they bring family values up for debate, the outcome of such encounters – at the end of the affair – is the usual return to the family and its security. The foray towards value growth starts from the nest and then, after just a few tentative steps, hairpins back to it again.

During the summer holidays, I got to know this guy. He was really nice and he said he was in love with me! He was very critical of the church and of the people who frequented it. The discussions we had made me look into myself and begin to question the things my parents believed in and what they had taught me. It wasn't about rejecting everything I knew, but maybe about rediscovering those values or, if necessary finding others. He too believed in solidarity and equality and saw the great injustices that there are in the world; but for him the only way to change things was to rebel against those who held power. I asked myself if my going to church was simply a habit, or if there was genuine faith behind it. Since I was a child I have been familiar with the Focolare, a movement of Catholic inspiration which is genuinely open to everyone, to people of all beliefs (religious and other), of all origins and cultures and of all ages. Naturally, during the crisis, I called all this into question too, since up to that time it was one of the many things that I'd inherited from my parents. What I

did realise, however, was that the friendships that had emerged in this context were all stronger, because they were underpinned by a sharing of what you could say were "transcendent" ideals. It seemed to me that this was already a good starting-point on the way to achieving that more united and just world that I could glimpse in the distance. [Irene, F, age 23]

The lack of real and autopoietic social engagement

The Iard researches indicate that the associations most frequented by the young people are sports clubs, followed by the religious, cultural and voluntary associations. Only 5% of all the youngsters interviewed in 2004 declared that they actively participated in organisations engaged in voluntary and social work[6]. This is somewhat surprising in view of the notion, commonly found in sociological and politological literature, that young people reject classical political participation in favour of an individual engagement in voluntary work[7]. In reality it seems that they reject both in favour of sports. But even then, since the majority do sport purely for the purpose of physical fitness, there are actually very few occasions of group sport that can act as an authentic testing-ground.

No form of social engagement, either in politics or in social or voluntary work, surfaced in the autobiographies I analysed. There is no sign at all of action within civil society, as opposed to individualised behaviour. Only five out of the sixty youngsters writing the biographies had taken part in political, cultural or voluntary associations. Even in these cases it was a choice with family precedents: the civic commitment was "inherited". Only Marco appeared to have embarked independently on a course of voluntary work, systematically devoting part of his free time to this activity.

Over a year ago I became a blood donor, and about the same time I became a member of *Ronda*, an association of volunteers that aims to help the homeless in this area, bringing them bare necessities such as food, clothes and moral

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[6] This finding puts the apparent reversal of the trend of participation in social life captured in the value statements of 2004 into perspective. At European level, 16% of young people aged 15-30 are engaged in voluntary activities (Eurobarometer 2007). In another survey (Eurobarometer 2013) we find that 14% of young people from Finland and the Netherlands have participated in an organisation promoting human rights, while the percentage drops to 6% for the young Italians.

[7] For an extensive analysis of young people's political participation, both at Italian and European level see: Bontempi and Pocaterra (2007); Pirni, Monti Bragadin and Bettin Lattes (2008).

support. It's a world I discovered on my own: I went looking for it. [Marco, M, age 23]

The non-involvement in associations of the young people in my study, like those of the national surveys, has cut them off completely from situations in which they puts themselves on the line, relating to adults and the principles governing areas of life beyond the family.

As regards politics, the rejection of any form of participation becomes even more striking. To refer again to the Iard surveys, in 2000 the question on political attitudes recorded a huge leap in the most extreme answer – "politics makes me sick" –: the 26% share was more than double that of the first survey in 1983. Never before had the first two answers, indicative of political engagement or at least interest, reached such low levels – 40% as against the historic peak of 53% in 1996 (Ricolfi 2002: 261) –. The rare flicker of any political commitment to be found in the youngsters' biographies is essentially playful and almost festive in tone: demonstrations and sit-ins at school are seen as a break from the daily round. Means and ends are reversed and the important thing is to hang out together: the declared ends offer the opportunity to be together, act as aggregating factors; aggregation as a means continues to lose ground to aggregation as an end in itself. We get the impression that the young students' demonstrations are more of a performance than a rally in the accepted sense, bringing to the surface a dislocation between public action and the expediency of everyday strategies. At the same time that they're rallying in the square against private interference in the university, they're queuing up to sign on for internships so that they can benefit from a work-study experience.

In Italy ritual sit-ins are by now practically scheduled in the annual school calendar. Ostensibly spurred each year by increasingly vague and sometimes absurd and contradictory motives, they are proposed by marginal minorities and generally peter out lethargically without leaving behind any significant forms of political mobilisation or socialisation. With few exceptions, the only principles they appear to uphold are the legitimacy of interrupting a public service and, quite often, of damaging public property.

The beginning of the new school year was total chaos: as a result of the law that had just been passed, our school had to get rid of one of the third-year sections, and the choice fell on ours since it was the smallest, the idea being that we'd be divided over the other sections. What better pretext for a good old sit-in? And it certainly wasn't the first either, my school had always been in the vanguard for forms of protest: in the first year we organised a sit-in because of the poor quality of the loos; in the second to get the road leading to the school

entrance tarred. My first insalubrious experiences (getting drunk, smoking pot, acts of petty vandalism) all took place at school. Needless to say the two week sit-in, where I was there every night, in the end came to nothing except about 500 euros of damage; and so our class was broken up, and to tell the truth I wasn't really that pushed about it. [Nicola, M, age 25]

We are in any case dealing with evident contradictions between ideal statements and practical conduct: there's a gap between saying that you think something's right and actually thinking it's right, and then there's another gap between what you think is the right thing to do and actually doing it.

When it came to voting on the sit-in, I voted against. When I was asked why, I replied that I saw it as a farce, listing the reasons why it seemed totally ridiculous to me. No-one was able to come up with any response to my criticisms, but despite that the majority voted for the sit-in, and mine was the only vote against in my class. [Sandro, M, age 23]

What the young people proclaim in the collective demonstrations is negated in their everyday behaviour. "Me and a couple of mates of mine succeeded in organising demonstrations for the most futile reasons, with the sole purpose of avoiding school on the days we had tests or interrogations in class" [Giovanni, M, age 25].

The most exciting experience of all was definitely taking part in the World Youth Day that was held in Paris in 1997. The site of the rally was this huge field where an unbelievable number of young people had already ensconced themselves. We spent the entire night all together in that field without sleeping a wink; in fact there was no way it would have been possible to get any sleep in that situation: there were people dancing, others playing music, in short it was a *huge party*. Naturally we couldn't resist challenging a group of Spaniards to a game of football, using our flags as goalposts. Apart from the football match, the next day we were all totally zonked, and in fact some of us slept right through the Pope's mass. [Luca, M, age 24]

Further, the politicised image of youth in the media appears to be seriously out of kilter.

At this time of the year sit-ins are almost systematically organised in all the schools, a phenomenon that tends to be considered as a sort of extension to the Christmas holidays [...] l'*Unità* depicts the figure of the young person fighting for his ideals as a sort of mythical hero, making the student who demonstrates,

organises sit-ins and draws attention to himself a model to be followed. According to various articles that have appeared in l'*Unità*, this type of young person represents the birth of a new generation that claims its rights and fights for them. I don't think that this is a correct representation of young people at all: fundamentally, at the time of secondary school we're not even aware yet of what we want from life. It seems to me a rather idealised and exaggerated image. [Giovanni, M, age 23]

It seems that only when the parents are politically involved are their sons and daughters stimulated to some form of engagement. In her autobiography Laura explained that at home they had always talked about politics and discussed what was on the news:

The sit-in was a way of collectively addressing problems that I already had my own take on; being able to exchange notes and discuss these matters with older students stimulated me greatly and definitely enriched me [...] My family supported my political interests; at the parents' meeting called to discuss the form of protest we'd decided on, my mother was the only one to stand up for the students. [Laura, F, age 24]

Even when young people do congregate in places with a distinct political connotation, the choice appears to be incidental or expedient. In the final analysis they offer nothing in terms of social or cultural enrichment.

The reason for this new meeting point [an ARCI social club][8] was essentially that in the winter you couldn't stay outdoors all day long. We'd always go out after five o'clock, when it was already dark and there was practically no lighting. Added to that, the passion some of us had for playing cards and for video poker led us to meet up in that place. I used to go there regularly for about four years until I finally decided to quit. It was so sordid that all my problems loomed larger inside those four walls. And the people who went there were even more sordid than the place itself. The subjects of discussion never veered beyond football, pussy (for which no more genteel synonyms were ever used), motorbikes and cars. [Matteo, M, age 25]

I collected a huge amount of material in my survey, and my analysis of it made it abundantly clear how far we had moved beyond the situation described by de Lillo in his Iard reports (2002 and 2007) and by other Italian

[8] The equivalent of a labour club in England.

sociologists[9]: in these youngsters' autobiographies the sphere of collective life was nowhere to be found. I was giving a series of lectures on the MA in Media and Communication at the University of Florence at the time, and my class consisted of 33 Italians and 6 foreign postgrad students aged between 25 and 30, all of whom had travelled a lot. In 2003 the imminent American invasion of Iraq was filling the newspapers and TV programmes, which also superficially addressed questions of international politics. So I decided to carry out an experiment: I asked the class to write a list of the ten most important things in life. Multiplying ten important things by 39 students you get 390 important things: of all 390 only one had anything to do with collective life (peace in the world) and was mentioned by one of the foreign students. Out of class, several of them told me that they intended to take part in peace rallies the next day in Rome, and claimed that they were ready to demonstrate for things beyond the narrow radius of family, sentimental relationships, friendship and self-fulfilment. Clearly there was a dislocation between taking part in demonstrations and the areas of life in which they located their biographical turning-points. The older brothers of the young people I had analysed over the three years of research under study were evidently in exactly the same boat.

The real breakthrough in the latest nationwide surveys is that the forecast shift in the participation of the young from the world of political parties to that of voluntary work was drastically wrong: the statistics show, as my research confirms, that young Italians play no part at all in the political, civil and social life of the country. There were, nevertheless, some acute observers who had already perceived this failure of engagement over twenty years before, and what's more in a region (Emilia Romagna) that had always been in the front line of political sensitivity.

> Under various disguises and appearances we can discern a failure, a profound and recurrent lack, the substantial absence of any tangible or ideal form of solidarity among the young people of Emilia Romagna. Obviously, we are dealing with identities or subjective concepts that are fairly ephemeral, polycentric, experimental and relative, but despite this, compared to other situations, even within Europe, we are faced with a young person without any vocation to solidarity, politically, religiously and even socially secularised, that is suspicious and reluctant to go beyond his own opinions and move on to some form of participative commitment or belonging (Cipolla 1989: 10) [my translation].

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[9] Among others, see two recent and interesting contributions on the topic: Gozzo (2010) and Pirni (2012).

As already stated, the general tendency is to see this as the result of political parties and associations that are old and stale in their approaches to topical issues and have totally failed to adapt to the personality of the young. To put it another way, the reason young people do not participate is because they don't identify with institutions and associations which were, so to speak, created by their parents. Another interpretation offered by sociologists sees today's young people as less inclined to join or subscribe to formal organisations, full stop. The youngsters move freely in an unrestricted space, experimenting different contexts and institutions, but only as visitors, without any permanent affiliation: zapping through the different ambits of society, they dwell inconsequentially within them for little more than a "click".

However, as Gianfranco Bettin Lattes (1997) has pointed out, we ought to remember that all sociological surveys in Italy prior to 1968 revealed young people's total lack of interest in politics; on the contrary, they expressed a strong interest in a "quiet life", levelling them out on the same positions as the adults. This was the famous "Three M" generation (*moglie/marito, mestiere, macchina* – wife/husband, job, car). The aspirations of this generation were perfectly attuned with the enhanced expectations of material wealth that characterised the climate of reconstruction in Italy. Today, these expectations of widespread prosperity are totally lacking, we need to draw the due consequences.

Coming to today, we can see the loss of historic memory that characterises most of the young people and their parents and teachers – meaning by historic memory one that embraces at least three generations (in other words, the memory of grandparents) –. The Now Generation is characterized by cultural traits typical of consumer-mediatised societies. The concepts of "militancy", of "investment", of "deferral" lose their effectiveness when the future is crushed onto the present. Empirical studies on young Europeans promoted by the European Commission reveal that the values declared by most young people belong to the category of defensive values: peace, environmental protection, human rights, freedom of opinion, the war against poverty. A general feeling of insecurity pervades the younger generation in contemporary Europe; this sense of insecurity is deeply rooted and cannot be attributed solely to economic problems.

Still following Bettin's interpretations, an analytical reading of the Eurobarometer surveys (2007 and 2013) on young people allows us to identify six types of value orientation among the young: individualists; conformists; neo-conservatives; post-materialists; committed Christians; traditionalists. Suffice it to say that 4/5 of the young people interviewed in Europe fall into the first three types, namely the individualists, the conformists and the neo-conservatives. Then, on top of that we have the *familist syndrome*, perfectly illustrated by both the phenomenon of the extension of the juvenile phase, and

by the "scientific" overlapping between family and politics, work and social career. The surveys carried out so far tend to rule out that we are dealing with a generation oriented towards social participation and universalistic attitudes.

Mistrust of institutions: the inter- and intra-generational shortfall

The failure to take part in associative life, political or other, is connected with the young people's mistrust of the institutions: however, such mistrust is not necessarily tantamount to a rejection of the status quo. Disillusion can go hand-in-hand with perfect integration into a culture. Nevertheless, while crucial to the functioning of society, trust in the political institutions and in the social leaders is a sentiment that appears to be in free-fall among the young people interviewed for the sixth Iard report (Buzzi, Cavalli and de Lillo 2007). This is nothing new: the trend has been in motion for several decades and has now simply intensified. Scientific institutions are the only ones that appear to command a significant degree of trust: 86% of the replies indicating "great" or "considerable" trust in scientists. On the opposite side, the politicians come off worst, with 87% of the young Italians interviewed declaring "little" or "no trust at all".

The disenchantment of the young people I met in my research is total, and is harnessed to a marked lack of interest in the institutions. Only occasionally is it entangled with feelings of rage and indignation, since few of these youngsters venture beyond the grip of resignation. Giovanni is one of the exceptions; even so, since he sees no potential path of change, his attention turns inwards on himself. Since acting upon reality is not an option, the only way out is individual and intellectual.

> I live in a country that's politically in ruins, without any authority, all that flourishes are scandals, incompetence and power games. I've had enough of all this, but I don't think that I can or must change the world. We can and must change only ourselves; everyone has to think in a different way. That's our allotted role in the contemporary fiction. [Giovanni, M, age 24]

In the rare references they do make to society, the subjects of the research envisage an entirely individual relation. Both generational and inter-generational solidarity are absent: every experience of the Other is a private experience: the public piazza is deserted. Engagement in civil society (politics, voluntary work) is restricted to a tiny minority, and is always secondary. In short, there are no occasions for experiencing a relationship with adults while feeling like an adult oneself, or at least not too much of a kid. There's a cognitive and

value gap between young Italians and their parents that generates disorientation and makes the young people incapable of planning their own future.

If you discard the interpretative categories, judgements and prejudices normally used to observe young people and attempt to understand what makes them tick, assessing them independently of society as a whole, they simply become invisible (Diamanti 1999). The only way to understand youngsters–adolescents is by adopting a relational perspective, considering them in relation to their older brothers/sisters, to adults and to old people, so that we can focus the differences in attitudes towards their life paths. Young people are never observed relationally, construed by the way they relate to other (older and younger) co-existent generations. If one had to define a shared element in the generational awareness of young people today, it would be the sensation that they're on the line as a generation required to make ethical choices in an everyday world limits no longer exist: in a society that is increasingly anomic (devoid of rules) and amoral (ethically indifferent) when not blatantly immoral (corrupt). The generational sense is embodied in the responses these young people make to the problems of living in a society that neither makes nor indicates ethical choices, but says to everyone: the choice of action is personal; you're on your own, since there are no shared social rules and the options are no longer comparable, or rather they no longer make any difference (Donati 1997: 12 and 25). For a lost and disoriented generation "without fathers or teachers" (Ricolfi and Sciolla 1980), the independent choice of a life path is cloaked in solitude. Still more solitary is the quest for criteria to guide the decision to go one way or the other, since the adults have dismally failed to construct a system of values that the youngsters could adopt, criticise or oppose.

Older Italians are extremely wary of these youngsters. And that's scarcely surprising since they bring them up against their own shortcomings, their own failures as adults, parents, mentors and teachers: the incapacity to propose ideas that can be accepted or fought against, to formulate models of authority that can, at least, be opposed. And so, they prefer them invisible: because when the young people do act, when they demonstrate, what come to the boil are not the novelties of the future but the issues and troubles of the present. Signs of a time in which teachers and parents, rather than giving good or bad examples, appear to be playing it by ear themselves (Diamanti 1999: 25-26).

The problem is not just a vertical, intergenerational one, but also extends to horizontal, intra-generational relations. It's hard to find any trace of a shared feeling or project among today's young people (Mannheim 1952 [1928]). As one of my interviewees said, the fact that young people take part in demonstrations should not be interpreted as a sign of engagement. These are simply occasions – with marked aesthetic and recreational overtones – in which the young person emerges from his or her egotistic isolation.

The impressions we get of young people – the way they speak, the way they dress, the way they communicate, relate to each other and express themselves – that's not young people at all. What does the fact that thousands of youngsters went to the G8 in Genoa mean? Does that make us all pacifists? Does that mean we're all anti-globalisation activists? Does it mean we were just all high and reading Gandhi? Or does it perhaps mean that we ourselves don't know what we are, we don't feel we belong to anything, we don't identify with anything. But we really miss not having that label; we really miss not being called a "generation". Because it would make us feel good to be a generation. Those few, instrumental pretexts, where all you need to take part is to be young, allow us for a moment to feel like a generation: the concert, G8, the university march, *Siddharta*, the VW Beetle, the PLO scarf. These are things that make us feel we belong to something. It's not much, and it's pretty superficial feeling you belong to a generation just because you attend something, or read something or wear something that lots of other people like you attend or read or wear. It's just a sense of sharing that makes you feel less alone, less locked up in your individualism. [Filippo, M, age 24]

Having established that young people's involvement in public life and formal associations is practically non-existent, we have to ask: so what are the young people up to? According to the Cospes study (Tonolo 1999) and the fifth (2002) and sixth (2007) Iard reports, the youngsters just hang out together. It's time spent without a specific purpose, during which they communicate. For most young people, friendship doesn't appear as an opportunity for intensive socialisation, for developing shared projects for the future, but more as a sort of everyday companionship, a distraction from the problems experienced in other social spheres where they cannot fully express their individuality.

In the 50s young people fought their battles within the family, taking up arms against their antiquated parents. In the 60s the conflict went public, and the young people saw themselves as a social movement. In the 70s consumer phenomena led them to identify with certain lifestyles and languages. In the 80s they became the generation of the void, of annihilation, the *Less Than Zero* generation (Ellis 1985). In the 90s and the early years of the new millennium maybe none of these hold for a generation without ideals, values or projects to inspire or anchor it. The "click on yourself" generation. The young are afflicted by uncertainty in a society increasingly short on love, increasingly risky, that fails to offer them a safe and symbolically significant image or plan. This explains the general feeling of having no solid benchmarks (Donati 1997: 24). No-one decides for them any more; everyone has to make their own choices, independently constructing values, criteria, directions. And since this construction takes place in a private sphere, inhabited by an emotional Self,

rather than boosting the acquisition of a social identity it instead tends the formation of an unbalanced emotional identity. And it's a fragile identity precisely because there is no *We*, the We being the germinal centre of any possible Me and of any possible You. The image of young people that emerges is of a generation wrapped up in the private dimension; where it does exist, the sense of belonging to a generation is bound up with issues that are existential/individual rather than political/social.

Addressing an ideology, a holistic and simplified vision of the world, gave yesterday's youngster the chance to get his or her bearings, and then to choose. Late-modern society has swept away the ideologies, and the ideals with them, thus depriving young people of the cogent guidance of ethical choice. Ethical choice simplifies reality, operating as a criterion that directs the decisive, final decision for or against, whereas relativist compromise and opportunism foster the notion of a reversible decision. Where there are no ethical foundations, every choice is temporary, revocable and renegotiable.

> We find ourselves facing so many choices. In the past, the possibility of making choices was much more limited, partly because the family was much more authoritarian and partly because the offer from the market and from society generally was much less differentiated, added to the fact that the average family was less affluent. Our lives now are a continuous series of choices. Even as children we're already seen as consumers, customers and targets of the market. Having the chance to decide on the basis of our preferences is definitely a step forward compared to the past; it's very important and positive. But who teaches us to choose? And based on what criteria? And how can we be expected to choose if we don't even know ourselves? [Irene, F, age 23]

Ironically, the multiplication of the perceived possibilities of life risks morphing into a giddy range of potential options from which it is impossible to select and reject. In the face of this, the family is seen as the only clear and reassuring benchmark, so that the difficulty of leaving has more explanations than mere economic motives. The young live in an increasingly differentiated and complex reality in which life options – real or virtual, subjectively perceived or objectively existent – appear to multiply. The growing person has to construe and map the existing scenarios, identify his or her place within them, select, reject and move in one or more directions; at the same time, the criteria for making choices become increasingly elusive and individual. The absence of a *ubi consistam* is felt.

> This expansion of the potential opportunities increases the anxiety of the young person, and the concern about not making the right investments in his

or her future. That's why young people now tend to put off the choice; they try to postpone the moment when they will have to face up to the adult world. [Roberto, M, age 25]

Meanwhile Italian adults marginalise the ethical dimension, ignoring it when not flagrantly denying it in their behaviour. According to one of the young people in my study, the cognitive difficulties adults have in getting their bearings in late-modern society is not what it's about. It's a moral issue: the adults wielding powers are egoists. This is a generation of only children, born to parents who have transmitted to them the delusion of the crushed hopes and passions of the 60s and 70s. 1989, the year of the fall of the Berlin wall, brought the crisis of last century's dominant ideologies to the fore. In the fathers (and mothers) it triggered hope but also disorientation, since the distinction between what was just and unjust collapsed along with the wall. A generation without fathers or teachers, or older brothers.

> The adults, especially those that have power, think only about themselves. They have no morals. Young people don't ask adults to be infallible, but to be credible and serious. There's a lot of talk about skills, about expertise to address the challenges of globalisation. But we young people know that adults don't reward our efforts, they don't consider the merit of people learning to do things. Italian adults, teachers especially, reward bootlicking and craftiness. And so we become crafty and crawlers. But it's sad. This way you learn nothing, except how to play up to the boss to get ahead. [Matteo, M, age 25]

Unable to find cogent yardsticks anywhere, the young people become individualistic, squeezed into a volatile Self. The Italian family culture encourages them to adopt such attitudes, while the collective dimension and values referring to the Other, have no place in their life experience. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the Other is not pivotal to the thoughts of their parents either, nor of the significant adults they meet. Exacerbating the semantic opacity generated by the multiplication of informative and formative agencies are profound cultural processes inherent to ancient and recent Italian history. These deeply-rooted anthropological attitudes are moulded by a communication that develops through mutual influence into a sort of vicious circle. In such a circle the young person may go astray unless he or she rapidly learns the rules of the game, hinging primarily on the ability to cut a path through the jungle of life – the Italian art of getting by – heedless of everything and everyone: *Self at all costs, regardless of the Other.* It's the culture of craftiness and malpractice that is instilled early on into the relational baggage of the young: far from being blameworthy, duping a teacher by copying in class proves that you're smart enough to get away with it.

According to Cavalli (1999), some adults feel an obscure sense of guilt because they realise they haven't done the right thing by young people. Rather than looking in the mirror, the adults invent these images that supposedly represent young people, whereas they are really just sketchy self-portraits. This seems to be a way of sweeping under the carpet something that makes the older generation edgy and that it refuses to recognise as its own, and appears to be particularly true when negative characteristics are attributed to young people. It happens because many adults have mislaid the capacity to counsel and listen to young people. They're afraid of exposing themselves, of setting themselves up as models to be followed or rejected, of engaging the young in long-term, wide-ranging projects, of clearly stating what values they believe in (because they're not sure): in a word, the older generation is afraid of clashing with the younger. And perhaps even more they're afraid of being judged, of hearing what they don't want to know, namely what the young think about their parents' generation: "We're dimly aware that we haven't done right by them" (Cavalli 1999: 254).

When the feeling of trust and loyal cooperation with one's neighbour is systematically violated, the young person risks entering a dangerous spiral of isolation and unease. The lack of meaningful and trustful dialogue with significant Others (Sullivan 1953) renders the construction of the youthful Self fragile.

> In a social context in which honesty, sense of duty and responsibility are things that hardly anyone cares about any more, quite a lot of young people – partly as a sort of reaction against rampant corruption – suffer from deep loneliness. They live closed up in a separate world where they have no dialogue with their families, with the school or the rest of society, but only with their peers. Then, to break out of this isolation, they resort to strong emotions, often beyond what's legally permitted. Many young people start taking drugs, even hard stuff. [Eleonora, F, age 24]

The culture of dependency and the lack of a collective narrative

In the communication society, TV in its various forms, social media on the web (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and even apps for Smartphones and Tablets have supplemented the traditional sites of socialisation to generate a phenomenon of polyphonic socialisation. How do the young communicate in such a society? And how do they recognise each other in their encounter with the adult world? While formulating pertinent questions, we can also explode a few myths about young people and their relations with adults. One is the

belief that young people are naturally creative and unconventional bearers of change, whereas the young people I met in my research were quite conformist and aligned with the prevailing adult culture. It is almost as if there is a sort of connivance between fathers and sons, one that fans the flames of certain dysfunctional mechanisms within Italian society.

As well as excluding the collective dimension – local, national or international – closing-in upon the Self and failure to open up towards the Other undermines young people's self-awareness. To grasp what is happening around us, to dialogue with the Other and with ourselves, we have to know where we stand, representing who we are as social actors in time and space, taking a range of dimensions into consideration (location, economy, culture etc.). The revisitation of personal biography and collective history is what allows the individual to reconstruct his narrative identity, and see his point of view of society as *a* point of view. In traditional societies self-narration was almost automatic. Past, present and future were linked through the stability of tradition, nature, destiny and religion. There was little mediated experience, since daily life was regulated by the situations, objects and people present in the community. But the narration of the self has becomes increasingly important for all social actors, public and not, in modern and late-modern societies, while at the same time the sense of individual identity can no longer be inherited or given:

> Self-identity is not a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits, possessed by the individual. It is *the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography*. Identity here still presumes continuity across time and space: but self-identity is such continuity as interpreted reflexively by the agent [...] To be a 'person' is not just to be reflexive actor, but to have a concept of a person (as applied both to the self and others) [...] A person with a reasonably stable sense of self-identity has a feeling of biographical continuity which she is able to grasp reflexively and, to a greater or lesser degree, communicate to other people (Giddens 1991: 53-54).

The hardest part of communicating with individuals from different social groups or cultures – and even with different age brackets within the same group – is being able to think and act with a view to recognition of the Other. Without this gradual other and self-recognition, the communication can become a minefield. There is the risk of perpetrating a *false recognition* that can lead to an egoistic type of relation (inter- and intra-generational) the *Other for Self* or, alternatively, *Self for Other*: a dialogue characterised by the annihilation of subjectivity. For recognition and dialogue, the mechanisms controlling feelings of reciprocal dependency and control have to be deactivated. Dignity must be given to both oneself and the Other through knowledge and trust,

by accepting personal and collective history, so that those with critical spirit and courage can glimpse the other that is in us and think of *Oneself as Another* (Ricoeur 1992).

This didn't happen with my subjects. The original interpretative key for this essay was: "Self without the Other: young Italians and the culture of dependency". I abandoned that because it could be misconstrued, because it is only by relating to the Other that we acquire identity, and we cannot be dependent in the absence of the Other. In the *Bel Paese*, in this very void filled with egotistic relations dependency has gone viral: the Other in the young people's stories is a ghost, a simulacrum, an Other moulded to serve one's own ends, desires, needs, fears. The world that the young people invest in is of short radius, with the centre in the family nest and the outer circle enclosing friends and sentimental relations just a short way beyond. Everything beyond this limited compass is experienced in a rapid and risk-free manner, through the media or on short holidays: zapping and clicking while remaining safely ensconced in the parental home – a place both physical and mental –.

In the book *Sources of the Self* (1989), Charles Taylor focuses the "culture of authenticity" widespread in modern societies. This requires everyone to be themselves while choosing between horizons that appear as given and transcending the Self, creating a sort of oscillatory movement between the egoistic ideal of self-realisation and the altruistic commitment to causes that can be pursued through engagement and action. On the contrary, the young people/children and adults/parents emerging from my research – equally responsible, each according to the respective role – are engaged in the construction of false identities, in other words identities with meanings drawn exclusively from within a culture of reciprocal dependency. This dependency starts from the family and ripples out to the main sites of socialisation (school and work) to become a crucial feature of Italian culture. Such attitudes might well be described within a "culture of narcissism" (Lasch 1979) or indeed of hedonism, individualism or particularism. I decided to refer to it as "dependency", because in the meshing of objective and subjective, structural and cultural aspects, it seemed the term best fitted to the young Italians of the third millennium in their relations with adults.

The last decade has witnessed many devastating events: natural catastrophes, wars, terrorist attacks and economic crises. Such events can trigger a learning curve (Boltanski 1999), but they have failed to jolt the younger generations out of an immobility that inevitably leads to the construction of individual and group identities crammed within the private world. Lacking the lifeblood of any society nourished by the sharing and internalisation of the values underpinning collective life, these private worlds are closed and anaemic. And all the most recent forms of collective action appear to adopt

that same "already felt" (Perniola 2012)[10] nuance of other rituals – cultural or consumerist to a greater or lesser degree – ubiquitous in the autobiographies of so many of the youngsters encountered during this research and elsewhere.

The lack of an adequate and plausible narrative that is capable of encompassing the social performances of individual and collective actors on the stage of Italian public life – each one with his/her role and responsibility – seems to impede an active awareness of the ongoing cultural crisis and traumas, in young people and adults alike[11]. Leaving to the Italian family alone the abnormal task of being the only institution that creates meaning simply leads to the production of hyper-particular scripts that cannot absolve the function of fostering the sense of belonging to a collectivity, or to a group, or in the long run even to the family itself.

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[10] The Italian philosopher argues that, since the 60s, we live a second-hand "sensology," produced by the media and underlying consumer attitudes. According to Perniola, the aesthetisation of experience, typical of a society guided by "sensological" rather than ideological criteria, requires an impersonal emotional universe, characterised by anonymous experience, in which everything renders itself as "already felt."

[11] See Alexander (2006 and 2012) for a holistic and sophisticated analysis of social performance and cultural trauma.

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Searching for adulthood:
young people, citizenship and participation

Alessandro Martelli and Ilaria Pitti

Focusing on the relation between youth and citizenship and between youth and adulthood, the article investigates youth paths of civic and political engagement by presenting the results of a qualitative research conducted in Bologna in 2012 which has involved a sample of young people and a sample of "significant adults" through semi-structured interviews. The intergenerational analysis shows that youth civic and political engagement, still influenced by social and economic factors, can be interpreted as a multiform expression of agency towards an environment perceived as not welcoming for the younger generations.

Young people between citizenship and adulthood

The recent debate on youth has extensively covered issues concerning the degrees of autonomy and the possibilities of social and political inclusion young people can experience during their transition to adulthood, in particular with respect to the recent economic crisis, which has harshly beaten on a condition historically thought of as weak, even before the crisis began. Young people's unemployment rate testifies their difficulties and stands as a serious warning for the growth of adult society's future members.

Youth condition, with its transformation and prerogatives, is undoubtedly influenced by the social circumstances surrounding it. While this is not the appropriate context for an in-depth analysis of the characteristics of today's society, it is opportune to mention, in a somewhat impressionistic way, a list of keywords that are used in authoritative literature to describe a world where young people's trajectories take form: unstable, risky, individualised, pluralistic and accelerated[1]. This is a socio-cultural environment where the de-

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[1] This is an extensive literature, with some highly significant contributions worth mentioning, both on a general level (Beck 1992; Melucci 1996; Giddens 1999; Castel 2003; Eisenstadt 2003; Sennett 2005; Berger and Luckman 1995) and specifically about young people (Furlong and Cartmel 1997; Blossfeld *et al.* 2005; Leccardi 2009).

traditionalisation and de-standardisation of biographies (Beck 1992) are particularly reflected in the paths into adulthood (Leccardi and Ruspini 2006; Walther 2006; Furlong 2009), without diminishing the long lasting influence of classic variables such as family status, gender and ethnic origins.

Although mainly perceived as a problem rather than a resource (Iard 2001), youth condition has, for a number of years, been part of the European political and social agenda as a phase of life that needs to be closely monitored in relation to its progression over time, and because it reflects the current vulnerabilities and future destinies of social and cultural integration. Being highly sensitive to social change, youth frequently reflects and anticipates its forms and content.

The ways of transition to adult life, seen as overcoming cumulative social stages (Modell *et al.* 1976), still represent the mainstream tools of studying young people in their functional transformation and maturity. Youth condition presents great complexities in relation to the analysis and planning of interventions and services, both adopting the perspective of the social stages, and extending the viewpoint to issues of identity and expectations. Youth is expressed within a rather wide age range that goes from 15 to 34, with the obvious differences from country to country, and therefore includes a plurality of youths (Cavalli and Galland 1993; Côté 2000)[2]. It develops around several spheres (education, work, sentimental relationships, parenthood, values, leisure, and participation) and varies according to the different ages within youth as well as to national characteristics (Bazzanella 2010). Nonetheless, some aspects seem to be common among contemporary western youth: the delay in entering adulthood, the problematic idea of future in both occupational and cognitive terms, a significant distance from adults in relation to cultural taste and private life (Cicchelli and Galland 2009). Youth condition cannot thus be analysed as an undifferentiated whole and comprehended without being placed in relation both to country-related socio-economic trends and to public policies that regulate, either directly or indirectly, individual and collective trajectories. Within this dense and complex tangle of factors, actors and processes pertaining to the characteristics of youth condition, this article focuses on the relevance of the relation between youth and adulthood and between youth and citizenship (Martelli 2013).

