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EDUCATION AS COMMONS

SELECTED PAPERS FROM
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INTERNATIONAL
MID-TERM CONFERENCE

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Organizers and partners



Università
degli Studi
di Palermo



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EDUCATIONAL COMMONS AND ACTIVE SOCIAL INCLUSION



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Education as Commons: Democratic Values, Social Justice, and Inclusion in Education. The Motivation and Structure of the Book

Orazio Giancola (University of Rome “Sapienza”)

Francesca Lagomarsino (University of Genoa)

Marianna Siino (University of Palermo)

This volume grew out of papers presented at the mid-term conference of the Education Section of the AIS (Italian Association of Sociology), held in Palermo, Italy, from April 12-14, 2023. The title of the conference was *Education as Commons: Democratic Values, Social Justice, and Inclusion in Education*. Building on the many presentations delivered there, a decision was made to open a call for extended versions of a relevant portion of the conference content. As with the conference, a multidisciplinary and pluralistic approach was adopted, accepting contributions not only of a sociological nature but also from a variety of disciplines, both theoretical and empirical, utilizing different methodologies typical of the field (from qualitative to quantitative, including mixed methods). For the conference, English was used as the “common language” for the introduction, while authors were free to write their papers in their preferred language.

The paradigm of “commons” as an alternative value and action system plays a crucial role in the educational sphere since it emphasizes the importance of orienting education toward the betterment of the community, not just the individual. From a commons perspective, education becomes a key tool for promoting inclusion, solidarity, and cooperation, preparing citizens not only to face personal challenges but also to contribute to the well-being of society as a whole. In this sense, education cannot be limited to the transmission of technical or individualistic knowledge; it must also promote values such as mutual respect, active participation, and social responsibility. By learning to recognize the needs and rights of others, students develop ethical and social skills that enable them to live and work in a more just and equitable society (Brighouse & Unterhalter, 2018).

Moreover, an education system that prioritizes the common good seeks to reduce inequality and ensure equal access to education for all, regardless of socioeconomic background. In this way, education becomes a tool for promoting social equity and strengthening the democratic fabric of society, even beyond its economic effects (Sandel, 2012). The concept of commons encourages a vision of education that transcends the mere acquisition of individual skills, promoting instead the building of a cohesive and inclusive society where all individuals can thrive and contribute to collective progress (UNESCO, 2015).

Following this conceptualization, rethinking education today as commons (i.e., educational commons) implies an effort to reverse contemporary neoliberal processes of enclosure and commodification in education. It seeks to radically transform teaching, learning, research, and institutions into a common good that fosters openness, inclusion, direct engagement in public life, autonomy, and self-reliance (Pechtelidis & Kioupiolis, 2020). Education as commons is thus intrinsically linked to various dimensions of identity formation—political, cultural, and economic—rather than being solely concerned with the transmission of formal knowledge. It also challenges traditional approaches to citizenship education (Dardot & Laval, 2014). This challenge is particularly evident in formal educational contexts, where agendas are often pre-established according to a dominant narrative that frames children’s participation in developmental terms—focusing on what they lack and have yet to achieve. This approach disregards children’s actual activities as citizens in the present and models their participation on adult-driven conceptions of voice and democracy. In the path toward education as commons, the notion of “subjectification” takes precedence over “socialization” (Biesta, 2010), positioning children as agents engaged in active, adaptive construction, rather than passive absorption. Education as commons thus implies a more cooperative and egalitarian mode of governance, participation, and citizenship, turning learning and governance processes into a collective good co-produced by all community members.

Education as a common good is crucial because it operates on multiple levels — societal, community, and individual — creating deep and interdependent connections across these spheres. At the societal level, education contributes to the creation of an informed and active citizenry capable of participating in democratic life and addressing social, economic, and environmental challenges. An education system that promotes the common good aims to form citizens who are aware of their rights and duties, capable of understanding global dynamics, and engaging in actions that

improve collective well-being (Dewey, 1916). When education is considered a common good, the democratic fabric is strengthened, as all members of society are called upon to contribute, regardless of social class, ethnicity, or background.

At the community level, education plays a central role in strengthening social ties and promoting inclusion. Schools, universities, and training centres are spaces where people from diverse backgrounds and experiences meet, share knowledge, and develop relationships of trust and solidarity. The actors in the educational process actively participate in community building by fostering openness and valuing diversity. In an educational setting that embraces the concept of the common good, communities are enriched not only culturally but also socially, as education promotes intercultural dialogue, cohesion, and cooperation. Equitable access to education helps reduce social barriers and build more cohesive and resilient communities where everyone can contribute.

At the individual level, education as a common good is not only about personal growth and skill development, but also about acquiring ethical and social values that prepare individuals to live harmoniously with others. Education provides tools not only for professional success but also for fostering a sense of responsibility to society and the community. Individuals educated within a system that emphasizes the common good are more likely to actively engage in building a just society, recognizing the interconnection between their well-being and that of others.

The connections between these three levels are mutually reinforcing: a society that invests in education as a common good creates stronger and more inclusive communities, which in turn foster the growth of knowledgeable and engaged individuals. At the same time, individuals educated with a vision of the common good help to improve their communities and, more broadly, to build a more equitable and inclusive society. This virtuous circle demonstrates how education, when understood as a common good, can act as a transformative force at all levels of social life.

This volume consists of five thematically cohesive sections. The first part, *Education as Commons*, explores various theoretical and empirical nuances of the concept of education as a common good. The second part, *School-Society-Community*, focuses on the complex interrelationships between education (both formal, non-formal, and informal) and societal and community levels. The third section, *Selection, Inclusion, Inequalities*, analyses both old and new factors in the production and reproduction of inequalities, with a special emphasis on inclusion. The fourth part, *Higher Education*,

addresses the university and higher education spheres, examining contributions from institutional and other actors within this educational domain. The fifth and final section, *Technologies, Communication, and Education*, delves into the role of ICTs, considering them not only as tools but also as agents embedded in educational practices.

The issues discussed in this volume touch upon some of the main questions in the current educational debate, such as the relationship between institutions of cultural production and reproduction, new social inequalities, and the need for participatory involvement of local communities in building educational capital as a resource. The paradigm of educational commons and the concept of commons more broadly, serves as a framework for social innovation. This theme is increasingly relevant, particularly in addressing social justice as a key element of the community bond underlying the coexistence of European states. This perspective foregrounds the social over the economic and presents a challenge to researchers studying systems of cultural reproduction. The hope is that this book will not only provide insights for reflection but also inspire action, particularly in promoting community practices in educational contexts and evaluating them through the lens of commons the co-creation and co-management of processes and outcomes, with a continuous openness to change and innovation.

The Editors

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Section 1

EDUCATION AS COMMONS

La democracia radical del común. Un horizonte instituyente y pedagógico

Daniel Ricardo Cujabán Artunduaga (University of Salerno)

Abstract Currently, there is intense debate on strategies to address the global pluricrisis, within which democracy and education are recognized as two ambivalent institutions. On one hand, they reproduce crises, but at the same time, they are crucial for overcoming them. This thesis proposes a theoretical and historical study of the relationship between both institutions, dismantling their modern conceptions and genealogies that persist in neoliberal models, maintaining a singular version of the concepts of democracy and education. The bridge connecting both institutions, and largely explaining the pluricrisis, is subjectivity. The issue of the subject is often limited to its study under individualistic, patriarchal, proprietary, colonial, and consumerist ontologies. The research aims to highlight the problem of the neoliberal subject and its institutions through theory and history while seeking to study and rescue alternative (radical) projects of democracy and education that oppose capitalist liberal democracy and the neoliberal societal model. To achieve this, a reading of the institutions is proposed from an ontology of the common that allows for a horizon of reflection and affirmative practice beyond modern thought, towards a reconstruction of a history and theory of common democratic pedagogies in a postcolonial and intersectional key.

1. DEMOCRACIA RADICAL E INSTITUCIONES DEL COMÚN

Uno de los nodos fundamentales para entender la crisis de la *democracia liberal* es la representación. El sujeto político abstracto que inventó el Estado moderno con Hobbes es un arquetipo ideal de individuo, creado a la imagen y semejanza de la modernidad capitalista, bajo los postulados de “racionalidad”, y “libertad”. Decir que el hombre es “libre e igual” por naturaleza, es hacer pasar un artificio por natural, es apropiarse de la legitimidad de lo “natural”. Lo cierto es que ese modelo de sujeto de la *democracia liberal* de las revoluciones burguesas, materialmente hablando, era definido en tanto; blanco, hombre, occidental, propietario, heterosexual...

La abstracción del sujeto “libre e igual”, nace en crisis. El sujeto real, las subjetividades de los cuerpos que no encajan en la abstracción del *sujeto moderno liberal*, han interpelado constantemente su artificialidad, han luchado contra la

apropiación de lo “natural”. Desde las luchas de emancipación de la esclavitud, hasta las luchas obreras, campesinas, indígenas, estudiantiles, feministas, se dan las batallas para encarar lo limitado del Sujeto de la democracia liberal. El sujeto corpóreo, real, que se manifiesta en una pluralidad de subjetividades, irrumpe para recordar que se siente sin representación en el juego liberal. Irrumpe para recordar una vez más que la pretensión de universalidad del moderno se quiebra, dejando caer el telón, dejando ver la realidad; la democracia liberal no ha podido relacionarse del todo con la cantidad de movimientos sociales esparcidos por el globo, no es contenedor que soporte una multitud de cuerpos con demandas cada vez más intensas (Bazzicalupo, 2019).

La propuesta de la *democracia radical* va tomando fuerza en cada una de las luchas de esos sujetos corpóreos, llegando a particularidades e intensidades en todo el globo, y en términos generales busca dar respuesta a la crisis de la democracia representativa.

Hay al menos dos formas de entender la *democracia radical*. Ambas antagonistas al modelo neoliberal; modelo que se entrega a una lógica de eficiencia global del mercado, debilitando no solo al Estado de derecho sino fundamentalmente el modelo de bienestar constitucional y garantista. En neoliberalismo reconfigura la abstracción del sujeto, con la retórica del *homo economicus*, del empresario de sí mismo, del *capital humano* (Beker, 1964).

Como respuesta a esta crisis nacen dos corrientes teóricas, ambas con un legado Nietzscheano que abandona toda idea trascendente y absoluta de verdad, de neutralidad. Se sitúa la verdad como una construcción histórica y contextual. La verdad no es indiferente al modo en el cual se busca, se produce, en el modo en el que es determinada. El horizonte biopolítico, material y concreto toma centralidad en el cuerpo, este es el talante del pensamiento radical. Afrontar los dispositivos de subjetividad neoliberal, resistir a las formas de valorización capitalista, denunciadas tempranamente, entre otros por Foucault y la escuela de Frankfurt (Bazzicalupo, 2014).

Por un lado, Laclau y Mouffe, entienden la *democracia radical* como un problema de hegemonía. Enfatizando en la urgencia de reapropiarse del político como representación unitaria de un nuevo sujeto, por ende, de conformar una fuerza hegemónica constituyente para ubicarla en el contenedor moderno de “pueblo”

(Laclau, & Mouffe, 2014). Dicho sujeto “pueblo”, tiene una ontología negativa, de vacío, está siempre escapando, de allí que deba ser definido constantemente.

Al no existir un universal trascendente, una verdad objetiva, el vacío inminente debe ser colmado, construido mediante una retórica unitaria, mediante una nueva narrativa de verdad, que devuelva al político las distintas subjetividades que crecen a las afueras de los universalismos del moderno (las mujeres, los indígenas, los migrantes, el ambiente, los movimientos sociales, LGBTIQ+...)

La radicalidad es entendida en modo estratégico, la dispersión de quienes no se sienten representados debe ser usada para crear un bloque unitario, una nueva articulación de la hegemonía que logre vencer el *interegnum*, para decirlo con Gramsci.

Hay al menos dos riesgos que se esconden en esta propuesta. El más evidente es el de asumir *el populismo* como una estrategia hegemónica para colmar el vacío ontológico de los contenedores “democracia” y “pueblo”. Esta visión paradójicamente refuerza *el populismo* como un mecanismo usado por los estrategas del polo opuesto, basta pensar en Trump, Bolsonaro, Forza Italia, Alternative für Deutschland, Milei y en general los partidos de ultraderecha contemporáneos. (Serughetti, 2023). El otro riesgo es el de la excesiva confianza en el aparato estatal, que ha derivado también en los totalitarismos de izquierda, que una vez en el poder reprimen cualquier subjetividad por fuera de la hegemonía creada, evidenciando así que el sujeto político creado tiene meramente un carácter instrumental.

La segunda propuesta de *democracia radical*, parte de una ontología afirmativa del sujeto. Deleuze y Negri concentran su propuesta en la microfísica del poder, reconociendo el poder más allá de la imagen totalizada y soberana del del Estado. El poder es entendido como un conjunto de relaciones productivas que conforman la vida, ya no solo como forma de subjetivación y control, sino como potencia que siempre es capaz de resistir. La ontología afirmativa del sujeto es abierta, productiva, deseante, capaz de transformación constante (Hardt, 1990; 1995).

De allí que lo político se desligue de una visión trascendental de la soberanía, para situarse en el campo *inmanente* del social. El pensamiento radical se sitúa en el orden vivo de la sociedad, no en los universalismos y “verdades contenedoras” del moderno, y menos en el fetiche edípico de la ley y el mercado.

Este enfoque neo-spinoziano ve en los cuerpos una plenitud en constante desborde, una potencia productiva del común, opuesta al artificio del individualismo y del

homo-economicus. El común por el contrario que se expresa en la intersubjetividad, la cooperación y la relación con el otro y con el entorno (Hardt & Negri, 2009).

Esta *biopotenza* es impersonal, es inmediatamente política es de todos y de ninguno, es radicalmente democrática. Negri desarrolla esta ontología afirmativa en la concepción pre-hobbesiana de multitud y en la idea del *general intellect* de Marx (Hardt & Negri, 2005).

Esta ontología afirmativa, productiva, es la que reivindica una autonomía del social, la capacidad de autogobierno de las distintas instituciones, de allí su ligamen con la autogestión de espacios y bienes comunes. La *democracia radical* se convierte en el vehículo inmanente con el cual las nuevas subjetividades pueden organizarse y autogobernarse, fenómeno que ya se viene dando en distintas partes del globo con experimentaciones neoinstitucionales y que incluso se puede reconocer en el autogobierno de los pueblos indígenas latinoamericanos.

Es decir, no es un concepto categórico, sino que describe el real, de allí su potencialidad. Pare Deleuze; “una tiranía es un régimen en el que hay muchas leyes y pocas instituciones, mientras que la democracia es un régimen en el que hay muchas instituciones y muy pocas leyes” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 27).

Algunas de las críticas a la propuesta afirmativa de la democracia radical de Negri y Deleuze, son: primero el problema del éxodo, como una estrategia que condena los movimientos a una especie de aislamiento de sus subjetividades. Aislamiento que amenaza su prolongación y acción. El éxodo termina por promover una articulación de nuevas instituciones (como los centros sociales, espacios autogestionados, alternativos, etc.) que siguen estando en el techo de lo público y lo privado pero que no logran articularse de manera autónoma en el real.

Otra crítica, es la de descartar el conflicto como gestión de la política, es un desligarse de institucionalizar estos movimientos en una alternativa política, en un contrapoder que permita y promueva la subsistencia de estas nuevas instituciones, so pena de dejar al arbitrio del modelo de turno el desmantelamiento de estas nuevas formas de producción del común, como ya ha pasado con el Estado de bienestar – welfare state -. No solo se requiere una gestión desde debajo, de autogobierno, sino la capacidad de subsistir en el escenario político, de perdurar en el tiempo y de jugarse una hegemonía del heterogéneo (Esposito, 2019).

2. ¿COMO PENSAR LAS INSTITUCIONES A TRAVÉS DEL COMÚN?

Consideramos que una forma de evitar los riesgos antes descritos, al menos teóricamente, es la propuesta del *pensamiento instituyente* de Roberto Esposito (2023) y la *democracia radical* de Laura Bazzicalupo (2014).

Para evitar del riesgo del éxodo destituyente de Hardt y Negri y a la vez de la ontología negativa e instrumental de sujeto en Lacalu y Mouffe se propone una mirada dinámica de las instituciones. Lo que requiere a su vez abrir el conflicto y el sujeto de manera afirmativa.

Por un lado, hay que remitirse a la genealogía del Estado moderno, especialmente en Hobbes, como un artificio teológico en el que la soberanía se cristaliza en la institución del Estado, reforzando el mito de que es el único capaz de Instituir. El estado entonces monopoliza la capacidad de instituir, a través del universalismo, se apropia de las instituciones.

En un pasaje del jurista romano Marciano, se constata que la lectura cristalizada del Estado como monopolio de las instituciones es una creación histórica. En el derecho romano en cambio, existía una relación dinámica o entre la acción de *instituire* y la *institutio* como un devenir dialectico y abierto. Los romanos resolvieron de esta forma el antagonismo entre los movimientos sociales y la clausura de las instituciones. *Vitam instituire*; refirma la relación entre la vida humana y las instituciones, una relación inseparable entre *el bios* y *el nomos*. No existe una *nuda vita*, no existe la vida humana sino en *comunitas*. Contrario al postulado Hobbsiano del *homini lupus*, predomina *Omnia sunt communia*, una antropología humana que tiene como horizonte el común, la relación con el otro y con el entorno (Esposito, 2003).