These two aspects could be merged into a general question frequently associated to young people's conducts: their "invisibility" (Gauthier 1994; Dia-

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[2] To exemplify the evolving peculiarities inherent to youth, we could refer on the one hand to the changes inside and around adolescence (Galland 1990 and 2008), and on the other hand to the appearance of individuals who are older than 35 and can be defined, for their way of life and orientation, as "adult-young people" (Cesareo 2005).

manti 1999) or, in other words, their escape from traditional roles and re-sponsibilities connected to personal growth and to participation to collective aims and practices. This invisibility seems to be strictly connected both to a demographic factor – that is to the decrease of weight in comparison to that of the adults and of the elderly – and to the behaviour of adult people, who have a persisting power of evaluating young people attitudes and at the same time frequently blur the boundaries, adopting a life-style more and more curved towards choices and consumption conventionally characteristic of younger individuals. On their side, young people are not passive actors, and play a camouflage game, mixing adjustment and innovation both in the private and in the public sphere.

Against this background, youth condition could be observed in terms of owned amount of citizenship by looking at the relation young people have with the public sphere for what concerns rights, duties and civicness.

Citizenship certainly is a fundamental engine of modern democracy, and its semantics recalls both aspects of redistribution and elements pertaining to the sense of belonging to a community and to the concept of identity (Barbalet 1988; Procacci 1998; Isin and Turner 2002).

In this perspective we could observe how citizenship on the one side corre-sponds to a set of rights and a level of protection descending from a status, on the other side takes form through concrete practices (of participation, coop-eration, solidarity, consumption), according to conducts and responsibilities as they are perceived by subjects in relation to their sense of belonging (Turner 1990; Smith *et al.* 2005). When we direct our attention on young people, both sides play a relevant role in influencing their interpretation of citizenship, even if issues of belonging and identity seem to have gained more and more im-portance in the last decades, for young people themselves and also for the adults looking at youth: there have been increasing worries and expectations towards the inclination of young people in terms of active citizenship, that is to what extent they show and combine loyalty, identification and participation (Barbalet 1998; Procacci 1998). The high significance of the subjective di-mension of citizenship, together with the incontrovertible weight of social and economic factors (according to which citizenship as an institution produces entitlements and provisions), allow to frame the question in terms of "partici-patory citizenship" (Martelli 2013).

With regard to the orientation of contemporary youth, we can refer to two interesting and useful conceptualisations. A first one is by Martuccelli (2007), who – echoing and developing the question of "Shifting Involvements" raised by Hirschman 1982 – has proposed the idea of a "conditional partici-pation" as a peculiar way of engagement in which activism and disaffection are strictly and simultaneously combined, which is not only typical of young

people, but seems to be particularly suitable for the representation of a widespread attitude among them. A second one underlines the emergence of a "democratic individualism" among young people (Bontempi and Pocaterra 2007; Spannring *et al.* 2008), where ideas of freedom and democracy are still attractive, but could be quite detached from a solid capacity to include them in a collective framework of action and mobilization. These two suggestions acquire further meaning if we direct our glance to the institutional side, where we find a decreasing ability to attract people under traditional patterns of participation and to maintain Marshall's idea of citizenship (1950) as a project of progressive reduction of inequalities.

In such a context, young people show new ways and styles of involvement, with a high degree of unconventional actions and orientations, that even when apparently seem to be far from any commitment (abstention from voting, street parades, youth riots, skating in public spaces), express new meanings and new issues whose contents and deep components have to do with the collective dimension (Walther 2012).

Furthermore, forms and degrees of participation and active citizenship are still strictly influenced by social and structural factors, confirming the intertwining relation between cultural and material elements of the participatory citizenship.

Nonetheless, the extended relevance of subjective identity among young people within the debate on citizenship and its tensions and promises could lead to a particularistic drift, where the increased value of cultural differences could cloud the vision towards the reduction of inequalities and the enforcement of a universalistic solidarity (Soysal 1994; Procacci 1998). In other words, one of the main risks appearing on the contemporary scene is that of a youth characterized by individualization without a (or with a weak) public sphere. This would imply strong difficulties in participating in processes of institutionalization, due to the complex combination of the need for individuality and the perceived value of identity on the one side, and collective objectives and projects of equality on the other side, which in a sense need impersonality and uniformity.

While framing and analyzing youth participation and civicness, as mentioned in the premises, we can't miss the set of factors and actors intervening, and in particular, we have to focus with more attention on the importance of an inter-generational perspective.

Despite the long tradition of sociological studies on youth engagement, the analysis still needs to be improved in its capability to "think youth in a generational way", that is to understand young people "as subjects who are defined by the relations they have (or do not have) with other generations" (Donati 1997: 7). This appears to be more and more urgent because of the deep changes occurred and occurring in the profile of both young people and

adults, which affect the redefinition of intergenerational relationships.

Although youth, during the last decades, has continuously modified its own characteristics and boundaries, it has also always been seen as a transition to adulthood, taking this *terminus ad quem* as a quite stable and, in a sense, self-evident condition.

Actually, adult people seem to have firmly maintained their power in establishing the rules of the game, still being in charge of the key roles and functions in economy and society (Ambrosi and Rosina 2009), and – with specific respect to their relation with young people – in defining the situation in terms of identity and deservingness along the process of becoming adult.

Nevertheless, pertaining to "who" the adults are, we are seeing deep changes related to their lifestyles, expectations, identity and also – which is noteworthy for the focus of this article – to their capacity of representing a model for the transition to adulthood (Saraceno 1984; Santambrogio 2002; Blatterer 2010; Burnett 2010; Recalcati 2013). This is the reason why, in the framework of a stronger orientation toward adopting an intergenerational perspective when studying youth, in our investigation we have to "search for adults" (Pole *et al.* 2005).

Young people, citizenship and participation: a case study on intergenerational relationships

This section presents some of the main results of a research dealing with the contemporary characteristics of youth civic and political involvement. The work has been inspired by the observation that, as previously said, the long tradition of sociological studies on youth engagement has often paid little attention to the relevance of inter-generational relationships in defining young people and their involvement (Donati 1997).

The research aimed to contribute to this perspective by studying how two generations – the one of today's young people and the one of today's adults – relate to each other with respect to civic and political participation, and what are the effects these relationships have on youth civic and political engagement.

In 2012, starting from this frame of reference, we carried out a qualitative study inspired to the grounded theory method (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Charmaz 2005) within a district of the city of Bologna (Italy). The research involved a sample of young people between 18 and 24 years old and a sample of "significant adults"[3] identified by the young people themselves.

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[3] The concept of "significant adults" recalls the traditional sociological construct of the "Significant Other". According to Sullivan (1940) and Mead (1967), significant others are those

The youth sample was composed of 32 young people, selected according to the relevance of some key variables: gender (16 males and 16 females); national origins (6 young people were of foreign origins); educational level and employment status (20 young people were still high school or university students while 12 already completed their studies; of the latter, 10 were working and 2 were unemployed), presence or absence of the families in Bologna (12 young people moved to Bologna for educational or work reasons and lived outside the family of origins), and political ideas (9 right-wing and 23 left-wing interviewees[4]).

The adult sample consisted of 18 adults[5] aged between 40 and 60 years old (born between 1952 and 1972). Males were slightly more than females (11 men *vs.* 7 women) and the adult interviewees were generally bound by a parental relationship to the correspondent young interviewees[6].

In order to involve both formally and informally engaged[7] young people (Ekman and Amnå 2009), we decide to get in touch with the interviewees

people who are of sufficient importance in an individual's life to affect his/her identity, sense of self, emotions and behaviours. In this research, by using the expression "significant adults" we make therefore reference to those adults who occupy an adequate central role in the young individual's biography to affect their identity, e and conducts; especially in relation to civic and political involvement.

[4] By proposing this net distinction between right and left wing interviewees we want to give account of a certain polarization that has been observed within the youth sample. Answering to a question about their political location on the traditional right-left scheme, our interviewees have mainly opted for a clear ideological alignment with one of the two polar positions. Moreover, also those who have defined their political location as "moderate" have spontaneously expressed their preference for a more conservative or a more liberal interpretation of this "central" political position.

[5] The 12 young interviewees who did not have their families in Bologna have chosen their parents or other people residing in the area of origin as significant adults. Due to the geographical distance, it was impossible to involve these adults in the research. The choice of this youth group, differently from the "autochthonous", reveals a relational world consisting only of peers, in which adults occupy a very marginal position.

[6] In 13 cases, the significant adult was the father or the mother of the young interviewees; in the other 5 cases, the significant adult was another relative, a teacher or a sports coach. Considering the entire youth sample, the vast majority of the interviewees (26) indicated one of the parents as significant adults. This seems to confirm the rise of a "socialità ristretta" (restricted sociability) among young people noticed by de Lillo (2002) in his studies on youth condition. In line with de Lillo's perspective the interviewees' choices show how young people interface with the civic and political dimension more and more through very intimate ties: among our interviewees parents represent the main "intermediaries" between youth and the participatory sphere of society.

[7] We tried to involve in the study also those young people who were not engaged through manifest practices of participation (e.g. formalised associations and parties), and who could apparently look like inactive and disinterested in civic and political engagement.

through various youth meeting places within the Navile district which have been selected through a preliminary mapping. The young interviewees have been initially contacted through cultural association, youth centres, sports associations, parishes, parks, libraries, shopping centres, cafés and pubs. In a second phase, we got in touch with other young people through voluntary and civic associations, charities, NGOs, political parties and associations.

As previously stated, the significant adults sample was built on the basis of the young interviewees' indication. During the interview, all the young people were asked to suggest an adult they considered particularly important to them in relation to their political and civic formation[8].

As for the youth sample, the decision to focus on this specific age group raised from two emerging issues that came to light after an analysis of the sociological literature on youth, as well as from the awareness that several youths can be distinguished within the youth as a whole.

Firstly, drawing a clear and explicit inspiration from Erikson' studies on youth identity[9] (Erikson 1968), Arnett (2000) has recently elaborated the concept of "emerging adulthood" which aim at highlighting the various characteristics that distinguish the period of life comprised between 18 and 24 within youth transitions to the adult status. According to Arnett, emerging adulthood is an age of identity explorations where young people are called to decide who they are and who they want to become; an age of instability marked by frequent forward and backward steps on adulthood's paths (Walther 2006); an age of personal reflexivity in which young people should reflect on themselves and on the world around them with planning attitude; an age "in between", characterized by the transition from one status to another, where the perception of oneself as adults comes and goes; an age of *chances* in which the future is still to be determined. Therefore the choice of this specific age limits reflects the desire to investigate the process of youth transition to adulthood by looking at the "central point" of the journey.

Secondly, the focus on this age segment allows us to deepen the sociological understanding of Generation Y's[10] relationship with active citizenship.

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[8] The exact question was: "can you tell me the name of an adult you consider important in your life, especially for what concerns civic and political participation?".

[9] Arnett's concept of "emerging adulthood" aim to update Erikson's theories on the developmental stages of the life cycle and, in particular, Erikson's idea that between adolescence and adulthood young people experience a "psychosocial moratorium" in which they're socially called to explore various possible futures in love and work.

[10] Among the various classic and contemporary contributions that have focused their attention on the concept of "generation", our frame of reference specifically recalls Mannheim's works (1928) and conceives generation primarily in a socio-historical perspective, that is as a group of

Among the many studies that have documented the peculiarity of this relation, Dalton (2008) has, for example, underlined the growing of a "new citizenship norms" within this youth group, whose engagement is considered to be more individualised, issue-oriented, and "glocal" (Norris 2003), as well as more connected to the private sphere of life, in comparison with the involvement practices of the previous generations.

The research materials were mainly collected through semi-structured interviews[11] and later integrated with various types of documentary materials such as leaflets, posters, books, posts on forums and social media.

These documents were obtained through the analysis of associations' websites and interviewees' personal profiles on Facebook, Twitter and other social media, but also by taking part to youth participatory events – such as meetings, manifestation and volunteering activities – organised by and for the young people within the district. The collected empirical data was managed using the NVivo software for qualitative data analysis.

Young people, adults, youth participation and citizenship: a restricted welcome?

In order to understand the influence intergenerational relationships have on youth engagement, we must first look at how young people understand the meaning of being citizens through their practices and representations of civic and political commitment.

The analysis of research materials has confirmed how youth engagement is framed by a strong pessimism concerning the contemporary conditions of young generations and by a clear scepticism towards politics and institutions as possible answer to youth problems.

people who were born and lived in a given socio-historical period and who have then been exposed to a limited set of accessible experiences (generational location) which can, in some specific circumstances, foster their awareness of sharing of a common destiny (generation as actuality). According to a commonly accepted definition, Generation Y comprises all the people born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s (our young interviewees were born between 1988 and 1994). Sometimes named also "Millennials", these young people are usually distinguished from the previous generation (Generation Y) for being the first generation of "digital natives", as well as for their more evident multi-cultural identity (Pew Research Center 2014).

[11] The interviews have been conducted between September and December 2012. We elaborated two different interviews' outlines: one for the youth sample and one for the adult sample. Both the interviews' outlines were composed of almost 40 questions and each individual encounters has had an average duration of 2 hours. In line with the grounded theory approach (Charmaz 2005), we kept our questions as broad as possible in order to let the interviewees free to express themselves and to actively guide the conversation flow.

Interestingly, this negative interpretation of the present situation seems to represent a constant element within the entire sample, which can create a sort of "generational solidarity" beyond the differences of origins. However, the pessimism also acquires different shades depending on the socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of the interviewee: among those young people who come from advantaged origins the current difficult socio-economic situation is more often perceived as transient and a sense of hope is usually ascribed to the future, while those young people with a more disadvantaged background usually share a negative idea about the future, thinking that no major positive evolutions will arrive soon.

In both case, pessimism and disillusionment seem to represent a conscious political horizon that feeds the engagement rather than prevent it (Bettin Lattes 2001; Bontempi and Pocaterra 2007). With regard to this aspect, research findings show a substantial coexistence between disaffection and activation, which shapes the participation of young interviewees in terms of a "suspicious commitment" or, according to Martucelli (2007), of a "conditional participation", where active participation goes hand in hand with an active distrust.

Looking at the relationship between young people and the more formal spheres of active participation (e.g. elections, political parties, trade unions or other formal political organizations) it has been possible to distinguish different profiles within the conditional engagement of our interviewees. More specifically, it seems possible to talk about a "reformist", a controlling and a rebellious way of being "conditionally engaged"[12].

For the definition of these three manners of involvement within politics, we looked at the youth's choice to participate or not through the more conventional tools of political engagement (e.g. voting and involvement in parties, trade unions and institutional-led activities) as well as to the meanings young people assign to their decision.

Both the reformers' and the controllers' groups consist of young people who have chosen to participate through official and institutional political

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[12] These three positions represent different qualities of participatory behaviours. In line with Ekman e Amnå's studies (2009), we opted for a rather broad definition of participation. Just "passive disengagement" – that is the attitude of those who do not participate because they do not perceive participation as important for themselves or for the society, and who do not accord a strategic meaning to their withdrawal – has been considered as a non participatory behaviour. The choice of this perspective has significantly reduced the possibility of defining some interviewees as "disengaged", even if very different participatory practices (in terms of frequency, perseverance and forms of commitment) can be recorded within the youth sample. Moreover, the research explicitly deals with participation and this has certainly attracted those young people who were more interested in this issue, as well as probably promoted a "proactive" interpretation of their disengagement.

practices, but their ways of involvement are strongly differentiated by the meanings they attribute to their political behaviours.

Those young people who chase a goal of reform through their involvement in the more traditional forms of political participation have been included in the reformers' group: facing a political scenario perceived as not encouraging, these individuals decide to stay and work on its renewal.

> Perfection does not exist and politics is certainly not perfect. […] However it is too easy to say they are all the same, it's all a mess, they should all go home and then do nothing: that is a defeat! People don't have the courage to admit it is not all the same thing, and it is also up to us to protect what is different and good. [F, age 19]

Also, among the controllers it has been possible to register a participatory activation within the formal political sphere, but the choice of being engaged in voting and in parties' activities was explained by the interviewees as a necessity that primarily stems from a lack of confidence toward politics. Although these young people decide to be involved in formalised political activities, they are not fighting for politics reforms: they are just trying to "control" politics or to "defend" themselves from politics[13]. In the passage from the position of the reformer to that of the controller, we can notice a reduction of youth expectations toward politics and politicians, but also a reshaping of their hopes with regards to their own abilities - as individuals and as young people - to do something to change the current political scenario.

> I do not know what we can really do. Rationally, I think we can not do big things. I mean, I participate, but I'm just trying to limit the damages, I am not really hoping in a change, I have no more illusions. [F, age 23]

A third group, consisting of those young interviewees who have chosen to completely abandon the institutional tools of political participation, believing that they are "totally unrecoverable" [M, age 22][14], completes the pro-

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[13] The terms "control" and "defence" refer to two different level of individual agency that can be recorded within this group of young interviewees. To describe these young people within the Italian research, we opted for the label "resistenti", which express both the dimension of the control and that of the defence. Since it was impossible to find a good translation for that term, we opted for the label "controllers", giving more emphasis to the youth active attitude toward politics. However, slightly passive attitude of defence is still present.

[14] "There is not so much to say. Politics, or at least the politics that is done by our politicians, is totally unrecoverable and we have already a bunch of evidences! I can't understand why we didn't have yet a revolution! Aren't people tired?" [M, age 22].

file of youth attitudes towards formal political commitment. This group is composed of those interviewees who have been named as "rebels". Among these young people the adoption of a participatory practice that can mainly be referred to an anti-political attitude is common: these individuals share a rejection of everything concerning institutional and formal politics, which finds its main expression in the complete avoidance of elections as well as of those activities organised and proposed by trade unions and parties. Within this group, the hopes for change are completely oriented towards (legal and illegal) extra-parliamentary engagement practices from public manifestations to riots, squatting, graffiti drawing and even vandalism.

> A change is still possible, but not in this system. We must think and act big, start from scratch, inventing a new way of doing politics... Who said that parties must necessarily exist? Are we sure we can't live without them? [M, age 24]

As stated, the socio-economic and cultural origins of the interviewees seem to have a central role in shaping their attitude toward formal politics. Those young people who have a stronger family background on an economic and cultural side seems to opt for a more proactive ("reformist" or "rebellious") attitude in relating with formal participation, while a more passive and defensive approach grows among the less advantaged ones and, in particular, among those who come from a lower cultural background.

Moreover, it has been possible to notice that the young people with higher levels of education are mainly located into the "reform" or the "rebellion" positions, while those who invested fewer – emotional and material – resources and show fewer expectation in education usually adopt an attitude of control/ defence in dealing with political participation.

The difficulties met on their paths of transition from school to work have also a certain importance in distinguishing the young interviewees into the three positions and this variable seems especially to differentiate the reformers from the rebels. The latter is, indeed, formed by young people who are experiencing more difficulties in finding a place into the job market after completing their education or who are more worried about their job opportunities in the forthcoming future. The idea of being "betrayed" by a society, which had taught them that by studying they would have had access to great opportunities, leads this group of young people to develop anger toward politics.

Beyond the differences in relation to their attitude toward formal political activities, the members of the three groups have something in common: the

activation through unconventional and non formal practices of engagement[15] is a constant element throughout the sample. Each of the young people interviewed is involved at least in one unconventional activity of commitment and, once again, it is interesting to highlight the meanings that are assigned to these ways of engagement.

The value young respondents attribute to all the activities located outside of the formal political sphere dwells exactly in their being "something different" from politics. In other words, the "goodness" of these practices of involvement emerges from a process of differentiation from the "badness" of politics: "politics is one thing and everything else is another" [M, age 22]. In youth point of view, social involvement, civic engagement and the different forms of extra-parliamentary activism (della Porta and Diani 2006; Sciolla 2012) are understood always in relation to politics, which still represents the actual horizon of meaning. These forms of participation appear to be the main reflection of the aforementioned typical "disaffection without disengagement" logic of youth's conditional activation, a pro-active reaction which is however also a more or less marked escape.

> I distinguish between the politics of the parties, the trade unions and the elections, and a new type of politics that is done in other ways and in other places. Politics and volunteering, for example. They are two completely different things: one is rigid and the other is not, one is closed and the other is not, one is dirty and the other is not. [F, age 24]

Within this distinction between politics and unconventional forms of activation within youth representations and practices of involvement, it is possible to identify one of the main aspects onto which intergenerational relationships between young people and adults display their influence.

Young people see the institutional political participation as an "adult territory": a participatory space where adults are the real and only holders of power. In these forms and spaces of involvement, the young interviewees state to benefit only from a "restricted welcoming" [M, age 22] because the access is difficult, and the dialogue with the older generation is founded on unfair bases.

> I mean, I'm good in the party, but the welcome is restricted: like, ok, stay here, talk, but do not bother us! I always feel like a guest. [F, age 19]

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[15] Drawing inspiration from Ekman and Amna's work, we considered unconventional practices of participation all those forms of civic, social and political involvement who not fit under the "formal political participation" label: social involvement (e.g. being vegan; recycling), civic engagement (e.g. volunteering) and activism (e.g. political consumerism and boycotting).

The common feeling among youth is that in these spaces of participation, the real offers of listening, dialogue and action are rare and purely formal. In the institutional practices of active citizenship, young people feel to be not fully recognised as "legitimated actors" (Fraser 2000: 118) of the political, social and civic system.

> Activities organised by the institutions are like many beautiful fences. You can jump, you can walk, but you must stay there, where they tell you to stay. [M, age 22]

> Into the party you don't fight with the same weapons of those who are above you, who are usually adults. They are always more important than you and they tell you that you can not understand because you're too young. I want a place where I can compete on an even footing. [M, age 18]

Practices of non-conventional participation are perceived, in reverse, as "youth areas" or places where the dialogue with adults – if present – is fairer. However, youth's perception of the unconventional forms of activations as "adult-free zones" seems to correspond to what they effectively are: in most cases, within the participatory experiences other than formal politics in which the interviewees are involved, adults are completely absent. Indeed, young people participate mainly through youth-led associations (e.g. cultural and volunteering associations founded and/or managed exclusively by young people, juvenile sections of some civic associations) where the issue of negotiating spaces, ideas, and perspectives with the adult world is rare.

Shifting our attention on the adult interviewees' ideas of youth participation and of young people as active citizens, it possible to observe that the legitimacy they grant to youth involvement is effectively characterized for being a "partial legitimacy".

On a first moment, the interviewed adults usually talk about young people as citizens in a rather apologetic way, claiming to put great hopes on the new generations and on what they can do for society and politics. From this point of view, they seem to give legitimacy to the youth participatory expressions and, indeed, to ascribe a "redeeming power" to youth.

> I think they will make a difference. Maybe not everyone, but I see them motivated, strong, even stronger than us. They know it is like that, they are not waiting for the manna from heaven as we have done for years. [M, age 42]

However, the concept of "partial legitimacy" has not been casually chosen: adults' recognition of youth involvement is actually less full than it may

initially look and this is clearly visible by considering the ways in which adults manage intergenerational conflicts on civic and political issues.

According to the young and adult interviewees' reconstruction of their intergenerational relationships on participatory themes, conflict seems indeed to be an ubiquitous element, and even if the relevance of this dimension is not new to family studies (Corbetta *et al.* 2012), the reactive modality commonly adopted by the interviewed adults is undoubtedly worthy of attention. When differences emerge between young people's and adults' interpretation of a political or civic issue, adults usually try to overcome the problem by calling into question the presumed immaturity of the young one who is always "too young" to understand.

> She is really active. She does a lot, she is a volunteer in an association, she also used to teach Italian to foreign children and she pays a lot of attention to politics […] always talking, always mumbling…but she doesn't vote. […] I wonder what does she thinks to obtain. According to me this not the right way to obtain something and I told her that she needs to keep in mind there is a difference between the real politics and all that is around it. She's too young to understand that her volunteering will not really change the world. [M, age 50]

Adults try to minimize intergenerational conflicts by stating they are due to the different levels of experience. According to them, young people don't have adequate means to understand the "truthfulness" of the worldview proposed by adults because of their lack of experience.

> If he was an adult! But he is young and he can't understand. I mean, even me, when I was young I did not understand, but then we grow, we become adults, we deal with many problems as adults do, and eventually our parents' opinions do not seem so weird anymore. [F, age 45]

The same dynamic can be identified also when adults talk about young generations as actors of participation: in this case, too, adults recognise the diffusion of a strong civic attitude among young people, but they contend new generations are not showing their interest "in the most appropriate way" [M, age 45].

> It does not take much to figure out they are not as disinterested as they seem. [...] Do you remember the protests in the Arab countries a few months ago? They knew more than me! The same about the things that one should buy or not. But it's weird: all this interest goes, I would not say it is wasted, but I do think it's not fully capitalised. [F, age 59]

Therefore, adults' positions on youth participation is rather ambiguous: on the one hand, they invest high hopes on the new generations, on the other they relegate them in a subordinate position of those who are not yet sufficiently ready; on the one hand they introduce young people as "potential heroes" able to "rewrite the world" [F, 46], on the other they promote an image of youth akin to an "endangered species" – precious, weak and dangerous at the same time – which must be kept in a sort of "ecological zone" fully managed by adults (Maurizio 2011).

These contradictory positions seem to be based on two conceptual distinctions that lie beneath the broader relationships adults have with youth.

The first refers to a temporal distinction between the present and the future (Leccardi 2009) that allows a postponement of youth recognition. In other words, the two opposite images of youth can coexist because they do not live on the same temporal context. The idolisation of young people as active citizens does not refer to the present, but to the future, and the hope adults invest on new generations are not declined into the present time. It's a "postponed hope" which does not make reference to what young people can do today, but to what they could do in a "tomorrow" not yet clearly defined. By stating that young people will save us in the future, the adult generation actually reaffirms its authority in the present, justifies a marginalization of young people as actors in society, adopts an authoritative style in reference to youth participation and, at the same time, locates itself in a passive position, letting things run their course naturally. It seems therefore clear that adults' confidence in young people is actually subordinated to the acquisition of the "adult status" and to a growth process that should lead the younger generations to become more and more similar to the adults, to share their ideas and behaviours. Confidence in young people as citizens and, more generally, as social actors, is therefore not only delayed, but also connected to an "abandonment" of their youth identity and of the related ideas on understanding and practicing participation.

The second distinction, which is closely related to the aforementioned, refers to the concepts of youth – as abstract symbol – and of young people – as real subject. Adults' coexisting optimism and pessimism toward young people as active citizens refer not only to two different temporal levels, but also to two distinct objects. During the last two decades, a number of studies have focused on adults' infatuation towards youth, which has been turned into a real contemporary myth (Dal Lago and Molinari 2002; Galimberti 2009; Recalcati 2013). Looking at participation, youth idolization allows a projection on the present of a standard of "youth participatory behaviour" which is more or less explicitly gathered from the 60s' and 70s' experiences of mobilization. Adults place deep confidence into youth, which is described

as custodian of a revolutionary power of civic and political change, but their love for the youth status does not imply the development of a similar feeling towards young people, who are instead frequently described with deep pessimism, especially with regard to their real capabilities of social commitment and involvement (James 2011). Such pessimism is usually expressed by adults through a continuous comparison between their own generation ("we, when we were young") and today's youth that nourishes both a "negative conceptualisation" – contemporary young people are not what they should be – and an "anachronistic conceptualisation" – contemporary young people are no longer what they were (Mazzoleni 2003: 17-18). This adults' attitude undoubtedly testifies their *nostalgia* for something they have lost, but also their difficulties in objectively understanding contemporary youth and the different historical and social conditions in which young people are now living (Schizzerotto *et al.* 2011).

Conclusions

Even if challenged by several transforming dynamics and tensions, contemporary citizenship still maintains its fundamental characteristics, which have to be looked after: it is centred on the coexistence of rights and responsibilities, it engages simultaneously both individual and collective elements, it recalls processes of identification that are strictly combined with mechanisms of redistribution and protection, integration and possibility of action.

Citizenship is mainly developed and debated within the political sphere, grounded on participation and civicness as fundamental pillars of the democratic societies.

With regard to young people's attitudes and behaviours toward these cornerstones of active citizenship, a double movement can be identified: on the one side, they share the rest of the population's same difficulties in accessing and producing universal meanings and goals of participation, on the other side they largely prefer unconventional forms of participation as a peculiar (generational?) position where protest, adjustment and innovation converge and mix. Nonetheless, their unconventional involvement still reveals deep political meaning. If participation and civicness are frequently associated to dynamics of identification and to a dimension where cultural orientation and sense of belonging prevail, research warns not to ignore the persisting relevance of social and structural factors on young people's biographies and on the level of freedom they can experience.

Youth's styles and degrees of active citizenship have to be analysed in the light of intergenerational relationships, that is, looking at the interaction be-

tween young people and adults, conceiving the latter as generation and as social institutions.

Highlighting the rise of a "conditional participation" expressed through proactive attitudes towards formal politics – based on a varying logic of "reform", "control" or "rebellion" – and the wide diffusion of unconventional practices of engagement within the youth sample, the research findings testify the persistence of a deep sense of civicness among the younger generations.

However, if institutions seem to be largely inadequate to attract young people to the democratic process, adults' words, as collected through the interviews, highlight a dual "narrative" that supports the asymmetric distribution of power widely explored by sociological studies on youth conditions. Adults themselves weaken young people's paths toward autonomy by refusing to recognise and legitimise the latter as full actors in the present.

Indeed, this asymmetry does continue in times of increasing crisis of adulthood itself: while a certain rhetoric of adulthood seems to persist among both adults and young people without big dissimilarities, adulthood "in practice" results to be much more problematic and blurred than in the past. Therefore, parallel to the investigation on youth there is an urgent need to (re)search for adulthood.

In this perspective, it seems reasonable to question the traditional representation of youth as a transition to adulthood. Given the changing (slightly disappearing?) status of adulthood and young people's persisting lack of autonomy, substituting the concept of adulthood with that of citizenship could be a promising operation, both for researchers and decision makers. Considering the persisting influence of social and economic conditions (age, gender, socio-economic status, origin, and life context) on young people's trajectories, their welfare and their attitude in participating to the public sphere (Pole *et al.* 2005; France 2007; Walther 2006 and 2012; Heinz 2009, Checkoway 2011; Eurobarometer 2011), the adoption of citizenship as *terminus ad quem* could allow to reduce the dependence of the process leading to youth autonomy on an elusive and uncertain adult figure, and at the same time could overcome the low sensitivity of the concept of adulthood to questions of redistribution and recognition.

In the perspective of future studies about the relation between young people, citizenship and participation, our research joins other investigations in recommending a particular attention towards the intergenerational dimension and the changing features of adulthood, saving the importance to combine the focus on belonging, identity and participation as subjective attitudes with that on social and economic factors preceding and/or conditioning possibilities and extents of practicing an active citizenship.

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Transition to adulthood and turnout.
Some unexpected implications from the Italian case

Dario Tuorto

Our article aims to study the evolution of turnout in Italy during the transition to adulthood. Previous studies in other countries (Bhatti and Hansen 2012) have attested an unexpected phase after the first vote, when turnout declines instead of following a progressive increase. We hypothesize that this trend also exists in Italy and is influenced by the characteristics of the living arrangement. The decision to leave or postpone the timing of exit from the parental home seems to play a crucial rule in the explanation of young adults' lower turnout. We also expect an interactive effect of variables such as the age-class of the young, their sex and occupational status. Data used for the analysis comes from two different sources (Osservatorio Prospex-Cattaneo, Itanes) and allows us to compare the level of turnout of young people in different living arrangements.

Introduction

Many studies in recent years have attested that young voters participate in elections less than older voters. In contrast to other forms of political participation where young people are more active, in the case of voting the relationship is normally reversed, with the curve of participation by age increasing as one moves from juvenile to adult age, and declining in correspondence with the age of "political retirement". There are various reasons for this gap: a reduced interest in politics, less knowledge about politics, a declining sense of civic duty (Topf 1995; Blais *et al.* 2004; Rubenson *et al.* 2004). And no clear trend has been identified in order to explain over-time and between-countries differences. But another question also remains unanswered: are age gaps due to life-cycle effects due to some specific feature of the youth transitory condition, or do they reflect peculiar generational differences and act through the process of generational replacement?

The first, well-known, explanation of these processes is based on the cycle effect. In this perspective the minor involvement is read as the consequence of a specific configuration of characteristics which affect the social statuses of

young people. Seymour M. Lipset, in his classic research (1960) connected the high degree of abstention of new voters with the impact of occupational mobility at the beginning of a job career. A young person voting for the first time has no previous political experience to rely on, still hasn't got a fixed set of political habits and tends to be more prone to receiving external influences, starting with those of his or her family. If these environments are homogeneous and transmit a specific input, the probability of voting will be higher, but more often a conflict situation prevails. In this case, young voters cannot simply limit themselves to their family's position and values because they contrast with those given by other reference groups. The "cross-pressure" effects are more likely to produce low turnout or inconstant political behaviour/orientation (Lipset 1960; Campbell 1960). During the complex phase of post-adolescence young people are caught between the need for independence and a still-active familiar conditioning. These contrasting forces, and the high instability of social rules that reflect a juxtaposition of different needs (being employed, forming a family, etc.) produce a weaker political identity and, as consequence, a more pronounced degree of abstention. Another obstacle in the acquisition of political maturity is geographical and residential instability experienced in juvenile age, which renders the stabilization of communitarian links and political contacts more difficult, with the effect of producing a substantially "disconnected voter" (Teixeira 1992). In synthesis, young adults are expected to vote less than older citizens because they are faced with the "start-up" problems that are typical of the juvenile age (completing education, searching for an occupation or a partner, etc.). In middle-age, participation rates normally reach higher levels as a result of the transition to marital status, although the presence of children in the household might act as a negative interference (Wilensky 2002).