Esta cristalización de las instituciones a su vez ha sido asumida de forma defensiva por los estructuralistas y postfundacionistas. Según Esposito, ya en algunas lecturas de Foucault y la escuela de Frankfurt encontramos esta actitud; la tendencia a ver a las instituciones como dispositivos de poder y subjetivación autoritarios. Esta idea impregna en los movimientos sociales de los 60's, quienes se adhieren a una actitud destituyente. La consecuencia es que las instituciones se cierran más y reafirman su carácter defensivo y de represión. Si abrimos esa dinámica, y pensamos en las instituciones desde su carácter instrumental y por ende susceptibles de acción ambivalente, entendemos que pueden ser operadas desde una lógica de praxis común. Este nuevo pensamiento instituyente resuelve el problema de la

prolongación de los movimientos en el tiempo, invitándolos a subsistir, a instituirse más allá del efímero *eventum*, a la vez que los rescata de su actuar en negativo, meramente defensivo.

Se requiere un último pasaje; hablar de las instituciones del común, en singular, como un pensamiento capaz de desarticular y avanzar más allá del paradigma moderno, pero también de la retórica jurídica de los bienes comunes.

La idea fundamental de los bienes comunes desde los estudios de Elinor Ostrom (1990) es la no centralidad o monopolio de la decisión sobre su uso (carácter central autoritario de la propiedad privada), en ese sentido, rompe a su vez con la lógica del capital que se basan en el valor de mercado (plusvalor). El límite de Ostrom entender los comunes solo como una categoría de bienes, como una característica de algunos bienes. Vercellone, en cambio sostiene que lo contrario a propiedad privada no es lo público, sino el valor común de uso, el principio de autogestión. Esto es posible porque ningún bien tiene una destinación natural de uso, sino que es la sociedad quien la da (Vercellone, 2017).

La destinación de uso hace alusión a la *democracia radical*. Decidir el uso social de las cosas es un principio democrático del común. Para que el valor de cambio tenga una lógica en las relaciones intersubjetivas, el capital (en particular el neoliberalismo) se concentra en crear subjetividades que reproduzca una única forma de producción y consumo. Contrario a esto la lógica del común se concentra en el autogobierno y la producción de valor de uso para generar riqueza social.

Con la escolarización en masa de los hijos de las clases proletarias y el acceso cada vez más extendido a las universidades, se constatan dos fenómenos. El primero es el de la falsa promesa del liberalismo y el capitalismo, en la cual el progreso y bienestar estaban asegurados por el crecimiento progresivo del acceso a la educación. Dicho acceso solo terminó por conformar distintas formas de reorganización de la división del trabajo, ligadas a los prestigios de determinadas universidades, y a la concentración de capital cultural y social que describía Bourdieu (1997).

Pero el segundo fenómeno, contrario a lo que pensaban los estructuralistas de la teoría de la reproducción, es que las formas de subjetivación que terminaban reproduciendo las brechas de clase, tenían un exceso constante en su producción. El común, más allá de una simple categoría de bienes, debe ser entendido como una forma de producción. producción de códigos, afectos, relaciones y subjetividades. Nacen y se transforma en la subjetividad. Los movimientos sociales y estudiantiles,

así como las distintas expresiones de contracultura son ejemplo de la producción de excedente por fuera de las lógicas de la producción capitalista.

Luego de los años 60's, en todo el globo, las demandas de estos movimientos sociales y contra-subjetividades rompen con los paradigmas de representación, de clase, género, de raza, de nación, desplazando las clásicas peticiones prestacionales salariales y civiles, para exigir el reconocimiento de nuevas formas de vida, así como el rediseño y participación en nuevas formas institucionales de tipo social, sanitario, educativo, etc.

Los bienes comunes son solo una dimensión del común. Reducir el debate a los comunes, es reducir el común a una mera clasificación de las cosas, hacerlo subsidiario y en todo caso aprisionarlo a la lógica estatal. El común entonces debe estar al singular, como forma de producción del social, para decirla con Negri (2009). Una lógica inversa al capital, a la propiedad y al individualismo. Una forma de instituir la vida.

Por último, el común debe ser capaz de articular y abrir el conflicto para instituirse como una opción política, retomando a Machiavelli, tomar el conflicto como motor de lo político. Una dinámica que el derecho romano ya tenía presente. Pensemos en el tribuno de la plebe como una institución que la antecede el conflicto desde abajo; la secesión del estamento plebeyo. Es un ejemplo de cómo la "clase" plebeya logra articular un conflicto de base para institucionalizarlo en lo político, en la vida pública. De allí la potencia de la democracia desde el pensamiento instituyente, de las instituciones del común para volver al *Vitam instituere*.

3. EL IMAGINARIO RADICAL DEMOCRÁTICO DEL COMÚN EN LA EDUCACIÓN

Alexander J Means (2014), confronta las distintas vertientes del pensamiento radical democrático y su relación directa con los proyectos instituyentes de una educación del común. En resumen, se trata de tres formas distintas de entender el pensamiento democrático radical, desde lenguajes distintos, siguiendo Balibar (2008), la democracia no se limita a modelos o propuestas de arquetipos, sino que es una relación de contenidos lingüísticos que caracterizan las distintas propuestas para pensar la democracia radical.

Así las cosas, el imaginario radical de la democracia, empieza con las propuestas de una tercera generación de Marxistas, como Laclau y Maouffe con su propuesta de

Democracia Radical. Hardt y Negri con su propuesta de democracia absoluta y una última idea que atraviesa la posibilidad de una democracia comunista.

La primera propuesta está ligada a la concepción radical se da dentro del antagonismo al modelo liberal capitalista de la democracia y como respuesta al autoritarismo soviético. De esta primera generación de demócratas radicales nacen los primeros debates sobre la relación entre el capitalismo, el comunismo y la democracia. Lefort y Cornelius Castoriadis particularmente contribuyen al debate en la revista *Socialisme ou Barbarie*. Luego de la propuesta de Laclau y Mouffe, varios pensadores de la pedagogía rediseñan propuestas sobre la democracia radical y la educación, la primera consecuencia es reiterar que la educación es un asunto inminentemente político, recordando los estudios gramscianos, a su vez utilizados por la pareja de autores, entre estos se encuentran los trabajos de Giroux (1997).

Una de las críticas que hace Rancière (2019) a este modelo, es el de totalizar el político, al pretender conformar una hegemonía se corre el riesgo de sacrificar la raíz práctica e inmanente de la democracia, vaciándola en nombre de la nueva hegemonía. En ese sentido, como bien lo afirma Balibar (2008, p. 526), no se trata del nombre de un régimen, sino de un conjunto de luchas y prácticas. No obstante, la democracia debe ser insitucionalizable, debe ser el motor que democratice las instituciones ya existentes, a la vez que se institucionaliza a sí misma.

En realidad, de este primer grupo, solo Balibar reitera la necesidad de apartarse de cualquier extremo, de la democracia como mera práctica, alejándose de las interacciones públicas y con las instituciones estatales (Rancière), pero también de la pretensión de cerrar las instituciones a un modelo de democracia único y hegemónico (Laclau, Mouffe). Se trata de un proceso instituyente y democrático del común.

La idea de democracia absoluta se desprende de las propuestas de Hardt y Negri (2001; 2005; 2009), sobre todo del concepto de poder constituyente y poder constituido (Negri, 1992), resaltando como en el capitalismo global, hay procesos de producción que escapan del control directo del capital, permitiendo una vía de escape para la producción autónoma e independiente del común. En esa ruptura con el comando del capital, en todo el entramado social, se encuentra la democracia absoluta como forma de relación de la multitud para la producción del común. La consecuencia en principio es la propuesta de éxodo del capital, que en términos de

las instituciones educativas se resume a la propuesta ya hecha por Iván Illich sobre la desescolarización de la sociedad.

Una forma de piratería de la educación que escapa tanto de lo público como de lo privado. Una de las réplicas que se hace a la idea del éxodo, es justamente encabezada por Mouffe (2013); considerando que no es suficiente organizar las nuevas formas del común por fuera del capitalismo y de lo público, pues dicha actividad se parece mucho a la libertad del mercado neoliberal y sobre todo asume una idea del Estado cristalizada, cuando en realidad es un conjunto complejo de relaciones y dinámicas (116-117).

Por último, Means, propone una relectura del comunismo como una simple propuesta anticapitalista. En realidad, justamente pensadores como Dubois, Freire y bell hooks, anclados a una idea radical de la educación y la pedagogía, reivindican al mismo tiempo la democracia como verdadera forma de convivencia común, enfatizando en como la autonomía de las subjetividades a través de la pedagogía radical contribuyen al imaginario de un comunismo democrático.

La idea de salirse del paradigma moderno permite rescatar un pensamiento instituyente, con una base radical de la democracia para cambiar las instituciones, dentro de ellas la educación. Entender el común como una forma de producción, permite al mismo tiempo identificar en el proceso pedagógico un espacio de batalla privilegiado de creación de subjetividades.

La crisis de la democracia y la educación, esconden una retórica en la que el mercado ha terminado monopolizando las dinámicas sociales, pero al mismo tiempo son un horizonte, una oportunidad para seguir construyendo prácticas alternativas desde el común.

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EDUCACIÓN SOCIAL Y DESARROLLO HUMANO: UNA RELACIÓN INEVITABLE PARA LA EMANCIPACIÓN DE LAS MUJERES Y LAS JOVENES

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Abstract Los eventos traumáticos suelen romper la armonía del mundo y causar cambios repentinos que devastan todas las áreas de la sociedad. De todos ellos, la crisis de la democracia y la educación son algunas de las más ásperas. Sin embargo, la educación sigue siendo un pilar fundamental de las Agendas de Desarrollo Global y, sobre todo, la educación social y democrática puede ser el factor principal para una sociedad generativa y un desarrollo humano capaz de formar nuevos seres humanos. Esta contribución pretende explorar el tema de la educación y de la cultura y su importancia por el empoderamiento de las personas. Utilizando el enfoque multidimensional de las capacidades (Sen, 1999), basado en un nuevo concepto de riqueza relacionado con las oportunidades y la libertad de las personas para vivir una vida de valor, se presentarán los resultados de una investigación empírica realizada en 2020. El objetivo principal fue medir, mediante métodos de investigación mixtos, el nivel de empoderamiento de las mujeres en dos contextos italianos diferentes, Roma y Caltanissetta, y el impacto sobre el bienestar de los niños/niñas. De acuerdo con estudios empíricos anteriores, los resultados de la investigación muestran que un mayor nivel de emancipación de las mujeres corresponde a un mayor nivel de bienestar de los niños/niñas. En particular, el estudio destaca la importancia de dos variables como fuentes del empoderamiento femenino y infantil: la oportunidad estructural y la educación. Ambos los factores reflejan el sistema cultural y educativo de los territorios considerados y muestran como invertir en una educación social generalizada podría ser la llave para una nueva sociedad respetuosa y inclusiva, basada en la participación activa de todas las personas.

1. LA EDUCACIÓN SOCIAL Y EL DESARROLLO HUMANO: UNA RELACIÓN NECESARIA

1.1. *Cultura y educación democrática*

El concepto de cultura constituye la base de diversas reflexiones en el debate científico, ya que permite explicar las posibles diferencias en la organización de una sociedad, un proceso o una institución, a pesar de las evoluciones que el concepto ha

experimentado a lo largo del tiempo (Tylor, 1871; Boas, 1940; Malinowski, 1944; Bourdieu, 1979). Todas transformaciones que experimenta un ser humano presuponen una adaptación cultural que permite su continuidad y desarrollo en el tiempo y que necesita ser transmitida de generación en generación para su progresivo perfeccionamiento y adaptación a las condiciones históricas vividas. Al mismo tiempo, la cultura permite a los seres humanos conformar el entorno a sus necesidades, provocando a su vez una transformación en un proceso de intercambio constante (Cuche, 2006).

Sin embargo, las transformaciones sociales, si no se orientan correctamente, pueden causar múltiples trastornos y problemas no resueltos en todas las esferas de la vida social, que sólo pueden corregirse prestando la debida atención a las circunstancias que acompañaron a estos acontecimientos (Mannheim, 2000). En este sentido, el conocimiento emerge como la principal herramienta a la hora de analizar las condiciones históricas y sociales que han acompañado las transformaciones de la sociedad. Existen aspectos del pensamiento que no pueden ser adecuadamente comprendidos e interpretados mientras los orígenes permanezcan oscuros, no se comprendan los mecanismos fundamentales de interrelación entre los diversos factores y no se piensen y estudien los acontecimientos en continuidad con el pasado, aflorando los procesos que se produjeron (ibidem).

Entre los diversos factores que intervienen en la transmisión de la cultura, se atribuye especial importancia a los factores educativos, que, junto con los culturales, suelen favorecer la concretización de una *vida de valores* y la creación de una cultura democrática. Se puede hacer referencia a lo que diversos autores (Sen, 1999; Mannheim & Campbell, 2017; Dewey, 1916) han denominado *educación social* como un sistema compuesto por un conjunto de valores y interacciones que definen temporalmente una sociedad. La *educación social* es una educación orientada a la ciudadanía, al respeto, a la inclusividad; respeta las tradiciones y las normas, pero también las cuestiona para no aceptar algo sólo porque es el resultado de un *habitus* arraigado. Es un proceso, por tanto, que forma *seres humanos sociales* que saben estar en sociedad y se caracterizan por una personalidad democrática y un comportamiento democrático, su manifestación directa (Mannheim & Campbell, 2017). El comportamiento democrático se caracteriza por la amplitud de miras, la disposición a la cooperación y la solidaridad, se inclina por el debate fructífero y

crítico, y está dispuesto a enriquecer la propia personalidad mediante la síntesis de diferentes posturas (Gili, 2017).

Por ello, a diferencia de otros enfoques educativos, algunos estudiosos y estudiosas proponen una educación que sea el resultado de la síntesis de la acción educativa individual y colectiva. Distinguiendo entre el *Yo-objeto*, que es el producto de la interacción y el condicionamiento social, del conjunto de roles y partes que la comunidad pone a nuestra disposición, y el *Yo-sujeto*, que es el principal agente de cambio, que participa en la evolución de la sociedad, por ejemplo Mannheim (et al., 2017) se refiere al individuo como aquel que adquiere *conciencia, capacidades críticas, habilidades cosmopolitas* y responsabilidad que le llevan a formar parte de un proceso cultural democrático constante (Nussbaum, 2001).

Lo que se divienta relevante, por tanto, es la creación de un sistema educativo generalizado y democrático, promovido no sólo por las instituciones educativas sino también por diferentes organismos de la sociedad y en cuya base esté la promoción de modelos de interacción cultural adecuados para fomentar el surgimiento y desarrollo de una personalidad democrática.

1.2. Educación y empoderamiento: un paradigma de desarrollo humano

Entre los diversos enfoques que se han centrado en la importancia de los factores educativos y culturales en la determinación de la calidad de vida de las personas, se encuentra el *enfoque de las capacidades* de Amartya Sen (1980) que relaciona la cuestión cultural y educativa con la cuestión de género, destacando la necesaria vinculación entre ambas. De hecho, lo que caracteriza la compleja cuestión de género se refiere a la presencia de prácticas sociales consolidadas a lo largo del tiempo que pueden favorecer u limitar la posibilidad de que las mujeres vivan una *vida de valor* y sean sujetos dignos y socialmente integrados.

Un proceso educativo democrático generalizado también para Sen permitiría sentar las bases de una nueva cultura que incluiría también a todas aquellas mujeres que durante mucho tiempo han permanecido al margen de la sociedad, fomentando un proceso de empoderamiento femenino que, por tanto, adquiere una serie de *conditio sine qua non* para que se convierta en realidad. La asunción cultural de la igualdad de los seres humanos, la igualdad en la diversidad, el respeto de los valores y la

persistencia de normas culturales democráticas son factores a los que debe prestarse atención, ya que determinan el nivel de empoderamiento femenino.

La cuestión de género también se convierte en prioritaria por sus efectos. Las pruebas empíricas demuestran la relación causa-efecto entre la capacitación de las mujeres y el bienestar de los niños y niñas: las mujeres más educadas, por ejemplo, son más conscientes de las prácticas adecuadas de nutrición y salud para los niños y niñas pequeños, tienen una mayor capacidad para hacer frente a la adversidad económica y están mejor informadas sobre la existencia de servicios públicos para los infantes (Unicef, 2006); además, una mujer con un mayor nivel de poder de decisión tendrá un mayor impacto en la salud, la educación y la libertad de expresión de niños y niñas (Bessant, 2014). Este proceso presupone un nuevo concepto de educación de los infantes que, desde una edad temprana, son consideradas sujetos activos y responsables en la difusión de culturas y personalidades democráticas.

De la importancia que los factores culturales y educativos desempeñan en la sociedad y por el efecto en el empoderamiento, surgen las principales preguntas de la investigación empírica que se presenta brevemente en el punto siguiente. El objetivo principal fue estudiar el nivel de desarrollo humano de las mujeres y los niños/niñas en dos territorios italianos, Roma y Caltanissetta, utilizando el enfoque del desarrollo humano y métodos de investigación mixtos. Anticipando las conclusiones, en esta investigación la educación y las oportunidades estructurales se postulan como factores determinantes de la capacitación de las mujeres y las niñas/niños.

2. EL DISEÑO DE LA INVESTIGACIÓN: UN CASO DE ESTUDIO EN ROMA Y CALTANISSETTA

2.1 El ciclo metodológico de la investigación

La metodología utilizada en el presente estudio es una metodología mixta (Creswell & Plan Clark, 2001), cuyo objetivo fue estudiar el objeto del análisis desde diferentes puntos de vista, reconociendo que la ciencia no busca la certeza pero es interesada en criticarla con la esperanza de aprender nuevas cosas, sacar a la luz diferentes explicaciones y impulsar un proceso de concienciación, al mismo tiempo integrando los resultados y acogiendo nuevos puntos de reflexión (Cuadro 1). La investigación, de hecho, cumple la función de superar un obstáculo o impedimento para cuestionar convicciones generalmente compartidas y salir del círculo de las propias suposiciones (Popper, 1967; Gadamer, 1983).