A second explanation for the turnout age gap focuses the attention on generational differences. According to the classical definition of "political generation" elaborated by Karl Mannheim (a cohort of births linked by shared values, attitudes, opinion in society and politics: Mannheim 1964), the process of socialization – not the simple growth into adulthood – has an influence on citizens' views, which are moulded during adolescence or post-adolescence and remain fixed for one's whole life. The leading ideas in politics and society during the phase of entering into adulthood (as opposed to the phase itself) are decisive in the formation of political behaviour and vote orientations. Since the end of 1960s all Western countries have been invested by a persistent wave of disaffection and criticism toward political institutions and parties (Klingemann and Fuchs 1995). Citizens have become more dissatisfied with their government and express more negative feelings of alienation, cynicism, apathy, disillusion, which lead to growing abstention (together with a decline

in party identification, militancy, activism) (Pharr and Putnam 2000). At the base of this discontinuity a change occurred within the electorate, where generations grown during the 1980s and 1990s and influenced by uncertainty of present societies took over from the older generations which socialized 20 years before, during the "golden age" of participation. Minor participation of recent cohorts does not simply reflect a life cycle effect but a weaker political socialization, and generation replacement also explains long-term political changes (Franklin and Wessels 2002). Within this perspective, non-voting at juvenile age is not seen as an intrinsic characteristic of young people, but as a behaviour that has only recently emerged as an effect of the crisis of political belonging. As Mark Franklin stated (2004), becoming voters in a period of crisis means a lower turnout rate.

A negative trend in electoral participation of young people emerges in several researches as the effect of weak levels of party identification and political attention (Parry *et al.* 1992) and produced, as a consequence, a more intense sense of detachment among the less educated sectors of the youth population (Flanagan *et al.* 2009). Some explanations of this tendency have focused on the progressive disappearance of generalist political information and the fragmentation of media influences which make it more complicated for a young voter to acquire basic political exposure (following leading political events, knowing important news for the nation). All of this might have inhibited the formation of civic duty towards the vote and the propensity to participate. Robert Putnam, in his *Bowling Alone* (2000), follows the line of a negative influence of television on a young person's life and collective experiences. Nevertheless, the generation replacement thesis lacks of a complete and more specific theory about why the age gap in participation exists and has widened over time.

A different perspective combines life cycle and generation explanations for turnout decline, studying the timing and sequence of specific events which regulate the transition to adulthood. This approach takes into account how specific phases of young life have changed and how a given change impacts on the level of participation of the successive young generations. Focusing on the cohorts of voters pushed into the electoral arena during the last decades, several scholars have stressed the importance and diffusion of a new and increasingly longer "moratorium phase" in the adult transition (Cavalli and Galland 1993; Billari and Liefbroer 2010). Political engagement increases as one's life, roles, and institutional connections in the community become more stable. The adult roles give a predictable structure to life, which makes regular engagement in community affairs more likely and increases the probability of being recruited into civic affairs (Flanagan and Sherod 1998). The life cycles of present-day young adults are not the same as those of the past.

Young people now spend a more extended period in school, are faced with a more complicated access to the labour market and remain longer under the economic protection of the family or the state.

While entry into adulthood became more ambiguous, research also investigated the linkages between the delay in adult transition and its effect on political behaviour. Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) compared the turnout rates of those who have/have not completed adult transitions, and registered a general homogeneity between the two groups. In France, Anne Muxel (2001 and 2010) found that young people who have experienced greater difficulty in their access to the labour market are, at the same time, those who have participated less. Focusing on the leaving home transition, Highton and Wolfinger (2001) found turnout among those who left the parental home to be lower than among those who had not taken the adult step of moving out, but once factors such as residential stability were taken into consideration the relationship became positive. In general, research generally attests that later maturation is expected to have an impact on turnout levels of younger cohorts and, as a consequence, explains part of the over-time decline in turnout among young people. In any case, there is no clear and definitive assumption that the effect of a later adult maturation (of every single life-event in the transition) is necessarily negative on turnout and political involvement.

As regards the familiar transition, a counterfactual hypothesis is arguable. Postponement in the median age of leaving home might produce a positive dynamic that balances the decline in turnout. In contrast with what happens when a job career starts later, staying longer with the family of origin could mean, above all, living in households where it is more likely that members vote and participate in politics. The underlined idea is that voters do not decide as rational individuals but as actors rooted in their social context, in primary networks that strongly influence voting behaviour. This is a widely consolidated assumption in literature (Campbell 1960; Lazarsfeld 1968; Zuckerman 2005). Parents influence their children directly, during primary socialization, and indirectly, through the transmission of social statuses (Verba *et al.* 2005). In political terms, this means that, when a young adult leaves the nest, the influence of the parents declines in favour of other social networks, which generally, for the present youngest generations, vote less than the their parents (the older generations). For all that, it is not surprising that longer youth-adult coresidence acts positively, and not negatively, on turnout. Living as a young adult in the parental home may matter, simply because voting is often a social act in which families go to the polls together. This is specifically what Bhatti and Janses attested in their analysis (2012): a correspondence between the processes of turnout decline and leaving home, and between the statuses of living with one's parents and higher turnout. Another intriguing finding in

their research is the emergence of a curvilinear relationship between age and turnout, with a temporary decline of participation after the first vote: a result registered only in a few countries (Denmark, Finland, Germany) but strongly conditioned by the availability of particular datasets and information on turnout at individual level. Among other things, a curvilinearity in the age-turnout relationship implies the emergence of three (not two) phases in a life cycle, with the youngest voting more than the relatively older young adults. These findings challenge the theoretical idea that young adults start out as habitual non-voters and gradually acquire a taste for voting proportional with the obtainment of adult roles (Highton and Wolfinger 2001; Plutzer 2002). If living with parents increases the likelihood of voting (and leaving the nest correspondingly decreases it), this partially explains the curvilinearity of the age-by-turnout curve.

The fascinating theory that the family environment positively influences young adult turnout could be particularly suited to the Italian case. Italy is a country where the young live a very long period (one of the longest in Europe) in the family of origin. It is also a country where youth unemployment is extremely high and, as a consequence of the delay in familiar transition, the parental home is the accommodation where young people out of the job market normally live. As in other western countries, families of origin have become a "safe" place to stay since the classic authoritarian model of education declined and new more egalitarian relationships prevailed. Whereas in the 1960s and 1970s new juvenile generations emerged as the effect of incomplete socialization, nowadays parents and children are more similar (not differentiated) in terms of values, opinions and attitudes (for Italy see: Corbetta *et al.* 2013).

Data and methods

The main theoretical question discussed in this paper concerns the relationship between (the decline of) turnout and (the delay of) transition to adulthood. How do life events concerning job or family careers interact with political participation? Is the postponement of adult transition negatively related to turnout? Do all relationships follow the same causal directions? Our hypotheses aim to evaluate, in general, the effect of the delay of adult transition and, specifically, the impact of transitions in working and familial careers (from not-employed to employed status, from condition of offspring in-out of parental home) on individual turnout. Following the theoretical assumptions described in par. 1 about young-adult rule theory (cross-pressure, disconnected status and so on) we test two rival hypotheses, *a)* and *b)*:

a) Turnout for young people is negatively influenced by the delay in adult maturation (delaying age of leaving school /education, acquiring the first job and leaving the parental home). In particular, the deadlock condition of not employed-not in education and the precarious job situation (economic dependency, unemployment, flexibility) might produce uncertain statuses and perceptions which depress political behaviour. Turnout should be higher both in the first phase after the legal age – a normal condition when all the transitions have yet to occur – and at the end of the transition, when all the adult statuses have been adopted by most of the younger generation. Differently, during post-adolescence or young adulthood the impact of delayed transitions should be both higher and negative because in these cases young people are living and acting at variance with the "right" (expected) age. We expect that a negative effect on turnout increases proportionally with a juvenile age-cohort's distance from the average age of adult maturation.

b) A rival hypothesis assumes as a key argument the influence of social networks and parents' socialization on their children's political life. Instead of depressing participation, remaining longer in the parental home may have a positive (not negative) effect on turnout during the phase of passage to adult status, because of the influence of a (generally) more participative household where the young are living. In particular, we expected: a) a positive relationship between living with parents and turnout; b) a higher positive relationship depending on the number of members in the household and the number of family members who participate; c) a positive effect (and a counter-balancing effect) of living with parents, regardless of a child's age; d) a decline in turnout level as one moves from a status of "children in the parental home" to a status of "married/cohabiting";

The perspective of matching variables on political behaviour with some variables related to life-course transitions calls for a very complex combination of data sources. Given these difficulties, we have collected information from different datasets in order to triangulate them. The first source comes from Itanes-Cattaneo Institute Archive on turnout. This is an extremely large archive of information on electoral participation of a representative sample of 100 sections of Italian voters. The official data covers two decades (1985-2006, with individual data from 1994), and provides the possibility of following the same voters over time. Samples range from around 55.000 cases to more than 80.000. This dataset allows us to explore in depth the relationship between turnout and age in the juvenile period. The second source is the Italian National Election Survey (Itanes programme of post-electoral studies). In this case, turnout derives from self-reported information and not from official

data[1]. The advantage of using this dataset is the possibility of including in the analysis information on life-course events within the format of static social condition (being/not being a student, employed, still at home and so on), while covering a large period of time.

The age gap in turnout: life-cycle, generation effect or both?

As the first point in our analysis we report a general overview of turnout rate by age-groups in Italy vs. other Western countries. This preliminary level of information is necessary in order to answer some basic key questions: do young Italian people participate less than other age-groups? Is the age gap in turnout more pronounced in Italy than in other countries? Has it widened in the recent elections?

Electoral participation has been high in Italy ever since the first post-war elections held in 1946, when voter turnout reached 89,1%. After those elections and over the course of three decades voting percentages remained stable at extremely high values. These peculiar characteristics changed in the late 1970s, but not until the 1990s did election turnout dynamics become a crucial factor in Italian politics. A comparison with the rest of Europe allows to place Italy within a broader framework. All countries have registered, to a greater or lesser extent, a growth of abstentionism in the last 20 years, while in the same period the oscillation range of the values has widened. Italy has always stood near the top of the international ranking on electoral participation, and it continued to do so throughout the 1990s. Although the declining trend of electoral participation in Italy has become evident in the past four or five elections, it has not been the most marked in Europe. Yet the fact remains that Italy is one of the few countries in which the number of voters has uninterruptedly declined in the last twenty years (figure 1 and table 1).

What about the age gap? According to an accurate comparative analysis of age differences in turnout in recent decades, the young-adult gap is shown to be strongly positive in some countries, positive in other countries and null only in Italy (Smets 2010). This peculiar finding has also been confirmed for the most recent elections. Turnout level among young Italian people (18-30 years old) is remarkably close to those reported by 31-60 and over 60 age classes (table 2). Whereas a similar trend occurs in some countries, in others

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[1] Self-reported turnout usually underestimates the percentage of abstainers. Previous analysis based on cross-check between official and survey data estimate in around 50% the quote of non voters who do not indicate their real voting behaviour (Tuorto 2006). Despite the distortion it is plausible that relationship between variables remain unaltered by this problem.

(i.e., US and Britain) the ratio is very low, with young people voting considerably less than all the older age-groups.

Figure 1: *Turnout (%) in Italy Parliamentary, European and Regional elections (1970-2014)*
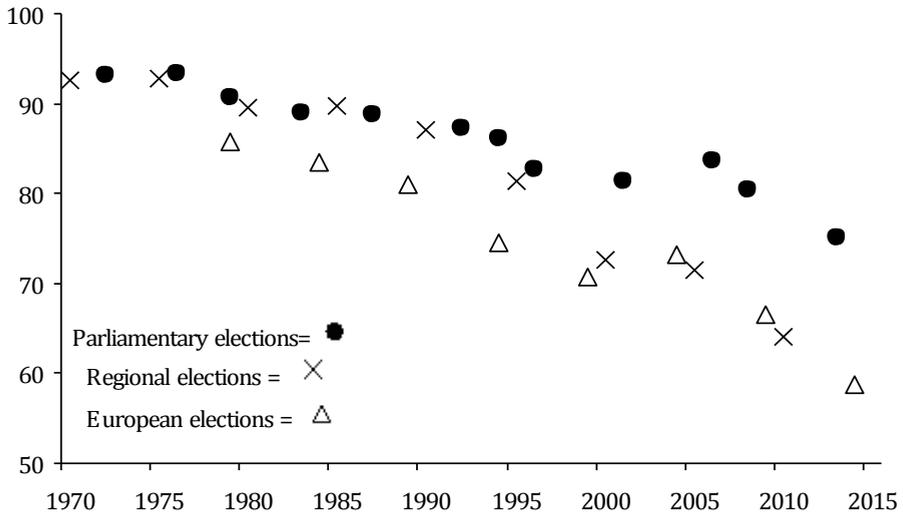
Source: The Italian Ministry of the Interior.

These preliminary results suggest the emergence of interesting trends: a) young people are less participative in many (but not in all) countries; b) the gap is larger in Anglo-Saxon countries; c) Italy is one of those countries where young people do not seem to have suffered a particularly strong penalization or political detachment, compared with other age-groups.

We then focused on turnout and age-class in Italy. For this purpose we derived results from larger national samples, in order to understand: a) if turnout increases with age; b) if the younger generation has always been (or has become after a certain period) less participative than adults; c) if turnout decline is a problem particular to young people or if it involves the whole population. When participation is normally minor at juvenile age and this trait lasts for a long period, it is plausible to detect a life cycle effect. If, on the other hand, minor participation characterizes only the recent cohorts of young people, a generation effect is the most probable dynamic. Alternatively, if the impact of change following a certain election occur, and concerns all voters, a period effect is in force. In this case, interactions between life cycle and generation, or life cycle and period are possible[2].

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[2] A limitation is given by the short time span, which covers 20 years, and is not adequate to give sufficient space to express all the age effects.

Table 1: *Turnout (%) in Europe in Parliamentary (Presidential) elections*

Turnout (recent election)		Turnout (average, 1990-2014)	
Belgium (2010)	89, 2	Belgium	91,0
Denmark (2011)	87,7	Denmark	85,6
Sweden (2010)	84,6	Sweden	83,8
France (2012, pres.)	80,3	Austria	83,5
Italy (2013)	75,1	Italy	82,6
Austria (2013)	74,9	France (pres.)	80,9
Netherlands (2012)	74,6	Germany	77,8
Germany (2014)	71,6	Netherlands	77,3
Ireland (2011)	70,0	Spain	74,1
Spain (2011)	68,9	Greece	74,0
Finland (2011)	67,3	Britain	67,2
Britain (2010)	65,8	Finland	66,9
Greece (2012)	62,5	Ireland	66,8
Portugal (2011)	58,0	Portugal	62,9

Source: Institute for Democracy and electoral assistance (IDEA).

How large is the participative gap and how has it changed over time in Italy? We have compared the turnout level of three age-classes – 18-30, 31-60 and over 60 years old – over the long electoral period from the mid-80s to the mid-2000 elections[3]. We expect a lower level of participation for young people (life-cycle hypothesis) and/or a progressive increase of the age gap (generation replacement), especially in correspondence with the less mobilizing elections. Data partially confirms both these theses. Registered turnout for young people places very close to adult turnout. Differences are minor until the mid-90s; they become higher in the following period (mid90s–mid2000s), but without exceeding a 4 point percentage; only in more recent elections did they reach their highest level (up to 6-7 p.p.) (fig. 2). In general, the turnout gap in Italy

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[3] Datasets used for this comparison are those from the Prospex official turnout archive, based on electoral registers. For previous periods and going back as far as 1968, data is available through electoral surveys but information is not particularly useful because turnout in Italy was too high for all voters to make a difference. We selected as age classes 18-30, 31-60 and over 60 in order to produce statistics comparable with those reported in tab. 2.

Table 2. *Turnout ratio 18-30/31-60 and 18-30/60+ in selected Western countries (single election)*

Turnout 18/30 vs. 31-60		Turnout 18/30 vs. 60+	
Sweden (2006)	1.01	Italy (2006)	1.09
Italy (2006)	0.96	Sweden (2006)	1.01
France (2007)	0.95	France (2007)	0.97
Netherland (2010)	0.94	Netherlands (2010)	0.95
Spain (2008)	0.86	Greece (2009)	0.82
Greece (2009)	0.84	Spain (2008)	0.82
Portugal (2009)	0.77	Portugal (2009)	0.72
Germany (2009)	0.74	Germany (2009)	0.66
Britain (2005)	0.41	Britain (2005)	0.35

Source: Our elaboration from Comparative Studies of Electoral Systems (CSES), module 3. For Britain data is taken from CSES module 2; for Italy: Prospex.

remains very limited and the decline in participation cannot be attributed to young people. More importantly, the over 60 age-class has made a significant difference, with negative performances over all the elections in the last two decades. This peculiar trait differs considerably from turnout dynamics in other Western countries, where youth disaffection reached very impressive levels[4]. In any case, while not decisive, the participation gap is also widening in Italy, and new voters have tended to enter into political life at a lower point than previous cohorts[5].

A suspicious curvilinearity. Why does turnout decline after the first vote(s)?

The study of turnout in juvenile age requires a very accurate analysis in order to disentangle different effects and detect the exact turning point in the curve. For this purpose, in our study we use a considerably large dataset, based on

[4] This is, in particular, the case in Britain. See: Clarke *et al*. 2004.
[5] A negative and instable trend in turnout rates among Italian young generations has been detected in several empirical studies See: Cuturi (2001); Tuorto (2010); Scervini and Segatti (2012).

Figure 2: *Turnout (%) by age-class in Italy Parliamentary elections (1985-2013); Regional elections (1985, 1990)**
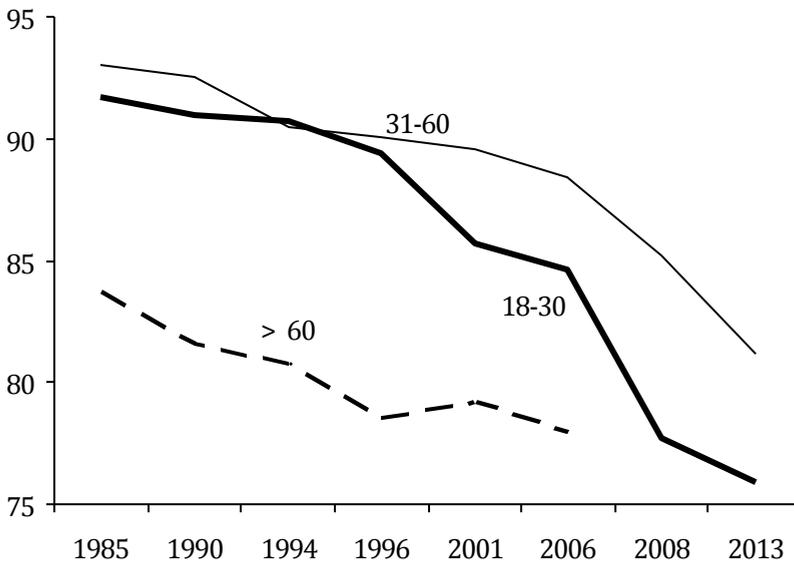

* F-values for group means differences: 1994 (0.28; ns.); 1996 (4.35; .037); 2001 (123.86; .000); 2006 (79.06; .000).
Source: Prospex (1985-2006); Itanes (2008 and 2013).

the official information of registered turnout in Parliamentary elections since the late 1980s (with the exception of the last two elections in 2008 and 2013, available via survey). As shown in previous tables, a very limited gap exists between Italian and adult voters, which has only recently widened. In order to better explore the relationship between age and turnout we have selected four age classes: 18-19, 20-25, 26-30 and 31-40 years old (including the oldest among the young) plus the group of "first voters" (overlapped with the first two categories). Results indicate that, while at the beginning of the period (during the 1980s elections) all the age categories showed a similar tendency, in the late 1990s and in the early 2000s elections some important differences arose. Young people in their 20s (20-25 and 26-30) have begun to lose more contact than the youngest (18-19) or oldest (31-40), with a significant difference of more than 5 percentage points lower than the average level of turnout for the entire youth electorate (fig. 3). Moreover, the decline has not affected new cohorts of the electorate at their first vote as it has for the young people in the intermediate phase of their passage to adulthood.

This highly interesting tendency needs to be investigated by virtue of a more accurate decomposition of data. Our large samples allowed us to create

Figure 3: *Turnout (%) by age-class at juvenile age Parliamentary elections (1985-2006); Regional elections (1985, 1990)*
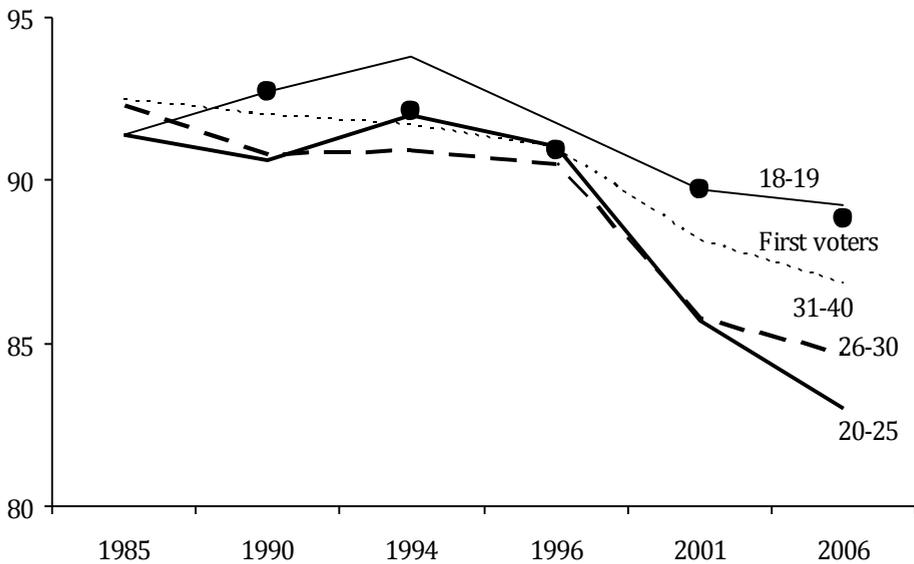
a turnout by age curve where turnout is reported year by year. The election span covers the period 1994-2006: the four elections with the most observations in our dataset (around 200.000 voters), and at least 1.000 cases every single year of age from 18 until 80. Similar curves for the two more recent elections (2008 and 2013) have also been reproduced using another data source (post-electoral survey).

1) The first result in figure 4 describes the peculiar condition occurring in the initial years of electoral life (first vote) with a very high level of turnout, comparable with the peak reached by the adults. An unexpected finding, given the higher cost (information, etc.) of going to the polls for a new voter (Plutzer 2002), but more understandable if we take into account the specific position of a very young voter over his/her life-course. A new voter in the first steps of the legal age is normally waiting to start up his/her job careers, and normally (in the Italian context) lives in the parental home: too young to be exposed to the negative impact of precariousness, and still at an age when the family influences continue to influence and regulate electoral behaviour. Instead, a key concern for our analysis is how turnout changes when young people move to more adult ages.

Figure 4: *Turnout (%) by age (single years) in Italy Cumulative period: Parliamentary elections (1994-2006)*
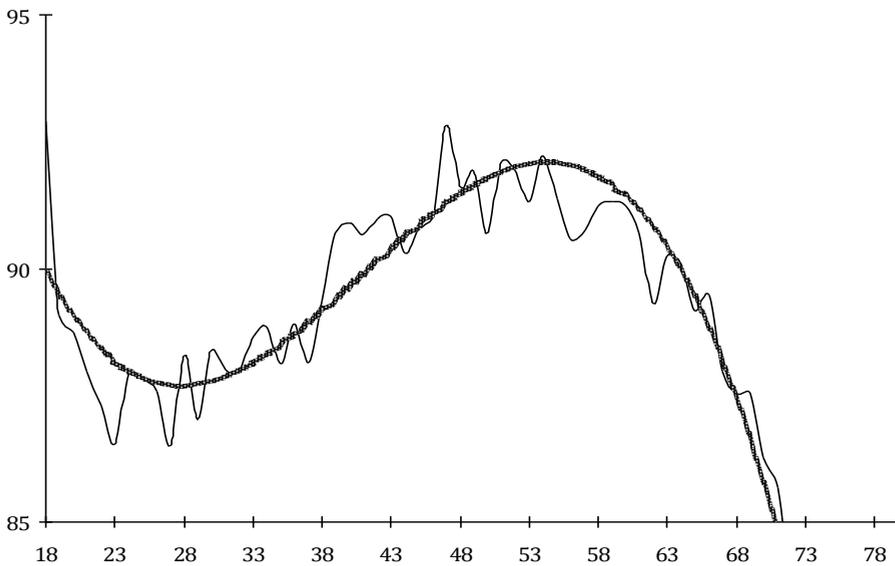

Source: Prospex. Number of observation around 200.000, N > 1.500 for every single year.

2) A second crucial characteristic emphasized in the graph is the sharp decline of participation after the first years, with turnout differences even exceeding 5 percentage points. The inversion concerns electoral behaviour of those in their early 20s, until 25-26 when the curve rises in a continuous progression, reaching the highest level at around 55 before then slowly declining.

3) The non-linear turnout by age relationship is not an episodic trait related to specific characteristics of a certain electoral cycle, but rather assumes the configuration of a structural aspect of voting behaviour in Italy. Indeed, in every election during the period 1994-2013 (fig. 5) we registered a clear inversion in the curve. Even when first voters have lowered their participation, young people in their 20s-30s have participated even less, and this accounts for the persistence of curvilinearity.

4) The curvilinear trait in age-turnout relationship is more pronounced among young men than among young women (fig. 6). Such a simple difference is probably linked to gender rules (the impact of the family burden, etc.) and different meanings of political participation and civic duty. Such issues would need to be explored in a more focalised research.

Figure 5: *Turnout (%) by age (single years) by election in Italy Parliamentary elections (period 1994-2013)**
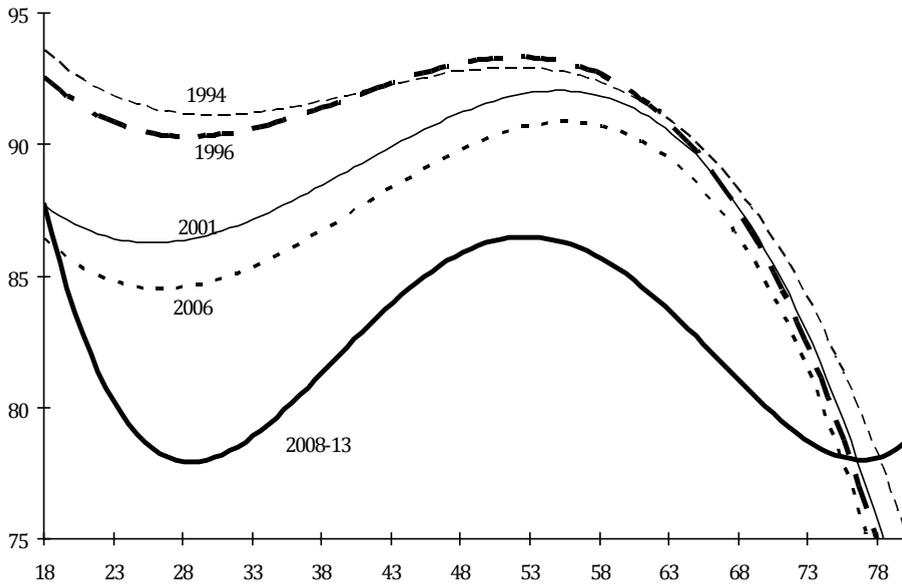
* All the reported percentages are weighted by the official rate of turnout.
Source: Prospex, Itanes (2008; 2013).

What lies behind this inversion in turnout rates after the first vote? Following literature on adult-role theory, we expected a linear relation, with a rise in participation moving from younger to adult ages. Only in a few countries has a different characteristic of turnout evolution (curvilinearity instead of linearity) been detected (see above). In addition to the classic explanations of adult role theory, literature on life-course transitions offers two arguments to clarify the puzzle of the curvilinearity. The first has to do with new trends in job careers. Lower turnout among the 20-30 age group means that young people experience worse conditions when they leave education (delayed age of first real job, precariousness, a longer period as "NEET", etc.). It is not surprising that a prolonged situation of ambivalence and instability regarding social statuses produces a negative effect on participation in public life and politics. What is both new and striking in contemporary life courses is the dimension of postponement and extension of this phase, which is compatible with the backlash on participation for those same age groups. A second argument concerns the dynamics in young people's living arrangements. If we assume that long parent-child coresidence may positively and not negatively influence the propensity to vote (see also: Bhatti and Hansen 2012), the decline of participation could be read as an effect of leaving home: not (only) the precariousness

Figure 6: *Turnout (%) by age (in single years) by sex in Italy Cumulative period: Parliamentary elections (1994-2006)*
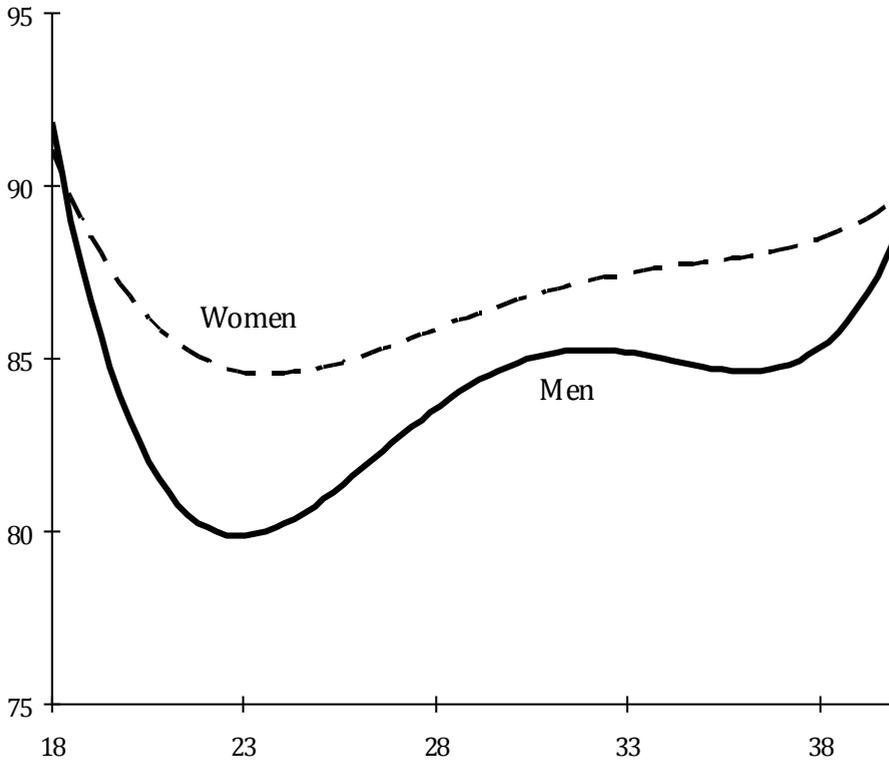
Source: Prospex.

of the job situation but (also) the activation of transition away from family, which implies leaving aside the protective phase of "son/daughter in parental home" and moving toward the complex task of setting up a new family. The relationship with turnout is clear: new families in their first years do not have the same level of "political capital" (experiences, values, practises, reinforcing examples) that consolidated families can count on. Besides, new families are generally composed of a low number of adult members (and voters who influence each other).

Looking through adult transition: are family characteristics a (good) explanation?

To sum up the main findings of our research: a) turnout in Italy is declining among young people with a similar intensity as among adults (a period effect?); b) young people have lost influence in recent elections (generation +

life-cycle effect); c) the decline has been more pronounced for voters in the 20-30 age group; d) young people participate less after their first vote and invert this trend at around the age of 25-26. In this paragraph we investigate how indicators of life-cycle (and changes in status condition) influence turnout rates. The process of maturation to adulthood is normally characterized by five markers: completing education, having a job, leaving home, being married and having children. For our analysis we focus on two of these factors – having a job and leaving home –[6]. As we are dealing with cross-sectional data, variables do not indicate transitions but rather statuses. In detail, the job career position is exemplified by the dichotomies "being employed/not employed", "being employed in atypical job/other condition" (specification of a precarious state)[7]. The living arrangement is simplified with the dichotomy "living as son/daughter in parental home vs. being married, cohabiting". Further information has been added in order to detect if a young offspring is effectively delaying the family transition. For this purpose we have calculated the median age of leaving home for age cohorts (in group of 5 years, with a distinction made between male and female). This procedure allows us to discern when a specific status in living arrangement is "right" or "wrong" (i.e., remaining with parents when the most part of his/her age group has left home), introducing this dimension as an interaction in regression models.

The unusual configuration of turnout by age curve suggests that we examine the transition to adulthood as composed of three distinct sections. In the first years of legal age no transition is expected to be completed (children are still living the "right" age for studying, remaining at home, etc.). At the later stage of a young person's (normal) life course, at the age of 30-35 until 40, all the markers should have moved coherently towards a fully adult status (a job, an independent family condition and so on). In both cases, turnout reaches a higher level in our curve, reflecting the effect of stability given by the specific configuration of social statuses (of youth and adult). The most problematic conjuncture coincides with the intermediate step – the renowned post-adolescence – when the negative influence of a "moratorium" phase might be more depressing (in terms of participation) for those people placed in a "wrong" condition (fig. 7).

Table 3 reports a distribution of turnout rates among the 18-40 age class taking into account young subjects' familial and working statuses. The per-

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[6] Marriage (the formation of a union) largely corresponds to leaving home in Italy (Schizzerotto 2002), while the impact of having children on political participation might have introduced several complications in the analysis (i.e., interaction with gender-related arguments)

[7] Education career, too, is partially included in the analysis, with the proxy variable "student vs. other condition".