En la parte cualitativa de esta investigación, después de un análisis de datos secundarios y estudios sobre el desarrollo humano, la cultura de género, la relación entre el empoderamiento de las mujeres y de los niños/niñas y los procesos culturales que intervienen en cada área de la vida, se utilizaron:

- *entrevistas con testigos privilegiados sociales e institucionales* (n. 9) expertas en género y empoderamiento (por ejemplo sociólogas de género y procesos culturales, presidentes de clubes o asociaciones de género) mediante entrevistas semiestructuradas (Bichi, 2000)¹;
- *focus group* (n. 2), compuesto por siete madres por cada grupo, diferenciadas por edad, empleo y nivel de educación, con el objetivo de investigar la cuestión de género y el impacto sobre niñas y niños mediante estímulos específicos. Las variables analizadas en el presente estudio han sido: discriminaciones, relaciones sociales, actividades culturales, servicios del territorio, familia de origen, existencia y calidad de las instituciones, competencias de la escuela, relaciones con los hijos/as. Los focus group han sido transcritos en detalle y analizados por la propia investigadora.

En la parte cuantitativa se utilizó:

- *cuestionario* (n. 106), para mujeres distinguidas según edad (18-64 años²), ocupación (tipo de trabajo, de contrato y de ámbito (público o privado en el que estaban empleadas) y estado civil. La muestra se seleccionó mediante el método de la avalancha razonada, incluido entre los métodos no probabilísticos (Statera, 1982): comenzando del Soroptimist Club, formado de mujeres que trabajan para otras y presente tanto en Roma como en Caltanissetta, se administró el cuestionario a las mujeres del club y, en segundo lugar, se les pidió que identificaran a otras mujeres a las que entrevistar en función de las características señaladas.

El cuestionario constaba de siete baterías, cada una de las cuales pretendía comprobar una hipótesis diferente, de acuerdo con previas análisis empíricas (Sen,

¹ Las entrevistas fueron transcritas detalladamente y analizadas por la investigadora (Corrao, 2000).

² La elección de una muestra tan amplia se justifica por la necesidad de comparar distintas generaciones. De hecho, no se observaron sustanciales diferencias entre mujeres de distintas edades. El cuestionario se analizó con el programa estadístico R.

1999; Istat, 2019): Trabajo e ingresos, Familia de origen, Actividades extra y relaciones sociales, Educación, Colaboración con la pareja y autonomía de decisión en la familia, Salud, Nutrición. También, el cuestionario incluía dos partes: la primera con preguntas relativas a la situación de las mujeres, y la segunda a la de los niños y niñas³.

<i>Técnica</i>	<i>Sujeto</i>
Entrevistas (n. 9)	Expertos/expertas institucionales y sociales en mujeres y empoderamiento (sociólogas de género y procesos culturales, presidentes de clubes o asociaciones de género).
Focus Group (n. 2)	7 madres (x2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nivel de instrucción (alto) • Trabajo (Jubilado/desempleado, Público/Privado/Autónomo)
Cuestionario (n. 106)	106 madres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edad (18-64 años) • Trabajo (Jubilado/desempleado, Público/Privado/Autónomo) • Estatus civil (soltera, conviviente/casado)

Cuadro 1. Metodología utilizada de la investigación.

Las diversas técnicas de investigación, utilizadas en orden secuencial, permitieron investigar tanto las mismas variables, para su posible integración, como variables diferentes y permitieron corroborar las hipótesis de la investigación. El presente estudio empírico, surgido de una situación problemática, trató de salir de sus propias convicciones, encontrándose, como veremos en los resultados, tanto con elementos ya conocidos como con factores nuevos.

Los resultados se presentan en la sección siguiente.

³ Por razones prácticas, pero sobre todo por cuestiones de privacidad y por la edad de muchos de ellos, no fue posible entrevistar directamente a los niños/niñas: por lo tanto, las preguntas fueron respondidas por las madres. Necesariamente, esto representa una limitación para la investigación, que intentaremos explorar más adelante.

2.2 Preguntas y hipótesis de la investigación

Después de haber analizado datos secundarios y estudios previos en tema de empoderamiento femenino y infantil, se formularon las siguientes preguntas de investigación:

1. ¿Es mayor el nivel de empoderamiento de las mujeres de Roma que el de las de Caltanissetta?
2. ¿Existe una relación entre el empoderamiento femenino y el de los hijos/hijas en los dos territorios considerados?
3. Si existe esta relación, ¿el nivel de empoderamiento de los niños/niñas de Roma es superior al de los niños/niñas de Caltanissetta?

Se eligieron Roma y Caltanissetta por varias razones: por ejemplo, se pueden identificar diferencias, como las dimensiones, pero también similitudes, como la cultura de género y las oportunidades estructurales. Roma es una metrópolis que ofrece más oportunidades estructurales, de empleo y de desarrollo para mujeres y niños/niñas, pero al mismo tiempo está muy fragmentada internamente, hasta el punto de que el nivel de desarrollo humano de las mujeres varía profundamente según el distrito considerado. Esto conduce a algunas similitudes con Caltanissetta, que, por el contrario, es una pequeña ciudad de Sicilia, con menos oportunidades de desarrollo humano y de género. Sin embargo, a pesar de esto, se supuso que el nivel de empoderamiento femenino en la ciudad siciliana podría ser menor, como muestran algunas investigaciones anteriores (Istat, 2019).

Las hipótesis a la base de la investigación son que el empoderamiento femenino está influido por:

- el territorio de pertenencia y la cultura del mismo;
- la eficiencia de las instituciones;
- el estatus socioeconómico de la familia de origen;
- la relación y colaboración con la pareja en familia (por ejemplo, ayuda en el hogar y con los hijos o participación de la mujer en las decisiones importantes de la familia).

También ha sido necesario definir medidas de empoderamiento de momento que se refiere a una pluralidad de situaciones. En nuestro caso se ha medido como:

- posibilidad de estudiar y elegir el recorrido de estudio;
- nivel de educación;
- posibilidades de trabajar y elegir qué tipo de trabajo realizar;
- percibir unos ingresos dignos;
- realizar actividades en el tiempo libre y elegir las sin condicionamientos⁴.

Del mismo modo, el bienestar de los niños y niñas se midió en términos de:

- educación;
- buena salud⁵;
- nutrición sana;
- actividades en el tiempo libre y elección de las mismas.

En este caso, se hipotizó que los factores de influencia del bienestar de los chicos/chicas eran las dimensiones identificadas para la mujer. A partir de las preguntas de investigación, los resultados fueron interesantes y se presentaron en el párrafo siguiente.

3. RESULTADOS: LA EDUCACIÓN Y LA OPORTUNIDAD ESTRUCTURAL COMO FUENTES DE EL EMPODERAMIENTO

La situación general resultó problemática en ambos territorios considerados y las discriminaciones fuertemente arraigadas, como se suponía. Las mujeres han subrayado en varias ocasiones las numerosas discriminaciones que se encuentran en la vida cotidiana y, sobre todo, en el ámbito laboral, cuya autoridad masculina supera a la femenina. Especialmente aquellas mujeres que se han embarcado en carreras profesionales han encontrado fuertes obstáculos: desde la discriminación de género masculino hasta la discriminación de género femenino, que han sufrido

⁴ Todas las dimensiones fueron agrupadas en un único Índice de empoderamiento femenino (*Women's Empowerment Index*) basado en el Índice de Desarrollo Humano (IDH). Del mismo modo, se construyó un Índice de bienestar infantil (*Children's Well-being Index*) agrupando la variable salud, las actividades en el tiempo libre, la elección de las mismas, el nivel de educación.

⁵ Se preguntó, por ejemplo: "en general, ¿cómo va su salud?" "¿Cuántos controles preventivos hace su hijo en un año?".

un proceso de ‘masculinización’⁶. En la investigación surgió, por lo tanto, una segregación de género vertical y horizontal en línea con otros estudios anteriores (Bartholini, 2016).

Las experiencias de todas las mujeres de Roma y Caltanissetta en el *focus group* también evidenciaron los efectos de las discriminaciones sobre las hijas y hijos, como no poder estar presentes en sus momentos importantes y no poder ofrecerles condiciones de vida dignas; también, muchas mujeres han tenido que renunciar a su empleo y han vivido esta experiencia de la maternidad, generalmente especial, como un periodo de dolor y dificultad, también originadas por los escasos o desorbitados servicios de apoyo ofrecidos a las madres. La mujer se ve obligada a gestionar su propia familia y aquella de la que procede, asumiendo un papel “autopoiético”, reinventando un servicio y sustituyéndose al Estado. Esto es cierto tanto en Caltanissetta, cuya situación ha llevado a menudo a las mujeres a abandonar su trabajo, como en Roma, donde las distancias y la falta de una red familiar han llevado a las mujeres a experimentar grandes problemas.

Aunque las experiencias fueron similares en ambas ciudades, fue posible responder positivamente tanto a la primera como a la segunda pregunta de la investigación: las mujeres de Caltanissetta tienen un menor grado de autonomía que las de Roma y los niños/niñas de Caltanissetta tienen un nivel inferior de bienestar que las/los de Roma. En consecuencia, hay una relación entre la situación femenina y la infantil, relación confirmada también por el estudio de regresión realizado mediante la construcción de índices de autonomía femenina y de bienestar infantil.

En particular, hay dos factores que en la presente investigación destacaron como causa mayor del empoderamiento: la *oportunidad estructural* y la educación.

La *oportunidad estructural* está definida como el conjunto de servicios construidos específicamente en función de las necesidades y requisitos de un territorio y de las personas que la viven (Sen, 1999): por lo tanto, refleja necesariamente valores, normas, hábitos y específicos procesos culturales de un contexto específico y de quienes construyen los servicios. De acuerdo con la hipótesis planteada, a través de las distintas técnicas pero sobre todo del cuestionario, en la presente investigación surgió que vivir o crecer en Caltanissetta disminuye la probabilidad de que las

⁶ Son aquellas mujeres, que han alcanzado una posición apical y han asumido actitudes de poder parecidas a las masculinas.

mujeres y los niños/niñas disfruten de un mayor nivel de autodeterminación. Además, en los *focus group* las mujeres subrayaron que ni las estructuras ni la cultura en Caltanissetta y en Roma permiten el pleno desarrollo y empoderamiento de las mujeres y los chicos/chicas. Estos resultados se ponen en línea con otros estudios que definen la *oportunidad estructural* como “estructuras sociales que nos rodean y de las que formamos parte que definen nuestras expectativas sobre las oportunidades que se nos presentan” (Roberts, 1968, p. 176) y destacan la importancia de los procesos culturales como elementos que organizan las oportunidades de vivir una vida de calidad (Bourdieu, 1979).

El segundo factor que ahora obstaculiza y ahora fomenta el empoderamiento de las mujeres y las niñas/niños y que surgió en la investigación es la educación.

En cuanto al estatus de “nuestras” mujeres, se constató que el nivel de educación de la familia de origen y la de el hombre tienen un impacto positivo sobre el nivel de empoderamiento como índice agregado, y en particular sobre el nivel de educación de las mujeres, la autonomía decisional en la familia y el empleo. Se puede afirmar que un mayor nivel de estatus familiar se corresponde con un mayor nivel de educación femenina, un buen nivel de autodeterminación y libertad para tomar decisiones valiosas, la conciencia de las propias capacidades y la posibilidad de elección de empleo. Del mismo modo, un hombre educado favorece el empoderamiento de la mujer, porque comprende su importancia como parte integrante de la sociedad, aunque este proceso por parte del hombre está influido por muchas variables culturales y sociales.

También, el nivel de educación del hombre aparece como un factor influyente en la condición del los niños/niñas, porque tiene un impacto positivo en su bienestar general en términos de nivel de educación, salud, nutrición y actividades en el tiempo libre, variables agregadas en un único índice. Este resultado parece fundamental y confirma la necesidad de invertir al mismo tiempo en la educación femenina y masculina desde una edad temprana.

¿Y el nivel de educación de la madre? ¿Qué función desempeña sobre el empoderamiento de los hijos/hijas? El estudio de regresión confirma el impacto del empoderamiento femenino sobre el empoderamiento de los hijos/hijas y los resultados parecen interesantes.

Mientras que muchas investigaciones sobre el desarrollo humano señalan la importancia del nivel educativo de la madre y su poder de decisión como factores esenciales para la autodeterminación de los hijos/hijas (Sen, 1999), en el presente estudio empírico el nivel educativo materno no resultó estadísticamente significativo, a diferencia de la educación de los hombres. Por el contrario, la ocupación materna subrayó como factor de influyente sobre el nivel de educación de los hijos/hijas, junto con la ayuda de la pareja en familia, especialmente en casa y con los infantes, las actividades en el tiempo libre de la madre⁷ y las oportunidades estructurales⁸.

Este resultado se refleja en la situación que viven las mujeres y las madres desde hace mucho tiempo: la discriminación que sufren las ponen en situación de influir en su hijo/hija no tanto por sus propios factores internos, sino por las posibilidades estructurales que les ofrece el territorio en el que viven y por la posesión de recursos económicos, que está necesariamente ligada al primer factor. Dado que, de hecho, no existe una correspondencia directa entre el nivel de educación femenina (que es alto en Italia) y el acceso al mundo laboral (muy bajo), se deduce que la posibilidad de que una mujer influya en la educación de su hijo es consecuencia directa de los recursos económicos que posee y de las libertades que experimenta. De hecho, no existe una prohibición explícita de que las mujeres entren en el mundo laboral, sino una prohibición cultural y educativa que las sigue relegando a esferas específicas, principalmente privadas. Si tenemos en cuenta, como resulta, que el nivel educativo del hombre influye en la probabilidad de que la mujer esté empleada y ésta influye en el nivel educativo de los niños/ niñas, entonces la educación del hombre se erige como la principal variable sobre la que trabajar, necesariamente juntos con otros factores.

⁷ En este sentido, cuantas más actividades de tiempo libre realiza una mujer, más probable es que los hijos realicen una actividad de tiempo libre varias veces a la semana. Aunque el resultado puede interpretarse de diferentes maneras, sugiere el hecho de que una madre que participa en diferentes ámbitos de la vida comprende la importancia de realizar actividades extra para su hijo.

⁸ Vivir en Roma tiene un impacto positivo.

CONCLUSIONES

En conclusión, los dos factores que en el estudio surgieron como variables de gran influencia para el empoderamiento tanto de las mujeres como de los niños/niñas son el nivel de educación de la pareja y la oportunidad estructural del territorio considerado, parte de los sistemas culturales y educativos específicos de los territorios considerados. Por encima de todo, la educación masculina parece tener un peso importante: además del impacto directo que tiene en la condición de las mujeres y los niños/niñas, surge como uno de los factores iniciales a partir de los cuales comienza todo el proceso de empoderamiento. Si, de hecho, gran parte de la discriminación de género proviene de la existencia de una cultura machista fuertemente arraigada que influye en el proceso de empoderamiento de las mujeres y los niños, entonces es necesario empezar por la educación de los hombres, que debe ir necesariamente unida a la de la sociedad en su conjunto.

Aunque la educación por sí sola no es suficiente, ya que las prácticas y las ideas de discriminación son a menudo independientes de ella, es una de las herramientas esenciales tanto en el caso de las mujeres, que no siempre son conscientes de su potencial, como en el de los hombres y los niños/niñas. Para la fuerte relación que surge entre el empoderamiento de las mujeres y el de los chicos/chicas (Sen 1999; Heckert et al., 2019; Canta, 2020), entre otras cosas, invertir en educación desde una edad temprana podría romper las cadenas de discriminación, a menudo intergeneracionales, aún presentes en la actualidad (Piccone Stella & Saraceno, 1996).

Teniendo en cuenta el *sistema educativo social* propuesto por algunos autores (Dewey, 1916; Sen, 1992; Nussbaum, 2001; Morin, 2015; Mannheim & Campbell, 2017; Banerjee & Duflò, 2020), se podría esperar formar un nuevo sistema integrado amplio y sólido de educación democrática y desarrollo humano, tramite una concertación de diferentes agencias educativas que se muevan en un terreno de diálogo fructífero y abierto, de pluralismo y de respeto al ser humano (Merico, 2019; Casavecchia, 2022; Canta, 2023).

Aceptar los retos que está planteando el protagonismo de las mujeres y los procesos culturales y educativos significa repensar una sociedad inclusiva, abierta, donde los prejuicios no tengan cabida, significa reconocer la importancia de todas las personas en las esferas pública y privada. Este proceso abre una crisis de las instituciones

tradicionales, de las sociedades, de las normas y valores que hasta ahora sólo se pensaban para los hombres y que ahora necesitan un *renovación de la sociedad* (Mannheim & Campbell Stewart, 2017). Para actuar este *renovación* es necesario comprender los valores y los modelos identitarios y educativos que fomentan una sociedad determinada: “toda la sociedad promueve un modelo ideal del yo y orienta sus opciones y estrategias educativas en esta dirección” (Gili, 2017, p. VI). Estudiar un fenómeno desde la sociología de la educación significa analizar objetivos, valores y métodos relacionados con el contexto cultural y social en el que ese fenómeno se produce; significa crear un clima educativo y democratizar la sociedad, a pesar de que también la barbaries pueden surgir en la abundancia de la educación y la democracia.