Figure 7: *The three phases of adult transition and their impact on electoral participation*
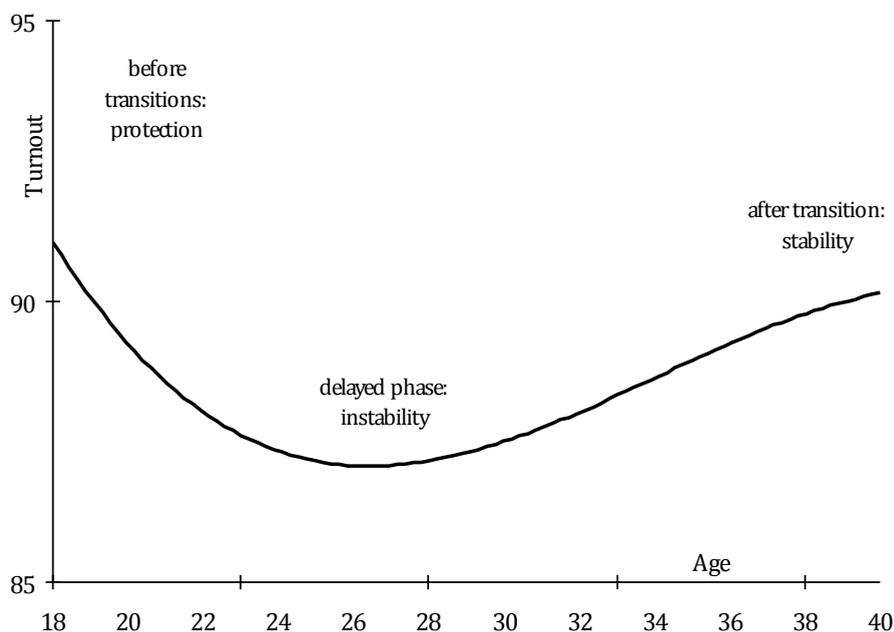
Table 3: *Turnout (%) of young people in different occupational and familiar status by gender and age**

	Tot (18-40)	M (18-40)	F (18-40)	18-30	31-40
Not completed education	83,4	80,3	86,2	83,5	82,9
Completed education	82,7	82,3	83,0	79,0	85,6
Not employed	75,7	70,8	77,8	72,8	78,4
Employed	85,6	85,0	86,5	82,1	88,3
Precarious job	73,9	71,8	76,1	67,9	83,3
Living in parental home	82,5	80,9	84,7	81,5	87,5
Living as his/her own	83,2	83,3	83,0	77,5	85,1
Living in parental home + employed	84,4	85,0	83,8	85,0	83,8
Living in parental home + not employed	80,9	73,8	85,2	77,3	85,2
N	3.980	1.979	1.911	2.199	1.781

* N min > 50 in all cells.
Source: Itanes 2001-2013 cumulative file (Parliamentary elections).

centages of people who turn out to vote become higher as one moves from the minimum to the maximum level of adult maturation. The only transition that truly makes a difference is that concerning the job career. The participation rates of the young employed exceed those of the young unemployed by 10 percentage points and performances of atypical workers also deteriorated (12 p.p. below). Both educational transition (having/not having left education) and family transition (having/not having left parental home) do not make a particular difference in this bivariate analysis. But the living arrangement contributes significantly in reducing the gap between the employed and not employed, with only 4 percentage points lower for young people who live in the parental home. Gender and age-class dimensions are also important aspects, and provide some interesting insights. A complete delay in adult maturation (not having completed any transition) reduces the participation rates of young males more than those of young females. The negative effect of unemployment is spread to all of the youth population, but has a greater impact on male turnout and, for these groups, is not attenuated by the coresidence with parents. Furthermore, while the effect of delay strongly depresses participation rates of the oldest section of the young category (30-40 years), an anticipation of the adult transition does not produce a positive effect among the youngest. For instance, having a job is associated with low turnout among the 18-30 group when this job is atypical (while the negative effect of precariousness decreases among the oldest group). Living with parents has a positive (not negative or null) correlation with turnout when a young individual is under 30. All these results suggest that the direction and the significance of the effect depend on: a) which specific life event/status is considered (job, living arrangement); b) the age ("right" vs. anticipated/postponed) at which a social status (being employed, unemployed, precarious, householder) is experienced.

In order to correctly evaluate the impact of adult transition on turnout we have run five distinct regression models, where the dependent variable is turnout (whether the young person has voted or not) and independent variables correspond to specific life-course indicators. The first four models add to the baseline model (with only socio-demographic variables), the status related to: educational passage (being/not being a student, Model 1), job career (being/not being unemployed, Model 2), precariousness in the job career (having/not having an atypical job, Model 3), leaving home transition (still in the parental home or living on his/her own, Model 4). The effect of being inactive along the job career changes significantly if the young subject is a student or unemployed. The condition of being a student does not seem to be viewed as a start-up problem and the relationship with turnout is generally positive, in line with other research (Highton and Wolfinger 2001; Smets 2010). This is a relevant result, although the low number of students who live on their own in Italy

makes it difficult to separate how much impact is due to the living arrangement or educational condition. Being unemployed is found to have a negative effect on turnout (beta value of -0,667). The relationship does not change sign in the case of a precarious job (beta: -0,507). The second indicator of life-course transition included in the regression is that concerning the familiar career. Our analysis has pointed out that living with parents is significantly related to a higher – not a lower – turnout (beta: +0,243). Instead of acting against turnout, a long-lasting coresidence actually seems to provide a safeguard from turnout decline. Finally, we have integrated into the regression a further analysis (Model 5) with the interaction between the living arrangement status (living in the parental home) and a dichotomous variable concerning the "correctness" or "incorrectness" of that status, calculated as a deviation from median age of leaving home for each specific age-cohort (and sex). Through this model it is possible to deduce that living with parents impacts positively on turnout, but only for young people whose age is lower than the median age for leaving home. Beyond this point a prolonging coresidence becomes problematic and decreases the probability to vote (beta: -0,356) (table 4).

Table 4: *Impact of adult transition statuses on the probability to vote. Logistic regression**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)
Still in education	+0.276 (0.174)				
Not employed		-0.667*** (0.143)			
Precarious job			-0.507** (0.293)		
Living in parental home				+0.243* (0.168)	+0.491** (0.227)
Living in parental home* older than specific median age for leaving home					-0.356* (0.226)
R^2 adjusted	0.07	0.18	0.09	0.09	0.10
N (obs.)	3.503	3.503	3.503	3.503	3.503

* Covariates not reported in the model are sex, age, education (not in Model 1), zone, occupational status (not in Model 1-3).
Source: Itanes cumulative file, 2001-2013 (Parliamentary elections).

Figure 8: *Predicted probability of voting by age according to the living arrangement condition and occupational status*
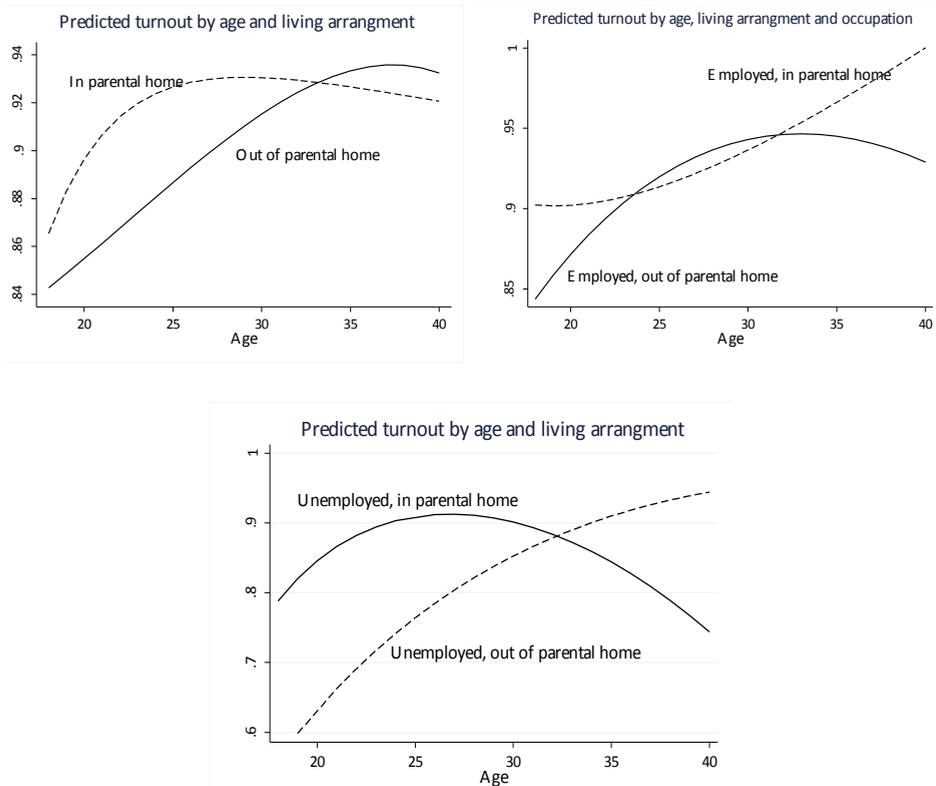
Source: Itanes cumulative file, 2001-2013 (Parliamentary elections).

The same results reported as regression coefficients are shown, in figure 8, as predicted probabilities of turning out to vote by age for different categories of young people, according to their living arrangement condition and occupational status. Compared with those living on their own, young people living in the parental home display a higher level of turnout. The gap is higher in the first years after the legal age and disappears only later, at around 30-35. The condition of the living arrangement significantly changes the probability of voting, especially for young unemployed individuals. Turnout is almost 20 percentage points higher when they live with parents at a very young age. Also for those employed, the status of coresidence boosts the probability of voting before the age of 25. This is a clear confirmation that, far from being negative, living in the parental home offers a very impressive advantage in the first years of political life.

Conclusion

The age gap in political participation is a has long been a subject of debate in political science. Much research has attested that young voters nowadays participate in elections less than the older voters in many established democracies. The classic explanations for these differences have focused on the life-cycle or on the generation effect, looking at the depressive impact of the (immature) condition of youth in itself, or stressing the process of replacement between more participative and less-participative cohorts of voters. In this article we have tried to combine life-cycle and generational explanations of turnout decline within a wider perspective, where turnout variation is seen in relation to the timing and sequence of specific events which regulate the transition to adulthood (the end of education, leaving home, getting a job, forming a family). In recent years all or many of these events have occurred later and this may have produced significant changes in young people's political maturation. Many scholars maintain that the growing uncertainty of the adult status might have contributed to a lowering of turnout levels, but recent explanations have supported a different reading, observing the positive effect on participation of a prolonged political socialization in the parental home.

Results based on the Italian case mainly support this hypothesis. Turnout by age curve reveals the existence of a curvilinear relationship, with the most critical situation (lower turnout) in correspondence with the age of young adulthood (20-30 years old): a phase during which young people experience frequently precarious statuses, abandon the safe environment of the parental home and move toward the complex task of setting up a new family. Regression analysis clearly point out that, using as a control other covariates, living with parents has a positive (not negative or null) effect on the probability to vote, but only for young people whose age is lower than the median age for leaving home (the "right" age for staying at home). Instead of producing electoral disaffection, a condition of parent-child coresidence in the crucial years of first adulthood seems to protect against the negative effect of social uncertainty. In fact, the status of a son/daughter in the family of origin contributes significantly in reducing the gap between the employed and not employed, increasing the probability of turnout to vote for the latter. Furthermore, while the effect of delay strongly depresses the participation rates of the oldest section of the young sector (30-40 years), an anticipation of the adult transition does not produce a positive effect among the youngest.

Our attempt to connect trends in youth turnout with the timing of adult transition offers an ideal framework for comparative and multilevel analysis. Further studies should incorporate, in individual analyses, variables concerning family models and material/immaterial exchanges between generations,

youth unemployment rates, social benefits and provisions for the young or young unemployed (insurance, minimum wage, etc). Following this direction of analysis, the level of political participation among young people (as well as the level of the youth-adult participative gap) might be interpreted in relation to specific welfare assets that regulate young people's life-courses: whether societies and policies deal with and offer contrast to the precariousness of the youth condition, and how the State or the family (instead of the market) supports working and familiar transitions.

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Relational dynamics and youth participation in Italy

Simona Gozzo

This study analyzes changes in political participation among Italian youth. The main hypothesis is that relations are key in understanding and explaining the propensity towards social involvement and political participation. We used both official data and data collected through a survey representing almost all the Italian regions. An interesting aspect of this analysis is that it explains how youth participation can increase despite the mistrust in the institutions.

Introduction

The crisis of political participation among Italian youth, which has been widespread since the Nineties, seems recently to have been replaced by an increase in involvement in specific spheres, excluding conventional participation. We notice, in particular, that since the Eighties there has been an increase in social youth participation and volunteering and this is in fact the current trend.

This work aims to describe and try to understand the dynamics underlying these changes/continuities in participation, analyzing the subtended cognitive and relational processes. Firstly we analyze national data sources (Itanes, Istat), then we focus specifically on data from the analysis carried out in 2012/13 which refers to young Italian university students. The results show recent growth in youth commitment but an amplification in local differences in different parts of Italy. This may depend on the complexity of the underlying relational, social and cognitive dynamics.

The concept of "social cohesion" has been defined in many different ways that have also influenced its operational profile. With regard to the goal of this study, it was decided to define this concept following the proposal of Chan (Chan *et al.* 2006). He defines it as consisting of 4 features: two objective dimensions (political and social participation) and two subjective dimensions (social and institutional trust). Participation is therefore an indicator of social cohesion and the relational dimension affects the propensity to participate.

Other studies have shown that the 4 dimensions are strongly associated with each other and – in the case of young people (Gozzo 2013) – with relational dynamics (Lockwood 1999).

It is assumed that the growth in participation is associated with high levels of confidence (Newton 2007 and 2011). Furthermore the relational dynamics encourage or restrict this involvement, enabling or hindering the effective social integration of young people in a society. The paradox is that in Italy there is an increase in young people's political participation, in spite of the growing crisis of institutional trust. A similar condition emerges in Britain (Henn *et al.* 2012). However, self-confidence is widespread in Italy, such as the perception of new "opportunities" to participate. There is also an increase in political competence (an indicator of "invisible participation").

The crisis of institutional trust may, therefore, be compensated by an increase in self-confidence. The aggregate (macro level) may hide the persistence – on the subjective level (micro) – of an actual association between institutional trust, even in its current state of crisis, and political participation. The role played by relational dynamics is, in any case, clear.

Elster focuses on the subjective states. He notices that the choice of action depends primarily on opportunities for action, both actual and perceived. Opportunities are the first "filter" of actions and depend not only on the dynamics related to the phase of the life cycle, but also on the social and relational context. The second "filter" of action only emerges after the constraint of opportunities has been overcome, and implies the presence of an alignment or misalignment between the desires and beliefs felt by each subject. Cognitive and affective dynamics are attributable to this second dimension (Elster 2007).

It seems that among young people a need for unconventional and self-oriented participation, stemming from the decision to take direct action to change social reality has increased. This kind of choice does not imply trust in political institutions so much as trust in direct democracy and the capacity and opportunities, it offers to act in order to affect political and social reality. Conventional participation, however, is mostly associated with institutional trust.

The theoretical model applied to verify the hypothesis refers to the identification of the generative mechanisms of social action, here defined in relation to the increase in young people's political participation. This theoretical model is particularly useful. It distinguishes between a micro-analytical level, that is the system of action, and a macro-level concerning some additive combination or non-additive composition, namely an emergent effect of micro-behaviors (Hedström *et al.* 2009).

The micro dimension includes dynamics due to the spread of self-confidence and social and institutional trust, while the macro dimension refers to the increase in participation. The relational component regulates the transi-

tion from micro to macro, while the increase in levels of education and the rapid growth of youth unemployment are structural factors – external to the model – which are attributable to the first factor mentioned by Elster: the presence and perception of opportunities for action.

The growth of youth unemployment and the spread of higher levels of instruction are, effectively, factors that may directly or indirectly influence participation, which is also organized or promoted through the new media.

These phenomena are related to the sphere of Opportunities, while the second filter defined by Elster, or alignment between Beliefs and Desires, is represented by the micro level of analysis. The micro-micro level dynamic implies the path from individual motivations to the diffusion of social attitudes and behaviors, by means of relational features, related to the dynamics of interaction.

Youth Participation in Italy. An heterogeneous universe

The subject of this work is youth participation. It is seen as a "dependent variable" compared to the independent ones represented by Opportunities, Desires and Beliefs, defined in a relational view. I try to explain the current configuration of juvenile involvement through these features. However, there are different kinds of participation, so the first question is: what are we defining as "participation"?

Istat data on political participation permits the identification of trends in Italian youth participation, selecting specific indicators. This analysis shows a clear increase in the self-determined political participation of youth between 1999 and 2011, but this trend is not generalizable to all actions, nor evenly distributed for all age groups (fig. 1). Youth mobilization concerning conventional political acts and, in particular, activism in parties remains stable or decreases.

Youth involvement increases if we consider unconventional actions such as participation in demonstrations, rallies and political debates (fig. 2).

New generations show a marked increase in indirect and unconventional political involvement. Participation in demonstrations, in particular, is a typical action of "juvenile" mobilization and this indicator shows a further increase among young people.

Interest in political debates is another trait that characterizes young people but this trend has changed over time. During the Nineties interest in debates grew with increasing age. In 2009 there was a reversal of the trend. Now the young are more involved than young-adults, those approaching adulthood. This trend is also confirmed by the 2011 data. How, then, can this change be accounted for?

Figure 1: *Indicators of conventional political participation: 1999-2011 (% within each category)*
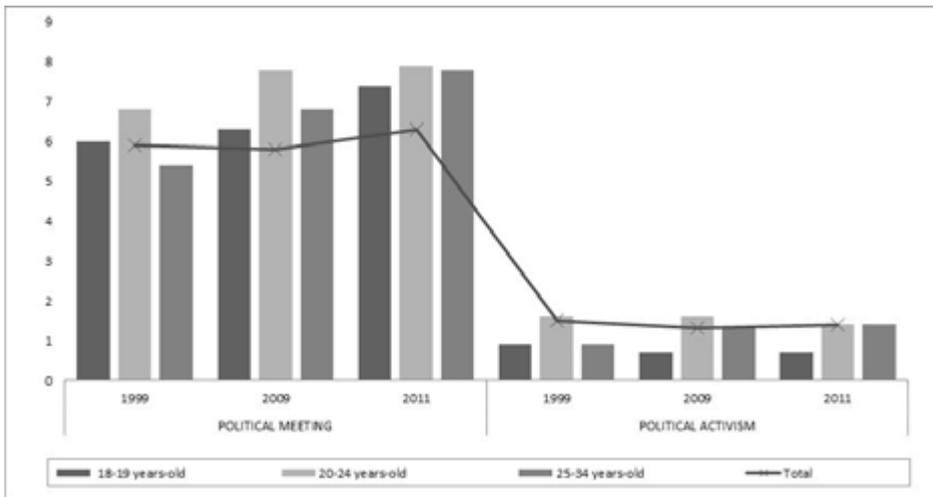
Source: Surveys Istat − *Partecipazione politica* (1999 and 2009) and *La vita quotidiana* (2011).

Figure 2: *Indicators of unconventional political participation: 1999-2011 (% within each category)*
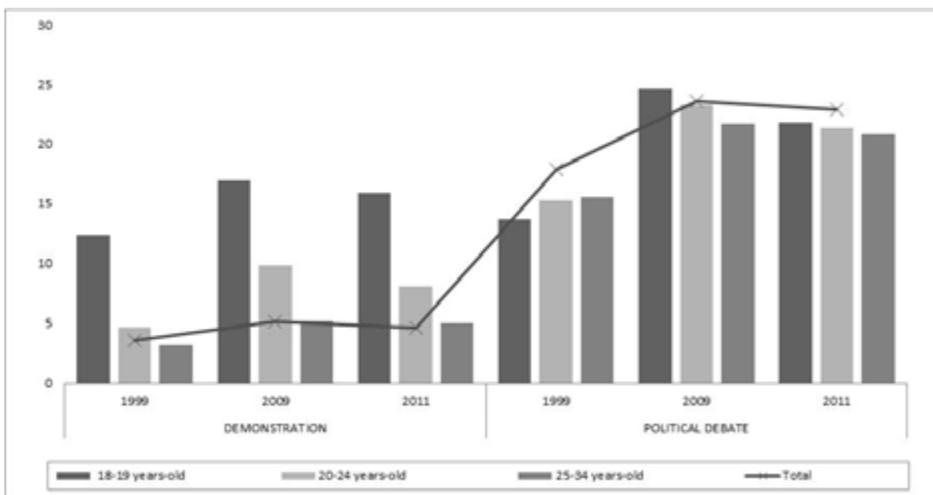
Source: Surveys Istat − *Partecipazione politica* (1999 and 2009) and *La vita quotidiana* (2011).

There may be different cases. We need to consider both the effect of mobilization via the web and reaction to growing economic disparities. Probably a mixture of these elements is responsible. The change in youth participation clearly implies a more general response to the economic and political crisis and a strong solidarity between generations. Young people opt for direct involvement thanks also to the encouragement of adults and, in a tense political climate, they ask for answers or work to improve their condition. The importance of relational dynamics is increasingly evident. This is also evident considering the trend of Istat reports.

The Istat data show that the main agents of political socialization are, for young people, relatives and friends. Although the political influence of friends and acquaintances is particularly strong, it is clear that the relatives are an important channel, especially for the younger ones. Just for the very young, in 2011, the incidence increases dramatically (the difference with respect to friends is reduced from 10 to 7 percentage-points). Further studies have shown that the influence of the close context of the family is even stronger and actually predictable when considering the decisions of young people to participate directly.

Table 1: *Significance of relatives and friends as channels of political information (%)*

AGE	RELATIVES			FRIENDS		
	1999	*2009*	*2011*	*1999*	*2009*	*2011*
18-19	22,9	33,8	40,7	31,7	42,6	46,4
20-24	18,5	31,4	35,5	29,6	38,3	44,7
25-34	13,2	23,8	24,1	22,7	29,7	31,3
35-44	10,3	17,2	15,8	19,4	24,2	25,8
45-54	10,2	13,9	15,4	19,2	22,7	24,9
55-59	10,9	14,6	15,2	17,7	21,9	23,2
60-64	11,0	14,1	14,9	19,1	22,3	21,9
65-74	10,4	14,6	15,2	15,7	20,9	20,5
75 and more	12,4	17,5	16,6	10,9	15,2	14,6
Total	12,5	18,8	19,3	20,1	24,9	26,2

Source: Surveys Istat – *Partecipazione politica* (1999 and 2009) and *La vita quotidiana* (2011).

These results show that the choices of participation and political competence does not only depend on family relationships. They are also affected (in fact, mainly influenced) by friendships and other relationships. The objective is to analyze just how much and whether the various relational types can affect youth participation. Analysis of the mechanisms that generate involvement in politics shows that the affection underlying relational dynamics prevails over purely instrumental reasons. A clue to this mechanism emerges when one considers the influence of the channels of political information (fig. 3).

Figure 3: *Traditional media and ties as instruments of political information – 2011 (%)*
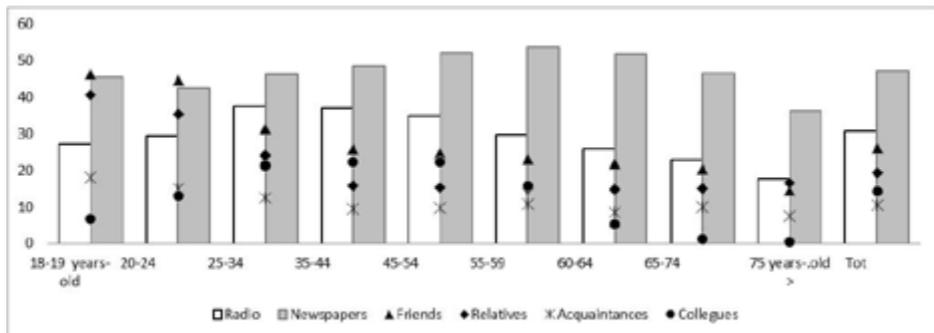
Source: Surveys Istat – *La vita quotidiana* (2011).

The Istat data show the strong influence on young people of direct links, particularly noticeable compared to traditional information channels (fig. 3). Young people are not characterized by an increased incidence of traditional information tools, but by the importance attributed to relational dynamics and, in particular, to friends and family. The incidence of intimate ties as channels of information (but not necessarily political pressure) decreases with age, while the reference to the weak ties (Granovetter 1983; Huckfeldt *et al.* 1993 and 1995; Alesina *et al.* 2011) increases.

The Istat data, however, does not take into account the influence of new media and, in particular, the web as a tool for communication, information and political influence. The Web, in fact, has become increasingly important as a vehicle for political information, utilized in particular by young people. Consequently, the Istat data would probably need an update or a "correction".

The participation of college students

The research carried out on Italian college students enables us to deepen the analysis and make it more specific, by considering the incidence of vari-

ous forms of participation and taking into account the reference target: educated subjects and particularly those interested in social and political issues. The data permits the comparison of different forms of participation (even those partially neglected by Istat), in order to obtain a more accurate assessment of "self-determined" or "other-determined" (Ryan *et al.* 2000) involvement.

The data was analyzed in order to reproduce the different participative dimensions identified by the literature (Randall 1987; Loera *et al.* 2004; Lamprianou 2013). Istat surveys do not include all the activities considered but include all features, even using some variables as proxies. Distinction is made between conventional forms of participation (registration of political parties, participation in election campaigns) and self-determined involvement (strikes, petitions, participation in a referendum, parades, critical consumerism), as well as illegal protests (occupations, violent demonstrations), latent or invisible participation (meetings, listening to political debates) and associative choices (fig. 4).

Figure 4: *Types of political participation widespread among college students (%)**
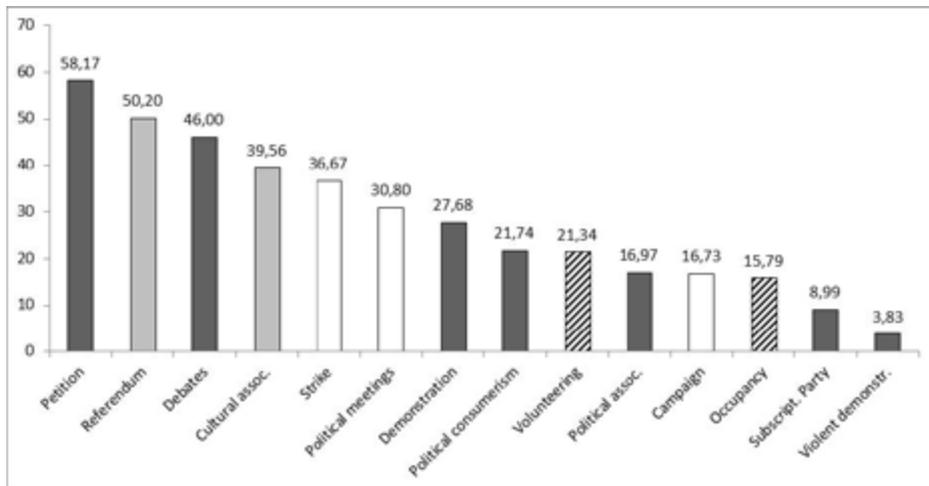
* White bars refer the tendency to form associations, the two-colored bars indicate action of "invisible" participation. Activities of conventional political participation are in grey, while dark bars refer to unconventional, self-directed actions.

The results confirm the emergence of a greater predisposition toward self-determined participation. Indirect participation in political debates is typically a high-competence activity that is often cited, in contrast to the rarer and rarer conventional participation. In order to understand the causes of this peculiar orientation of youth participation, I decided to investigate the relational sources of participation or exclusion.

Trust and strong ties

A first relational dimension which affects political involvement is identification in a community. This is the origin of civic sense and the main cause of trust in people or institutions (Putnam 1994), but the most recent national Italian study (Itanes 2008; Demos 2013) confirm the crisis of trust in political institutions. The naissance of disaffection has a structural genesis and is not related to cohorts of age, but young people are particularly cynical towards political institutions. Confidence in institutions seems to have been replaced by a growing cynicism. Curiously, rather than indifference and apathy, this attitude creates youth involvement and demand for participation. The cynicism, in fact, is generated by a mixture between a sense of "internal" efficacy and a perception of "external" inefficiency and it can, therefore, produce high levels of direct involvement.

The latest Demos data indicates that young people (under 34 years old) do not trust the institutions of representative democracy and this attitude emerges to a greater extent for this age group than for adults. Diamanti notes that the youth in 2011 are not more confident than adults, in contrast to the trend found in 2006 (Diamanti 2013). The same trend is detected through Itanes' data: the feeling of distrust and dissatisfaction toward political actors, political parties and their leaders has grown in the whole society, but in a more evident way among young people.

It is quite usual to hear that young people act as a sounding board of society (Bettin Lattes 1999). From this point of view, youth disaffection is a mirror for collective political resentment, with no strong differences compared to adults but, unlike those, young people are not simply resigned or frustrated persons. The principle current trend in youth involvement shows that – compared with data detected in early years – political disenchantment does not cause disaffection but, rather, encourages participation.

The latest national polls (Diamanti 2013) indicate that more than 40% of young people are directly involved in political or social projects, including solidarity and environmental action. It seems, therefore, questionable to hypothesize a general crisis of "juvenile participation". Political disaffection or complete rejection of the political dimension were prevalent features until the Nineties. This dimension is gradually replaced by proactive orientations, mainly referable to non-conventional, social or invisible actions.

A surplus of youth involvement is not the result of greater institutional trust and it does not seem to arise from an increase in generalized trust (Stzompka 2000; Newton 2007; Newton *et al.* 2011) but it arises from a desire to promote social change, which requires a direct commitment.

The research carried out on a sample of Italian university students[1] allows us to enhance these considerations by observing the level of education. We obtain lower percentages of generalized trust, compared to national data. It seems that – according with Itanes' and Demos' data – the lower confidence of young people is counterbalanced by an increase of trust in international institutions.

Another distinguishing trait refers to the high youth confidence towards the mayor of the city, probably the result of increasing commitment to the local dimension. Consequentially, political trust has not totally collapsed, but is focused on a local or international dimension, while there is a lack in institutional trust and cognitive involvement when we look for the national level. The interpersonal feature also shows an increase in confidence referred mainly to the "strong" ties (Granovetter 1983) but it is difficult to assess whether this is a generational trait or a common, Italian trait (Banfield 1958; Putnam 1994). On the other hand, considering the kind of links that influence the politic choices of the respondents, parents and friends have a great – and almost equal – importance (fig. 5).

Adults have similar ideas, compared with those of friends, much more often than young people. This trait persists regardless of the issue (fig. 6), while the influence of parents has fewer differences compared with the cohort of age.

If we look at the proportion of subjects thinking like their parents or friends (fig. 6), we note the greater importance of parents. Excluding religion, moreover, adults tend to declare a greater *homophily* as regards their friends. Parents play a primary role as points of reference for life choices and behavior of young people who, however, show independence of judgment in the field of ethical issues.

The autonomy in ethic choices is, probably, the result of an increase in self-determination among young people, related to cognitive features (increasing education levels, empowerment, political competence and direct participation).

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[1] Our Data are about a survey carried out on 1.389 students belonging to Italian humanistic universities. The Universities were selected with the aim to include the most part of Italian Regions and to represent both three-year and specialized students. We selected from one to three courses for each Department (depending on the greatness of each University). All students attending each course were contacted, but not everybody accepted the interview. Finally, the proportion of respondents obtained was distributed by geographic area with a slight over-representation of Florence (due to the importance of the university) and a under-representation of Padua, Udine and Cagliari (departments where the number of students is lower). The sample includes 478 men and 907 women while 913 respondents were 18 – 23 years old. The average age is 24 years old. The selected sample has connotations that reflect, in general, typical traits of Italian university students.

Table 2: *Propensity to general and institutional trust (%)*

Trust on…	Age				Trust on…	Age			
	18-24	25-29	30 and more	Total		18-24	25-29	30 and more	Total
N. (a.v.)	*(913)*	*(362)*	*(114)*	*(1.389)*	*N. (a.v.)*	*(913)*	*(362)*	*(114)*	*(1.389)*
People					*International political institutions*				
Always	1,3	1,4	3,5	1,5	Always	10,0	7,0	9,0	9,2
Sometimes	29,7	33,6	42,5	31,5	Sometimes	56,8	53,5	60,7	56,1
Rarely	44,6	47,7	36,8	44,9	Rarely	23,0	25,2	21,4	23,5
Never	22,4	16,4	14,9	20,3	Never	8,6	9,8	6,7	8,8
I don't know	2,0	0,9	2,3	1,8	I don't know	1,6	4,5	2,2	2,4
Total	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*Total*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*
National political institutions					*Mayor*				
Always	0,2	0,56	0	0,3	Always	4,8	4,2	9,1	4,9
Sometimes	25,3	26,26	35,2	26,2	Sometimes	34,7	33,0	46,6	35,0
Rarely	49,5	45,81	51,2	48,6	Rarely	30,2	31,1	21,6	29,9
Never	23,8	26,54	13,6	23,9	Never	20,9	22,7	15,9	21,1
I don't know	1,2	0,83	0	1,0	I don't know	9,4	9,0	6,8	9,1
Total	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*Total*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*

The relational dimension

Can significant relationships (so-defined by each interviewed) have a direct influence on participation choices? Relational dynamics can be traced back to political participation by adopting two different points of view. The first (looking at macro dynamics) analyzes the amount and typology of relationships among people in society and defines relationships as a community-resource, the result of individual integration in a social context. These studies have a strong ethical component. Participation is considered as one indicator of more general concepts, such as "integration", "social cohesion" or "social capital" (Putnam 1994 and 2000; Lookwood 1999; Chan *et al.* 2006). The second point of view (micro level) refers to typology (kin/non kin ties) and structure (network analysis indices) of individual ego-networks and aims to locate the kind of ties/nets related to high individual involvement (Huckfeldt *et al.* 1993;

Figure 5: *Ties with medium-high influence on youth political opinion (%)*
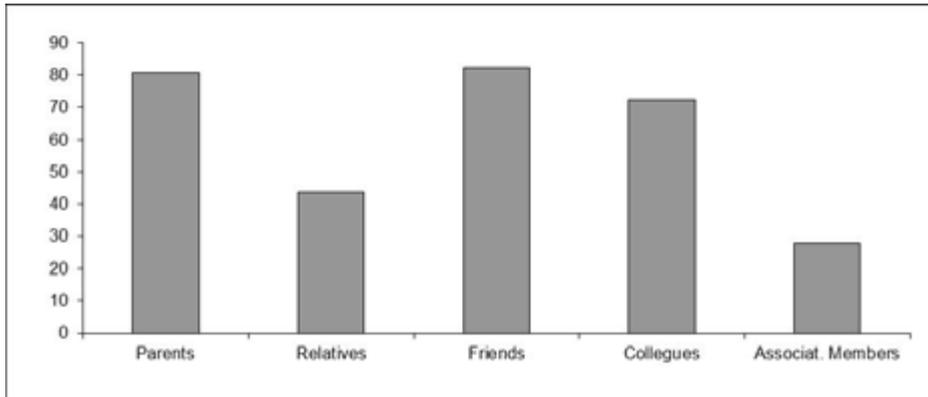
Figure 6: *Influence of parents/friends opinions on youth choices (%)*
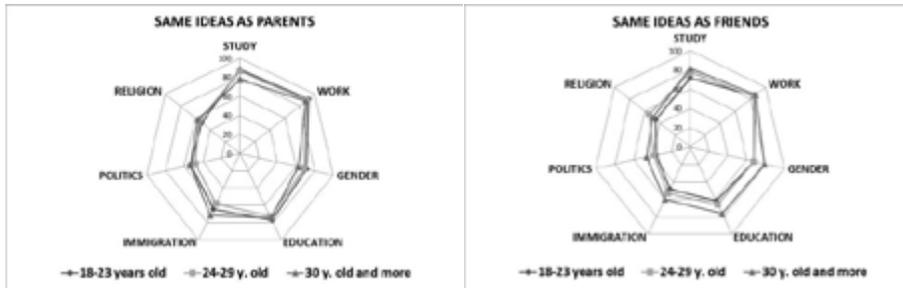
Chiesi 1999; Salvini 2007 and 2013). This latter perspective needs to take into consideration different mechanisms related to age and generations (for example, socialization effects and kin ties are more important for young people and women). The two dynamics are both important phenomena and are related each other (it is clear that micro-genesis affects macro building, with consequent spread of social and political participation).

The paradox we want to understand is why Italian young people show an increase in social and political involvement without a proportional increase in social/institutional trust. If we assume that the relational dimension mediates between subjective and objective features of social cohesion (Chan *et al.* 2006), it is possible to look for an answer in relational dynamics.

Network analysis is applied focusing on the micro-genesis of the increase in youth political participation. I applied two kinds of relational measure. I studied both the structure of networks that college students indicate as "important" or "significant ties", and personal characteristics of each interlocutor with whom the interviewee says they confide in.

Network analysis tools are applied with the aim of analyzing the structure of significant networks, that is those networks made of ties spreading information and participation for respondents.

The structural analysis of ego-networks is determined by asking college students with whom they usually talk about politics. I hypothesize that those who refer only or mainly to kin ties, tend to structure "bond" ties, with links that protect only in-group membership. These kinds of networks are not helpful if you want to construct a community sense or if you want to promote social and political trust (and so the increase of participation). Instead, the tendency to form groups or associations, getting in touch with other people, is an indicator of social cohesion as a community resource (Huckfeldt *et al.* 1995; Putnam 1994 and 2000) and an indicator of self-determination and social capital as an individual resource (Bourdieu 1958; Burt 2000; Lin 2001). People who prefer to talk about politics with members of associations or colleagues have a surplus in relational tools and this is due to the presence of non-kin ties, such as weak ties (Granovetter 1983). The main presence of kin ties implies, more frequently, a lack in heterogeneous informative channels, small mobilization and "other-determination" (Alesina *et al.* 2011).

I hypothesize that weak ties, when confidents are *bridges* among different clusters, improve and increase the quantity of disposable information, which is why subjects with a lack of non kin ties have fewer opportunities and information (Salvini 2005). Different kinds of networks and relational resources favor the emergence of a *bridging* social capital, which is a more appropriate resource for democratic participation, compared to *bonding* social capital, and is compatible with a high level of social cohesion. In order to verify these hypotheses, I compare Network Analysis results with trust and political involvement of each respondent.

Network Analysis measures are applied to cognitive nets constituted by a maximum amount of 10 interlocutors, frequently contacted by respondents. I distinguished two kinds of measures. The first is for the structure of ego-networks, which are detectable by means of network analysis tools. The second is for the characteristics of interlocutors, synthesized by specific indexes. Both measures have been calculated for each network and for each respondent. With respect to the networks, I selected information about size, density, and centrality (tab. 3).

The second kind of measure relates to the qualitative characteristics described by the respondents for each node. The selected information are: gender of each interlocutor; relationship between the respondent and his/her confidant, coded by distinguishing between strong or weak ties (Granovetter 1983) and the individual's propensity to influence or to be influenced by each confidant's political ideas.

Table 3: *Significance of the main Network Analysis key measures*

N.A. index	Computational procedure	Significance
Size	Number of nodes	Number of selected confidants
Density	A measure of a closed network. The fewer nodes in the network, the more likely it will be a higher density	Propensity for communication among people within the nets. This measure increases when the ego-nets have principally strong ties and / or few confidants
2StepR	This index measures the presence of pairs of nodes with an intermediary	Average number of interlocutors who have good propensity to contact each other, assuming the heterogeneity of ties within the network
Broker	Intermediation capacity of each node. This index detects the presence of nodes with a structural advantage caused by their position within the network	Networks characterized by greater size and presence of brokers
Degree centrality	This measure is a result of the "calculation of degrees", i.e. by the number of adjacent nodes. The measure is derived from the calculation of the number of direct ties that connect individuals within the network	The node with the highest rank is, metaphorically, a place in the group where "things happen". The actors with a low degree represent the peripheral positions in the network.
In-degree	The centrality of each node depends on the number of nodes that select it.	Index of prestige. The centrality of each node depends on the number of choices that the node has received.
Out-degree	The centrality of each node depends on the number of other nodes that it selected	Measure of Sociability. This index shows the vulnerability of a subject, measured in terms of the request for help/information to other nodes but also its propensity to sociability.
Closeness centrality	This measure is the opposite of distance among nodes. Distance in a graph is measured through the number of intermediaries among nodes. The more a node is close to all others, the more it has a high closeness index.	A person is much more central as s/he is in a position to interact quickly (having few but well-connected intermediaries) with the other actors. A high index value means, on a structural level, that all or most of the actors are connected to each other, directly or through a broker.
Betweenness centrality	Betweenness centrality relates to the interposition of an actor on "paths" that connect all pairs of nodes in the network.	Node that acts as a "bridge" or connection between subjects and/ or groups.

Looking at the networks as a whole, the prevailing tendency is to be influenced by confidants and / or the spread of sociability (*out-degree*), rather than the identification of reference points within the ego-nets (*in-degree*). The direct ties (*degree*) are more common than the indirect ones (*closeness*) and this is confirmed by the lack of "structural intermediaries" (*betweenness*), although there is a wide number of intermediaries between pairs (*broker, 2 step reach*).

Altogether, there is a similar proportion of strong and weak ties, so the networks do not appear to be characterized mainly by family ties. There is, rather, a certain heterogeneity in the composition of information channels (although trust is focused on the intimate bonds). The profile changes, however, notably by distinguishing three clusters identified with reference to the extension of ego-nets (tab. 4).

The *size* value is the number of selected interlocutors and it is the reference criterion to distinguish three relational structures: the isolated subjects (less than 4 cited contacts); the subjects with medium size ego-networks (from 4 to 6 contacts) and those with large ego-networks (7-10 contacts).

A first observation arises immediately: the second cluster is characterized by students who prefer intimate ties, and the third by those who favor weak ties. A second criticism relates to the number of these groups. The third cluster is less numerous but it includes 22% of respondents, so it is not a "marginal" group. The second cluster, the most numerous, includes 43% of respondents, while 35% of students (mostly "adults") belong to the first. Young people constitute 48% of the second cluster. The third group cuts across age, with slightly higher proportions of young or adult. People belonging to this last group have extended and heterogeneous networks.

The higher propensity of respondents to refer to weak ties to acquire information and the presence of trustful attitudes are associated with the network size and the number of weak ties. This confirms the thesis that the propensity to trust is a resource, allowing access to information channels, participatory tools and relational dynamics (Gabriellini 2011). The gender of interlocutors does not affect these results, while noticeable is the impact of high political competence among confidants within the most extensive networks.

The first cluster, with isolated students, has limited values for all indices. The second cluster is characterized by an intermediate level with respect to the extension of the networks and the presence of subjects with relational structures focused on strong ties. Sociability subtended to the network (*out degree*) is similar to that recorded for the third cluster, but the presence of reference points or opinion leaders in the network is limited. This specificity becomes even more noticeable considering the *closeness* centrality. Finally, the *betweenness centrality* can be taken into account only for the third cluster.

Table 4: *Relational characteristics of the three clusters identified (average values)*

Relational clusters	CLUSTER 1	CLUSTER 2	CLUSTER 3
Network's characteristics	0-3 interlocutors	4-6 interlocutors	7-10 interlocutors
Ties	15.2	26.7	36.3
Density	0.89	2.89	10
2 step reach.	5.07	9.83	20.34
Broker	3.59	7.77	18.56
Out-degree	14.35	31.1	32.23
In-degree	10.12	24.31	28.54
In-closeness	10.46	20.45	36.11
Out-closeness	8.25	19.26	34.7
N ego Betweenneess	0.13	1.7	3.84
Node's characteristics	0-3 interlocutors	4-6 interlocutors	7-10 interlocutors
Num. of interlocutors	2	5	9
Num. of reliable confidants	6	8	10
Num. of reliable strong ties	5	6	8
Num. of reliable weak ties	1	1	2
Self-determination*	0.79	1.61	2.61
Other-determination **	0.3	0.84	1.88
Number of strong ties	1.33	2.53	3.66
Number of weak ties	0.74	2.21	5.2
Num. of male interlocutors	1.08	2.47	4.64
Num. of female interloc.	1.01	2.28	4.41
Nodes with pol. comp.	1.42	3.05	5.57

* Number of interlocutors influenced by respondent.
** Number of interlocutors who influence the respondent.

Looking at the qualitative dimension, we note that trust is mostly due to the presence of strong ties, rather than dependent on generalized trust. What are the effects according to changes in participation? Belonging to the third cluster is more strongly associated with the dynamics of participation than it

is to the cohort of age. Both young people and adults have a slightly higher proportion of belonging to this cluster. Consequently, it seems that relational dynamics arise as an explanatory factor for increased participation in a specific direction (fig. 7). In addition, the effect of age seems to be crossed with other causal factors such as levels of education and relational dynamics.

Those who belong to the third cluster are more oriented towards protest actions (marches, strikes) and less to conventional participation (members of political parties, campaigning, voting). The level of participation in self-directed actions (petitions, boycotts, referendum) is not common only among isolates. With regard to the motivational component, there is a lack in a sense of external efficacy (i.e., the perception that political institutions function effectively) while the sense of internal efficacy is widespread. The combination between high internal and low external efficacy is a coherent trait of cynicism. This attitude is specifically localized in relation to the perception of politics among young people with higher levels of education. The data is confirmed if we consider the trust in politicians, while there is a high level of trust in voluntary associations, particularly prevalent among those belonging to the third cluster.

Figure 7: *Relational clusters and other features (affective, cognitive and participatory dynamics)*
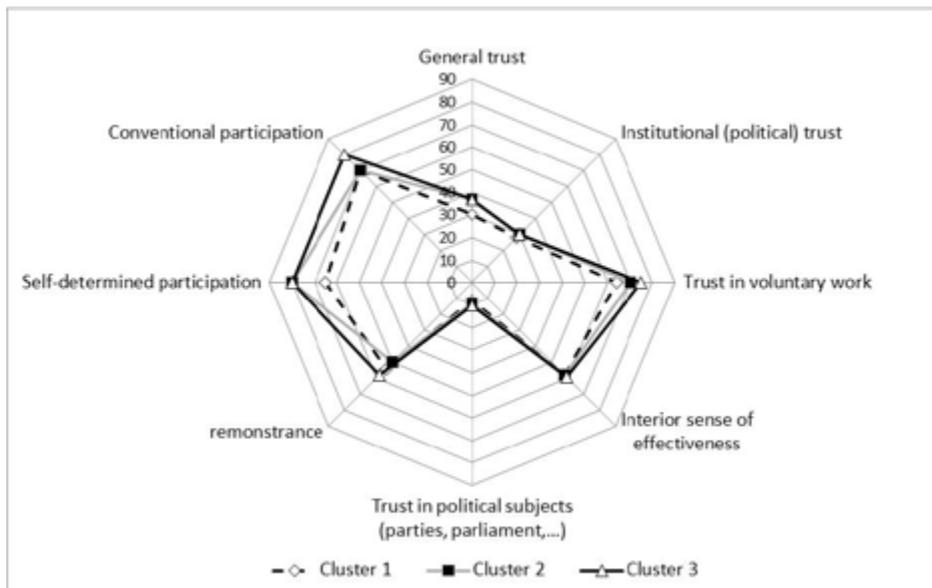
Features of youth participation

A Principal Component Analysis (PCA) model is applied in order to assess the connection between the typology of youth participation and other fea-

tures that affect youth involvement (namely, affective, cognitive and relational dynamics). PCA is a tool that permits the joint analysis of data. The solution emerges crossing different dimensions by mean of the correlation among variables[2] (tab. 5).

In order to assess the impact of the dynamics that are hidden using only monovariate or bivariate analysis, a model that focused in particular on the specific type of participation was created. The proposed analysis allows for the discrimination between two lines of youth participation: conventional and unconventional. Each is associated with specific characteristics and tends to polarize, in particular, attitudes to actual behavior. The result is a representation of what could be considered as two universes of participation, that are the expression of different dynamics.

This solution appears to be adequate. The selection of two factors (n=1.389 cases) can explain 31% of the overall variance, almost equally spread along the axes of the Cartesian plane. Affective, cognitive, and relational components also appear as all equally included in the solution (fig. 8).

The first dimension (represented by the abscissa) contrasts affective dynamics (trust and self-determined participation) and, above all, actions of protest. The propensity to trust in political institutions, in particular, is opposed to actions of protest and, in general, to self-direction (which can be considered as a typical youth attitude of involvement).

Note that this dimension is both characterized by a high propensity to use the internet for information and a high propensity to build meaningful relational networks (third relational cluster), a trend which contrasts with the negative semi-axis of the first dimension. This pole includes all other ways of getting information, making it a proper pole for traditional channels of information.

The second dimension (ordinate) represents the propensity towards political information *versus* relational isolation and shows a second way: conventional participation, associated with an attitude of trust towards others and towards parties (sense of external efficacy), opposed to relational isolation.

Excluding the relational dynamics, this second dimension opposes two models of involvement: self-directed and conventional participation. The first is conveyed mainly by trust in oneself and by web browsing, while the second

[2] The indicators have been calculated through dummy variables (dichotomous variables have been defined for each category of each categorical variables) or by summing categories showing a medium-high level of involvement/participation. Finally, we obtain variables that can be considered as metric data. Concerning other prerequisites for PCA application, the size of sample is higher than 300 cases and we introduce more than 3 variables for each factor, without outliers. Besides, the correlation matrix did not show too high or low indices of correlation.

Table 5: *Variables in PCA model*

Variable names	The meaning of variables	Questions or procedure (for index)
Cluster 1	Isolated people	INDEX: First relational cluster
Cluster 2	People with a prevalence of kin ties among their political confidants	INDEX: Second relational cluster
Cluster 3	People with a presence of kin & non kin ties among their political confidants	INDEX: Third relational cluster
GENERAL TRUST	People who trust in others	"I trust in people"
INTERIOR EFFIC 1	People who think they can affect political choices	"People can affect political decisions"
INTERIOR EFFIC 2	People who have political competence	"I understand political issues"
EXTERNAL EFF 1	People who think kindly of politicians	"I think that elected people act with responsibility"
EXTERNAL EFF 2	People who think political acts are effective	"I think the parties are interested in solving people's problems"
INFO TV & TG	People who detect political information by means of tv	"I acquire political information watching television and newscasts"
INFO NEWSP & RADIO	People who detect political information via radio and/or newspaper	"I acquire political information listening the radio / reading newspapers"
INFO MEETINGS	People who detect political information from meetings	"I acquire political information attending electoral meeting"
INFO WEB	People who detect political information on the web	"I acquire political information by web (social network, news, etc.)"
TRUST POL INST	People who trust in political action	"I trust in political associations"
TRUST VOL	People who trust in volunteering	"I trust in volunteering"
PROTEST ACT	Actions of political protest	INDEX: Protest activities (marches, manifestations, strikes, etc...)
CONVENT PART	Actions of political participation	INDEX: Activities of conventional political participation (to vote, to campaign, etc…)
SELF-DETERM PART	Self-determined political actions (individual actions with political significance)	INDEX: Self-determined participation (consumerism, signing petitions, signing for referendums)

cumulates traditional channels of information and institutional trust. Generalized trust is placed transversely with respect to this dichotomy, as well as the propensity to structure relationships.

Figure 8: *Graphical representation of the PCA model*
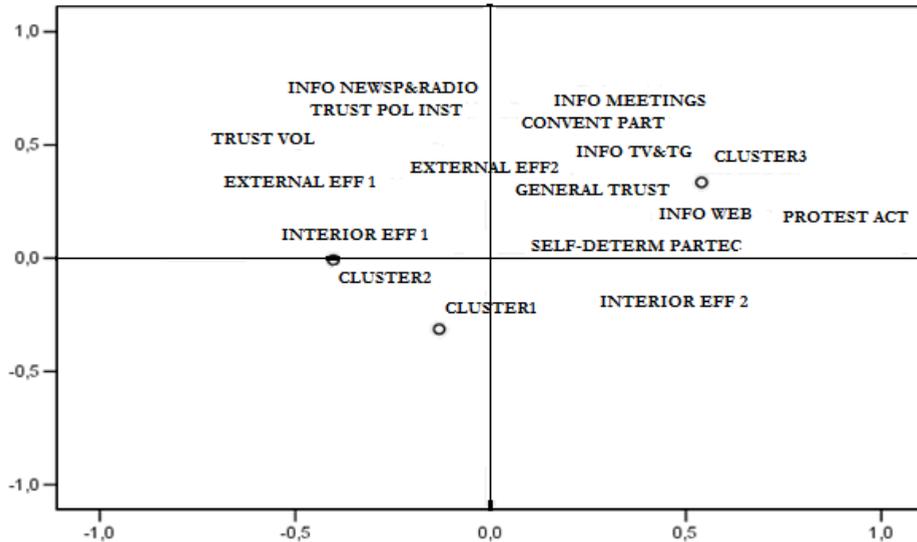
Factor scores recorded on this dimension do not show significant differences compared to the variance detected on a regional basis (Levene test), so you can get more information about the influence of any contextual effects by analysis of variance (fig. 9). The ANOVA allows, in particular, to link the different practices of participation to specific contextual effects (here detected considering the university in which students were enrolled).

Southern Italy and the islands areas (Catania, Cagliari, Palermo and Cosenza) are strongly characterized by conventional (traditional) forms of political participation, even taking into account the age factor. Participation is more heterogeneous in Urbino, Salerno, Padova, Torino and Genova. These are prestigious universities, located in small but central areas (except Torino). Finally, participation is primarily self-directed in Udine, Milano and Bologna, central and important areas.

The factor scores related to discrimination between forms of political participation have a distribution that approximates to the Gaussian (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test) and it is, therefore, possible to propose a regression model that allows us to assess the impact of additional dynamics on the propensity to conventional participation rather than self-directed participation (tab. 6).

Figure 9: *ANOVA results and contextual effects*
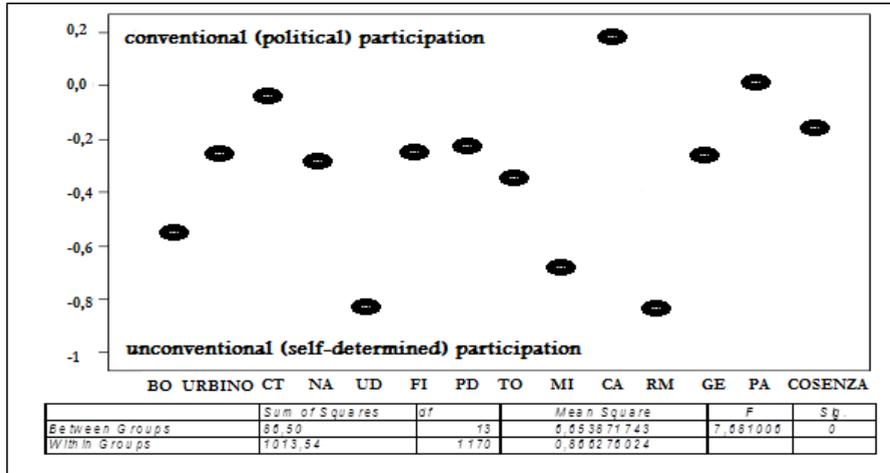
The structural dynamics only affect the choice of participation in a partial fashion. The presence of a stable job or not, in particular, does not seem to have any relevance. Age, male gender and higher levels of education are significantly correlated with the propensity to conventional participation. The causal relationship found for the structural dynamics is, however, limited, as well as the influence of family and friends, a sense of internal efficacy and the incidence of the context associated with southern or central Italy. We note, moreover, that the trust in volunteering (but not the actual involvement in voluntary associations) affects the dynamics of participation. Only the political associations certainly affect the propensity to conventional participation, rather than the self-directed model of participation. The propensity to conventional participation (rather than self-directed involvement) is mainly related to trust in political institutions – measured through the perception of institutional efficacy – and to trust in charitable organizations (voluntary work, the church).

Conclusion

This work highlights some traits of Italian youth's political participation and it does not show a crisis of participation, but rather the increasing importance of different participatory acts.

The picture that emerges shows increasing political skills among voters. The reference sample (consisting of university students) does not present pecu-

Table 6: *Regression model (dependent variable =factor scores of PCA model)*

Y = self-determined versus conventional participation	Unstandardized Coefficients		Std. Coeff.	t	Sign.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-2.47	0.12		-20.02	0.00
Gender (M)	**0.08**	**0.04**	**0.04**	**1.96**	**0.05**
Age	**0.01**	**0.00**	**0.07**	**2.70**	**0.01**
Degree	**0.10**	**0.05**	**0.04**	**2.08**	**0.04**
Regular job	0.05	0.08	0.02	0.68	0.49
Temporary job	0.05	0.04	0.02	1.18	0.24
Trust in internat. politics	**0.37**	**0.04**	**0.18**	**9.34**	**0.00**
Trust in church	**0.41**	**0.04**	**0.20**	**9.63**	**0.00**
Trust in volunteering	**0.37**	**0.04**	**0.18**	**9.34**	**0.00**
Trust in Mayor	**0.31**	**0.04**	**0.16**	**8.10**	**0.00**
Cultural associationism	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.84	0.40
Political associationism	**0.32**	**0.05**	**0.12**	**6.00**	**0.00**
Volunteering	0.02	0.05	0.01	0.40	0.69
Web - high pol. competence	**0.07**	**0.01**	**0.15**	**7.45**	**0.00**
Parents	**0.21**	**0.05**	**0.09**	**4.32**	**0.00**
Relatives	**0.14**	**0.04**	**0.07**	**3.65**	**0.00**
Friends	**0.18**	**0.05**	**0.07**	**3.47**	**0.00**
Collegues	0.08	0.05	0.04	1.71	0.09
Member of associations	**0.33**	**0.05**	**0.15**	**7.09**	**0.00**
Interior efficacy	**0.07**	**0.03**	**0.05**	**2.66**	**0.01**
Institut. effic. (perception)	**0.80**	**0.04**	**0.40**	**20.55**	**0.00**
North-west	-0.03	0.05	-0.01	-0.62	0.53
North-east	-0.11	0.07	-0.03	-1.50	0.13
Centre	-0.12	0.06	-0.04	-1.99	0.05
Sud	0.15	0.05	0.07	2.97	0.00

R=0.8 R2=0.6

liar characteristics compared with national data on youth participation. The most relevant information obtained through the survey concerns relational, cognitive and affective dynamics.

Political socialization plays an important role in guiding youth participation. In particular, the influence of the peer group and parents is fundamental. These changes in participation propensity are characterized by the increasing rates of self-determined involvement and protest acts, while there is a reduction in conventional participation and, in particular, in party membership. Data about college students identified two features of participation: conventional and unconventional. Conventional participation contrasts with isolation but is connected with greater influence of kin ties, traditional channels of information and trust (especially towards political institutions). Unconventional participation is composed of acts of protest and self-directed involvement. Both unconventional dynamics seem to be spread not only among university students, but among young people. The analysis shows, in particular, how these two aspects of unconventional participation exhibit similar traits, as both are associated with a greater propensity to use new media and to structure extensive and heterogeneous ego-networks. Self-directed participation is, however, characterized by greater confidence in self and in others while protest action is opposed to institutional trust, regardless of whether it is political or social.

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Youth Policies in Europe: big changes after the big crisis? An explorative analysis

Riccardo Guidi

The paper deals with current innovation trajectories in European youth policies. It is aimed at exploring European Union policy addresses on youth condition and the youth policies of four EU Member Countries (Germany, Denmark, United Kingdom, Italy) belonging to different welfare and youth transition regimes. Although the analysis is explorative and the results must be considered preliminary only, a minimalist and workfare-based policy approach seems to characterize European youth policies in times of crisis. This confirms that social changes are not enough per sé to generate policy interventionism. The European relative political inertia against the hard effects of post-2008 crisis risks to further strengthen inequalities among social groups, age groups and countries.

Introduction

In the last decades youth has progressively become a vulnerable segment of European societies. Although change of youth condition in Europe should be addressed as a long-term and wide question, 2008 crisis, recession and austerity politics have exacerbated the already existing difficulties of European young people, especially in some countries (Eurofound 2014; Oecd 2014). In the aftermath of 2008 crisis, the transition to adulthood has been and continues to be uncertain and frustrating for more and more European young people (Cordella and Masi 2012; Heinz 2009).

The worsening of youth condition is harshly weighing on the supporting agencies as well. European families, above all in Southern Europe countries, have growing responsibilities towards their children and less resources to support them. Moreover the costs public institution agencies currently have for youth unemployment seem considerable (for UK see: Macmillan 2012).

More generally, the worsening of youth condition matters with the future of European societies. The European Commission (EC) explicitly underlined that bad youth condition can weaken global competitiveness of Europe (EC 2012a). Moreover, the precarious transition to adulthood clearly impedes

and/or delays procreation, further altering the already critical European demographic balance and pensions system sustainability (EC 2012b). The consequences of current economic hardship on youth include also a loss of confidence, an undermining of trust and expectations, an increasing risk of social exclusion and disengagement from society (Eurofound 2014).

The scope of these consequences significantly questions European public policies. Although recent European political discourse has significantly focused on youth problems and youth studies have been growing at least since the 1990s, the attention of literature on post-crisis European youth policies has been so far rather low[1].

This paper deals with current innovation trajectories in European youth policies. It is aimed at exploring European Union (EU) policy addresses on youth condition and the youth policies of four EU Member Countries (Germany, Denmark, United Kingdom, Italy) belonging to different welfare and youth transition regimes (Esping Andersen 1990; Ferrera 1996; Walther 2006). The results of my analysis must be considered only preliminary and provisional and they especially call for stronger supporting evidences in the next future.

In the following paragraph, I will provide some assumptions on welfare and youth policies innovation. Then I will explore changes in EU level political addresses on youth and innovations of youth policies in Denmark, Germany, United Kingdom (here mainly in England), and Italy. The results are discussed in the last paragraph.

Changing welfare and youth policies: what is at stake, how innovation works

In post II World War Western Europe, public policies – and peculiarly welfare policies – have been one of the most powerful and legitimate devices to redistribute powers between different groups in society preserving individual freedom. The "founding fathers" of contemporary welfare policies dedicated great attention to this point. John M. Keynes and Karl Polanyi addressed the socially devastating power of self-regulating market economy and *laissez-faire* ideologies, calling for a counter-movement, political criteria and robust instruments to intervene in market economy (Keynes 1991 [1932]; Polanyi 1944). The notion of social citizenship (Marshall 2009 [1950]) had a pivotal

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[1] As a result of a systematic review through the International Bibliography of Social Sciences, only 9 articles in some way dealing with the transformations of post-2007 European youth policies were found at the end of April 2014.

importance in the building of post II World War Western European welfare systems. In Marshall's view, social citizenship drives welfare public policies to guarantee equal conditions for exercising the right to be different, which means making freedom of individual choice a real possibility for all. Social citizenship based welfare public policies are thus expected to modify the distribution of inherited powers, providing the most disadvantaged people the means to be effectively and basically free as well as the most advantaged ones.

Nevertheless, in the last decades the redistributive mission of European (and not only) welfare policies seems to be at stake. Since the late 1970s/early 1980s "the EU as a whole has failed to make a significant reduction in the proportion of its citizens living at risk of poverty" (Atkinson 2013: 2). More recently EU has not succeeded to tackle the social impact of 2008 crisis. Oecd data (Oecd 2014) showed that in many European countries the income of the poorest 10% of the population declined or increased less than that of the richest 10% in 2007-2011 period. As a result, European societies currently undergo the highest inequality levels since the 1970s/1980s (Atkinson 2013).

European youth seems to have been involved into an impoverishment path more than other age groups in the aftermath of 2008 crisis. According to Oecd (2014) data, the distribution of disposable incomes among the European young, adult and elderly people has been changing since 2007 (see tab. 1). In the Euro area, the already high proportion of young people at risk of poverty has further and almost linearly grown in the last years. As a result, young people currently seem the age group at the highest risk of poverty in the Euro area (see figure 1). According to Oecd long-term analysis, youth seems to have replaced the elderly as the group experiencing the greater risk of income poverty (Oecd 2014).

Table 1: *Annual percentage changes in disposable incomes 2007 and 2011 by age groups*

	Total	Young (18-25)	Adult (26-65)	Elderly (Over 65)
Denmark	+0,3	-0,7	+0,4	+1,3
Sweden	+2,5	+3,6	+2,0	+3,5
Germany	+0,4	+0,1	+0,3	+0,3
France	+0,3	+0,2	+0,2	+1,0
United Kingdom	-1,5	-1,7	-2,0	+0,2
Ireland	-5,6	-7,2	-5,6	-1,8
Italy	-1,5	-1,0	-1,8	+0,2
Spain	-3,6	-4,9	-3,9	-0,2

Source: Elaboration from OECD 2014.

Current socio-economic worsening of youth condition in Europe can be framed in some longer and wider trends about youth (see also the other contributions of this monographic issue). At least since the 1990s youth transition from adolescence to adulthood has been observed shifting from a linear path transition (education => employment => marriage => procreation) to a destandardised, fragmented, prolonged and vulnerable transition. The scope of this shift has been considered so wide that since first 2000s the most part of European young people would live a sort of "yo-yo transition" (Walther 2006): they would swing between autonomy – that is expected in adulthood – and (economic) dependence – that is typical of adolescence – for a much longer period than before. In this scenario, every adulthood milestone is considered uncertain, the steps to adulthood can be reversible and misaligned [(education) <=> (employment) <=> (marriage) <=> (procreation)] and finally, the meanings of being young and adult seem to be at stake (Woodman and Wyn 2013).

Although this general shift seems significantly to echo epochal transformations within contemporary societies, especially in terms of new social risks (Beck 1992; Taylor-Gooby 2004), the differences between segments of youth population and between contexts of transition to adulthood should not be disregarded.

Figure 1: *People at risk of poverty by age in Euro Area (18 countries)*
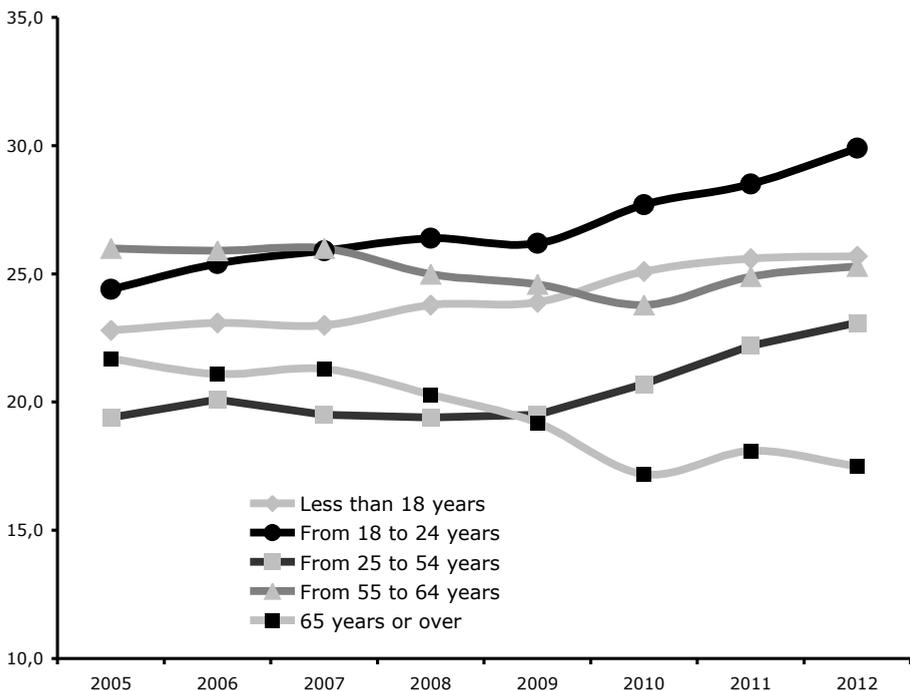
Source: Eurostat – Income and Living Conditions.