Siguiendo los pensamientos de Mannheim (1957), el conocimiento, la cultura y la educación democrática no son puntos finales, sino medios siempre vivos y válidos de construir verdades, no absolutas, sino flexibles que deconstruyen *Ideologías* estáticas en favor de posibles *Utopías* dinámicas basadas en la participación activa y el respeto de todos los seres humanos.

La participación activa, intesa como la posibilidad de las personas de ejercer el poder para influir en el estado del mundo y tener la libertad de decidir qué tipo de vida vivir (Ardigo, 1980), asume una particular importancia contestualmente como medio, porque incide en el bienestar propio, y como fin, porque se identifica como una actividad de importancia intrínseca.

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IL RUOLO DELL'ISTRUZIONE LESSICALE NELLA PROMOZIONE DELL'EQUITÀ NELLA PRIMA INFANZIA. RISULTATI EMPIRICI DA UN'INDAGINE CONDOTTA CON EDUCATORI DI NIDO E INSEGNANTI DI SCUOLA DELL'INFANZIA*

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Abstract Le competenze lessicali, possedute dai bambini già a partire dal secondo anno di vita, sono potenti predittori della loro capacità di comprensione della lettura. La letteratura scientifica in ambito educativo ha messo in luce gli effetti positivi delle pratiche di lettura ad alta voce sui processi di alfabetizzazione precoce, sull'ampliamento del vocabolario, sullo sviluppo della competenza linguistica e lessicale nei bambini a partire già dall'età prescolare. È stato dimostrato che un'istruzione ricca di vocaboli, come l'inserimento di nuovi vocaboli in discussioni estese, può essere più vantaggiosa per i bambini promuovendo competenze lessicali più sviluppate e determinando il successo e l'insuccesso del loro processo di apprendimento. Nel presente contributo vengono presentati gli esiti di un'indagine condotta nei nidi e nelle scuole dell'infanzia di Palermo, nell'anno scolastico 2022/2023 in relazione alle pratiche educative messe in atto, da educatori e insegnanti, per sviluppare e incrementare le competenze linguistiche dei bambini in età prescolare.

INTRODUZIONE

L'importanza delle competenze linguistiche fin dalla prima infanzia e le disuguaglianze che emergono in questo contesto costituiscono un argomento di rilevanza critica nel dibattito sull'istruzione e l'equità educativa. Sin dall'inizio della carriera scolastica, i bambini mostrano livelli di competenza differenziati, con conseguenti

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variazioni nelle probabilità di successo educativo (Becker, 2011). Queste disuguaglianze precoci nelle abilità cognitive sono ampiamente attribuite alle disparità nell'educazione parentale, incluse le interazioni genitore-figlio e le stimolazioni offerte all'interno dell'ambiente domestico, nonché allo status socioeconomico (SES) familiare (Cheadle, 2008; Lareau, 2011). Tuttavia, ciò solleva la questione se tali differenze nelle abilità cognitive siano inevitabili in età prescolare.

Una potenziale risposta a questa domanda potrebbe derivare dall'espansione delle opportunità educative offerte ai bambini attraverso programmi educativi precoci. La partecipazione alla scuola dell'infanzia è stata associata a notevoli effetti compensativi, con numerose ricerche che evidenziano un impatto positivo sullo sviluppo delle competenze in diverse aree (Andrew et al., 2022; Burger, 2010; Magnuson et al., 2004). Inoltre, si è osservato che i bambini svantaggiati traggono maggiori benefici dalla partecipazione alla scuola dell'infanzia rispetto ai loro coetanei più privilegiati (Magnuson et al., 2004). Pertanto, sorge la domanda se l'istruzione prescolare possa contribuire ad attenuare il divario nelle abilità cognitive durante la prima infanzia.

Le competenze linguistiche, infatti, giocano un ruolo fondamentale nel determinare il successo educativo dei bambini (Hoff, 2013; Golinkoff et al., 2019). L'analisi dello sviluppo di tali competenze è essenziale per comprendere l'ineguaglianza educativa. Il livello di competenza linguistica durante la prima infanzia rappresenta il "capitale iniziale" con cui i bambini affrontano il loro percorso educativo (Becker, 2011). Le disparità sociali nelle competenze linguistiche dei bambini in età precoce tendono a persistere nel tempo, se non ad aumentare (Feinstein, 2003). Pertanto, è cruciale esaminare attentamente questo periodo critico e valutare l'efficacia degli interventi educativi precoci nel ridurre le differenze tra i bambini di diversa estrazione sociale.

Inoltre, è fondamentale considerare il ruolo delle istituzioni educative per la prima infanzia nel plasmare le competenze linguistiche dei bambini. Le ricerche indicano che, oltre alle influenze familiari, gli ambienti educativi per la prima infanzia, con personale qualificato e materiali stimolanti, possono influenzare positivamente lo sviluppo linguistico (Burger, 2010; Barnett, 2011). È quindi cruciale comprendere le prospettive e le pratiche adottate dagli educatori e dagli insegnanti per formulare strategie educative efficaci e mirate a favorire lo sviluppo linguistico e lessicale fin dalla prima infanzia. In questo contesto, infatti, i servizi educativi per la prima infanzia assumono un ruolo cruciale nel promuovere eque opportunità educative e nel

fornire una potenziale via di compensazione per i bambini provenienti da famiglie svantaggiate (Becker, 2011).

In risposta a questa sfida, il presente contributo si propone di esaminare le percezioni degli operatori rispetto alle loro pratiche educative finalizzate alla promozione linguistica e all'istruzione lessicale. Nello specifico, vengono presentati i risultati di una prima rilevazione condotta presso i nidi e le scuole dell'infanzia di Palermo durante l'anno scolastico 2022/2023 per indagare l'importanza attribuita dagli educatori e dagli insegnanti all'incremento di queste specifiche competenze nei bambini già dalla prima infanzia.

LETTURA E SVILUPPO DEL VOCABOLARIO LINGUISTICO NELLA PRIMA INFANZIA

Il linguaggio è un'abilità essenziale nello sviluppo della persona che permea ogni fase della vita, dalla prima infanzia alla senilità e, se considerato nella sua accezione più evoluta, rappresenta una caratteristica peculiare dell'essere umano. La ricerca sullo sviluppo linguistico nei primi anni di vita ha arricchito in modo significativo le conoscenze sui meccanismi, sui fattori e sulle traiettorie di sviluppo delle diverse componenti linguistiche (Saxton, 2010). L'acquisizione lessicale è un processo complesso ed esteso che coinvolge l'integrazione di conoscenze fonologiche (i suoni sono il centro di questo sottosistema e sono peculiari e specifici per ogni lingua e corrispondono alle parole e quindi alle idee che il soggetto vuole esprimere); semantiche (i rapporti tra significante e significato); morfologiche (comprende le parole e i loro meccanismi di formazione) e sintattiche (studiare le regole secondo cui si combinano le parole nel formare frasi). L'istruzione del vocabolario, nello specifico, dovrebbe essere più che semplicemente identificare o etichettare le parole. Piuttosto, dovrebbe supportare i bambini nella costruzione delle parole e nel riconoscerne il significato, usandole in un discorso significativo e coinvolgente.

I servizi per la prima infanzia, a questo proposito, rivestono un ruolo molto importante per lo sviluppo del vocabolario del bambino, attivando processi di comunicazione interpersonale per far comprendere al bambino i concetti espressi attraverso i codici simbolici che caratterizzano il linguaggio verbale (Bruner, 1983).

Nei contesti educativi dedicati alla prima infanzia, nella relazione tra educatore e bambino, prende forma quello che Bruner (1983) definisce *format* cioè "una struttura

45 Il ruolo dell'istruzione lessicale nella promozione dell'equità nella prima infanzia. Risultati empirici da un'indagine condotta con educatori di nido e insegnanti di scuola dell'infanzia

d'interazione standardizzata", che definisce i ruoli della comunicazione e che alla fine diventano reversibili (Bruner, 1983). Nell'interazione tra adulto e bambino si instaurano dei meccanismi comunicativi per cui ad una certa azione o parola corrisponde sempre una conseguenza e questo succede ogni volta che una parola viene ripetuta (Bruner, 1983). Questo meccanismo favorisce sia l'instaurarsi di un rapporto di fiducia tra adulto e bambino, sia il passaggio dall'intenzione comunicativa alla verbalizzazione delle parole. Attraverso questa modalità di comunicazione, definita pre-intenzionale, l'adulto manda segnali di ricezione e accettazione al bambino, il quale, senza esserne consapevole, riveste il ruolo di partner comunicativo, dando così avvio alla comunicazione (D'Amico & Devescovi, 2022). Questo dialogo tra adulto e bambino è utile sia all'educatore per comprendere ciò che il bambino vuole raccontare, sia al bambino per attivare un meccanismo inconscio dello sviluppo del linguaggio.

Poiché le abilità di vocabolario nella prima infanzia sono potenti predittori delle future capacità di comprensione della lettura dei bambini e, più in generale, dell'alfabetizzazione e del successo scolastico, si ravvisa nella lettura e nella narrazione da parte dell'adulto, una pratica efficace per promuovere e sviluppare il linguaggio nella prima infanzia. La letteratura scientifica (Dale et al., 2023; Ding et al., 2023), a questo proposito, ha ampiamente dimostrato i benefici dell'attività di lettura ad alta voce, già a partire dall'età prescolare. La lettura ad alta voce, se praticata con costanza, riesce a colmare gli svantaggi e a consentire a ciascun bambino di esprimere le proprie potenzialità (Batini & Giusti, 2021).

Autori come Davidse et al. (2010), inoltre, mettono in evidenza la relazione tra le pratiche di lettura condotta dall'adulto in età prescolare e i livelli di alfabetizzazione precoce del bambino, sottolineando come le prime si configurino come fondamentali indicatori predittivi determinando una correlazione positiva tra lo sviluppo del vocabolario e l'esposizione al libro. Attraverso la lettura proposta dall'adulto, il bambino viene esposto a nuovi vocaboli che sono notevolmente più rari e complessi rispetto a quelli utilizzati nella comunicazione orale (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997), sviluppando abilità ricettive, come l'ascolto e la produzione orale (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2001). La lettura da parte dell'adulto, se opportunamente condotta offre la possibilità di riformulare e condividere emozioni, immaginare scenari ed eventi, elaborare insieme significati e sentimenti; e tutto questo è importante per comprendere come è fatta una storia, per cogliere la successione degli eventi, le motivazioni che animano i personaggi, gli snodi narrativi. La lettura condivisa, mediata da un adulto di

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riferimento, inoltre, se praticata con regolarità, contribuisce allo sviluppo del linguaggio e all'alfabetizzazione (Lennox, 2013). Questi aspetti sono condivisi da Catarsi (2011), che richiama l'attenzione anche su un altro aspetto interessante, il fatto che attraverso la lettura da parte dell'adulto si facilita nel bambino la creazione di immagini mentali, che giocano un ruolo rilevante sia ai fini dello svilupparsi della competenza creativa, sia ai fini dell'arricchimento della capacità simbolica che il bambino, crescendo, va via via creandosi.

La lettura, dunque, è una pratica essenziale per sviluppare il vocabolario linguistico dei bambini in età prescolare e per promuovere i sottosistemi del linguaggio (Husain, 2015) in relazione ai processi cognitivi e sociali. Questo è importante dal punto di vista dell'apprendimento (Dettori & Morselli, 2007) in quanto connota la lettura come pratica educativa orientata alla formazione e allo sviluppo olistico del bambino (Pulvirenti, 2005).

A partire da questi presupposti teorici, la lettura non può e non deve essere pensata semplicemente come un'azione educativa per consentire al bambino di organizzare le informazioni, ma deve supportarlo nel processo di organizzazione ed espressione delle proprie esperienze (Lipman, 2005).

Proprio nello sviluppo di queste competenze e in vista di una formazione olistica, la scuola e, più in generale, i servizi educativi per la prima infanzia ricoprono un ruolo fondamentale, che va oltre la formazione di base dei bambini e che è orientata a stimolare la motivazione permanente ad apprendere.

La lettura proposta all'interno dei servizi per la prima infanzia è, pertanto, una pratica efficace e immediata per costruire significati, incidendo in modo rilevante sia sul successo scolastico che sulla possibilità di apprendere, sperimentare, sviluppare e far fiorire liberamente capacità, talenti e aspirazioni di ciascun bambino.

METODO

Scopo della ricerca

L'indagine, oggetto di questo contributo, ha avuto un duplice scopo: esaminare se e in che modo gli educatori del nido e gli insegnanti della scuola dell'infanzia promuovono le abilità linguistiche nei bambini presenti nelle loro sezioni; conoscere e

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rilevare le strategie didattiche implementate dagli educatori e dagli insegnanti della scuola dell'infanzia per promuovere e migliorare le competenze lessicali dei bambini.

Con la ricerca si è voluto sia esplorare e rilevare le pratiche educative messe in atto, da educatori e insegnanti, per sviluppare e incrementare le competenze linguistiche dei bambini in età prescolare sia rilevare quanto, secondo educatori e insegnanti, fosse importante incrementare queste specifiche competenze nei bambini già a partire dalla prima infanzia.

Pertanto, la ricerca qui presentata ha proprio come oggetto l'analisi della prospettiva degli educatori e degli insegnanti di scuola dell'infanzia del territorio palermitano, sulle modalità di attuazione di interventi didattici finalizzati allo sviluppo e alla promozione delle abilità linguistiche dei bambini, rilevando le strategie didattiche maggiormente utilizzate per sviluppare il vocabolario nei bambini da 0 a 6 anni.

Partecipanti

Il campione è costituito da 67 insegnanti ed educatori dei servizi educativi per la prima infanzia, in prevalenza di genere femminile (97,0%), con un'età media pari a 42,2 anni (DS= 11,36). Riguardo il titolo di studio posseduto, dall'analisi dei dati emerge che il 4,8% di essi dichiara di possedere un dottorato di ricerca o un master di primo o secondo livello, il 53,4% una laurea magistrale, il 41,8% un diploma di scuola secondaria.

Strumento

Il questionario strutturato, la cui somministrazione è avvenuta tramite l'applicativo Google moduli, è costituito da tre parti: la prima parte volta a rilevare i dati di contesto (età, genere e titolo di studio); la seconda parte è costituita da quattro domande che prevedono sia opzioni dicotomiche (sì/no) che domande aperte per consentire una più ampia esposizione delle pratiche educative adottate rispetto ai seguenti aspetti: identificazione e esplicitazione delle parole chiave prima di una sequenza didattica, opportunità di sviluppo autonomo del lessico, di richiamo e di monitoraggio; la terza parte è costituita dalle "Tecniche per la lettura ad alta voce – 27 suggerimenti per la fascia 0-6 anni" (Batini & Giusti, 2021). Questa sezione è a sua volta costituita

da tre parti: “Conquistare e sviluppare l’attenzione”; “Creare interesse per le storie e favorire la partecipazione” e “La cultura del libro”. Ogni parte dello strumento prevede un numero variabile di tecniche su comportamenti e atteggiamenti che l’educatore, durante la lettura ad alta voce, dovrebbe attivare e mantenere con lo scopo di conquistare e mantenere attiva l’attenzione dei bambini, promuovere la partecipazione e l’interesse dei piccoli ascoltatori e, infine, incoraggiare l’approccio alla storia, al racconto e alla narrazione attraverso la cultura del libro. In questa sede, è stato chiesto agli educatori e agli insegnanti che hanno partecipato alla ricerca di riferire sull’utilizzo o meno di ciascuna tecnica. Nella tabella, di seguito si riportano le “Tecniche per la lettura ad alta voce – 27 suggerimenti per la fascia 0-6 anni” e le relative sezioni (Batini & Giusti, 2021).

<i>Sezioni</i>	<i>Tecniche</i>
Parte prima – Conquistare e sviluppare l’attenzione	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Come un copione 2. L’anfitrione attento 3. Mi piaci se ti muovi 4. Immagina un po’. 5. Come un dialogo 6. Dove eravamo? 7. Il tuo formato 8. Smetti subito! 9. Ancora un minuto 10. Muoviti con la storia 11. A me gli occhi! 12. Check 13. Silenzio, si ascolta 14. Ritmo!
Parte seconda – Creare interesse per le storie e favorire la partecipazione	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Divertiti 16. Collegare all’esperienza 17. Favorisci la bibliodiversità 18. Ancora! 19. Fare le voci 20. Quattro chiacchiere 21. Una storia tira l’altra 22. Invito al disegno
Parte terza – La cultura del libro	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 23. Zona di lettura ad alta voce 24. A portata di mano 25. Una buona abitudine 26. Non finisce qui 27. Coinvolgi i genitori

Tab. 1. Tecniche per la lettura ad alta voce – 27 suggerimenti per la fascia 0-6 anni.

RISULTATI

I dati sono stati analizzati tramite i software statistici MaxQDA 2022 (per le risposte aperte) e Jamovi versione 2.5.5 (per le risposte chiuse).

Pratiche didattiche per lo sviluppo lessicale

In Tab. 2 è riportata una panoramica generale delle risposte fornite alle domande riguardanti la pratica educativa dei docenti ed educatori rispondenti al questionario in relazione allo sviluppo lessicale nei bambini in età prescolare.