More than before, European youth probably shares a common values framework, but class and place seem to be still important in shaping youth transitions (MacDonald *et al.* 2005). Moreover, welfare policies sometimes strengthen some existing inequalities in youth population instead of contrasting them (Coussée *et al.* 2009). National economic systems, public policies and family traditions have a significantly impact on the path towards independence (Lesnard 2011).

In Walther's (2006) proposal, four youth transitions regimes existed in Europe before the 2008 crisis. Nordic countries are considered the champions of the *universalistic transition regime*. It is mainly based on a comprehensive school system; flexible training standards; State social security provisions; low risks and high female employment regime; and a concept of youth as personal development. The UK is the archetype for *liberal transition regime*. Here the focus of transition policies is mainly employability; individual rights and responsibilities count more than collective provisions; training options have flexible and low standards; the level of benefits are low; employment regime is flexible; risky and high female, and youth is expected to be replaced as soon as possible by economic independence. The *employment-centred transition regime* accounts for the continental countries, such as Germany, France and the Netherlands. This regime is characterized by a selectively organized school system aimed at allocating youth in different occupational careers and by a highly regulated employment regime. Here labour market and social security system are divided into a highly standardized and protected core and outsiders; youth is mainly considered in terms of allocation to social and occupational positions. On the other hand, southern European countries (such as Italy, Spain, Portugal) are the models of a *sub-protective youth transition regime*. The latter does not provide choice, flexibility or security, and it is centred on family support. Here youth is a long waiting phase; employment regime is low female and highly risky; school is structured comprehensively until the end of compulsory education, but the rate of early school leaving is high.

Nevertheless, these transition regimes are not static. Walther (2006) reported some transformations in the Nordic countries (with a strengthening of individualized labour market integration) and in the continental countries (with the introduction of workfare elements) in the first 2000s. What is happening under the pressure of 2008 crisis? Are EU and national policies for youth changing and eventually, how?

How public policies changes happen. Some general assumptions

Understanding how policy changes happen is all but obvious. Some scholars welcomed exogenous pressure driven models of change (Streeck and Thelen 2005).

Here institutions are supposed to ordinarily work in an inertial way cyclically interrupted by shocking shifts ("critical junctures") coming from outside (e.g.: energy crises, financial earthquakes, great recessions, changes in cultural values, global competition...). This approach has been criticized to excessively simplify the question of change and to neglect the importance of intra-institutional features and dynamics for policies innovation (Mahoney and Thelen 2010).

According to other authoritative scholars, post-1980s and post-2007 policy changes have been driven by well recognisable forces and intentions. Gallino (2012) argued the post-1980s scenario resulted from a new and inverted class struggle that global capital and its references in political arena have been conducting since the early 1980s to recover the lost power in the *trente glorieuses* of Welfare States. Woodman and Wyn (2013) follow a similar hypothesis on youth policies changes, arguing that neo-liberal hegemony clearly oriented national reforms towards self-entrepreneurship, deregulation of labour market and marketization of education systems.

Some penetrating hypotheses on policy changes come from the new-institutionalist tradition. Here public policy innovation is supposed to happen within a complex framework where previous intra-institutional dynamics and their results matter (Mahoney and Thelen 2010). Policy innovation is expected to be *path-dependent* and the impact of external pressure (such as an economic crisis) on policy change is considered to be eventually hard but *indirect*.

This does not mean innovation is impossible: existing frameworks constrain innovation, but they do not prevent it. Innovators can follow different strategies of change (Mahoney and Thelen 2010). Conservative constituencies can be overcome not only through explicit and visible actions (as a reform plan); an "hidden politics" of change can sometimes be more effective (Hacker 2004). Following Hacker, one can argue that when public policies do not significantly change after a socio-economic change altering the distribution of powers, a *de facto* reform has been carried out. In other words, political inertia in times of social change can produce and legitimate new distribution of powers in society as well as a "positive" political intervention.

The current framework of national policies innovation is further complicated by the so-called "rescaling" processes (Kazepov 2010). Sovra-institutional actors – EU included – have a growing role in orienting national and sub-national policies. They sometimes ask for specific reforms and directly act to incentivize them through "positive" (e.g.: financial supports) and/or "negative" (e.g.: sanctions threat) instruments. They also affect policy change dynamics more indirectly, for example spreading reform paradigms and policy ideas (Campbell and Pederson 2010).

Nevertheless, the processes of national and local implementation of higher scale political addresses are all but obvious (Gherardi and Lippi 2000; Pipan

and Czarniawska 2010; Guidi 2011). Assessing the impact of a single EU variable on the processes of national policy change is extremely difficult because the latter depends on many and different features. The adoption of a strict top-down approach in the study of the relationships between EU actors and national policies is largely unsatisfying (Radaelli 2002).

An overview of the developments of EU Youth Policies

The processes towards a EU youth policy engaged different actors and needed time (Williamson 2007). After a slow *statu nascenti* period (from 1968 to 1980s), the first EU programmes for youth begun to be implemented from 1988 and a process of reviewing national youth policy started in the second half of the 1990s (Williamson 2007).

The first consolidation of EU youth policy happened through the White Paper on youth launched by EC in 2001, after a one year consultation. The White Paper proposed a framework for EU countries consisting of two components: (1) increasing cooperation between EU countries; (2) taking greater account of the youth factor in sectoral policies. Four priorities characterized the former component: youth participation in public life; information on European affairs; voluntary service; better knowledge on youth. On the other hand, the latter consisted in a call for taking youth problems more into account in all the policies (such as employment, education, racism, health, etc.) (EC 2001).

Indeed, the White Paper has been considered the most important EU level document on youth up to 2011 (Williamson 2007; Cicchelli 2011). According to Cicchelli (2011), the White Paper set active citizenship at the top of EU political agenda on youth and inspired both the "Youth" (2000-2006) and the "Youth in Action" (2007-2013) EU programmes. Using the terms of Loncle and Muniglia (2011), the White Paper included only the "soft" policies in the specific field of EU youth policy and left the "hard" policies impacting on youth (employment, education...) to other processes and authorities.

The EU developed a specific and "harder" interest in youth along the implementation process of the Lisbon Strategy. The latter was launched by EC in 2000 with the aim to make the EU the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world. Within the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy, the Council of Europe adopted the European Pact for Youth (Council of EU 2005), which mainly emphasised the need to give young people the skills to contribute to competitiveness, growth and social cohesion (Williamson 2011). According to the Commission of the European Communities (2005: 11),

Adoption of the European Pact for Youth has complemented the development of the active citizenship of young people [...] by taking on board the concerns of youth within the policies that support the Lisbon partnership for growth and jobs.

A wide consultation process promoted by European Parliament in 2009 revealed that 2001-2009 EU actions on youth were only partially satisfying. In response to this, the Commission of the European Communities proposed to set out a strategy for the future of youth policies in Europe, the so-called new "EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018)" (Commission of the European Communities 2009; Council of EU 2009). It has included eight fields of action: (1) Education and training; (2) Employment & entrepreneurship; (3) Health & well-being; (4) Participation; (5) Voluntary activities; (6) Social inclusion; (7) Youth & the world; (8) Creativity & culture.

The first cycle evaluation report announced the priority of the following triennium: "strengthening the link between the renewed framework and Europe 2020" (Council of EU-EC 2012: 13).

Member States should in particular target young people who are not in employment, education or training [...]. They should undertake more efforts to increase young people's access to work, apprenticeships and traineeships and improve their employability (*Ivi*: 14).

Although EU institutions have not given up the programs already planned under the whole EU Youth Strategy, they seem more and more to have targeted youth unemployment as policy priority. The 2012 Annual Growth Survey (EC 2011a) considered urgent "tackling unemployment and the social consequences of the crisis" especially on youth. Three emergencies were especially underlined: unemployment, temporary work and early-school leaving. EU-level specific proposals included "a 'Youth Opportunities Initiative' (YOI) to boost youth employment, in particular access to a first job, apprenticeships and internships" (EC 2011a: 18).

In adopting YOI, EC strongly recommended to the Member States the so-called "Youth Guarantee" (YG). It is presented as

a new approach to tackling youth unemployment which ensures that all young people under 25 – whether registered with employment services or not – get a good-quality, concrete offer within 4 months of them leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. The good-quality offer should be for a job, apprenticeship, traineeship, or continued education and be adapted to each individual need and situation (ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079).

EU institutions have stronger supported YG in 2013. In February 2013, the Council has proposed a "Youth Employment Initiative" (YEI) with a budget of € 6 billion over seven years (2014-2020). YEI is particularly focused on Neet young people and allows the Member Countries with above 25% youth unemployment rate to be eligible for extra funding to implement YG (EC 2013a). In April 2013, the Council (Council of EU 2013) has endorsed YG defining some general guidelines for national implementation. Firstly, YG is expected to better work in the context of a partnership-based approach, bringing together various stakeholders in the design and implementation. Secondly, the use of early intervention and activation measures is recommended. Thirdly, EU institutions advise to address mismatches between the skills required by the labour market and those of unemployed or inactive young people. Fourthly, national budgets should prioritise youth and last, assessment and monitoring are considered important.

A claim for reforms has accompanied these developments. The EC President and European Commissioner for Employment, the Social Affairs and Inclusion have considered YG as "the best way for Member States to help young people to get a job and to reduce the unacceptable levels of youth unemployment" and have called explicitly for Member States "to put in place the structural reforms and infrastructure to make the YG a reality as soon as possible" (EC 2013b). The national implementation phase of YG has started in the early 2014.

Youth policies in four European countries: an overview

Comparing national youth policies in Europe is problematic at least for the different definitions of youth (including children or not, including over 24 years old or not) and the different national policy traditions (Iard 2001: 57-61). In my explorative comparative analysis, I will not consider the national policies for children and I will mainly focus on the transition to adulthood policies (Cordella and Masi 2012).

Denmark

Youth policies framework in Denmark seems to be highly decentralised (Helve 2011). Regions and Municipalities are in charge of most services for young people. The municipalities have a role both by themselves and through local Youth Councils that are funded by Municipalities, but independent. Moreover, the municipalities have recently been the field of relevant participatory experimentations (Dam 2010: 233-235).

The key-actor at national level is the Ministry of Education which coordinates Government's Youth Committee including eight further Ministries. According to Dam (2010: 229), this framework mainly reveals the weakness of the Danish youth policies: they seem to be "more like a soft coordination of youth-related measures across different ministries than a planning and implementation of an overall youth policy" (Dam 2010: 231). The national advocacy of youth interests in Denmark is guaranteed by numerous youth organizations and by some representative organs, such as the Danish Youth Council (the umbrella organisation for about 70 voluntary children and youth organisations) and the Network of Youth Councils (the umbrella organisation for local Youth Councils) (Haarder 2008: 64-65).

The national youth policies in 2008-2009 have been centred around two main objectives: (1) providing all young people an education in order to be prepared for the labour market and for further education; (2) turning Danish young people into democratic active citizens (Haarder 2008: 60-61). The integration of young people, especially of non-Danish origins, has received special attention and has mainly been addressed through education campaigns (Haarder 2008: 67-68).

Prioritising the active citizenship of youth and recognising a key-role to education both recall some of the most important elements in the Danish model of youth policies (Helve 2011; Walther 2006). Nevertheless, it has been argued that the focus of Danish youth policies has shifted "from participatory stimulation to educational demands" since 2009 (Dam 2010: 231).

More generally, a new round of reforms has been developed by different national governments since 2009[2]. Young people are one of the main targets of "Cash Benefit Reform" and the reform of flexi-job scheme (Danish Government, 2013: 17). These reforms have been based on the principles already inspiring the "active turn" in Danish welfare policies in the middle-1990s (Abrahamson 2009). They have been presented by the social democrat Danish Finance Minister as a way to move "away from giving people cash to giving them opportunities and education" (Simons 2014).

Although Denmark has adopted EU YG, it does not seem to have significantly innovated neither the programs nor the approaches of Danish youth policies (Danish Ministry of Employment 2014: 13-17)[3]. The measures included in the EU YG Danish Implementation Plan had been already enacted

[2] In the aftermath of 2008 crisis, Denmark has had a left-wing government up to March 2009, then a right-wing one from April 2009 to September 2011 and again a left-wing government from October 2011.

[3] According to Higgins (2012, 11) Denmark has been the first European country to introduce Youth Guarantee in 1990.

following both the traditional patterns of national policies and the pillars of 2009-2014 reforms (Danish Ministry of Employment 2014: 10). On these bases, Denmark provides 15-17 and 18-29 years old people with a complete coverage in case of unemployment and education gaps[4]. Clear and secure times for each measure are guaranteed.

Education is considered the key-resource to reach the objectives of EU Youth Strategy. Danish education system is based on the dual system (alternation between school and apprenticeship in an enterprise), the Youth Guidance Centres (monitoring the competencies and orienting youth) and Production Schools (developing the competencies of the young people below 25 years old who do not have any qualifications to enter in secondary education). Beyond education, Denmark eases the transition for youth into the labour market through six measures (Trainee efforts for graduates; Wage subsidy jobs; Enterprise trainings; Job rotations; Upgradings in connection with an employment; Internship centres). They are addressed to different kinds of young people and are managed by Job Centres. Youth Units allow the coordination of services for youth (Danish Ministry of Employment 2014).

Germany

In Germany federal government, the Länders and the municipalities share the responsibilities of youth policies. Länders and municipalities are the main players in implementing youth policies and providing assistance services to youth (Bendit 2010; Wondratschek 2014). At the federal level, a Ministry has in charge youth policy, senior citizens, women, and family affairs. The role of the Ministry of youth has been considered typically marginal (Bendit 2010: 335), although an integration process with Federal Ministries of education, labour market, social, health, justice, regional policies seems to have been strengthened in the last years (Wondratschek 2014).

German youth policies seem to follow the well-known new corporativist pattern: policies design and implementation often result from the cooperation between public agencies and civil society organizations (such as youth associations, Ngos, trade unions, churches...) (Bendit 2010). Councils on youth policies exist at federal, regional and local level.

Both Bendit (2010) and Wondratschek (2014) have highlighted that the fight against right-wing extremism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, violence and terrorism has been one of the major tasks of German youth policy in the last

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[4] EU YG scheme covers youth until 25 years old. Denmark employment policies have extended the threshold up to 29.

years. The programmes running under the Ministry for youth in 2014 have mainly included initiatives for disadvantaged youth, migrant youth and extreme right young people. In the field of youth welfare policies, Bendit (2010: 337-338) has observed a growing support to young families since 2006.

However, German youth policies have received several criticisms. They have been considered almost insignificant (Lucking-Michel 2009), weak, static and only complementary to stronger policies, such as the educational ones (Bendit 2010: 347). The level of youth policy integration would be still unsatisfying, many measures aimed at contrasting poverty among young people would have been ineffective, while better results seem to have been achieved on youth social participation (Bendit 2010: 347-348). Bendit has also noted an instrumental shift in German youth policies. They would be more and more strictly focused on integrating young people into the labour market and less and less addressed to socially empower them (*Ivi*: 348).

Although the impact of mid-2000s labour market reforms should not be underestimated (Cinalli and Giugni 2013), Germany seemingly follows a path-dependent approach in implementing EU YG programs[5]. Since this country tackled effectively the impacts of 2008 crisis on youth, it seems to be strengthening the already existing measures (mainly vocational education and dual system) in order to further reduce youth unemployment rates. The YG is in Germany a way "to amplify the downward trend in youth unemployment" (German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs 2014: 15).

The fight against Neets (considered one of the key-challenge in current Germany and centre-staged in EU YG as well) is based on previous initiatives (such as "Jugend Starken", began in 2007) (German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs 2014: 19-20). The initiatives for young disabled people and young migrant people in the German YG Implementation Plan mainly come from previous programs (such as Integration through Training Programme, begun in 2005), although some adjustments have been planned for the next years (*Ivi:* 35-36).

The Guidelines of the EU YG calling for a partnership approach and an early intervention have been easily settled into the already existing governance framework. The so-called "Schulewirtschaft" alliance between schools, business and job centres continues to be the successful locally-based coalition initiative for youth occupation (*Ivi:* 21). The EU YG funds are supposed to continue the existing measures and, where possible, to marginally expand

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[5] From 2005, Angela Merkel and CDU-CSU are the key-players of German governments. 2005-2009 Angela Merkel government was supported by a CDU-CSU/SPD coalition (grand coalition), 2009-2013 Angela Merkel government by a CDU-CSU/FDP coalition and Angela Merkel current government by CDU-CSU/SPD coalition again.

them on the basis of some local experimentations developed since 2010 (*Ivi:* 23-29). The implementation of the YG in the field of training is expected to be embedded within the National Pact for Career Training and Skilled Manpower Development that has been developed by the Federal Government and the main industry organisations in the past ten years (*Ivi:* 29-30).

United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have "devolved administrations". Although youth policy on the whole is considered to be included in the "devolved matters", the distribution of powers seems to be more complicated since education, training, health, housing and social services are "devolved matters" and employment is a "reserved matter" to the UK Parliament (except in Northern Ireland). Moreover, the local authorities have an important role in the implementation of the UK youth policies and thus, it seems to be a complex policy field whose competences are divided.

Youth was centred-stage in the agenda of 1997-2010 New Labour governments (Mizen 2003) and seems to be for Tory-Liberal Coalition government (2011-on) as well. The "Education and Inspection Act" (2006) and especially the "New Deal for Young People" (1998) have been considered the most important national youth policies plans under the New Labour governments (Youth Partnership 2010; Nativel 2011)[6]. The Tory-Liberal Coalition government launched three plans for youth in 2011: "Positive for Youth"; "Building Engagement, Building Futures" and "Opening Doors; Breaking Barriers".

"Positive for Youth" (HM Government 2011a) deals with many 13-19 years old people related questions. In terms of approach, the document underlines the new cross-sectional approach of English youth policies, the active role of neighborhood, communities and voluntary organizations in designing and implementing youth services, and the importance to facilitate youth participation at local level. In terms of initiatives, the Plan includes support schemes to parents and carers, interventions to help young people in learning; finding a job; building a character; developing a sense of belonging; being in health, and initiatives for protecting the most vulnerable people and preventing youth crime. The Plan has been strongly criticized by some authoritative professionals for the scarce attention to structural changes (such as poverty, inequality and lack of jobs) and excessive shift of responsibilities from State to families, volunteering and communities (Buckland 2013; Davies 2011).

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[6] Mizen (2003) has reckoned the latter as a prime example of the importance New Labour recognised to human capital development for competitiveness and growth.

As "improving social mobility is the principal goal of the Coalition Government's social policy" (HM Government 2011b: 3), the Plan "Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers' has a pivotal importance. It is based on a four phases life cycle approach that is expected to make "life chances more equal at the critical points for social mobility" (*Ivi:* 6). The measures for transition years (16-24 years old) are mainly aimed at raising attainment in schools, facilitating higher education for disadvantaged young people, and supporting the transition of young people to work. From 2015, all English young people will remain in education or training to age 18. They will be able to choose among full-time education, work-based learning, or (if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering) part-time education or training. Vocational education is strengthened through new University Technical Colleges (sponsored by Universities and heavily influenced by local and national employers) and the existing apprenticeship programmes are extended. As for the transition school-to-work, the Plan sets out an all-age service providing advice on careers, skills and the labour market.

The current UK Government has dedicated a special attention to Neet young people through the Plan "Building Engagement, Building Futures" (HM Government 2011c). The most changes are about 18-24 year olds young people. A stronger engagement in education and training is mainly expected through the institution of a National Careers Service, a new apprenticeship programme, further education and training opportunities. The Plan supports 18-24 year olds employment mainly through a more partnership-based and personalized approach of the Job Centres, as well as work experiences, work clubs, sector-based work academies and pre-Employment Training. The 18-24 year olds on inactive benefits and in disadvantaged groups are mainly supported with a renewed compact between the government and Voluntary and Community Sector.

Moreover, a new Youth Contract to help get young people learning or earning is presented as a key element in the Government approach. The Youth Contract consists of an offer of a Work Experience or sector-based work academy place for every unemployed 18-24 year old who wants one (HM Government 2011c: 8). It is driven by a clear principle:

> As we are providing more support and more opportunities for young people, we also expect more in return. Those failing to engage positively with the Youth Contract will be considered for Mandatory Work Activity. Those who drop out of a Work Experience place or a subsidised (or other) job without good reason will lose their benefits (*Ivi:* 8).

The UK Government has criticized the "EU generally inflexible approach" on YG and has decided to not implement it mainly because "many

of the measures recommended under the YG are already in place in the UK" (House of Commons 2013). Nevertheless, this choice only partially counts for the whole UK. Diverging from the UK government view, the Scottish Parliament has welcomed the YG in March 2014 and the Welsh Parliament has included the YG into its own "Youth Engagement and Progression Framework" (Welsh Government 2013 and 2014).

Italy

Youth policies have never been centred-stage in the political Italian agenda. However, three clusters of youth policies can be identified in the last decades. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Italian youth policies mainly focused on drug and youth deviant behaviour (Campagnoli 2010a). Some attention has been paid to youth participation and empowerment from 2000s in a sort of "new deal of Italian youth policies" (Campagnoli 2010b; Pasqualini 2010; Cordella and Guidi 2012). In the last years the political discourse has been more and more focused on the difficulties of youth in the labour market. The 15-24 years old unemployment rate has constantly been higher than the general population one (Mingione and Pugliese 2010), but it has further significantly increased up to more than 40%. Beyond unemployment, the increase of Neet young people, the precarious employment, the rising mismatch and over-education, and the low wage levels have made the young and the young adult people condition very hard in Italy (Guidi 2014).

Both the Head of State and the last three Prime Ministers (Mario Monti, Enrico Letta and more recently Matteo Renzi) explicitly and repeatedly have defined youth as one of the most important targets for national policies. Nevertheless, 2009-2014 Italian youth policies have been as weak as before, if not even weaker. Although some innovations exist at the local level[7], they continue to be uncertain, unequal, and fragmented. Moreover, the Italian local active labour market policies have been progressively weakened by national retrenchment programs hit by political instability, and last but not least, disoriented by the progressive suppression of the local public bodies ("Province") that had held the competencies since the second half of the 1990s.

In the aftermath of the 2008 crisis, families have been more and more the pivotal supporting institution for Italian youth. Nevertheless, they have had to tackle the broader impacts of economic recession and austerity politics at the

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[7] Since 2001, Italian Regions have been more autonomous than before in designing and implementing youth policies. This has allowed some Regions (e.g.: Tuscany, Emilia-Romagna, Puglia) to experiment new transition to adulthood policies (Cordella and Masi 2013).

same time. As a result, poor and at risk of poverty families have significantly grown (Istat 2014).

In this scenario, the Italian Government has considered the EU YG "an important innovation in European initiatives on youth policies" (Italian Ministry of Employment and Social Policies 2013: 1) and has endorsed the YG as a positive "structural reform". The Italian YG Implementation Plan is thus aimed both to tackle the employment emergency and to lay the foundation for a permanent guarantee system.

The Plan is detailed about the target population of YG. Unemployed and Neet 15-24 years old people (in 2012 more than 6 millions on the whole), and secondly 15-29 years old young people in the same conditions (in 2012 more than 9 millions) are the priority. Neet people are further differentiated between people who have or do not have a formal qualification and people who are looking or not for an employment. Moreover, the targets have been considered and quantified on regional scale.

Coherently to the Italian public administration structure, the implementation responsibilities are divided between central government and regional governments. The former is expected to adopt the national plan and to carry out some general actions (public communication, monitoring...), whereas the Regions are expected to implement national addresses with a significative room of manoevre. Some further tasks (e.g.: incentives regulation) are shared between them. A national Coordination Unit (composed by three Ministries, Youth Department, Regions, Province and the national coordination of local Chambers of commerce) is created and the involvement of further actors (such as third sector organizations, National Social Welfare Institute – INPS, private employment agencies) is envisaged.

The Italian YG Plan also focuses on the interventions. First of all, public communication actions are expected. Secondly, local public services should arrange a "welcome phase" to present the potential recipients the schemes and will evaluate young people in terms of work availability, qualifications, and skills. Thirdly, local public service and recipient are expected to sign a "service agreement", which is an individualized project aimed at integrating the recipient in labour market or at concluding the training. Fourthly, local public services are expected to provide recipients with the support. The Plan defines 7 supporting measures: (1) enterprise bonus to give young people a temporary work; (2) apprenticeship; (3) internship; (4) civil service; (5) support to a business start-up; (6) incentives to transnational mobility; (7) training programs (19).

However, as the Plan states, these measures already exist in Italy and the EU YG funds are simply expected to extend them. The Plan also underlines that Italy already introduced a youth guarantee scheme for unemployed peo-

ple in 2000-2002 (Italian Laws n. 181/2000 and n. 297/2002), but as the Plan itself acknowledges, it has not so far been effective.

Current trends in European youth policies. Some provisional conclusions

The analysis I conducted is only explorative and provisional. Further works should better address the existing relationships among local, national and supranational levels of current youth policies. A bottom-up analysis focusing on the practice implementation of youth policies could be considered a convenient approach (Cordella and Guidi 2012).

On the basis of this draft overview, it appears the EU action has had a role in the emergence and developments of a European youth policy. On the one hand, the 2001 EU White Paper, the EU programmes "Youth" and "Youth in action" have significantly contributed to the emergence of a "soft" youth policy. It has mainly meant dealing with post-modern matters (such as participation, active citizenship, tolerance…) through soft instruments (information, orientation, facultative involvement in projects...) at EU and national level. On the other hand, the EU has called for youth within Lisbon and Europe 2020 Strategy. It has mainly meant a focus on education, training and employment. So, from the early 2000s, youth policy at EU and national level seems to be an heterogeneous and contended field in which "soft" and usually ancillary policies coexist with "hard" and usually centre-staged policies (Loncle and Muniglia 2011).

In the aftermath of the 2008 crisis some hardening of EU youth policies seems to have been produced. The EU have continued to support the existing "soft" youth policies programmes, but especially from 2011 the most important EU initiatives in the field of youth ("Youth Opportunities Initiative", "Youth Employment Initiative", "Youth Guarantee") have been about education, training and transition to work and have been mainly addressed Neet young people.

Nevertheless, the growing EU action on the "hard" side of youth policies in hard times seems to have been more incremental than path-breaking. Similarly to what happened before the 2008 crisis, the EU programmes have continued to tackle youth unemployment through supply-side based interventions, mainly focusing on employability and skills of youth (Lahusen *et al.* 2013). On the contrary, few energies have been dedicated to design a more comprehensive strategy against youth unemployment and very limited emphasis has been put on the quality of work, job creation and social security although these are clear emergencies (Lahusen *et al.* 2013; MacDonald 2011). A "minimalist policy approach of precarious protection"

(Lahusen *et al.* 2013: 300) seems to characterize current European youth policies. This confirms that current social changes are not enough to generate policy interventionism.

The explorative analysis in four countries (Denmark, Germany, UK and Italy) shows that the pluralization of actors and government levels, the integration of different youth related policies and the growing attention to transition to work measures are converging trends in post-2007 European national youth policies.

National traditions seem however to play a key-role in shaping both the processes and the outcomes of current youth policies in Europe. This seems particularly clear with regard to the EU YG national implementation processes. Previous dynamics and framework of national policy-making are significantly influencing the EU YG implementation. It seems to confirm the hypothesis of path-dependency in public policies. It also seems to show that the EU YG, as actually designed and financed at EU level, are not succeeding in contrasting the social impact of crisis on youth in those European countries with a traditionally sub-protective youth transition regime.

This result supports the argument of an unchanged validity of Walther (2006) transition regimes proposal. Nevertheless, as Walther himself noted, a (neo)liberal shift in universal model seems to be underway. It is particularly the case of Denmark that is further reinforcing the 1990s turn to workfare (Torfing 1999; Kildal 2001).

Indeed, the outcome of these trends in current youth policies should not be disregarded. The absence of big changes in youth policies after the big crisis does not mean that nothing is changing. Following Hacker's (2004) proposal, the European relative political inertia against the hard effects of post-2008 crisis on European societies is likely to generate a "hidden reform" in the social distribution of powers. The incremental continuation of a minimalist and workfare-based policy approach in times of crisis risks to further strengthen inequalities among social groups, age groups and countries. In short, they seem to further weaken the social citizenship-based European welfare systems as well as the European youth condition.

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Identity-related: young people, strategies of identity and social networks

Chiara Moroni

The social networks are activators of exponential relations and of new formulas of self-representation. For this the social networks may be considered real laboratories in which to experience different possibilities of construction and reconstruction of Self. This construction process is very common among young people, called "digital natives"; they use the social networks to define themselves and their social relationship. Today we have more and more identity-related.

Introduction

The concept of identity, individual or collective, nowadays is a concept necessarily fluid and open, as well as the identity itself, subject to strategies particularly articulated of transformation, adaptation and progressive development, as became fluid and open in post modernity. This articulation results from the lack, as in the pre-modern age, of certain and solid focuses with witch a person can build a personal identity characterized by coherence and continuity.

The fact that contemporary identities represent a structure constantly planned and subjected to different perspectives, allows to think about the concept in terms of "strategies of identity" that the individual uses in the self-representation of himself and in the imagine that he wants to give of himself within the group or groups in which he takes part.

As Daher points out the post-modern identity is made up of "a mosaic to build and rebuild within fragmentary itineraries, continuous solicitations, alterations of cognitive maps and the continuous necessity to manage unexpected events" (Daher 2013: 127). The paths of identitary structuration, that every individual experienced, are marked by uncertainty and necessity to negotiate both the structures and relations of identity repeatedly. The features of these paths, that could be defined unstable and variable, depend on elements

both particular and global, as well illustrates Bauman (1999 and 2003). As is known, according to Bauman's description, post-modern identities build on the basis of elements, images and relations variously perceived, that change in own's instruments and abilities.

In this "fluctuating" scene, the identities of individuals have difficulty to guide themselves and the research to find necessary anchor points seems to achieve in relations and in particular in virtual relations that today are available from information tools, especially for young people.

If adult identities don't represent no more a point of arrival firm and steady, but keep on undergo re-elaborations and redesigns, even more so the young people's identities, that represents by nature more a project than a reality, they should be read on the basis of variable strategies and ways open to definition and re-definition.

This constant scene of variability should be read and interpreted on the basis of the assets that young people have today in order to realize that complex network of relations and necessary experiences to give structure and perspective to relative identitaries strategies.

The relational and experiential dimension was completely innovated by the presence of information tools in which channels of communication have developed with a structure and reasons unknown. These new opportunities during the time have changed the same ways of relations' exercise and the Self's perception always more the result of an image reflected in the belonging community: both aspects of identity, individual and social, are less and less discernible both in the strategies and in the effects of perceptions and behavior.

The appearance of information tools in the individual and social context, by this time ten-year, gradually has defined at least four generations of young people that use these technologies in a different and intensive way, revolutionizing the perception of "relation" and "experience", and even identitary construction.

Digital natives: four generations for four development's steps of digital media

The issue of structural transformation of management's relationships, as the way of self-representation, is strictly linked to the approach that new generations have with technology and to the communicative use of the media they make of. This connection was the discussion topic for several studies and analyses aimed at defining generational features of these transformations.

The expression Net Generation was introduced by the economist Don Tapscot in 1998 commenting on a research, led on three hundred American teenagers. This research underlines a radical difference of behaviours and tasks

relative to previous generations. The distinguishing feature between the generation studied by Tapscot and the previous is that for the first technologies are not a problem but, to the contrary, represent an opportunity (Tapscot 2009).

It was starting with this consideration, that a few years later, the researcher Marc Prensky introduced the concept of digital natives, that in the articulation of his speech are opposed to digital immigrants. Digital natives are the young people that could be defined "mothertongue" of technologies and use them in a massive way, much more than other medium, especially news media and television. Digital immigrants, on the contrary, are those belonging to previous generations, have found technologies in the adulthood and try to exploit the potential, though staying in the "fog" of no-comprehension of mechanisms and technical structures (Prensky 2001).

But what kind of implications the invasive presence of technology in ordinary routine of young people involve? The concept of digital native implies a series of transformations that occur on behaviours, on relationships and on the mind of technology-generation. Members of the new generations are changed by media and this kind of transformation doesn't concern only behaviours and use's habits, but also the cognitive processes and the symbolic dimension. These transformations, especially the cognitive one, happen in early years of life and this is the element that characterizes it radically from previous generations. From the viewpoint of experience the main change stands on the directness of technologies, the use of which is immediate and intuitive (Riva 2014).

Examining the media's history it's obvious that the emergence of new technologies has always involved ten-years processes of change, both in the social sphere and in the cognitive dimension and symbolic of individuals; digital media on the other hand have reduced the time required for the realization of these changes, making them more rapid and radical. Not rarely, digital natives are inclined to keep out more disused media from their habits of use and consumption, because they are replaced in radical way, indeed, from new digitizing opportunities.

Depending on these general features of individual and social change it's possible to distinguish four generations of digital natives, each of which is characterized by the change of interface[1] used (Riva 2012).

The first generation defined text (textual interface) had access to a new low cost and quicker instrument of communication, connected to writing texts

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[1] Interface: it means the software that could be develop from the hardware in a dependent way. The hardware is made up of physical features of technical means. For example cell phone (hardware) was subjected to different changes of connected software so with the same technical instrument we can was phone but also surf in the net and interact in the social networks.

(sms, chat, email, forum); this interface allow digital native to test new ways of communication and the creation of virtual communities free from traditional spacetime's links.

The web generation (web interface) is linked, on the other hand, to the capacity to index and assimilate a huge quantity of data, that allow to access and use a big "collective intelligence".

Relative to identitary issues, on which we talked over, the social media generation (web interface 2.0) represents the creation's cornerstone of new identitary strategies connected to the possibility to create and share contents within the virtual community that allow digital natives to build and control their social identity and their networks.

At last, it's possible to identify a touch generation (touch interface) made up of current children, that thanks to ease of technologies' use are opened to new communicative experiences which effects on the individual and the community are still indefinable.

Web 2.0: a new expressive and relational tool

As is known the expression "web 2.0" was introduced in 2004 from the American editor O'Reilly Media to describe a new generation of internet services based on on-line collaboration and sharing between users: the age of consulting web sites is closing and it starts the age of shared spaces developed and updated from all. From the viewpoint of use and contents' distribution, web 2.0 entails two main consequences: dematerialization of contents and disintermediation. The first consequence is based on the fact that the contents are no more linked to a physical support but are free from distributions' issues; the second one is linked to the possibility to create and share own contents in an independent way compared to the traditional chain of value.

In the contest of web 2.0 several types of new services have developed, each of which makes possible different opportunities for users: expressive sites offer the possibility to create and share own contents ensuring the possibility to express oneself in autonomy and without obligations; collaborative sites create the opportunity to co-work with other users in order to reach a goal; at least, relational sites allow to present oneself and identify other users with whom establish a personal or work relation. This last type of sites has developed and involved users in an exponential way over the last years. From an operational viewpoint social networks represent a revolution based on three features: 1) the presence of a virtual space (forum) in which is possible build and "share" own profile; 2) the possibility to build a net of contacts to interact with; 3) every single knot of the net can spread other contacts and other relations' possibility.

These features make the social networks a collective space able to ensure the elaboration and the implementation of identitary and relational strategies, mutually conditioning, linked to strategies of others that "attend" social network and form the net of symbolical and experiential opportunities.

Generation 2.0: experience and identitary strategies

What has been said so far bring to an absolutely original definition of the social networks even from a psychosocial point of view (Riva 2010): they are communicative and expressive platforms that allow user to organize both his social net and his social identity. In the first case it's about organization's action, extension and comparison of contacts and relations; in the second one we are in front of the realization of defining strategies and description of own identity.

The spread and the interiorization of opportunities of web 2.0 and social networks brought to three radical changes that, which in turn, are changing digital natives' "practices", with important consequences upon action's strategies and contextualization of ourselves and our relationship with others.

According to Riva (2014) the first of these changes is linked to the users' role as opposed to means and contents available in it. The spectator moves from this role and from commentator to be a spectauthor and a commentauthor. Thanks to the reduction of complexity of productive process of medial contents, digital natives before being spectators are authors, so they are far from the passive spectator typical of the nine-hundred mass media.

Nowadays has developed the figure of spectator that creates and modifies contents depending on his needs of expression and of communication (Pulcini 2006). Social networks even create virtual spaces of participation, in which the user is even the author of opinions, argument's and sharing's note about information, but also contents shared by other persons that take part to interactions in the social network (Riva, Pettiti and Uggé 2007).

The second change is linked to the role and perception of the body in the communication and relations: the passage from real to virtual and from subject to object marks even, inevitably, the strategies of identitary elaboration are enriching by an atonal decontestualization of perception and experiences.

That emotional intelligence (Goleman 1995) based on empathy and physicality creates between two o more subjects that interact in the real dimension subjectively, with the use of opportunities from web 2.0, loses his roots to become a sensations' mosaic, often built *ad hoc*, to share and feel some emotions rather than others, in a changing kaleidoscope of perceive Id and that one transmitted and shared with others. The mediated communication disincarnates the subject that during the interaction gives a multiplicity images of

himself, not rarely de-contestualized and re-contestualized depending on the construction of contents that you want to share.

These processes have several consequences upon digital natives in the perception of individual and social self. First of all, as notes by Riva "the virtual body parts from the identity of subject and becomes a communicative and expressive tool that could be used in a strategic way to spread an exact image of self" (Riva 2014: 56-57). These new opportunities have a central role in the identity's development of digital native, infect, this corporeal re-elaboration has a function and a goal both communicative and expressive. It refers to a social need to reflect in the others; this contributes to build a social identity that passes even through the corporal dimension (Confalonieri and Grazzani Gavazzi 2005). The choice of avatar[2] is an integral part of this strategic process of corporeal virtual reconstruction. On the one hand the choice of own avatar is an individual process dialectical that reflects the tension between perceived identity and ideal identity. To the other hand, the possibility to change this image depending on the contests and speakers with whom he relates, allow digital native to adapt his social identity to different worlds in which he interacts (Villani *et al.* 2012).

Secondly, even who receives information and suggestions on single identity, it does in a fragmentary way and especially indirectly; Riva points out: "without objectivity of physical body, the receiving subjects can build the other's identity only in a indirect way, interpreting the messages and the images that he shares" (Riva 2014: 58).

Thirdly, "the virtual body separates itself from the subject and obtains autonomy and stability" (*Ivi*: 59). While in the face to face relations the construction of physical image is linked to a context temporally limited, which one that the native posts on his virtual account could be more lasting or even more evanescent depending on whether it becomes the avatar or the object of sharing, on which social networks have poor memory.

Finally, the subject can't no more use the body and relative expressive and communicative standards to understand others' emotions; this increases what has been defined emotional illiteracy (Goleman, 1995) that is the incapability to learn and understand own and others' emotions.

The third change generated by web 2.0 and social networks, in the experiential dimension of digital natives, is linked to the fusion – in terms of meanings and representations – between real world (off-line) and virtual world (on-line). This fusion involves even a new kind of intimacy in public with the

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[2] The avatar is the image used by the user of social network for represent himself within the virtual community.

boundaries' erosion between public and private. These elements spring from the particular nature of the space that digital natives live in an ever greater quantity and intensity. This is a virtual space, indeed, in which relations and contests are mixed up and they change in shared practices, and so public, actions and interactions defined private according to the rules of real life.

The progressive intensify of this boundaries' confusion creates an original space "interreality" that appears much more malleable and dynamic than the nets and the traditional social spaces, and it includes all daily experiences: digital and real, public and private.

In the particular environment of social networks, the mutual effects between real and virtual and between public and private are much more radical and evident that in the real world. They are linked to a great level of invasivity in the lives of others – real and virtual – and individuals can control it with difficulty. An example of this invasivity is the practice of tagging[3], by means of users of social networks can change in public the private sphere of others, without control from them, unless they're medium's experts.

Connected identities

Phycology, from Williams James, distinguished individuality – Self – in two components: Id that indicates the subject who acts and knows – Self seen inside the subject's mind; Me as product of Id's activity, aim of own and others' reflection – the Self seen from outside individuals' mind.

So far the media's influence has been examined upon the features of digital native's Id, acting on perceptions and emotions. At the same time, however, Self obtain an identity through a progressive adaptation of physical and social environment in which it stays. For this reason taking part in social networks has an effect not only on the experience but also on the identity.

Nicholas Carr, expanding McLuhan's considerations, affirms that:

> In the long term the content of a medium has much less importance of medium itself in conditioning our way to think and act. As a window on the world, and on ourselves, a popular medium shape what we see and how we see it, and in the course of time, if we use it enough, it changes what we are as individuals and society (Carr 2011: 17).

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[3] The practice of *tagging* (labelling) gives the opportunity to associate a "friend", without his will, to an image in which he is or to a text note refers to him.

The features of social networks enhance the implications of reiterate use of these medium during the time: they are at the same time windows on the world and on Self, relations' activators and shapers of collective identities. They ensure that identities of digital natives are increasingly the visible result of their connections and their on line productions.

The individual identity is increasingly connected and conditioned by social identities, which in turn, for digital natives, are the product of virtual relations and processes of multiple aggregations in different communities. The social identity can be described as "the part of self's concept of an individual resulting from the consciousness of belonging to a social group (or to social groups), and also the value and the emotive sense linked to his belonging" (Taifel 1981: 36). It's therefore evident that the social identity will never be defined in an exclusive and definitive way, especially if it's accomplished and continuously renegotiated in the light of relations and "connections" that realize and expand in the net and in the virtual spaces of social networks.

Before the beginning of media, social identities and the relative influences on the individual identities, the dimensions relative to relations and experiences were linked to a temporal and spatial contextualization. The development of Internet and his interface, made possible by web 2.0, allowed digital natives to build individual narrations that could became collective narrations with extreme facility, in witch others take part and built no more with a descriptive nature, but with a reactive and relational nature.

More specifically in digital media the subject can organize his identity in a strategically and typical way in order to give a certain image of himself. In the virtual world the digital native tries different ways of being, choosing his aspect – physical or emotional – to give prominence: the possibility to experiment is simplified by the absence of social and relational consequences in case that the image is not winning.

As Katelyn McKenna (2007) pointed out, young digital natives have familiarity with the explicit enunciation of opinions and emotions, as long as are shared in the virtual dimension: they are more willing to show their Self in the social networks because they're within a net of "friends" without a direct feedback of relations and there's no risk of disappointment or social penalty. Digital media offer the possibility to test different roles and identities: "the various expressions of identity that are online not only reflect the status of identity" as the sublet perceives, "but also give form to that identity, conditioning the perception […] about what others think" (Palfrey and Gasser 2009: 55).

At the same time, social networks allow to others users of the net to step easily on social identity of the individual. No wonder if Galimberti talks about "enunciative intersubjectivity" to underline how the subjectivity is not free

from interactive experience of the subjects: the others with their narrations and interactions may cause effects on the subjectivity of individuals.

Connected identities are such because they are the result both of voluntary interactions and of non verifiable effects of such interactions. As Galimberti and Cilento Ibarra underline:

> The image that the author gives of himself in the online interactions is not the only result of his individual choices, but it clarifies during the interaction with other/others. It has to be considered the result of a combined action, sensitive to the features of the surrounding in which it verifies (Galimberti and Cilento Ibarra 2007: 261).

This situation, if on the one hand can represent a resource to build such fluid and plural identities, on the other hand not rarely in the teenager creates insecurity linked to precariousness and to changeability, not always controllable from identitary strategies. The risk for digital natives is to replace the future and certainties with an eternal present without relationships and securities. According to Galimberti (2011) the identitary building through the virtual experience of social networks can involve, first of all, the incapability to take charge of oneself and own identity: the subjectivity becomes a shared and uncertain object difficult to replace in own identitary sphere in a responsible way. But the lack of responsibility can reveal towards the other too: not having a clear vision of himself, the subject is not totally able to answer for his actions and interactions, neither to evaluate the effects on the others.

Finally, digital natives' dependence from technology can't be undervalued: it represents paradoxically a source of certainty, a place in which you have an unimaginable power control in the daily real life. For this reason Sherry Turkle notes:

> Teenagers sleep with their cell phones onto […] Technology is part of them to such an extent that it has became as phantom limb […] All this make them clever in technology, but it implies a series of new insecurities. They take care of their friendships in the social networks but then they wonder if they're friends. They are connected to each other all day, but they're not sure having communicated (Turkle 2012: 23).

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Disadvantaged young people, family and the lack of big brothers.
An interview with Alessandro Cavalli

Edited by Andrea Pirni

Alessandro Cavalli is Emeritus Professor in Sociology at the University of Pavia. Member of the Committee for Economical, Statistic and Sociological Sciences of the CNR (The Italian National Council for Research, 1972-1975), member of the International Sociological Association's Executive Committee (1982-1986), Directeur d'études at the Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales of Paris (1980). Max Weber Gastprofessor at University of Heidielberg (1989). L. Lecreq Professor at the Université Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve (1994). Fellow of the Institute for Advanced Studies of the Budapest Collegium (1995). Member of the Directive Committee of the Encyclopedia of Social Science, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani (1984-1998). Director of the «Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia» (1978-1980) and of «il Mulino» (1994-2002). Editor-in-Chief of «Mundus. Rivista semestrale di didattica della storia». He has been President of the Scientific Council of the Iard Institute (Milan), Vice-President of the Italian Sociology Association. He is currently member of the Academia Europaea, non resident National member of the Accademia delle Scienze di Torino, corresponding associate of the Accademia dei Lincei. In 2010 he was awarded with the Antonio Feltrinelli prize by the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. He is the author of numerous publications in Italian, French, English and German and is member of the scientific committees of different Italian and foreign reviews.
Some of his publications on the condition of youth: Gioventù: condizione o processo?, in «Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia», XXX, I (1980); (with V. Cesareo, A. de Lillo, L. Ricolfi and G. Romagnoli) Giovani oggi. Indagine Iard sulla condizione giovanile in Italia (1984); (with A. Calabrò et al.) (ed.) Il tempo dei giovani (1985); (with A. de Lillo) Giovani anni 80. Secondo rapporto Iard sulla condizione giovanile in Italia (1988); (with A. de Lillo) (ed.) Giovani anni 90. Terzo rapporto Iard sulla condizione giovanile in Italia (1993); (with O. Galland) (ed.) Senza fretta di crescere. L'ingresso difficile nella vita adulta (1996); (with C. Buzzi and A. de Lillo) (ed.), Giovani verso il Duemila: Quarto rapporto Iard sulla condizione giovanile in Italia (1997); (with C. Buzzi and A. de Lillo) (ed.) Giovani del nuovo secolo: Quinto rapporto Iard sulla condizione giovanile in Italia (2002); (with C. Buzzi and A. de Lillo) (ed.) Rapporto giovani: Sesta indagine dell'Istituto Iard sulla condizione giovanile in Italia (2007); (with O. Galland and V. Cicchelli) Deux pays, deux jeunesses? La condition juvénile en France et en Italie (2008); (with C. Leccardi) (ed.) Le quattro stagioni della ricerca sociologica sui giovani, in «Quaderni di Sociologia», LVII (62), fascicolo speciale, Per capire la società che cambia: scritti in ricordo di Antonio de Lillo (2013).

Professor Cavalli, in the last decades there has been a large development of sociology of newer generations in Italy and in Europe: why has the interest in youth grown so much? Is it forecasting to study youth?

I do not believe that studying youth is forecasting. To better explain myself, if you want to make previsions you should not study them to understand how they will be once they are adults. Then why is it that we study youth now much more than we did in the past? The question surrounds not the object of the research, but he who studies: we live in times of great uncertainty, and in uncertain times one questions himself more. The growing interest towards youth, is in fact connected to the need of knowledge of a generation – of not only researchers – and, in general, of a society that undergoes rapid and unseen processes of change. We study youth looking for the directions of the transformations in act, as today they appear more obscure and uncertain then they did in days past.

The Italian sociology of young generations is, therefore, refining itself as a specific perspective study on the foundations of the growing uncertainty of contemporary society. Your studies have taken you in many countries, bringing you in touch with many research perspectives: which are the specificities of Italian sociology on the subject of youth compared to other positions in Europe?

The specificity is that those who have studied youth realized that in Italy, in particular, it consists of a particularly extended period of one's life; and it is this, in the end, that differentiates southern European countries from northern European ones: a prolonged extension of the juvenile phase that comes from a series of complicated and broader factors. At the beginning of the 80's we started asking ourselves why in Italy one lived for such a long time with his/her family. It is the attempt to answer this question that partially defines Italian sociology on youth. I remember for example that throughout our collaborations, Olivier Galland was very interested in this subject and in the reasons for which in Italy young people stay within their own families for such an extended time while in France and in other countries this phenomenon was noticed with a much more modest intensity.

It is at the beginning of the 80's that you wrote an article on the «Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia» in which you presented youth as a new social entity product of the industrial society: this new entity that resulted from the transformation of the structures of the educative system and many other factors, did not establish an actual group as there were no historical events significant enough to activate a collective emotion and it did not even represent a generation in the mannheimian sense of the term. Today the period of life that represents youth is very extended – also as a result of the typically Italian phenomenon just previously mentioned – and it is object, at times, of a stigmatization that takes place because of the delay younger people are showing at building their own families, at starting their own careers, and at political participation… in other words: in the development of typically adult roles. In this scenario – in which we must insert the economical crisis – do you believe in the possibility of the formation of a new generation that will exercise a significant role in social change?

Generations are always composite, never homogeneous; they have a common element, which is being exposed to one historic situation but with great internal differentiation in the reaction and in the perception of that same situation. As an example some cohorts form a generation, with reasons tied to a historical circumstance: those born from 1896 to 1899, males of that age have all been to war. War created an experience that uniformed youth from officer cadets to simple infantry; these are however absolutely unrepeatable situations. In this case you can say that young people created a generation. There was such a strong uniforming factor that it put the young college graduate and the illiterate farmer together. There hasn't been another situation like this. Mannheim reflected on youth movements of the beginning of the 20th century that were radically right wing on one side, radically left wing on the other, and were in strong opposition. It is quite possible that something similar might manifest itself soon, some of the conditions are already there. But they're not enough. You never know when a movement is going to be born and when one is going to die. Sometimes the conditions are there for it to be born, but it doesn't happen because it would depend on a series of unrepeatable constellations of factors that occurred at the same time in other phases. Furthermore, these movements have a strong contagious component, they are not tied to societies and national histories. It is possible that there are some situations on a global level that favour these dynamics. The Vietnam war, for example, was also important in Europe as it produced phenomenona of collective emotion. The same thing did not happen in 2001. 1989 was very important for eastern Europe, and generations are present there. And very vividly. I spend about a quarter of the year in Berlin and the differences are very clear between who group before, after, or during the events of 1989, generations are heavily marked by it, in a way that has not happened to us. There are dynamics that spread worldwide, especially in the industrialized world, related to the growth of education. This is a general phenomenon, maybe for us it is slightly feebler, even if the main element regarding the extension of the years related to youth is exactly this: a lengthening of school attendance.

It seems to me that a certain fracture is developing between Mediterranean Europe and Central-Northern Europe: young people are proof of this as, for instance, the youth unemployment rate carries a much heavier bearing in Italy and in other countries of Mediterranean Europe – such as Greece or Spain – than elsewhere, due to reasons strictly connected to the functioning or malfunctioning of the labour market. Youth unemployment rate at 40 and more % is an unknown phenomenon beyond the Alps. Now this is something that gravely affects the state in which young people find themselves. I agree with demographic researchers such as Alessandro Rosina, Massimo Livi Bacci, and economists like Tito Boeri, that have been recently affirm-

ing that there are a series of structural elements in these societies that hinder younger generations, delaying their entrance in adulthood, therefore holding them down in this long phase dominated by precariousness, by uncertainty, where they are disadvantaged by a series of other phenomenona. I do believe that young people in southern Europe are disadvantaged.

This disadvantage is then a structural phenomenon in Italy. What elements affect this phenomenon and how do they operate?

There is something that allows this disadvantage to take place: the fact that, for better or for worse, families are able to maintain this situation of minority. I believe this to be an Italian peculiarity. Redistribution of resources at a social level, in Italy, takes its place within the family; not through social mechanisms, but family ones, keeping youth in condition of inadequate independence. If redistribution takes place within the family, it clearly has an impact on ones independence. Many young people manage to hold up because their grand-parents have a good pension, because their parents have good pensions, something that would be inconceivable in Denmark. There are some 30-year-olds, if not older, that still don't know what they want to do with their lives. In some ways this is absolutely positive, in the sense that in a dynamic society you do not become an adult just to start waiting to grow old. From this point of view even adulthood has to acquire some elements of flexibility. The subject of flex-ible biography concerns the willingness to change the entire course of our life. This is certainly an important aspect of the juvenile phase, however in our society youth is kept in a situation of limited independence. Youth today, for the time being, seems incapable of producing change. They might be able to go back to the leading role in certain historical phases. I've asked myself if the Renzi-phenomenon or the Grillo-phenomenon might be read in this key. They are interesting phenomenona. The traditional electorate of the Partito Demo-cratico (Italian Democratic Party) has a higher age average than others, and probably so does Forza Italia's. It seems to me that among Renzi's and Grillo's electorate the average age is lowered. This could mean that the conditions are met for a new phase of youth protagonism. Just as we could not foresee what happened in 1968, it is possible that we are simply unable to predict these new forms of youth protagonism. Ours is a gerontocratic society and in a society of this kind it is possible for tensions between generations to grow strong enough to favour some movement. I wouldn't be surprised – and I'm not saying that it is foreseeable – if new youth movements developed in a society that has been so heavily gerontocratic for such a long time... not to talk about the universities.

Since the 80's Italian society has radically changed. Have its structures also changed? For instance, have the educational institutions – looking at the reforms of the past decade –

modified how they operate considering the changes in society and in new generations?

In some societies they have, in some others less. There are societies in which these implications are less fluid and find it more difficult to reconnect with the transformations of their student population: from this point of view I believe that in our country the forces holding back change in these institutions are, and have been, very strong. Our school has not changed very much. In spite of the various reforms. Having conducted numerous researches on teachers, it seems to me that the turnover in the population of teachers has been – righteously – halted. There had been a bubble in the 70's and 80's for which there was particularly extend quantity of teachers in the population. This blocked the turnover for at least ten years. In the next ten years there will be a great deal of teachers that will be leaving schools, and there will have to be a strong replacement. Today the Italian teaching body has the highest age average in Europe. This means that sooner or later some kind of turnover will have to take place. There is a great distance, even chronologically, between generations, and we are dealing with young people confronting themselves with adult figures where there are no older brothers. There are fathers and grandfathers but there is a lack of big brothers that carry out that important role of connection between the two. We are talking about school: but in almost all institutions in Italy there is a turnover problem. When we talk about gerontocracy it essentially means this. It is clearly noticeable within the teaching body. I believe this to be a specifically Italian situation, the phenomenon is very clear in universities, which have been carrying this "hump" since the 70's, when my generation arrived. This was a long-term feedback from 1968, because in '68 there was a great expansion of the student population and of the teaching staff of universities. Furthermore, such an expansion in a limited amount of time usually brings limited selectivity, so a little bit of everything flew into universities in those days. This "hump" is now moving forward and out but, because it will leave an emptiness, it risks creating another "hump", of smaller dimensions: these situations occur in institutions that don't have a physiological turnover. The generation of the 70's is exiting the universitarian teaching body and is leaving an emptiness that is not being filled yet, because in times like these, that suffer from the economical crisis, it seems convenient not to reinstate public positions. Following a drastic reduction, however, in the long run, it is possible to witness consistent new entries. So there are some privileged generations and some disadvantaged ones. I'm part of a generation that might have been the luckiest in Italy's history, since it's unification. I'm sorry to say this to you since you're younger, but I unfortunately believe that this generation, mine, will be a singularity in this country's history. We lived our childhood and teenage years in the post-war period, which was very tough, but filled with hope, emotions and strong idealistic tensions,

the economic development took place during a phase in which society as a whole was shifting, instigating tension and conflict. But also breeding great hopes of change. Especially privileged were those that entered educational institutions in the moment of their great expansion. I studied Economics. As soon as I graduated I received at least 20 job interview proposals. Currently a neo-graduate sends around 200 letters with his curriculum and nobody even answers. There is a striking difference. The generation to which I belong is, however, also the one that took office in most kind of institutions, not only the educational ones, and somehow did not favour the turnover. These situations do not reproduce themselves, they are exceptional historical conjunctions. This is also addressed to all those of my same age, who are complaining about how low their pensions are: they are low because they retired after working for 20 years but have been receiving a pension for 40. They subjectively don't perceive this as a privilege, but they are objectively privileged. They lived an exceptional phase of this country's history, for which later generations are paying the price. Societies that amass public debt, are societies that have later generations pay for their wealth. This is the real objective element of generational conflict. Another matter is if these become subjective and turn into real conflict, but the conflicts between generations are already there. However, they hardly also become conflicts on a subjective level.

What is it that intervenes to soften these conflicts? What dynamics, or which actors don't allow these to become conflicts on a subjective level, therefore on a group one?

Society's great institution for integration, the family. Generational conflicts also, and especially, happen inside of families. And conflict internal to the family is hard to accept. This happened for instance in Germany in the 60's. The study of German movements from the 60's and the 70's is interesting because it had a very strong political meaning in the opposition between sons and fathers that lived through and accepted Nazism: there, conflict manifested itself inside of families in a sometimes very painful way. I know some people my age that cut all relationships with their parents and left Germany because they could not bear to live in a society that was carrying such a weight on its shoulders. From some points of view it is a good thing that families reduce conflict: where institutions do not have a unifying function it is a good thing that there is something that keeps society together. And family certainly has this role. Where can we notice, above all, the strong points of family? It is where institutions are weak. The weakness of institutions strengthens primary relations. The strong point represented by the family shows itself in its ability to adapt, which is much stronger than that of institutions. It fundamentally represents a place where solidarity can emerge and some bonds are created that are stronger than others. This compensates for the weaker bonds with the institutions.

Under some points of view youth self-develops, young people develop their own identity but there is also a process of other-development, as it is others that contribute to the elaboration of that specific condition. Even teachers contribute. Could the generational turnover of teachers be the bearer of a different representation of youth and contribute to its modification?

I believe so; if we now allow people in their 30's to enter the schooling system, this will probably modify the way in which youth is represented. An average age of 50 within the teaching staff is too high; the introduction of 30-year-olds should definitely change something. There is also a parallel phenomenon which is rather negative: an excessive feminization of teaching staff in school. This is especially harmful for males that need to have valuable adult male figures and will have a hard time maturing if they do not find them. Gender mainstreaming remains very important. The feminization process in educational management is instead, in my opinion, rather positive. The fact that there are women in schools directing the institute, is an important thing, especially if it raises the autonomy of the school, I believe it improves scholastic life as women who decide to become head teachers are not usually frustrated teachers, but rather teachers that have accumulated a great deal of experience. Often, in the past, head teachers have been male teachers, wore out from teaching and therefore terrible managers. In this sense it is important that there has been a taking in consideration of a different gender perspective in the analysis of youth related to education, to healthcare and to politics; my generation struggled to focus on gender mainstreaming, while it is very important. It is extraordinarily difficult to keep the various aspects of the youth condition together and in fact, for instance in the Iard researches we tried to break up the object, but in the end there was always someone looking at politics – like Luca Ricolfi or Ilvo Diamanti – and the specificities re-emerged: we tried to keep them together but were not always able to.

The Iard researches represent a very important asset for Italian sociology of young generations. You have given life to and coordinated the Iard researches, and with you Antonio de Lillo to whom this issue of «SocietàMutamentoPolitica» is dedicated.

Antonio and I have walked a long path together. I have to say that we complemented ourselves very well, he had a vastly superior methodological education than mine, as my background is mainly historic-economical. He instead had a more lazarsfeldian education with Vittorio Capecchi. We complemented ourselves very well because we had different proficiencies. Collaborations also work well because you encounter different kinds of personalities that allow you to work well together. Expertise is not enough, you need different aspects of personalities, and our personalities, however different, completed each others well.

For instance in what?

When differences emerged, the way in which one would discuss to try and convince the other; at times it was him convincing me and at times it was me convincing him. Antonio, I recall, came to Iard while I was working on a project directed by a psychologist, Professor Ornella Andreani of the university of Pavia, on social class, intelligence and personality, research for which I especially curated the sociographic aspect. At a certain point Professor Andreani asked me if I knew a good statistician because there was a ton of data to elaborate. So I then asked Vittorio Capecchi who was a classmate of mine at Bocconi University – Vittorio is also from Bocconi –. Vittorio told me: "Yes, there is Antonio de Lillo, trust him he's very good". So he also joined Iard and we worked together from the end of the 60's until when he passed away. For 40 years. And I must say it was a great team. We were a truly tight-knit couple and we were very close. When we had different ideas comparing them was really a way of growing instead of arguing. Antonio truly passed away to soon.

Your experience with Iard was structural for the deliberation on youth condition, the lack of this type of systematic work is mow very noticeable. What elements should be proposed again? Which job coordinates should be taken from the Iard experience?

I hope that these kind of things are reproducible, although I understand that it is not easy. Iard was very peculiar. It came from the Rotary Club, to help talented young people that lacked economic resources. A sort of philanthropic endeavour. And with time it transformed itself. The element of continuity was its president, Franco Brambilla, that truly gave life to it. He came from the Pirelli world, he was part Milano's middle class, very tied to the industry, not finance, but industry, not to fashion but factories; it was an enlightened middle class, well aware that its privileges were also responsibilities and duties. An ethic of this particular part of Milan's middle class that was subsequently lost with what came after, berlusconism, a fraction that did not culturally belong to this type of middle class. Iard was born and grew because this person was trying to create the right conditions to make socially useful actions. You can well imagine that from a researcher's point of view working in a place where somebody is trying to find the resources that allow you to do your research means finding yourself in the best possible environment. When I told you that mine was a lucky generation: I had a lot of luck! And with Antonio we worked very much at this endeavor: it wasn't too easy because, for instance, we had to slightly reduce the importance of educators and psychologists that were initially very prominent in Iard. This brought some animosity towards us. But without this enlightened entrepreneur there wouldn't have been any Iard; Antonio and I contributed to its success because he was there, without him we

couldn't have done anything. And having a favourable situation allowed us to reach many goals; for instance, it allowed me to work within Iard – but also outside of it – with the same research team for at least ten years.

In closing, what suggestions could you share with those who wish to start pursuing sociological studies on new generations?

Disciplinary specialization is essential, it has very high costs and this unfortunately brings grist to the mill of those who believe that novelists better understand the society of which they write about rather than social sciences. The issue is how to sum this up. And this depends very much on ones education. I believe that more your education is wide and diversified the better it allows you to have a wider view. My argument toward young sociologists is that they are too hyperspecialized from the start. They know too little of the related disciplines and regarding sociology they know everything concerning their problem but they don't read the fundamental classics, my generation was shaped on the classics. This is also a sign of crisis within the discipline. This also explains why many conscious mind are looking at philosophy. Maybe because they find readier answers and not fragmented visions. For a good sociological research you have to be willing to "get your hands dirty". The challenge that youth sociology faces is the specialization of generalists.

Thank you, Professor.

Looking for new ways of bringing different dimensions of lives together.
An interview with Andy Furlong

Edited by Andrea Pirni

Andy Furlong is Professor of Social Inclusion and Education (Robert Owen Centre) and Dean of Research (Social Sciences College Senior Management) at the University of Glasgow. His research interests revolve around the experiences of young people in education and their transitions from education to employment. From a sociological perspective, his research has focused on patterns of educational participation and forms of engagement, educational and occupational aspirations, higher education, informal education and training. He has held visiting positions at Deakin, Melbourne, Monash and Newcastle in Australia, and held an Invitation Fellowship from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. He is an advisor to the Japanese Youth Cohort Survey team. He has worked with a wide range of government and international organisations including the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the Luxembourg Ministry of Youth, the International Trades Union Confederation, the Japanese Institute for Labour Policy and Training, the Japanese Ministry of Education, the Secretariat General of Youth for Catalonia. He is Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, member of the Japanese Sociological Association, member of the ESRC Methods and Infrastructure Committee. He is Managing Editor and founder of «Journal of Youth Studies», member of Editorial Board of «British Journal of Sociology of Education», «Journal of Longitudinal and Life Course Studies» and Editorial Advisor of «International Social Science Journal» (Issue 164, 2000).
Among his most recent books about youth's condition: Youth Studies. An introduction (2013); (ed.) Handbook of Youth and Young Adulthood. New perspectives and agendas (2009); (with D. Woodman) Youth and Young Adulthood: Critical Concepts in Sociology (2009); Higher Education and Social Justice (2009); (with F. Cartmel) Young People and Social Change: New Perspectives (2007); (with F. Cartmel) Graduates from Disadvantaged Families: Early Labour Market Experiences (2005); (with B. Stalder and A. Azzopardi) Vulnerable Youth: Perspectives on Vulnerability in Education, Employment and Leisure (2000); (with F. Cartmel) Young People and Social Change: Individualization and Risk in Late Modernity (1997).

Youth is a social phenomenon, typical of contemporary societies. Western modernity has socially produced youth as an incubation phase of the adulthood and as an acquisition phase of the latent model of modern society. Since a few decades, we have been witnessing the extension of the youth condition; in some societies, such as the Italian one, with greater intensity than other societies, such as the north European ones. Some concepts stated in the literature – as "post-adolescence", "young adulthood", "emerging adulthood"

— support this trend by showing how youth is increasingly hybrid due to factors connected with adolescence and adulthood. This has gradually involved cohorts born since the '60s. We can assume, among others, two explanations. Both are related to the deep change that took place in European societies in the decades after World War II, particularly from the late '60s until the '90s. On the macro-social level. European societies have adopted a strong and defined structure, significantly strengthening the trends that had manifested themselves in the meantime including urbanization, scholarization, standardization of employment. This configuration has become institutionalized over time and policies have worked to reproduce it. Social change and systemic factors, active at different levels, make this model less sustainable today stimulating its transformation. However, there is not a new model. Therefore, the phase of the life-cycle in which it should establish a new social structure extends. In short, the theories of reflexive modernization show how the (post)modern societies are changing without a specific project: is the extension of youth an endogenous phenomenon capable of selecting a new elite who can propose a new project? On the meso-social level. The older generations who planned the society we live in belong to the cohorts born in the '40s and early '60s: they have experienced a transition to "intense" and "short" adulthood, in a relatively fast time. Overall, these cohorts shape a large generation who has profoundly outlined our society. For a long time — often even today — this generation has formally or informally occupied leading roles in political, economic, cultural spheres. Has this dynamic stimulated the extension of youth? A dominant generation — a gerontocratic society — tends to extend the transition to adulthood to postpone generational replacement? In summary: can we study change in youth through a perspective that considers the distribution of power between the generations? Can this be an explanation for the differences between northern and southern European societies? Does the progressive aging of the population, as a demographic phenomenon, support these interpretations?

Among scholars from different disciplines who study youth, there is fairly widespread agreement about key trends, especially the protraction of the youth phase of the lifecourse. This has led to the introduction of new terminologies to refer to a period of life that falls between that traditionally regarded as (dependent) youth and (independent) adulthood; variously described as young adulthood, emerging adulthood and post-adolescence. Clearly, as Arnett points out, there are significant differences between a young person of 13 or 14, still at school and living with their parents, as someone in their late 20s who may also be in full-time education and living in the parental home. However, these terms are not neutral and are built on contrasting theoretical models. Specifically, post-adolescence and emerging adulthood are based on a staged model of development that remains common in psychology and which maintains that in the post-adolescent stage significant physiological differences can be identified between "young" and "mature" adults (e.g. views about the state of development of young people's brain and its implications for assessing risk). In contrast, the term young adulthood is more in tune with

sociological ways of thinking and recognises the contested and socially constructed nature of this part of the lifecourse.