<i>Domanda</i>	<i>Si (%)</i>	<i>No (%)</i>	<i>Mancante</i>
1. Raccontare storie è strettamente legato allo sviluppo del linguaggio, e lo sviluppo lessicale in particolare. Di solito identificate e rendete esplicite le parole da introdurre ai bambini prima di una sequenza didattica (ad esempio, una storia, una poesia, una filastrocca, una canzone)?	68,7	25,4	6
2. Di solito fornite opportunità strutturate ai bambini per utilizzare autonomamente il nuovo lessico?	67,2	28,4	4,5
3. Ci sono opportunità strutturate nella pratica didattica per riprendere il lessico acquisito nelle settimane precedenti?	70,1	22,4	7,5
4. Utilizzi strumenti e/o strategie per monitorare il progresso dello sviluppo lessicale dei bambini nella tua sezione?	71,6	26,9	1,5

Tab. 2. Distribuzione percentuale delle risposte alle domande riguardanti la pratica educativa e lo sviluppo lessicale nei bambini in età prescolare.

L'analisi delle risposte fornite dagli educatori di nido d'infanzia e docenti della scuola dell'infanzia rivela un panorama variegato di approcci riguardo alla narrazione e all'introduzione delle parole chiave prima di una sequenza didattica. Sebbene una parte dei partecipanti abbia indicato di non identificare esplicitamente le parole da introdurre (25,4%), una percentuale significativa di risposte si è concentrata sull'adozione di strategie mirate (68,7%).

In particolare, la maggior parte dei docenti e degli educatori ha dichiarato di presentare le parole chiave della storia o della sequenza didattica in corso, evidenziando un

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approccio strutturato volto a preparare i bambini all'argomento trattato. Questa pratica riflette un'impostazione intenzionale nell'inserire il lessico specifico in un contesto narrativo. È stato principalmente riferito l'utilizzo di strumenti come canzoni, poesie o filastrocche per agevolare la comprensione e la memorizzazione del lessico. Altri rispondenti hanno invece evidenziato l'importanza delle ripetizioni e delle interazioni verbali con i bambini durante la narrazione. Anche se in misura minore, alcuni docenti hanno inoltre menzionato l'importanza dell'immaginazione e della creazione di immagini visive durante la narrazione, sottolineando come la dimensione visiva possa arricchire l'esperienza narrativa e favorire una comprensione più profonda e coinvolgente delle parole chiave.

Per quanto riguarda le opportunità strutturate nella pratica didattica per riprendere il vocabolario acquisito nelle settimane precedenti, su un totale di 67 risposte, il 70,1% dei partecipanti ha indicato la presenza di tali opportunità, mentre il 22,4% ha risposto negativamente

L'analisi più dettagliata delle risposte fornite dagli educatori di nido d'infanzia e docenti della scuola dell'infanzia riguardo alle opportunità strutturate per l'utilizzo indipendente dei nuovi vocaboli da parte dei bambini rivela una gamma diversificata di approcci e strategie impiegate. Dall'analisi delle risposte esplicative fornite, prevale l'utilizzo del dialogo come mezzo per stimolare l'uso indipendente dei nuovi vocaboli, puntando quindi sulla comunicazione verbale e sull'interazione sociale per il consolidamento del lessico acquisito. Alcuni docenti/educatori riferiscono inoltre di fornire contesti differenti, familiari e significativi per ripetere i nuovi vocaboli, fornendo ai bambini esempi pratici di utilizzo all'interno di situazioni reali o di storie.

In altri casi è menzionato l'utilizzo di strategie ludiche, come il gioco, le filastrocche e le poesie, per favorire l'appropriazione autonoma dei nuovi vocaboli.

La percentuale sostanziale di risposte positive (70,1%) da parte di educatori di nido e insegnanti di scuola dell'infanzia nel fornire opportunità strutturate per il ripasso del lessico acquisito, suggerisce il riconoscimento dell'importanza di consolidare e applicare il vocabolario precedentemente appreso durante le attività didattiche. Tuttavia, le risposte negative e mancanti (22,4% e 7,5% rispettivamente) indicano che potrebbero esserci delle aree di miglioramento nella pratica educativa, dove alcune opportunità di ripasso potrebbero non essere pienamente implementate o potrebbero essere considerate insufficienti dagli insegnanti e dagli educatori. L'analisi delle

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risposte degli educatori evidenzia una varietà di approcci riguardo alle occasioni strutturate per riprendere i vocaboli acquisiti nelle settimane precedenti, come il disegno e le foto, fornendo così un punto di riferimento visivo per i bambini e facilitando il processo di memorizzazione e rievocazione. Altri rispondenti hanno invece riferito di utilizzare il gioco, la ricostruzione delle storie, i movimenti o delle schede didattiche.

Nell'ambito dell'analisi delle risposte relative all'impiego di strumenti e/o strategie per monitorare il progresso dello sviluppo lessicale dei bambini nella sezione considerata, su un totale di 67 risposte, il 71,6% dei partecipanti ha dichiarato di adottare tali strumenti e/o strategie. La maggior parte dei rispondenti ha tuttavia dichiarato di non utilizzare strumenti specifici per questo scopo. Qualche docente/educatore ha invece fatto riferimento a griglie di osservazione, per registrare e valutare l'acquisizione del vocabolario nel tempo, consentendo, al tempo stesso, di tracciare il percorso di sviluppo individuale di ciascun bambino. Altri rispondenti hanno invece riferito un'impostazione più informale e naturale nel monitoraggio dei progressi linguistici, quali ad esempio l'osservazione non strutturata e l'ascolto attivo durante le attività quotidiane.

Tecniche utilizzate nella pratica didattica per la lettura ad alta voce

La frequenza con cui vengono lette storie ad alta voce ai bambini e alle bambine è risultata essere diversificata tra i rispondenti (Figura 1). La maggioranza dei docenti e degli educatori ha indicato di leggere storie una volta al giorno (40%) o due/tre volte a settimana (37%). Rispetto alla durata delle sessioni di lettura, la media è stata calcolata a 18,09 minuti (SD=9,21), evidenziando una discreta variabilità nella lunghezza delle sessioni.

Nell'esplorazione delle tecniche adottate per favorire l'attenzione durante la lettura (Fig. 2), emergono dati particolarmente rilevanti che riflettono l'approccio e l'attenzione dedicati all'interazione con i bambini (Fig. 2). La Tecnica 4, "Immagina un po'", si distingue per la sua ampia adozione, con il 58,2% dei rispondenti che ne fa uso. Questo risultato suggerisce un forte interesse nel coinvolgere i bambini attraverso l'uso delle immagini e la stimolazione della curiosità per facilitare l'immersione nella storia fin dalla copertina del libro.

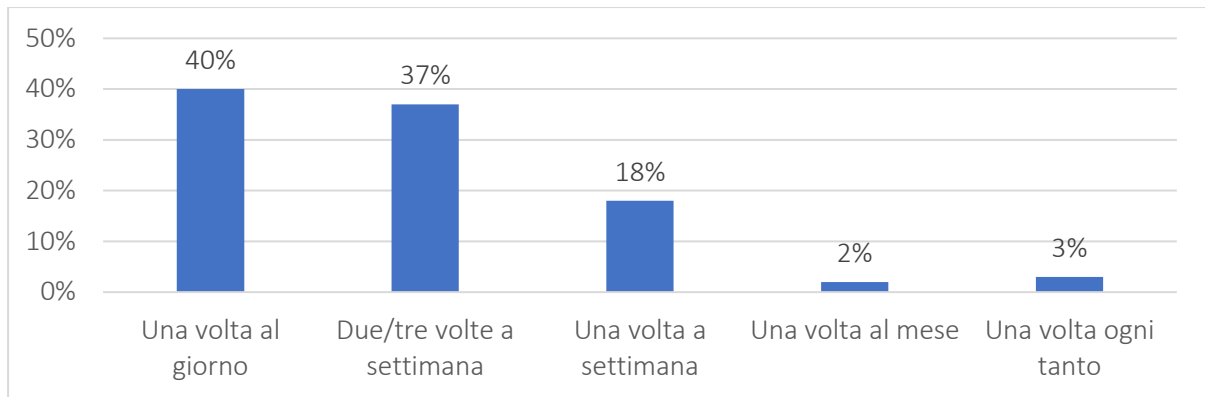


Fig. 1. Distribuzione delle frequenze percentuali della lettura di storie ad alta voce ai bambini e alle bambine tra i rispondenti.

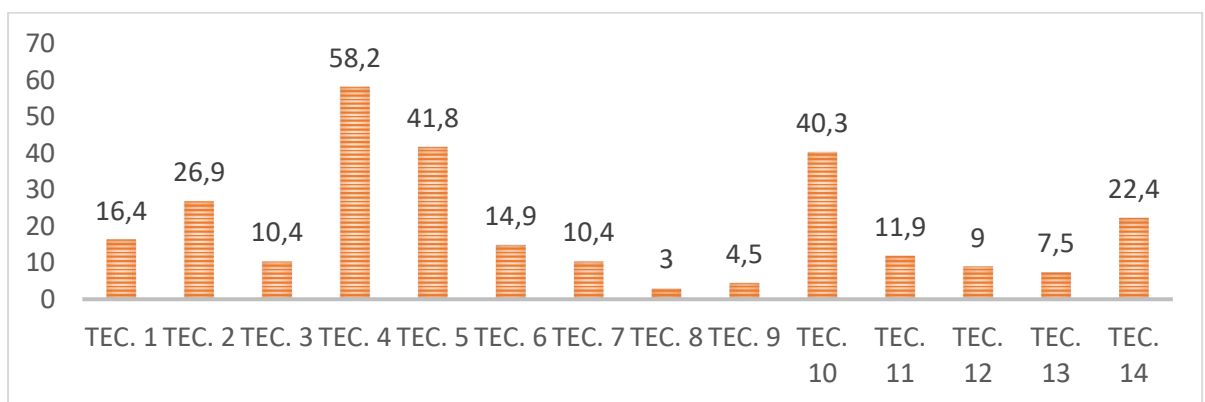


Fig. 2. Distribuzione delle frequenze percentuali di utilizzo delle tecniche "Conquistare e sviluppare l'attenzione tra i rispondenti.

Allo stesso modo, la Tecnica 5, "Come un dialogo", riscontrando un'adozione significativa dal 41,8% dei rispondenti, sottolinea l'importanza di trasformare la lettura in un'esperienza interattiva, favorendo una connessione più profonda con le esperienze di vita dei bambini, rendendo la lettura un momento di condivisione e partecipazione attiva.

Infine, la frequenza del 40,3% per la Tecnica 10, "Muoviti con la storia", evidenzia l'attenzione posta sull'aspetto fisico e gestuale durante la lettura. L'integrazione di gesti, movimenti ed espressioni facciali non solo rende la lettura più vivace e coinvolgente, ma favorisce anche una maggiore comprensione emotiva del testo, incoraggiando i bambini a entrare appieno nel mondo della storia.

Nell'analisi delle varie tecniche utilizzate durante le sessioni di lettura ad alta voce (Fig. 3), per creare interesse nelle storie e incoraggiare la partecipazione dei bambini,

emerge la prevalenza nell'utilizzo della Tecnica 19, "Fare le voci", che risulta essere ampiamente adottata, con il 64,2% dei rispondenti. L'interpretazione delle voci dei personaggi, l'uso del volume, del tono della voce e degli accenti contribuiscono a dare vita alle parole della storia, rendendo la lettura più interessante e coinvolgente, favorendo anche l'identificazione e l'immedesimazione con i protagonisti della narrazione. Anche a Tecnica 15, "Divertiti", si distingue per il suo ampio utilizzo, sottolineando l'importanza di trasmettere il proprio divertimento durante la lettura per suscitare interesse e coinvolgimento nei bambini. Altrettanto significativa è la Tecnica 16, "Collegare all'esperienza"; essa si concentra sulla creazione di collegamenti tra i testi letti e l'esperienza personale dei bambini, facilitando la comprensione e una maggiore partecipazione emotiva grazie all'identificazione con i personaggi della storia.

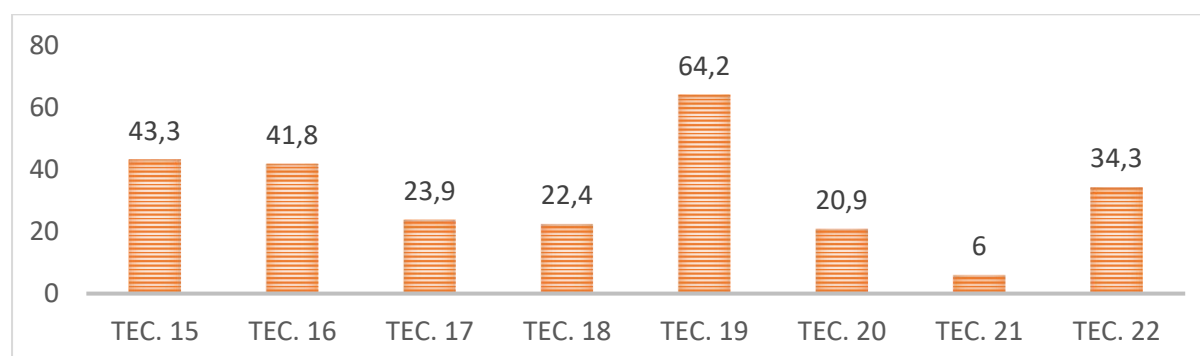


Fig. 3. Distribuzione delle frequenze percentuali di utilizzo delle tecniche "Creare interesse per le storie e favorire la partecipazione" tra i rispondenti.

Nell'analisi delle tecniche utilizzate per favorire la promozione di una cultura del libro tramite la lettura ad alta voce nei bambini (Fig. 4), alcune strategie emergono significativamente. La Tecnica 23, "Zona di lettura ad alta voce", risulta essere ampiamente adottata, con il 53,7% dei rispondenti che condivide l'importanza di creare uno spazio protetto e confortevole dedicato alla lettura, che favorisca l'ascolto attento e contribuisca a stabilire una routine piacevole e significativa per i bambini. Anche, la Tecnica 25, "Una buona abitudine", adottata dal 50,7% dei partecipanti, riflette l'importanza di trasformare la lettura ad alta voce in un'abitudine quotidiana desiderata dai bambini, stabilendo una routine definita e ritualizzata che valorizzi l'atto stesso di leggere insieme. Infine, la Tecnica 24, "A portata di mano", viene adottata dal 43,3% dei rispondenti, evidenziando l'importanza di garantire l'accesso continuo ai libri, creando un angolo dedicato facilmente raggiungibile anche per i bambini più

piccoli. Questo approccio favorisce l'esplorazione sensoriale e l'autonomia nella scelta dei libri.

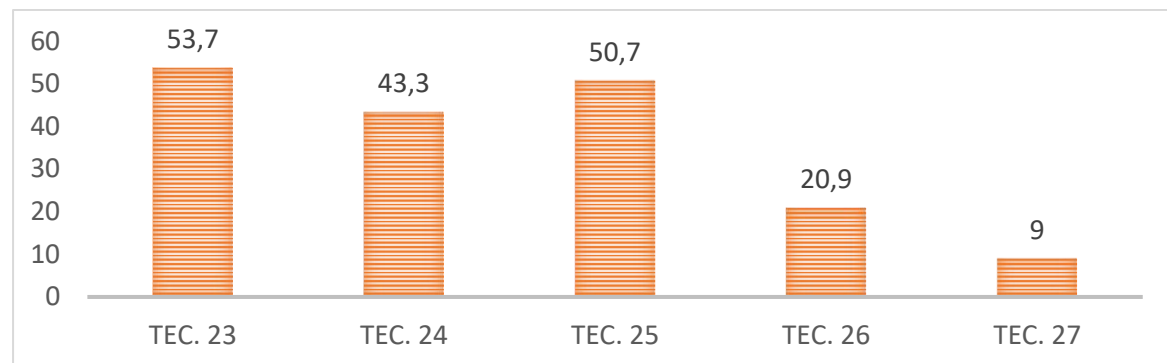


Fig. 4. Distribuzione delle frequenze percentuali di utilizzo delle tecniche "La cultura del libro" tra i rispondenti.

Tuttavia, vi sono alcune tecniche meno utilizzate, come la Tecnica 27, "Coinvolgi i genitori", adottata solo dal 9,10% dei partecipanti. Questo suggerisce che, sebbene coinvolgere i genitori nelle iniziative di promozione della lettura sia importante, potrebbe non essere stata una priorità per i rispondenti.

DISCUSSIONE

Complessivamente, emerge una ricchezza di approcci e pratiche che gli educatori e i docenti della scuola dell'infanzia riferiscono di adottare per favorire lo sviluppo linguistico e lessicale dei bambini in età prescolare.

Nell'analisi dei dati raccolti sulle tecniche utilizzate per promuovere la lettura ad alta voce nei bambini, emergono alcune tendenze che sono in linea con le evidenze della letteratura internazionale di ricerca sull'argomento. In particolare, l'adozione delle tecniche che favoriscono la creazione di uno spazio dedicato alla lettura, come la "Zona di lettura ad alta voce" e la garanzia che i libri siano "A portata di mano", rispecchia la riconosciuta importanza di un ambiente fisico stimolante e accessibile per promuovere l'interesse e l'abitudine alla lettura fin dalla prima infanzia (Lennox, 2013; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002).

Inoltre, l'adozione delle tecniche che mirano a rendere la lettura ad alta voce un'abitudine consolidata e l'inclusione della lettura in attività correlate, riflette la

comprensione diffusa dell'importanza di integrare la lettura nella vita quotidiana dei bambini per sostenere lo sviluppo del linguaggio e della comprensione (Ding et al., 2023).

Tuttavia, i dati evidenziano anche alcune aree in cui potrebbe esserci spazio per un maggiore allineamento con le raccomandazioni della letteratura. Ad esempio, mentre la creazione di una "Zona di lettura ad alta voce" è ampiamente adottata, la partecipazione dei genitori nelle iniziative di promozione della lettura risulta essere meno comune. Questo contrasto potrebbe essere indicativo di una potenziale opportunità di miglioramento, poiché numerosi studi hanno evidenziato il ruolo cruciale dei genitori nell'incoraggiare e sostenere le abilità linguistiche dei bambini (Barone et al., 2023).