As young adulthood blends seamlessly into youth and adulthood, it can be frustrating for researchers who cannot identify clear start and end-points. Nevertheless, the contested nature of the concept promotes the recognition of the politics that underpin the protraction of the youth phase. Here we must recognise that the institutionalised protraction of the youth phase weakens young people as social actors and helps promote their exploitation by the baby boomers. Young people have seen their relative wage rates decline (in some countries, such as the UK, differentials are underpinned by legislation) while increases in house prices relative to wages block the road to independence. Qualification inflation and increased competition among young people for quality jobs promotes protracted educational participation, despite evidence of poor returns for graduates who are faced with a growth of opportunities at the lower end of the labour market in insecure forms of employment. Against this backdrop, the political voice of the baby boomers ensure that threats to their standard of living are repelled while austerity measures are disproportionally shouldered by the young.

If we recognise a fundamental conflict of interest between young people and the ruling generation, we begin to recognise generational conflict as a potential motor of change: as highlighted in classic works by commentators such as Feuer and Mannheim. In this vein we can see examples of the rise of youth-driven political movements in a number of European countries, stimulated by the inequitable burdens of austerity packages. On the other hand, it is also important to be aware of the extent to which the process of individualisation weakens the political resolve of young people many of whom engage in a process of self-blame rather than identifying systemic failings.

In sum, the recognition of power differentials between generations allows us to take a fresh perspective on processes of social, change, although north-south differences in Europe are more a question of degree.

Youth Studies seem to proceed along two lines that rarely meet. On the one hand, there are scholars who work about the conceptualization of the youth phase and, on the other hand, scholars who are concerned with the behavior of young people in specific fields, from politics to employment, from deviance to lifestyles. A very patchy scenario comes out. You have made the first real effort to systematize these studies: can you see some interpretation lines able to combine these two trends and / or able to effectively combine these different fields?

While it is true that there has been a long-standing division between what we may refer to as "cultural" and "transition" perspectives on youth, the very best research has always involved an approach that merged the two perspectives. Indeed, I argue that if we are to address "big" social science questions

through the study of young people, then we have to understand macro-level drivers as well as the micro-level processes which drive social change and reproduction.

What are some of the similarities between young Europeans and young Americans or young people of other countries? What are, on the contrary, the differences? Is there a European youth? If so, through which phenomena is the European youth delineating?

The similarities between young people in countries across the global north are far greater than the differences. Certainly processes of economic and social change are further advanced in some countries than others, but the trajectories are similar. For example, young people in Japan experienced a process of restructuring following a major recession two decades ago: this led to the growth of precarious work forms in the 1990s that we are seeing in Europe now following our more recent recession. In the US, job insecurity has also been evident for some time, but driven more by politics than by economics.

How can the growing convergence of educational systems in Europe influence the social construction of the European youth?

Educational convergence is a political response to a set of common conditions. As such, we can expect to see increasing commonalities in European youth, although it is important to recognise that education-employment linkages vary in strength and are affected by policies relating to both spheres. In Germany, Austria and Switzerland these linkages are highly regulated, resulting in lower rates of youth unemployment but at the same time restricting the potential for social mobility.

The axis defined by the economic dependence-autonomy has qualified for a long time the studies about young people, becoming almost a paradigm: are there other heuristically fertile paradigms able to replace it?

It is difficult to conceptualise the youth phase without recourse to debates about dependence and independence. At the same time, we must recognise a blurring of the lines between dependence and independence. Young people may rely on intergenerational resource transfers long after entering employment and in a context where job insecurity has become endemic, some form of dependence, be it on the family or on the state, may be lifelong.

Is there a conflict in Europe today among the younger generation and the older generation? In what forms does it occur?

Conflict between generations is increasing and is likely to intensify as young people begin to recognise the extent to which generational exploitation

has become entrenched. In many European countries "unfunded" approaches to the provision of pensions, under which the current generation of workers pays for those currently retired, mean that young people in poorly paid and insecure jobs who are struggling to get by will be paying for the pensions of a generation who are far more affluent then themselves. Moreover, with older people being more likely to vote, politicians tend to protect the benefits of a generation who are active politically while showing less concern for a generation who are less involved with the formal political process.

Youth has big differences within itself and is very multifaceted: which are the main cleavages?
The differences among young that are most significant are largely the same as among older generations: social class, gender, colour, place of residence and social capitals, none of which show signs of weakening. However, with an increased importance on education and labour market insecurity, the ability and willingness of a family to transfer resources from older to young members is becoming increasingly significant. For example, wealthier parents may pay for postgraduate courses and may subsidise young people undertaking unpaid internships in order to build up experience in forms of employment where competition is high, such as the media, banking and politics.

Are today's young Europeans actors of social change? In what fields are they more innovative and carriers of change?
Young people are often reluctant actors of change. In other words they are forced to react to changing circumstances and have to be creative in the ways they imagine and build careers and manage lives. Here, as Woodman has shown, young people have to explore new ways of bringing different dimensions of their lives together, managing complex, fragmented, work schedules with the conflicting schedules of friends and family.

What lines of research should we follow in order to overcome an interpretative impasse of the sociology of youth in relation to study social change? Which are the most interesting results that emerge from comparative research? How can empirical research into young people be done?
I am not convinced that we have reached an interpretive impasse with regards to the study of social change, although I do think there is a tendency to exaggerate change and underplay continuities. There is a need to develop a more rounded understanding of change that applies in comparative contexts; an understanding that has not been helped by the top-down approach to research agendas developed by the European Commission. Large projects incorporating ten or more countries tend to get overwhelmed by detail

and can easily lose sight of the bigger issues. Modern research agendas are most effective when they combine quantitative and qualitative approaches and where they more easily across the "false binary" of transition and cultural approaches.

Thank you, Andy.

Fundamentalists toward democracy?
Empirical analysis of fundamentalist attitudes and democratic attitudes in the Middle East

Kazem Hajizadeh

Huntington asks an important question in The Third Wave: if traditional Islamic values and beliefs have significantly retarded democratic progress in the past, to what extent are they likely to continue to do so in the future? Unlike Huntington's work, this paper is primarily a micro-level analysis. It seeks to show how Muslim people interpret and evaluate Islam and democracy. So we want to attach more data to Huntington's theory and wish to demonstrate that non-democratic political space and authoritarian governments in Muslim countries can't be explained by the features of Islam; there are considerable reasons and facts to convince scholars to look for other factors. The results illustrate nearly all Muslims tend to Islam and democracy at the same time. It seems Large populations of moderate fundamentalists in Muslim countries are appearing who struggle to actualize Islamic teachings in a democratic political model.

Outline of problem

Huntington's *The Third Wave* makes a great contribution to macro-level political sociology. It also includes many implications for scholars who are interested in contemporary religious movements. In chapter six, he argues that there are some cultural obstacles to Democratization as well as economic and political ones.

A less restrictive version of the cultural obstacle argument is not that only one culture is peculiarly to democracy but that one or more cultures are peculiarly hostile to it. The two cultures most often cited are Confucianism and Islam. In this regard, Huntington asks three questions:

1) To what extent are traditional Confucian and Islamic values and beliefs hostile to democracy?

2) If they are, to what extent have these cultures in fact hampered progress toward democracy?

3) If they have significantly retarded democratic progress in the past, to what extent are they likely to continue to do so in the future? (Huntington 1991a: 300).

In one hand, Huntington argues – based on Ernest Gellner's work – that the high culture form of Islam is endowed with a number of features – unitarianism, a rule-ethic, individualism, scripturalism, puritanism, an egalitarian aversion to mediation and hierarchy, a fairly small load of magic – that are congruent, presumably, with requirements of modernity or modernization. They are also generally congruent with the requirements of democracy. On the other hand, he believes that fundamentalist Muslims demand a country's sovereignty be in the hands of pious Muslims; that Shari'a be the law; and clergy have a decisive vote in policy-making. Finally, He points to two main solutions to cultural obstacle:

1) Great cultural traditions like Islam and Confucianism are highly complex bodies of ideas, beliefs, doctrines, assumptions, and behavior patterns. Any major culture, including Confucianism, has some elements that are compatible with democracy, just as both Protestantism and Catholicism have elements that are clearly undemocratic.

2) Cultures historically are dynamic, not stagnant. The dominant beliefs and attitudes in a society change. While maintaining elements of continuity, the prevailing culture of a society in one generation may differ significantly from what it was one or two generations earlier. (Huntington 1991b: 28, 30).

This paper is focused on the second and the third questions. Unlike Huntington's work, it is primarily a micro-level analysis. It seeks to show how Muslim people interpret and evaluate Islam and democracy. So we want to attach more data to Huntington's theory and wish to take a step further.

What is fundamentalism? Who are fundamentalists? Historically, Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780-855) and Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328) were the first fundamentalists and today Sunni Muslims consider them as the two prime fundamentalists. Ibn Hanbal, though a renowned scholar and theologian, was mostly famous for his collections of the Traditions and his emphasis upon the Qur'an and the hadith as the primary sources of legal knowledge. Consequently, Hanbali juristic doctrine has a strong traditionalist and conservative character. Inevitably, he was compelled to defend himself against the teachings of the Mu'tazilites during the mihna and he adopted what one would expect on such issues: a Traditionist approach which states that one should look to the primary sources of the Qu'ran and the hadith and accept what is written without interpretation or further discussion. The Hanbali law school currently dominates Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, and has a limited following in Syria and Iraq. Among the most prominent adherents of Hanbali doctrine were Ibn Taymiyya and, more recently, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1792) whose alliance with Ibn Saud, ancestor of the founders of Saudi Arabia, resulted in the Hanbali school becoming the official doctrine in that country (Jackson 2006: 45-47).

There is also Shi'i fundamentalism. Imam Khomeini (1902-1989) and Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir Sadr (1935-1980) are the contemporary figures who led Iranians and Iraqis toward Islamic revival.

> Shi'i fundamentalism can be distinguished by following characteristics:
> - Believing in Islam as a total way of life even during the Occultation of the Imam.
> - Paying great attention to Islamic social and political philosophy and jurisprudence.
> - Insisting on the necessity of establishing a religious government in the absence of the Imam.
> - Believing in the unity of state and religion during the Occultation period.
> - Emphasizing on the responsibility of Muslims to take preliminary steps toward the promised global just government of Imam Mahdi (Hashemi-Najafabadi 2010: 193-194).

Savage thinks that

> there is an armored structure to fundamentalisms: they are hierarchical – in regard to gender and religious leaders –, centrally organized – around an authority belief –, clearly demarcated against outsiders, and goal-driven towards a sacred past or future. What can be said of these varied fundamentalisms is that fundamentalism is not one "thing", but rather it is the shape that religion takes when it is under threat (Savage, 2011: 133).

Most of Muslim countries were once the colonies of Western countries. Algeria became independent from France in 1962; Djibouti from France in 1977, Gambia from UK in 1965, Mali from France in 1960, Niger from France in 1960, Senegal from France in 1960, Sierra Leone from UK in 1961, Sudan from Egypt and UK in 1956, and so on. Colonialism threatened both economic and cultural assets. Religion "has been an important source of identity, which has been especially important in the context of the struggle against colonialism" (Fox 2008: 30).

Fundamentalism is rising as an antithesis of globalizing modernity and secularity (Ercins 2009; Vorster 2007). It's growing especially in Muslim countries. 88 percent of people in Saudi Arabia and 71 percent of Algerians agree that only the laws of the Shari'a should be implemented. In Turkey 68 percent believe that religious leaders should influence the government. 95 percent of Pakistanians and 75 percent of Iranians believe that politicians who do not believe in God are unfit for public office. In Iraq 78 percent and in Egypt 60 percent believe that churches give answers to social problems.

In recent decades fundamentalists have been acquiring power in Muslim countries and religious state is the first goal of Islamic fundamentalism (Abukhalil 1997; Esposito 1998).

It is fair to say that Muslims generally believe in the holistic nature of Islam. As an instrument for understanding life, Islam is often considered to be something more than a mere religion. In particular, Islam does not recognize the separation between the spiritual and the temporal – although the two domains can be distinguished –. On the contrary, Islam offers an ethical guide for all aspects of life.

Some view Islamic fundamentalism as a school essentially associated with Radicalism and violence. From a particular approach, every religion relies on some major fundaments which vitalize them through the human history. Consequently, if a certain religion was in a dangerous situation and felt invading external entities, it would defend itself- perhaps in a violent manner – and purify itself – perhaps in an isolation form. Islamic fundamentalists utilizing violence are a small population compared to the large population of Muslim people – not affiliated to radical groups – who have moderate attitude to fundamentalism.

Moghaddam, drawing broadly from a variety of psychological constructs, developed the "staircase to Terrorism" as a metaphor for the process of violent radicalization. The "staircase" narrows as it ascends from the ground floor and through five successive levels. There are six floors:

According to figure 1, people begin with a desire to alleviate adversity and improve their situation. After Unsuccessful attempts and climbing the floors, some of those sympathizers eventually join an extremist group, organization, or movement that advocates for, and perhaps engages in, terrorist violence. At the top or final level among those who have joined are those who overcome any barriers to action and actually commit a terrorist act. Violent radicalization and engagement in terrorism is best viewed as a unique and dynamic psychosocial process in which only a small number of individuals with a special social space would engage (Borum 2011).

Consequently, we study all Muslim people and concentrate on those who are more fundamentalist. From our viewpoint, two major components constitute Islamic fundamentalism: Islamic social system in which Islamic law – based on Quran and Sunnah – is implemented; and Islamic government which is responsible for providing appropriate conditions. Other fundamentalist characteristics – such as different roles of men and women – can be derived from these two elements.

Fundamentalism grew fast at the end of the twentieth century as a response to the crises emerging in Muslim countries. A huge population of Muslims joint Islamic movements. They believed that the solution to our political pro-

Figure 1: *Staircase to Terrorism*
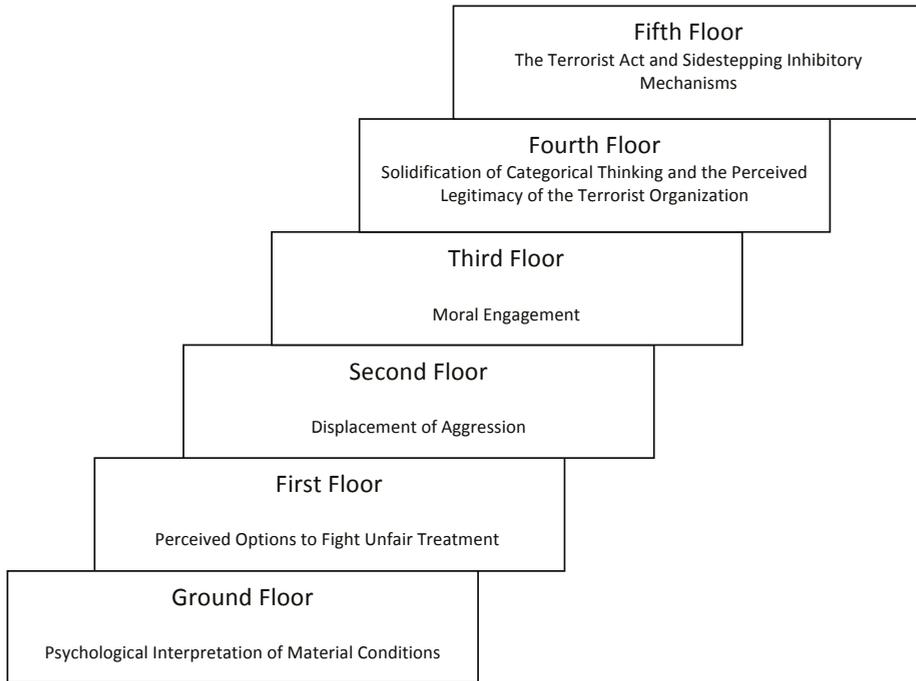
blems today was the return to the social and political values indicated in Islam (Dekmejian, 1985).

Method

The Carnegie Middle East Governance and Islam Dataset (1988-2010) includes both individual-level and country-level variables. Data on individual-level variables are drawn from 34 surveys carried out in 12 Arab countries, Turkey, and Iran. Taken together, a total of 54,894 men and women were surveyed. Almost all of the surveys involved face-to-face interviews. Most of the surveys were carried out either as the first wave of the Arab Barometer, the third, fourth, and fifth waves of the World Values Survey, or a project on attitudes related to governance carried out by Mark Tessler with funding from the National Science Foundation. Table 1 shows the details of all surveys.

All of the surveys contain a large number of relevant questions, and the Carnegie Data Set thus includes almost 200 individual level variables pertaining to politically relevant attitudes, values and behavior. There are also many individual-level variables pertaining to the personal attributes of respondents, such as age, sex and educational level.

Table 1: *List of Surveys*

Country	Year	N		Country	Year	N
Early Surveys				**Arab Barometer 1st Wave**		
Egypt	1988	292		Jordan	2006	1.143
Kuwait	1988	300		Palestine	2006	1.270
Palestine	1995	2.368		Algeria	2006	1.300
Palestine	1999	1.200		Morocco	2006	1.277
				Lebanon	2007	1.200
World Values Survey 3rd Wave				Yemen	2007	717
Egypt	2000	3.000		Jordan	2008	967
Iran	2000	2.532		Palestine	2008	3.430
Turkey	2001	4.607		Bahrain	2009	500
Jordan	2001	1.223				
Morocco	2001	2.264		**World Values Survey 4th and 5th Waves**		
Algeria	2002	1.282		Saudi Arabia	2003	1.502
				Iraq	2004	2.325
Tessler National Science Foundation				Iran	2005	2.667
Jordan	2003	1.000		Iraq	2006	2.701
Palestine	2003	1.320		Jordan	2007	1.200
Algeria	2004	1.446		Morocco	2007	1.200
Morocco	2005	1.083		Egypt	2008	3.051
Kuwait	2005	750		Turkey	2007	1.346
Yemen	2006	1.440		Qatar	2010	1.060

Source: The Carnegie Middle East Governance and Islam Dataset (1988-2010), ICPSR 32302.

The inclusion in the Carnegie Data Set of time-specific country-level variables is designed to permit and encourage two-level analyses that investigate relationships between the orientations of ordinary citizens and the characteristics of the countries and time periods in which these men and women are located.

This article analyses three categories: the items which indicate fundamentalism; the items which indicate democratic attitudes; and the indica-

tors which include both fundamentalism and democracy. The indicators are as below:

Fundamentalism
- Government should implement only the laws of the Shari'a.
- Religious practice is a private matter and should be separated from socio-political life.
- It would be better for [country] if more people with strong religious beliefs held public office.

Democracy
- In a democracy, the economy runs badly.
- Democracies are not good at maintaining order.
- Democracy may have its problems but is better than any other form of government.

Fundamentalism and Democracy
- Democracy is a Western form of government that is not compatible with Islam.
- Government and parliament should make laws according to the wishes of the people in some areas and implement Shari'a in others.

In the next part, first, all of eight indicators are statistically described; and second, six items constituting two indices – F Index and D Index[1] – make a crosstab which offers an abstract picture. It helps us to sum up all the information; go from specific details to general beings and becomings and make a conclusion.

Results

Table 2 points to the importance of making laws exactly based on the Shari'a from Muslims' view. People of Palestine have been located between "important" and "somewhat important" on the scale with a brief change since 1999. Jordan and Algeria revolve "important" in a slightly wavy manner. Morocco moves from "somewhat important" to "important". Kuwait and Iraq take the inverse direction. Yemen and Egypt move toward "very important". Saudi Arabia is the only one getting "very important" and Lebanon is the only one standing on "not important". Bahrain in 2009 is very similar to Kuwait in 1988 and Jordan in 2003.

Mean of this indicator in the period (1988-2009) is 2.32. Overall, Muslims evaluate this item as "important".

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[1] F Index (FI) and D Index (DI) represent Fundamentalist attitudes and Democratic attitudes respectively.

Table 2: *Government should implement only the laws of the Shari'a (1= very important, 2= important, 3= somewhat important, 4= not important, 5= not important at all)*

Country	Means on timeline			
Palestine	1999 (2.52)	2003 (2.45)	2006 (2.71)	2008 (2.98)
Jordan	2001 (1.73)	2003 (2.28)	2006 (1.92)	
Algeria	2002 (2.10)	2004 (2.38)	2006 (1.78)	
Morocco	2005 (2.69)	2006 (1.70)		
Kuwait	1988 (2.28)	2005 (3.09)		
Yemen	2006 (2.36)	2007 (1.60)		
Iraq	2004 (2.42)	2006 (2.68)		
Egypt	1988 (2.32)	2000 (1.80)		
Saudi Arabia	2003 (1.49)			
Bahrain	2009 (2.29)			
Lebanon	2007 (3.84)			

Fundamentalists believe that Islam and socio-political life are interlocked and Muslims should actualize Islamic teachings in their society. This item shows a polarized situation in Palestine, Jordan, Algeria (2004), Morocco (2006), Kuwait (2005), Yemen and Bahrain. This situation changes in favor of fundamentalism in Palestine, Jordan, Algeria and Morocco. In Palestine (1995), Morocco (2005) and Lebanon, fundamentalists are absolutely minor leagues.

Egyptians nearly strongly agree with this item. Bahrain, Kuwait and Lebanon stand on "disagree". Yemen moves toward disagree but there is a 0.75 distance yet. Jordan, Algeria, Morocco and Palestine change in favor of fundamentalist attitudes. Iraq takes the way to "neither agree nor disagree". Turkey is located between 2 and 3 with no variation. Overall, 26 percent of Muslims strongly agree and 33 percent agree with the item; Thus, 59 percent think that people with strong religious beliefs should hold public office.

People of Jordan in 2001, 2003 and 2006 disagree and in 2007 strongly disagree with the statement. Morocco goes beyond "disagree" in 2006 and continues in the same way. Algeria is almost constant. Yemen and Palestine change against democracy. On the contrary, Iran, Turkey[2] and Egypt mo-

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[2] Yavuz argues that In Turkey, Islamic bourgeois grew fast as a result of evolving public space and making democratic policies in the market in 1980s (Yavuz 2009).

Table 3: *Religious practice is a private matter and should be separated from socio-political life (1= Agree, 2= Neither agree nor disagree, 3= Disagree)*

Country	Modes on timeline				
Palestine	Agree (68%) 1995	Disagree (58%) 1999	Disagree (57%) 2003	Disagree (53%) 2006	Disagree (58%) 2008
Jordan	Agree (52%) 2003	Agree (58%) 2006	Disagree (59%) 2008		
Algeria	Disagree (57%) 2004	Disagree (64%) 2006			
Morocco	Agree (71%) 2005	Agree (51%) 2006			
Kuwait	Neither agree nor disagree (63%) 1988	Agree (56%) 2005			
Yemen	Disagree (58%) 2006	Disagree (52%) 2007			
Egypt	Neither agree nor disagree (47%) 1988				
Bahrain	Agree (57%) 2009				
Lebanon	Agree (78%) 2007				

ves toward "strongly disagree" quickly. Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Lebanon and Bahrain score 3 without exception. Positive attitude to democracy is clear. 43 percent of all Muslims disagree and 32 percent strongly disagree with this item. There is a minority having a negative image of democracy.

Rounded figures point to 3; in other words all Muslims disagree with the item. Morocco (2006), Egypt and Kuwait are the top three. The result is wonderful. In 2000s, Muslims, without exception, believe that democracy as a form of political system manages to maintain social order.

Table 4: *It would be better for [country] if more people with strong religious beliefs held public office (1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4= disagree, 5= strongly disagree)*

Country	Means on timeline			
Jordan	2001 (2.28)	2003 (2.88)	2006 (2.93)	2007 (2.24)
Algeria	2002 (2.80)	2004 (2.31)	2006 (2.78)	
Morocco	2001 (2.49)	2006 (2.41)	2007 (2.24)	
Palestine	2003 (2.87)	2006 (2.65)		
Yemen	2006 (3.09)	2007 (3.25)		
Iraq	2004 (2.52)	2006 (2.90)		
Turkey	2001 (2.60)	2007 (2.60)		
Egypt	2000 (1.62)			
Iran	2005 (2.15)			
Bahrain	2009 (3.59)			
Kuwait	2005 (3.59)			
Lebanon	2007 (4.04)			

Table 5: *In a democracy, the economy runs badly (1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= disagree, 4= strongly disagree)*

Country	Means on timeline			
Jordan	2001 (2.88)	2003 (2.85)	2006 (2.65)	2007 (3.66)
Morocco	2001 (2.71)	2005 (2.74)	2006 (3.29)	2007 (3.35)
Algeria	2002 (2.74)	2004 (2.75)	2006 (2.66)	
Yemen	2006 (2.71)	2007 (2.57)		
Iran	2000 (2.85)	2005 (3.34)		
Turkey	2001 (2.77)	2007 (3.48)		
Egypt	2000 (3.03)	2006 (3.63)		
Palestine	2003 (2.87)	2006 (2.63)		
Iraq	2004 (2.88)			
Saudi Arabia	2003 (2.73)			
Kuwait	2005 (2.87)			
Lebanon	2007 (2.88)			
Bahrain	2009 (2.81)			

Table 6: *Democracies are not good at maintaining order (1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= disagree, 4= strongly disagree)*

Country	Means on timeline		
Jordan	2001 (2.89)	2003 (2.77)	2006 (2.68)
Algeria	2002 (2.74)	2004 (2.70)	2006 (2.59)
Morocco	2001 (2.60)	2005 (2.71)	2006 (3.27)
Yemen	2006 (2.86)	2007 (2.72)	
Palestine	2003 (2.78)	2006 (2.58)	
Iraq	2004 (2.72)		
Egypt	2000 (3.01)		
Saudi Arabia	2003 (2.64)		
Iran	2000 (2.83)		
Turkey	2001 (2.71)		
Bahrain	2009 (2.80)		
Kuwait	2005 (2.91)		
Lebanon	2007 (2.84)		

This item best represents democratic attitudes. Similarly, rounded figures point to 1 or 2. People of Morocco (2001) and Egypt strongly agree and others agree with the statement. Tables 5, 6 and 7 confirm one another. They carry a clear message: Muslims tend to democracy as a form of government and there is a consensus among them.

Table 8 and 9 are different from the previous ones. In table 8, there is an item defining democracy as a system opposing Islam. On the contrary, the next item brings Islam and democracy together.

Jordan, Palestine, Algeria and Morocco move toward "disagree". People of Kuwait, Lebanon and Bahrain disagree with the item. Yemen is located near 3 on the scale. Lebanon, Morocco (2006) and Bahrain express the most disagreement. More than 65 percent of all Muslims strongly agree or agree with the statement. There is also 7 percent whose opinion is neutral. The "clash" thesis claims that there are sharp cultural differences between the core political values common in societies sharing a Western Christian heritage – particularly those concerning representative democracy – and the beliefs common in the rest of the world, especially Islamic societies. Huntington believes that the main elements of Western civilization include the separation

Table 7: *Democracy may have its problems but is better than any other form of government (1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= disagree, 4= strongly disagree)*

Country	Means on timeline		
Jordan	2001 (1.72)	2003 (1.82)	2006 (1.87)
Palestine	2003 (1.94)	2006 (1.97)	2008 (1.99)
Algeria	2002 (1.67)	2004 (1.93)	2006 (1.91)
Morocco	2001 (1.29)	2005 (1.74)	2006 (1.55)
Yemen	2006 (1.77)	2007 (1.94)	
Iraq	2004 (1.69)	2006 (1.67)	
Egypt	2000 (1.39)		
Saudi Arabia	2003 (2.01)		
Iran	2000 (2.12)		
Turkey	2001 (1.72)		
Bahrain	2009 (1.81)		
Kuwait	2005 (1.73)		
Lebanon	2007 (1.69)		

of sacred and secular authority, the rule of law and pluralism, the democratic structures of representative government and the protection of individual rights and liberties as the buffer between people and the state (Norris and Inglehart 2011: 135). It seems Muslims can get along with democracy just to the extent where sacred authority still remains. If democracy can survive without secularization, it will become Muslims' favorite political form.

Palestine and Yemen moves from "important" to "somewhat important". Algeria, Morocco and Jordan revolve 2. Kuwait and Bahrain are the same; both of them evaluate the item as "important". Lebanon score 3; it is somewhat important to make laws according to the wishes of the people in some areas and based on Shari'a in others. Total mean of this indicator is 2.22; in other words, Muslims tend to such a political combination.

In Diagram 1, proportional frequency of each cell is presented. More than 30% of all Muslims have moderately fundamentalist and democratic attitudes. There is 17% whose FI and DI are 2 and 1 respectively and there is 14% whose FI and DI are 1 and 2 respectively. Only 3% are pure fundamenta-

Table 8: *Democracy is a Western form of government that is not compatible with Islam (1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4= disagree, 5= strongly disagree)*

Country	Means on timeline		
Jordan	2003 (3.23)	2006 (3.52)	2008 (3.48)
Palestine	2003 (3.11)	2006 (3.42)	2008 (3.58)
Algeria	2002 (3.22)	2004 (3.14)	2006 (3.49)
Morocco	2005 (3.64)	2006 (3.75)	
Kuwait	2005 (3.64)		
Lebanon	2007 (3.83)		
Yemen	2007 (3.49)		
Bahrain	2009 (3.72)		

Table 9: *Government and parliament should make laws according to the wishes of the people in some areas and implement shariʿa in others (1= very important, 2= important, 3= somewhat important, 4= not important, 5= not important at all)*

Country	Means on timeline		
Palestine	2003 (1.97)	2006 (2.54)	2008 (2.52)
Algeria	2004 (1.93)	2006 (2.28)	
Morocco	2005 (2.08)	2006 (1.75)	
Yemen	2006 (2.10)	2007 (2.63)	
Jordan	2003 (1.93)	2006 (2.18)	
Kuwait	2005 (2.02)		
Lebanon	2007 (3.06)		
Bahrain	2009 (2.03)		

lists and only 8% represent purely democratic attitudes. Pure fundamentalists and democrats are shifting to the central cell. Radical fundamentalist movements do not represent the majority of Muslims or Islamic movements; they include a few small groups. Unlike radical fundamentalists who reject dialogue, conciliation and cooperation, moderate fundamentalists participate in legal political processes and protect tolerance, freedom, civil society and democratic values (Moussalli, 1995). Ahmad Moussali redefines the bases and scope of modern Islamic thought, suggesting that Islamic fundamenta-

Diagram 1: *Fundamentalism and Democracy Crosstabulation*
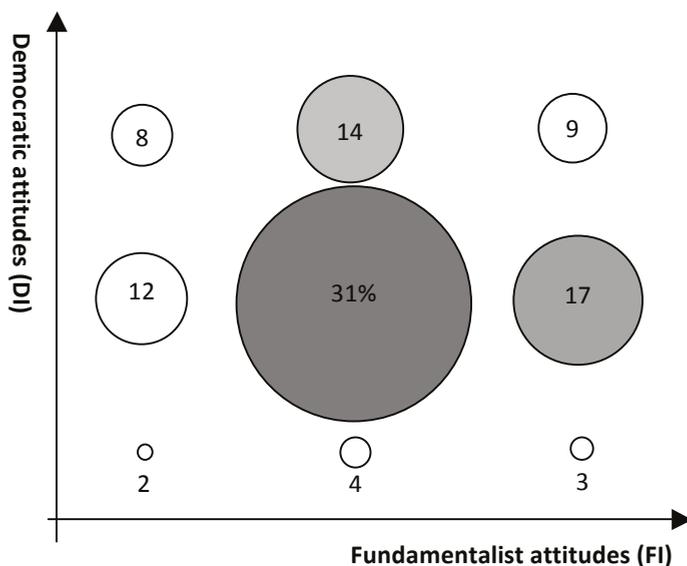
lism might prove to be a liberating theology for the modern Islamic world. Basing his argument largely on Arabic documents, he analyzes the basic concerns of fundamentalism. He examines the ideas of major Muslim thinkers who have affected the contemporary Islamic revival – especially Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, and Hasan al-Turabi – showing the range of Islamic fundamentalist views from liberal democracy to authoritarianism. He then discusses how their thinking could affect an Islamic state, from political repression at one extreme to political representation at the other. Going to the core of issues raised by fundamentalists, he maintains that Islamic fundamentalism is a modern development that will have a lasting impact on the history of Islam – one comparable to the impact of Protestantism on the history of Christianity (Moussalli 1999) –. Thus, fundamentalism should be viewed as a dynamic doctrine which is engaged in political debates. It is performing the role of providing an ideology explaining political and social reality to individual Muslims.

Conclusion

More than a year after 2010, there continues to be a strong desire for democracy in Arab and other predominantly Muslim nations. Indeed, these publics do not just support the general notion of democracy – they also embrace spe-

cific features of a democratic system, such as competitive elections and free speech –. On the other hand, a substantial number in key Muslim countries want a large role for Islam in political life; however, there are significant differences over the degree to which the legal system should be based on Islam.

In presentations of democracy within a broad conceptual framework, much attention is given to some specific aspects of social and political operation. In particular, Islamic democracy is seen as affirming longstanding Islamic concepts of consultation (shurah), consensus (ijma), and independent interpretive judgement (ijtihad). Like many concepts in western political tradition, these terms have not always been identified with democratic institutions and have a variety of usages in contemporary Muslim discourse. However, regardless of other contexts and usages, these terms are central to the debates and discussions regarding democratizations in Muslim societies (Esposito 1996: 27). Large populations of moderate fundamentalists in Muslim countries are emerging who seek to actualize Islamic teachings in a modern form which adopts and raises some of the western concepts such as democracy. It seems Muslims will create a new religious political system absorbing some democratic values and norms.

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