In conclusione, i dati raccolti confermano molti dei principi e delle pratiche raccomandate dalla ricerca internazionale sulla promozione della lettura ad alta voce nei bambini, ma indicano anche possibili aree di intervento per migliorare ulteriormente le pratiche attuali e massimizzare i benefici per lo sviluppo linguistico e cognitivo dei bambini.

Tuttavia, è importante considerare con cautela tali risultati, in quanto potrebbero essere influenzati dalla desiderabilità sociale delle risposte, con gli educatori e i docenti che potrebbero tendere a segnalare un maggior utilizzo di pratiche educative considerate socialmente accettate o auspicabili.

CONCLUSIONI

Nel complesso, i risultati di questa indagine suggeriscono alcune linee guida per il miglioramento delle pratiche educative nel contesto della lettura ad alta voce nei bambini in età prescolare. Prima di tutto, sarebbe auspicabile espandere l'indagine su tutto il territorio nazionale al fine di ottenere una rappresentazione più completa delle pratiche adottate e delle sfide incontrate dagli educatori e dagli insegnanti in diverse regioni. Questo approccio consentirebbe di identificare eventuali variazioni regionali nelle strategie educative e di sviluppare interventi mirati per migliorare l'efficacia della promozione della lettura ad alta voce nei contesti educativi.

In secondo luogo, è evidente la necessità di promuovere corsi di formazione specifici per gli insegnanti di scuola dell'infanzia e gli educatori di nido al fine di migliorare le loro competenze e conoscenze nella promozione della lettura ad alta voce.

Infine, future ricerche potrebbero considerare il passaggio da un approccio basato su questionari autovalutativi a un'osservazione strutturata dei contesti educativi. Questo consentirebbe di ottenere una comprensione più approfondita delle pratiche effettive di lettura ad alta voce e dei fattori che influenzano l'efficacia di tali pratiche. Attraverso l'osservazione diretta, sarebbe possibile valutare in modo più accurato il coinvolgimento dei bambini, l'efficacia delle strategie educative adottate e l'impatto sullo sviluppo del linguaggio e della letteratura nei bambini in età prescolare.

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L'ÉCOLE ENTRE COMMUNS ET "HORS DU COMMUN"

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Abstract Cet article confronte le projet radicalement démocratique de réalisation d'une école des communs (Laval & Vergne, 2021; Dupeyron, 2024) à l'existence concrète de secteurs scolaires "hors du commun", contrôlés par les classes dominantes mais vérifiant paradoxalement certains critères d'une vie scolaire autogérée, communautaire et coopérative. En effet, si tout laisse penser que la démocratie n'a pas encore stabilisé une école conforme à ses principes, alors l'application à la forme scolaire des principes et des pratiques des communs peut permettre de dessiner la silhouette émergente d'une école conçue selon les trois axes majeurs des communs : la maîtrise populaire des ressources éducatives partagées, l'existence d'une communauté égalitaire souveraine et l'activité coopérative autogestionnaire comme formule générale de la politique. Toutefois, une enquête ethnographique menée dans des écoles très privilégiées de l'enseignement secondaire français (Pittet, 2017) montre que ces "ghettos dorés" vérifient les implications éducatives et académiques du "néolibéralisme", entendu ici comme une révolution anthropologique globale dans les sociétés occidentales, et donc comme une manière spécifique de mettre les subjectivités au travail. Or, l'observation de la vie scolaire qui se déroule dans ces espaces construits par et pour les dominants y révèle la construction pratique de formes très importantes de "solidarité" et de "coopération" au sein des classes privilégiées, comme formes d'adhésion et de consentement aux rationalités néolibérales, ce qui confirme que la construction d'une école publique fondée sur les principes du "commun" est entravée, plus qu'on ne le pense, par la puissance éducative du projet néolibéral de vies "hors du commun".

INTRODUCTION

La période contemporaine n'est nullement marquée par une "fin de l'histoire", comme avaient essayé de le faire croire certains penseurs néolibéraux après la chute du Bloc de l'Est en 1989-1991 (Fukuyama, 1992). Au contraire, la montée en puissance de phénomènes inquiétants semble s'accélérer à l'échelle de l'humanité : crise anthropocénique, hégémonie capitaliste et frénésie extractiviste, ethno-nationalismes et pathologies identitaires, conflits militaires, illibéralisme et "sortie de la démocratie" (Dardot & Laval, 2016), etc.

Face à ces évolutions, dont certaines ouvrent vers de graves atteintes à l'intégrité de l'humanité, un grand nombre de résistances et de projets alternatifs se réfèrent, de façon variable, au modèle des *communs*, afin que les populations puissent récupérer la maîtrise de leur destin et bâtir souverainement des sociétés centrées sur une démocratie sociale et écologique entendue comme forme concrète de vie ou comme "mode de vie" (Dewey, 1995) et non pas simplement comme cadre formel de l'action étatique. Dans cette dynamique, des réalisations scolaires originales apparaissent çà et là (telle l'école du Chiapas¹, par exemple), non sans lien avec des expériences pédagogiques passées (Dupeyron, 2020) et affirmant que l'éducation est un chantier majeur dans la construction d'un monde des communs.

Nous voulons ici, non seulement définir les contours de ce que pourrait être une *école des communs* (Laval & Vergne, 2021; Dupeyron, 2024), mais également confronter ce projet scolaire radicalement démocratique à l'existence concrète de secteurs scolaires "hors du commun", contrôlés par les classes dominantes mais vérifiant paradoxalement certains critères d'une vie scolaire autogérée, communautaire et coopérative. En effet, si tout laisse penser que la démocratie n'a pas encore stabilisé une école conforme à ses principes, alors l'application à la forme scolaire des principes et des pratiques des communs permet de dessiner la silhouette émergente d'une école conçue selon les trois axes majeurs des communs : la maîtrise populaire des ressources éducatives partagées, l'existence d'une communauté égalitaire souveraine et l'activité coopérative autogestionnaire comme formule générale de la politique.

Toutefois, une enquête ethnographique menée dans des écoles très privilégiées de l'enseignement secondaire français (Pittet, 2017) montre que ces "ghettos dorés" vérifient les implications éducatives et académiques du "néolibéralisme", entendu ici comme une révolution anthropologique globale dans les sociétés occidentales, et donc comme une manière spécifique de mettre les subjectivités au travail. Or, l'observation de la vie scolaire qui se déroule dans ces espaces construits *par* et *pour* les dominants révèle la construction pratique de formes très importantes de "solidarité" et de "coopération" au sein des classes privilégiées, comme formes d'adhésion et de consentement aux rationalités néolibérales, ce qui confirme que la construction d'une école publique fondée sur les principes du "commun" est

¹ Le Chiapas est une des trente-deux régions administratives du Mexique. Il s'agit d'une région rurale pauvre dont la population, depuis 1994, vit une expérience d'autogouvernement dans le cadre du mouvement zapatiste.

entravée, plus qu'on ne le pense, par la puissance éducative du projet néolibéral de vies "hors du commun".

Après avoir rappelé ce que recouvre le modèle politique des communs (1), nous étudierons le profil d'une école des communs (2) distincte à la fois des écoles privées et des écoles étatiques, qui trop souvent fonctionnent principalement selon l'intérêt des dominants, alors que l'école commune pourrait constituer la principale maison d'éducation populaire. Puis nous confronterons ce modèle émergent à une étude de terrain sur l'école "hors du commun" telle que la font fonctionner les classes dominantes pour leur seul intérêt (3).

1. LES COMMUNS

Les concepts de *Commun* et de *communs* sont sortis du cercle des spécialistes pour nourrir des usages plus vastes, notamment dans les domaines de la politique, de l'écologie et des actions "citoyennes", au sens large et imprécis du terme. Ils accompagnent souvent des alternatives au capitalisme souhaitant également se distinguer des socialismes d'État et de l'étatisation autoritaire des réponses aux problèmes des populations.

Ce processus de popularisation d'une référence conceptuelle, inévitablement, ne va pas sans confusions. S'il est désormais possible de parler d'une "rhétorique des communs", c'est bien parce que ceux-ci sont parfois mis à toutes les sauces. Ils sont, par exemple, censés désigner de façon idyllique les modes de vie précoloniaux sur différents continents, ou même la quasi-totalité de la vie rurale dans l'Europe précapitaliste. Or, le fait que le mode de vie communautaire ait été longtemps une donnée anthropologique saillante dans les sociétés préindustrielles, avant que l'essor du capitalisme implique la primauté des modes de vie individualisés et de la propriété privée, ne saurait conduire à la sublimation des sociétés rurales et traditionnelles, qu'il est déraisonnable de ranger dans une seule et même catégorie d'organisations sociales et de laver de tout soupçon concernant l'égalité des sexes, la démocratie dialogique, le partage inclusif et égalitaire des ressources et du pouvoir, le patriarcat, la condition des enfants, etc. Vivre dans une communauté, ce n'est pas nécessairement vivre *selon les communs*.

Nous devons aussi nous défier de l'utilisation du concept de commun par des politiques institutionnelles quand celles-ci prétendent mettre certains secteurs d'activité

et certaines ressources à l’abri du marché, mais refusent d’en confier la maîtrise à l’action populaire. C’est souvent au nom des “biens communs” et de “l’intérêt commun” que sont menées des politiques autoritaires, qu’elles soient ou non acceptées par une majorité de la population, comme s’il s’agissait de sauver celle-ci d’elle-même en décidant à sa place.

Enfin, différents types de communautarismes pourraient eux aussi se réclamer – mais à tort – d’une forme de communs (culturels, sociaux, religieux ou identitaires). Ces visions du monde social réduisent les communs au domaine de “ceux qui se ressemblent” et qui doivent partager un même intérêt, ce qui les autoriserait à mener une vie peu ou prou séparée du reste de la population. Bien souvent, on peut certes y retrouver certains éléments de coopération, de solidarité, de préservation du monde commun, de primauté des intérêts de la population (la classe sociale ou la communauté religieuse, par exemple) qui *semblent* relever du registre des communs mais qui s’en distinguent par l’application de principes de hiérarchisation et de cloisonnement sociaux, comme va le montrer l’étude sur les ghettos scolaires dorés.

Or, les communs ne désignent pas *ce que nous sommes*, comme si, pour vivre ensemble, il fallait nécessairement partager des critères anthropologiques, culturels ou sociologiques homogènes, mais *ce que nous faisons* ensemble pour administrer collectivement notre vie partagée dans une même société. Une société des communs n’est donc pas l’incarnation d’une communauté close et exclusive fondée sur une identité rejetant les “autres” hors du monde commun privatif, mais constitue un réseau dynamique de relations et de coopération créant une vie commune inclusive et autogérée, ou encore, comme le dit Silvia Federici : les communs réalisent “la production de nous-mêmes comme d’un sujet commun” sans hiérarchie ni distinction (Federici, 2022, p. 161).

La rhétorique des communs porte donc au moins trois risques majeurs : la projection idéaliste vers des sociétés rurales anciennes; la récupération institutionnelle sous la forme d’une gestion non-démocratique des “biens communs”; le séparatisme communautariste, identitaire ou sociologique. Pour déjouer ces pièges, il faut leur opposer terme à terme et *a minima* trois éléments d’une définition des communs incluant : la matérialité d’une création permanente (les communs, ce n’est pas un modèle, mais une *question* appelant l’invention collective de réponses *actuelles*); l’autogestion populaire (les communs, c’est le pouvoir direct de toute la population en tant que sujet collectif dialogique); et l’inclusion potentiellement universelle (les communs, c’est *nous toutes et nous tous*, nos vies et nos corps assemblés). C’est donc

une définition en triptyque que propose Massimo De Angelis (2022, 195-198). Selon lui, les communs sont des organisations sociales rassemblant trois axes interconnectés : un *périmètre commun de ressources*, une *communauté sociale* et un *faire en commun*.

Le premier axe est celui auquel est parfois réduite la question des communs. Il pose l'existence d'un *ensemble commun* de ressources naturelles ou artificielles [*commonwealth*] utilisées, voire détenues en commun, car jugées indispensables pour la résolution des problèmes de la population. Les communs désignent un ensemble de choses (les "biens communs") et de services (les "services communs") placés à l'abri de toute privatisation totale et de toute marchandisation. Ils ne peuvent être, ni le motif d'une réserve privée, ni le motif d'un accès conditionné par une procédure commerciale ou par la possession d'un statut social particulier. Ils se définissent ainsi par une forme de maîtrise collective de ressources universellement accessibles. "L'accès égalitaire aux moyens essentiels de (re)production doit être au fondement de la vie dans les communs", confirme Silvia Federici (2022, pp. 139-140). On pourrait ainsi envisager de démultiplier dans la société le couplage entre l'octroi à chacun d'une forme de garantie communautaire dans l'accès aux ressources et une activité des communs qui corresponde à cette garantie, soit : une sécurité sociale de l'alimentation, du travail, du loisir, etc., comme il peut exister une sécurité sociale de la santé. L'école des communs serait donc la forme sociale permettant l'accès à une éducation commune entendue comme une ressource partagée pour la connaissance et l'épanouissement individuel et collectif.

Le deuxième axe est constitué par l'existence concrète d'une communauté de *coopérants* [*commoners*] autogérant le monde commun par un jeu d'obligations et de droits démocratiquement partagés. Un *commoner*, en anglais, est d'abord une *roturière* ou un *roturier*, un homme banal ou une femme banale, une *personne du commun*. C'est "n'importe qui", à la différence des individus distingués par leur appartenance à un groupe social dominant ou séparatiste. En ce sens, l'utilisation des ressources communes ne peut se faire que dans une organisation sociale expurgée des ségrégations et des discriminations sociales. Il ne s'agit donc pas de proposer une communauté close, un entre-soi "ethnique" ou sociologique, ou encore le repli sur une communauté historique auto-proclamée et incluant des inégalités. Le principe des communs, justement, doit subsumer les différences sous une appartenance à un seul et même groupement social : la communauté de celles et ceux qui vivent nécessairement *ensemble* dès lors qu'ils ont à partager les mêmes ressources, avec les droits et

les obligations qui vont avec. Le seul critère d'appartenance à la société des *commoners*, c'est le fait d'exister, d'être là, de se présenter avec son corps, sa matérialité, son histoire et sa dignité. Les communs reposent donc sur la communauté de ceux qui, à la limite, *n'ont rien en commun*, excepté le fait d'avoir à vivre ensemble. On voit ici que le fondement matériel de la communauté est essentiellement *territorial*. Les *commoners* ne sont pas ceux qui se ressemblent ou ceux qui se choisissent, ils sont *ceux qui sont présents ensemble dans un même espace*. Ainsi, la communauté est un ensemble de relations sociales égalitaires, pas une simple collection d'individus. Son incarnation territoriale la plus évidente est la *commune*, comme l'ont montré de nombreuses expériences historiques.

Le troisième axe réside dans l'usage d'une *praxis* populaire qui oriente les communs par les principes de co-activité, de co-opération autogestionnaire et d'usages partagés, qui se situent au fondement de l'obligation politique. L'institution démocratique des communs est toujours l'effet concret des *pratiques* de la mise en commun. Les communs, dans cette optique, se concrétisent quand "les hommes s'engagent ensemble dans une même tâche et produisent, en agissant ainsi, des normes morales et juridiques qui règlent leur action" (Dardot & Laval, 2014, p. 23). De ce fait, les communs se matérialisent surtout par des pratiques du *faire en commun* [le *commoning*]. Ces pratiques supposent l'invention autonome de règles de fonctionnement et d'obligations relatives à la coopération sociale, notamment quant à la contribution de chacune et de chacun à l'action commune, et quant aux modalités d'accès aux ressources. Le mot *commun* désigne donc le principe politique d'une co-obligation pour celles et ceux qui sont engagés dans une même activité, dans un agir commun qui produit de façon immanente ses propres normes morales et juridiques, sans qu'un pouvoir transcendant le corps social ait à gouverner celui-ci.

On saisit sur ce point le lien de consubstantialité entre les pratiques des communs et les formes variées de démocratie directe ou participative, voire de communalisme libertaire, puisque les prises de décisions collectives supposent une forme de dilution du pouvoir dans l'activité dialogique universelle, ce qui s'accompagne de procédures politiques que les mouvements populaires expérimentèrent souvent : universalité d'accès à la parole et à la décision, transparence et contrôle communautaire de l'exercice des responsabilités, délégation partielle et momentanée de pouvoir à des commis de confiance porteurs de mandats consentis et délimités, révocabilité et rotation fréquente des mandats, proximité immédiate des mandataires et des mandatés, "horizontalité" du pouvoir, discutabilité universelle des affaires

communes, etc. En un mot : les communs impliquent, autant que faire se peut, une autogestion populaire.

2. L'ÉCOLE ET L'ÉDUCATION DES COMMUNS

Il faut maintenant affronter le défi de la définition d'une école placée sous l'égide des communs. En effet, on peut supposer qu'il n'existe guère, au sein des formes scolaires institutionnelles ou privées, d'école commune de l'universalité des droits humains, de l'écopédagogie et de la démocratie accomplie (sans domination ni discrimination), car la vie scolaire imposée aux élèves ne permet pas à ceux-ci d'expérimenter une pratique de ces enjeux majeurs de l'éducation. Cette école à venir pourrait être *l'école des communs* : là se situe sans doute "la révolution scolaire à venir" (Laval & Vergne, 2021).

Pour en esquisser la silhouette, nous empruntons ici à quatre sources principales : les théories actuelles des communs; plusieurs pédagogies ouvrières et émancipatrices (par exemple celles des socialismes français du 19^e siècle, mais aussi celle de Paulo Freire); des expériences scolaires effectives (au Chiapas, dans le cadre du MST², à l'école de la Commune de Paris en 1871, etc.); des pensées de l'éducation connectées au projet d'une démocratie comme forme concrète de vie (Dewey, 2011; Ingold, 2018). Dans le cadre de ce texte, nous n'en donnerons qu'un aperçu en cinq points.

- a) Commençons par préciser ce que nous entendons par le concept d'"école". Selon une approche matérialiste et historique, une école est une *forme sociale* organisée en vue de remplir certaines *fonctions* pédagogiques ou éducatives. Selon les principes des communs, cette forme sociale ne saurait être une *institution*, entendue comme un dispositif pérenne organisant la vie commune en imposant aux individus des systèmes de normes pour encadrer leur mode de vie (État, Église, École, Famille, Parti, etc.). Dans l'esprit des communs, il ne saurait y avoir d'institution détentrice du monopole sur le pouvoir éducatif commun et agissant à la place de la population. Tout au plus peut-il exister

² Le MST est le mouvement des travailleurs ruraux sans-terre du Brésil le plus connu, mais il n'est pas le seul à incarner les luttes paysannes en vue d'une répartition plus justes des terres cultivables. Il y a quelques années, le MST comptabilisait déjà plus de 2000 écoles proposant un cursus plus ou moins complet selon les situations. Cet effort éducatif est conforme à un des mots d'ordre du mouvement : " pour que chaque Sans-terre étudie ! "

une administration fédérale, veillant sur les principes des communs et assistant de façon coordonnée les expériences des populations. C'est en ce sens que l'école des communs est une maison d'éducation où la population s'éduque en commun, et non une institution gouvernant verticalement le savoir.

- b) L'école des communs est un lieu d'enquête sociale et de formation populaire, car elle est *épistémiquement* nécessaire pour l'étude commune des problèmes de la population, de la communication et de la compréhension. Autrement dit : elle est le service commun de la production populaire de connaissances et de culture. Elle n'est plus le lieu de la *diffusion* paternaliste des connaissances sur fond de tri social, mais le lieu de la *construction coopérative* et du *partage* des connaissances. L'école des communs ne doit donc pas être une école contrôlant la vie éducative et pédagogique des populations, mais une formation sociale par laquelle la vie des populations exerce elle-même la fonction épistémique, cette autogestion ne concernant bien sûr que *la partie commune* de l'éducation.
- c) Ainsi, cette école est une *école pour la vie*. Cela signifie qu'elle se met au service de l'entretien de la vie des populations, de sa production et de sa reproduction, et qu'elle est une des principales pratiques coopératives de la vie humaine. Elle a donc pour fonction primordiale de travailler sur la *relation sociale* entre individus et entre groupes, et sur la *relation épistémique et écologique* à la réalité et aux problèmes que celle-ci suscite. La vie scolaire est donc une vie de convivialité (relations sociales) et une vie de co-compréhension attentive de la réalité (relations épistémiques et écologiques). Nous appelons ici "relation épistémique" l'établissement de liens de compréhension et de connaissance entre les populations, leur vie et leur environnement proche ou lointain, et "relation écologique" l'établissement de liens respectueux de l'interdépendance de l'humain et de son environnement.
- d) Poser l'école des communs en tant que centre actif d'éducation populaire, c'est admettre qu'elle ne soit pas simplement le lieu où la population éduque ses enfants, mais qu'elle soit potentiellement ouverte à toutes les générations, dans des usages partagés des outils de la fonction épistémique (documentation, médias, matériel, espaces d'étude, de discussion et d'exercice, etc.). On peut même imaginer que l'école devienne le lieu où vivent les enquêtes sociales par lesquelles la population se saisit de ses problèmes.

Par exemple, les enquêtes sur les méga-bassines de rétention d'eau, sur l'accueil des migrants, sur les féminicides, sur l'économie de subsistance, etc., seraient sans doute plus en sécurité dans un lieu épistémique autogéré et inclusif, au lieu d'être dévolues à une minorité politique et/ou technocratique sous influence des groupes de pression.

- e) En ce sens, l'éducation scolaire des communs se déroule sur un "mode mineur" (Ingold, 2018) : elle ne vise pas l'installation forcée d'une essence humaine prédéterminée mais admet que le sens de la vie humaine n'est pas réductible à un état particulier ou à un aboutissement prédéfini. Il est plutôt dans le fait même de *pouvoir devenir*, d'être adaptable, autocréateur, attentif au monde et relié interactivement à celui-ci. Dewey ne dit rien d'autre quand il définit l'éducation comme la formation et l'entretien d'une capacité de continuer de s'éduquer. Elle n'est pas *principalement* la transmission du résultat d'expériences passées et extérieures, et son enjeu principal n'est pas de prédéterminer l'expérience de l'avenir; au contraire, elle vise surtout à préserver *l'avenir de l'expérience*, en expurgeant celle-ci de ses freins historiques : les dominations sociales, sexistes, racialisées, coloniales, validistes, etc.

Ce modeste et incomplet aperçu suggère ce que pourrait donner la volonté de transformer l'école en un milieu de vie *congruent* avec ses propres principes émancipateurs et communs, *transactionnel* (animé par le souci de relations multiformes aux autres, aux choses, à la nature), épistémiquement *critique* et *pragmatiste*, et soucieux du bien-vivre de la population – le *buen vivir* que beaucoup de luttes décoloniales sud-américaines revendiquent comme alternative à la folie de l'extractivisme et du productivisme capitalistes, ceux-ci impliquant au contraire une gestion oppressive des corps et des êtres (Ceceña, 2012, p. 128).

3. L'ÉCOLE HORS DU COMMUN

L'expérience au sein des écoles construites selon des logiques hermétiques aux principes des communs devrait, en toute logique, s'opposer terme à terme au profilage scolaire que nous venons de proposer. Or, nous allons justement montrer que la réalité de certaines écoles "hors du commun" est bien plus complexe et surprenante.

En effet, toutes les révolutions se jouent dans un conflit dynamique entre des forces contradictoires où il est toujours nécessaire, pour définir un idéal comme pour engager sa réalisation, d'identifier clairement les logiques adverses et de bien comprendre les mécanismes à travers lesquels ces logiques opèrent dans le réel. Le "néolibéralisme", compris comme une dynamique globale d'adaptation des institutions et des individus à des logiques économiques et concurrentielles, porte à l'évidence une part importante des forces les plus contraires à toutes les révolutions possibles vers une "école des communs". Les études critiques en sciences humaines et sociales ont accumulé sur ce sujet, notamment en prolongeant les analyses foucaaldiennes du biopouvoir, une somme considérable de connaissances qui permettent d'établir en la matière un diagnostic des logiques adverses que l'on peut dire très avancé et approfondi. Mais si cette "nouvelle raison du monde" (Dardot & Laval, 2010) réorganise toute notre existence, des structures les plus objectives de notre monde social jusqu'à nos intimités les plus subjectives, il reste qu'elle ne s'impose pas partout et pour tout le monde de la même façon en produisant les mêmes effets, et que ces variations sont essentielles à prendre en compte, notamment sur le terrain de l'école, où nous pensons qu'une part importante des implications scolaires et éducatives du néolibéralisme peut largement échapper à notre compréhension, parce que nous dirigeons trop rarement la focale vers les lieux et les publics scolaires qui sont les mieux "placés" pour tirer de ces reconfigurations scolaires néolibérales le plus d'avantages et de profits. Pour cette raison, nous proposons de prolonger nos réflexions concernant l'"école des communs" en nous appuyant sur une enquête conduite dans les marges "dorées" de l'enseignement secondaire français; des collèges et lycées caractérisés par une concentration exceptionnelle de publics issus des classes dominantes.

Si nous disons au sujet de ces écoles et des vies scolaires qui s'y déroulent qu'elles sont "hors du commun", ce n'est pas uniquement en raison du caractère rare et privilégié des conditions de scolarisation que l'on rencontre sur ce terrain; elles ne concernent en effet qu'une proportion très infime de la population scolarisée à ce niveau d'enseignement, une part tout aussi insignifiante quantitativement parlant des établissements qui le composent, et elles diffèrent qualitativement et de manière significative de celles que l'institution réserve, si l'on peut dire, au commun des mortels. Mais ce terrain est aussi "hors du commun" à la façon d'un parfait contre-exemple dans le cadre de cet article; il compte parmi ces lieux de notre monde social qui sont les plus éloignés du "commun" tel que nous l'avons défini ci-dessus, en

raison notamment des formes radicales de clôture et d'entre-soi social, culturel et même ethnique qui le caractérisent, mais pas seulement. Ces écoles sont encore hors du commun parce qu'elles sont plus engagées que d'autres dans la sélection et la formation des élites scolaires, au point d'être tout entières organisées et pour ainsi dire "tendues" vers ces brillantes ambitions; tout ce qu'il faut donc pour faire fonctionner à plein régime les logiques compétitives et concurrentielles de la rationalité néolibérale.

Pourtant, jamais au cours de notre enquête ces phénomènes d'exacerbation de la concurrence et de la compétition scolaire ne se sont manifestés de façon évidente, tout au contraire des formes de solidarité, d'entraide et de coopération qui n'ont jamais cessé de s'imposer comme des éléments déterminants, tant pour apercevoir ce qu'il y a de spécifique dans toute l'organisation éducative et pédagogique de ces écoles, que pour comprendre l'expérience et le vécu scolaire des populations concernées. Il y a, autrement dit, entre ce que sont ces écoles "hors du commun", et ce que serait une véritable "école des communs", de nombreuses "ressemblances" qui sont, disons-le d'emblée, de "fausses ressemblances", comparables aux similitudes trompeuses qui font les "faux-amis"; ces mots qui, appartenant à deux langues différentes, nous incitent à croire qu'ils signifient la même chose parce qu'ils sont formellement similaires.

Ces similitudes trompeuses peuvent être expliquées et interprétées de plusieurs façons. La sociologie a produit notamment quelques monographies tournées vers le quotidien et les modes de vie de la grande bourgeoisie, où les auteurs ont souligné les formes d'entraide et de solidarité qui sont propres à ces groupes sociaux (Pinçon & Pinçon-Charlot, 2000; Le Wita, 1988) et les travaux de Pierre Bourdieu et Monique de Saint Martin ont mis en évidence, en étudiant le champ du pouvoir en général et le système des grandes écoles en particulier, cette "forme de complémentarité dans la concurrence qui est au fondement d'une véritable solidarité organique dans la division du travail de domination" (Bourdieu & Saint Martin, 1987, p. 47). Ces analyses permettent largement d'expliquer l'existence de ces "fausses ressemblances" et les fonctions que remplissent ces formes particulières de solidarité, d'entraide et de coopération, mais permettons-nous ici d'indiquer une autre lecture possible, différente mais complémentaire.

Les écoles hors du commun ne sont pas moins concernées que d'autres par la grande vague de réformes, de projets et autres dispositifs d'inspiration néolibérale qui se sont succédé ces quarante dernières années, et elles ne sont en aucune manière

imperméables aux passions et croyances qui dominent notre époque et notre société. Or, si ces écoles sont “néolibérales” – et elles le sont – alors nous pouvons déduire que le néolibéralisme détruit les collectifs, mais sans porter atteinte aux mécanismes qui tendent à assurer la cohésion et les liens qui unissent les différentes fractions des classes les plus privilégiées. Nous pouvons aussi expliquer nos similitudes trompeuses en soulignant que nous avons peut-être ici affaire à la réalisation des conceptions toutes néolibérales de ces notions, où solidarité, entraide, coopération et compétition finissent par se confondre en signifiant la même chose; la “coopétition”.

CONCLUSION

La principale leçon de cette étude biface est d'ordre *méthodologique*, nous semble-t-il. Elle nous incite à résister aux hypostases et aux dualismes couramment employés dans des champs de recherche très chargés de tensions politiques – comme l'est le domaine des études sur les politiques éducatives et sur la forme scolaire. Certes, l'opposition conceptuelle entre le néolibéralisme et les communs décrit bien des réalités socio-historiques marquées par un incontestable et violent antagonisme, ce que, dans un autre lexique, nous pourrions nommer la *lutte des classes*. Qui voudrait parler de l'école en Occident aujourd'hui sans se référer à cet antagonisme se condamnerait à la cécité et à l'insignifiance. Mais cette opposition se concrétise aussi dans une complexité, dans une hybridation et dans un enchevêtrement faisant que, par exemple, les élites sociales gardent souvent un coup d'avance sur leurs adversaires, puisqu'elles font intégrer à leur descendance des habitudes de “coopétition” au sein de vies scolaires paradoxalement plus “communes” que les établissements publics auxquels on les oppose parfois bien radicalement. En somme, comme aurait dit Bachelard (1999, p. 107), “le simple est toujours le simplifié”.

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LA FORMAZIONE COME BENE COMUNE: UN MODELLO DI VALUTAZIONE DELLE RICADUTE DI UN PERCORSO DI SVILUPPO PROFESSIONALE NEL CONTESTO SCOLASTICO*

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Abstract La formazione professionale può essere considerata un bene comune? Le attività formative sull'autovalutazione rivolte a dirigenti e docenti possono essere qualificate come un bene comune? In questo contributo le autrici provano a rispondere presentando l'approccio di un protocollo di valutazione delle ricadute di un percorso di sviluppo professionale per il personale della scuola sui temi dell'autovalutazione, a un anno dalla sua conclusione. Nell'approccio presentato le ricadute della valutazione riguardano sia il livello individuale, ovvero la percezione di una maggiore padronanza dei processi valutativi dichiarata dai partecipanti, che di scuola nel suo complesso, considerando la dimensione sociale e il sistema di significati che la scuola, come comunità di pratica professionale e organizzativa, vi ha attribuito. La formazione, infatti, potrebbe aver generato non solo nuove conoscenze, competenze e assetti educativi e didattici, ma, auspicabilmente, una differente visione della valutazione e della scuola.

INTRODUZIONE

La concezione della formazione come bene comune, secondo quanto emerge dalle riflessioni di Francesco Cappa (2017), offre una prospettiva in cui la formazione non solo facilita un'economia orientata al bene comune, ma rappresenta un bene comune in sé, definendola intrinsecamente come tale.

* Le opinioni espresse nel lavoro sono riconducibili esclusivamente agli autori e non impegnano in alcun modo l'Istituto. Nel citare il contributo non è, pertanto, corretto attribuirne le argomentazioni all'INVALSI o ai suoi vertici. Il lavoro è frutto del lavoro condiviso dal gruppo di ricerca.

Sebbene il contributo sia il frutto del lavoro condiviso dalle autrici, sono da attribuire a Letizia Giampietro il paragrafo 2 e a Donatella Poliandri l'Introduzione, il paragrafo 1, le Conclusioni.

In questo contesto, l'investimento nella formazione durante le crisi economiche emerge come cruciale, con un'attenzione spesso concentrata su quella giovanile. Tuttavia, la teoria del life-long learning, enfatizzando l'importanza della formazione degli adulti, sottolinea la necessità di un impegno formativo continuo (Edwards Deming, 2000).

Infatti, la formazione come bene comune è concepita come accessibile a tutte le età, ponendo l'accento sul sapere generato dalla pratica, soprattutto nelle professioni educative (Sennett, 2008). Questa prospettiva si intreccia con il concetto di beni comuni, evidenziato da Mattei (2011), il quale sostiene che i beni comuni sono relazionali e resistono a concettualizzazioni teoriche separate dalla prassi. La visione della formazione come dispositivo, collegando le dimensioni strutturali dell'educazione e integrando il mondo della formazione con quello della vita, il personale con il collettivo, il politico con il culturale, contribuisce a definirla come un processo dinamico e interconnesso (Franza, 2001). L'importanza della formazione degli adulti, in linea con le teorie del life-long learning, risiede nel fatto che il sapere condiviso e le competenze acquisite attraverso pratiche comunitarie offrono un'esperienza personale di impegno e identità di partecipazione (Edwards Deming, 2000).

I criteri di Cappa per considerare la formazione come bene comune riflettono l'idea di Mattei (2011), includendo l'universalità dell'accesso, la qualità dell'istruzione, la rilevanza sociale ed economica, e l'impatto sulla coesione sociale. Secondo Mattei, infatti, i beni comuni esistono in relazioni qualitative e richiedono una consapevolezza teorica accompagnata da una prassi di conflitto per il riconoscimento di relazioni significative, all'interno di specifici contesti dei quali siamo partecipi. Ciò è ancora più vero nelle professioni educative e nei servizi 'relazionali' quali l'istruzione, la cura, l'assistenza e la formazione.

Biesta (2015), attraverso una riflessione critica sulle professioni, sottolinea come la trasparenza e l'*accountability* possono contribuire a una maggiore democrazia nelle professioni educative, coinvolgendo attivamente i professionisti nel rendere conto delle loro azioni. Tuttavia, l'autore avverte che è cruciale bilanciare l'*accountability* affinché non diventi eccessivamente burocratica o basata solo su indicatori quantitativi (Biesta, 2023). La democrazia nelle professioni educative richiede un coinvolgimento attivo delle parti interessate nel definire cosa costituisce un'educazione di qualità e nel processo decisionale, evitando un modello autoritario di responsabilità imposta dall'esterno. Barry McDonald (1974) suggerisce come la valutazione

dovrebbe seguire approcci maggiormente in linea con il modo in cui gli insegnanti formulano giudizi. Egli enfatizza la necessità che i risultati della ricerca siano accessibili e rilevanti per gli insegnanti, affrontando la sfida di sviluppare tecniche che rispecchino il loro modo di pensare e formulare giudizi.

Integrando queste prospettive, se la formazione è considerata un bene comune, la valutazione della formazione può anch'essa essere considerata un bene comune, specialmente quando condotta secondo criteri che riflettono l'accessibilità, la qualità, la condivisione, la contestualizzazione, la comprensibilità degli esiti e la promozione di una democrazia attraverso un coinvolgimento attivo delle parti interessate. È una valutazione che, come emerge dalla prospettiva di Stame, propone di seguire da vicino i progetti per comprendere i momenti cruciali in cui le decisioni possono portare a nuovi modi di svolgere attività e a processi di apprendimento dove anche i fallimenti apparenti possono rivelarsi successi, poiché esistono teorie alternative detenute dai diversi stakeholders che spiegano in modo più accurato il motivo per cui determinati interventi possono funzionare nei contesti specifici in cui si verificano (Stame, 2010; 2015; 2022).

Il contributo qui proposto muove dallo scenario appena descritto e ha l'obiettivo di avviare una riflessione su questi temi, partendo da un'esperienza concreta di formazione degli adulti. Nei paragrafi seguenti illustreremo, infatti, il modello di valutazione delle ricadute della formazione del personale scolastico sui processi di autovalutazione delle scuole (*follow-up*), condotta all'interno della ricerca intervento Valu.E for Schools (VfS). Nella ricerca intervento VfS, infatti, la proposta adottata di comunità di pratica professionale collaborativa ha rappresentato un approccio formativo che ha riflettuto il carattere sociale dell'esperienza, sottolineando la collaborazione tra colleghi e la condivisione delle conoscenze, proponendosi di influenzare l'intera comunità scolastica. Seguendo dunque i principi chiave di accessibilità, qualità, partecipazione, rilevanza sociale è possibile sostenere che il percorso condotto possa rappresentare un bene condiviso. Analogamente, i principi di valutazione adottati hanno riverberato questi criteri, riflettendo un approccio etnografico e fenomenologico che ha valutato non solo gli esiti attesi, ma anche quelli inattesi del percorso formativo condotto. In tal modo, la valutazione si è allineata con la concezione della formazione come un processo in divenire, costruito e condiviso all'interno di specifici contesti socioculturali, coinvolgendo tutti i partecipanti e rappresentando, in ultima analisi, un ulteriore momento della formazione condotta.

APPROCCI DELLA VALUTAZIONE DELLA FORMAZIONE PROFESSIONALE

Valutare un percorso formativo del personale della scuola significa ricostruire il processo e dare valore ai cambiamenti avvenuti, a seguito della formazione, agli attori sociali coinvolti, considerati sia nella loro singolarità che come parte integrante di un contesto, quello della scuola.

Dal punto di vista metodologico, nella valutazione della formazione professionale, accanto ad approcci più quantitativi e orientati alla valutazione costi/benefici dell'intervento, ne sono emersi altri di matrice etnografica, prossimi alle realtà organizzative dei beneficiari, in grado di stimolare la riflessività dei partecipanti non solo sugli esiti attesi ma anche su quelli inattesi, che rappresentano un terreno di ricerca interessante dal punto di vista fenomenologico. La rilevazione degli esiti attesi e inattesi, infatti, consente di considerare il percorso di formazione come un processo in divenire, proiettato alla costruzione e alla condivisione di significati nell'ambito di una determinata organizzazione in un preciso contesto socioculturale (Salmieri, 2017)¹. Per mezzo di approcci metodologici molto diversi e "modelli di interpretazione dei processi decisionali temperati dal criterio della razionalità limitata e dell'assunzione delle dimensioni dell'incertezza" (Lipari, 1995), risulta possibile, infatti, cogliere elementi valutativi di matrice culturale e contestuale che orientano le ricadute della formazione a livello individuale e organizzativo.

LA VALUTAZIONE DELLE RICADUTE DELLE ATTIVITA' DI FORMAZIONE E SUPPORTO DEL PROGETTO VALU.E FOR SCHOOLS

Nell'ambito della progettazione PON (2014-2020), la ricerca intervento Value for Schools (VfS) nell'ambito del più ampio Progetto Valu.E² (Valutazione/Autovalutazione Esperta), nel biennio 2020-2021, ha promosso la realizzazione di tre percorsi formativi e di sostegno alle scuole finalizzati a rafforzare: 1) le competenze dei dirigenti scolastici per condurre i processi autovalutativi a livello di scuola; 2) le competenze valutative e progettuali dei docenti per migliorare la capacità di lettura dei dati

¹ Cfr. Lipari (200), Salmieri (2017), Alvarez et al. (2004), Bisio (2002), Gagliardi, e Quarantino, (2000) per un'introduzione essenziale degli approcci alla valutazione della formazione professionale.

² Valu.E Valutazione/Autovalutazione Esperta", Valu.E 10.9.3.A – FSE PON 2015-1, approvato con comunicazione MIUR prot. AOODGEFID/23772 del 15/12/2015.

offerti dal sistema e raccolti all'interno della scuola, con possibili ricadute migliorative ai fini della predisposizione del Rapporto di Autovalutazione (Rav)³.

Le attività formative hanno coinvolto 45 scuole, 15 per ciascuna macroarea, distribuite in 9 regioni: per il Sud sono state coinvolte le scuole della Sardegna, della Puglia e della Campania; per il Centro le scuole del Lazio, della Toscana e dell'Umbria; per il Nord quelle dell'Emilia-Romagna, del Piemonte e della Lombardia⁴. Hanno partecipato alle attività di formazione circa 400 componenti dei nuclei di autovalutazione (NIV), in larga parte docenti, e 42 dirigenti scolastici (DS).

Il modello di riferimento della formazione è stato quello delle comunità di pratica professionali che apprendono collaborativamente, in cui la collaborazione è lo strumento strategico dell'apprendimento tra i partecipanti, in grado di favorire la costruzione delle conoscenze e la condivisione delle esperienze (Wenger, 1998; Trentin, 2004; Duncombe e Armour, 2004; Brown e Poortman, 2018).

A distanza di un anno dalla conclusione degli interventi, abbiamo condotto un *follow-up* volto a valutare le ricadute dei percorsi formativi e di supporto Vfs⁵. In questa fase, l'obiettivo non è stato quello di valutare la qualità della formazione intesa dal punto di vista del processo pedagogico erogato, quanto le ricadute che tali percorsi hanno avuto sia a livello individuale, riguardo per esempio la percezione di una maggiore padronanza dei processi valutativi dichiarata dai partecipanti, che di scuola nel suo complesso, considerando la dimensione sociale degli impatti della formazione.

Abbiamo cioè posto l'accento sul contesto in cui è stato realizzato l'intervento, nonché sul sistema di significati che la scuola, come comunità di pratica professionale e

³ Dall'anno scolastico 2014-2015, tutte le scuole italiane di primo e secondo ciclo, statali e paritarie, al termine di un processo di autovalutazione, compilano il Rapporto di Autovalutazione (Rav) e delineano i propri punti di forza e gli aspetti da migliorare secondo un quadro di riferimento comune, così come previsto dal DPR 80/2013 che regola il Sistema Nazionale di Valutazione (SNV).

⁴ Le scuole sono state selezionate attraverso una procedura di campionamento a due stadi stratificato: sono state considerate come unità di I stadio le province (una provincia selezionata per ognuna delle 9 regioni di intervento individuate), come unità di II stadio le scuole (5 per ciascuna regione) e come variabile di strato la regione.

⁵ Il disegno di valutazione della ricerca intervento Vfs è stato articolato in una molteplicità di approcci; oltre al *follow up* a distanza di un anno, è stata condotta, infatti, una valutazione di impatto, con un disegno quasi sperimentale (Poliandri e Giampietro, 2023a) e una valutazione di processo, attraverso un disegno di studio di caso multiplo (Poliandri e Giampietro, 2023b).

organizzativa, vi ha attribuito. La formazione, infatti, potrebbe aver generato non solo nuove conoscenze, competenze e assetti educativi e didattici, ma, auspicabilmente, una differente visione della valutazione e della scuola.

Per la valutazione delle ricadute della formazione dei percorsi formativi e di supporto, abbiamo tenuto in considerazione i livelli individuati dal modello di Kirkpatrick (2010)^{6,7}. Questo modello è stato considerato secondo una prospettiva disgiunta, in funzione della capacità euristica di classificazione dei contenuti per l'analisi delle ricadute. I livelli individuati per la valutazione delle ricadute delle attività formative VfS sono quattro: *Reaction*, *Learning*, *Behavior*, *Results*.

Il primo livello, *Reaction*, riguarda le impressioni dei destinatari sul percorso formativo, il gradimento dell'esperienza, anche in relazione alle aspettative iniziali. Il secondo livello, *Learning*, riguarda gli apprendimenti dei beneficiari, il miglioramento delle conoscenze, delle abilità e gli atteggiamenti maturati a seguito dell'intervento. Il terzo livello, *Behavior*, si riferisce ai cambiamenti nei comportamenti e nelle prestazioni dei partecipanti. Il quarto e ultimo livello, *Results*, considera la ricaduta dell'intervento formativo a livello dell'organizzazione nel suo complesso, compresi i cambiamenti nella percezione della scuola come comunità di pratica professionale.

Abbiamo scelto di non indagare il primo livello nel *follow-up* in quanto, a ridosso della conclusione dell'intervento, attraverso tecnica CAWI avevamo già somministrato un questionario di soddisfazione (Litteri et al., 2024) a tutti i partecipanti dei percorsi formativi e di supporto. Il *follow-up* si è dunque concentrato sui tre livelli successivi, con l'obiettivo di cogliere sia gli apprendimenti dichiarati dai beneficiari a livello

⁶ Nel modello sono previsti quattro livelli, fortemente connessi l'uno con l'altro: ciascun livello successivo integra gerarchicamente quello precedente, consentendo di operare una distinzione tra il gradimento di un percorso, l'apprendimento di nuove conoscenze e abilità, il trasferimento nel contesto lavorativo e l'impatto a livello organizzativo. Studi successivi hanno evidenziato le criticità delle assunzioni soggiacenti il quadro di riferimento di tale modello, la meccanicità dei livelli, nonché le difficoltà emergenti, nella pratica, per la valutazione dei livelli superiori, la necessità di competenze metodologiche avanzate e la dispendiosità in termini di tempo e costo (Salmieri, 2017). Per una rassegna sulle applicazioni del modello di Kirkpatrick e i relativi adattamenti maturati negli anni cfr. Rosa (2018).

⁷ A livello educativo un adattamento del modello di Kirkpatrick è stato fatto da Guskey (2000), in 5 livelli: 1) reazioni dei partecipanti alle attività, 2) apprendimenti di nuove conoscenze, abilità e competenze, 3) supporto e cambiamento organizzativo, 4) uso delle nuove conoscenze e competenze da parte dei partecipanti, 5) esiti dell'apprendimento degli studenti.

personale, sia quelli sostanziali di ricaduta della formazione che possono risultare nei documenti strategici della scuola, ossia il Rav, il Piano Triennale dell'Offerta Formativa (PTOF), il Piano di miglioramento (PdM), sia l'impatto simbolico, cercando di ricostruire il significato del percorso formativo per i beneficiari, i criteri per l'attribuzione di senso utilizzati dagli stessi e, a un livello superiore, dalla comunità scolastica nel suo complesso.

Sulla base del quadro di riferimento della ricerca intervento Vfs, abbiamo individuato sei ambiti su cui abbiamo ipotizzato che l'intervento formativo avesse avuto delle ricadute, ossia:

- le pratiche valutative, in particolar modo quelle del NIV, ovvero del gruppo di lavoro interno alla scuola che si occupa della gestione del processo autovalutativo. Il NIV risulta il principale custode del bagaglio teorico-tecnico-pratico in tema di autovalutazione, sviluppando, con la redazione del Rav, la sua principale espressione pratica a livello di scuola. Possono essere considerati esiti di impatto: eventuali ampliamenti e potenziamenti del NIV, in modo che risulti rappresentativo ed efficace per affrontare il processo valutativo; cambiamenti nelle modalità di lavoro imputabili alla formazione; adozione di nuovi strumenti e procedure;
- le pratiche educative e didattiche. Rientrano nelle pratiche educative e didattiche gli aspetti afferenti all'individuazione del curricolo fondamentale (e opzionale), alla progettazione didattica e alla realizzazione degli interventi didattici. La rilevazione dei possibili esiti di impatto considera i cambiamenti, le modifiche, gli sviluppi e le innovazioni relativi alla progettazione degli interventi educativo-didattici, alle pratiche di insegnamento e valutazione degli studenti imputabili come esito all'attività formativa;
- le pratiche organizzative e gestionali, ovvero gli aspetti che consentono alla scuola di indirizzare, allineare e convogliare le risorse finanziarie e strumentali disponibili, il capitale intellettuale interno, i contributi e le risorse esterne verso il perseguimento delle priorità e degli obiettivi dell'istituto. Possibili risultati in termini di impatto sono relativi: alla promozione di pratiche di governo ritenute maggiormente efficaci; allo sviluppo di nuovi processi di comunicazione, di organizzazione del personale, di implementazione di sistemi di controllo e monitoraggio, etc.;

- la collaborazione interna e lo sviluppo professionale. Questo ambito considera le attività di collaborazione e di confronto fra gruppi interni alla scuola nello sviluppo dei temi valutativi, intesi come ambito di conoscenza, ricerca e approfondimento specifici. Possibili risultati in termini di impatto sono relativi a: modifiche, sviluppi e innovazioni, relativi a potenziali ed effettivi avanzamenti ottenuti a seguito della formazione nell'ambito delle pratiche collegiali riguardanti temi valutativi, come ad esempio la creazione di spazi collegiali per una collaborazione efficace e la promozione di percorsi di formazione sulla valutazione in relazione ai bisogni rilevati;
- la collaborazione esterna e il *networking*. In questa area si considera la capacità della scuola di coinvolgere differenti *stakeholders* nei processi valutativi così come di proporsi come partner strategico di reti territoriali sui temi della valutazione. Esiti di impatto possono riguardare la promozione, il mantenimento e la gestione proattiva delle relazioni e delle collaborazioni con soggetti esterni e con altre scuole per migliorare le pratiche valutative, ampliare le opportunità e condividere le risorse;
- la cultura valutativa, ossia l'insieme delle convinzioni, delle norme, dei valori e degli atteggiamenti nei confronti della valutazione che vengono condivisi dai membri di una scuola e ne influenzano il comportamento e le pratiche professionali. Si tratta di una dimensione di carattere trasversale, i cui impatti possono riguardare: le modifiche e i cambiamenti negli atteggiamenti dei partecipanti e dei gruppi all'interno della scuola nei confronti dell'autovalutazione e nel riconoscimento delle funzioni e del ruolo dell'autovalutazione per il miglioramento; i cambiamenti nei saperi e negli artefatti culturali con i quali la scuola organizza e sviluppa i processi valutativi.

Nella valutazione delle ricadute, abbiamo prestato particolare attenzione alla lettura del contesto interno ed esterno della scuola, alle condizioni abilitanti ovvero ostacolanti che hanno reso possibile o meno una ricaduta dell'intervento Vfs, quali, ad esempio, la complessità strutturale della scuola (la molteplicità degli ordini, il numero di plessi, la dislocazione territoriale), le caratteristiche del DS in termini di ruolo e anzianità di carriera, le risorse umane presenti, il turn over del personale, gli spazi.

La valutazione delle ricadute della formazione è stata affidata a 21 esperti, docenti e dirigenti scolastici, con esperienza nell'ambito dei processi di miglioramento e della valutazione esterna delle scuole. Gli esperti hanno ricevuto una formazione specifica durante un seminario residenziale sugli obiettivi della ricerca intervento, sul protocollo di valutazione e sugli strumenti di rilevazione. Ciascuno di loro ha avuto il compito di condurre il *follow-up* in due scuole.

Il compito dell'esperto è consistito nell'identificare le ricadute che, plausibilmente, possono essere ricondotte all'intervento formativo, o che sono attribuite direttamente a esso da parte dei beneficiari. Per questo il protocollo di valutazione ha previsto, in prima battuta, l'analisi dei documenti strategici della scuola (Rav, PTOF, PdM): ciascun esperto ha operato un confronto tra i documenti prodotti prima dell'intervento formativo, per la triennalità 2019-2022, e quelli prodotti dopo l'intervento formativo, nella triennalità 2022-2025. Successivamente, gli esperti hanno condotto una visita nelle istituzioni scolastiche della durata di due giorni, per la raccolta di informazioni attraverso interviste individuali con il DS, la funzione strumentale per la valutazione, il rappresentante del Consiglio d'istituto, e interviste di gruppo con il NIV, con i docenti che hanno partecipato alla formazione ma anche con una rappresentanza di coloro che non vi hanno preso parte. A conclusione del *follow-up*, gli esperti hanno compilato una rubrica di valutazione per ciascuno dei sei ambiti di indagine delle ricadute della formazione e redatto una relazione conclusiva di esito della valutazione condotta.

Abbiamo posta una particolare attenzione nella formazione degli esperti per ciò che riguarda gli aspetti relazionali del rapporto con il personale delle scuole, affinché la visita di valutazione potesse essere considerata come un'ulteriore fase dell'intervento formativo. Nello specifico, abbiamo formato e incoraggiato gli esperti a utilizzare la tecnica del *professional dialogue fra pari*, utilizzata nell'ambito della formazione e dello sviluppo professionale degli insegnanti per promuovere una pratica riflessiva a partire dall'analisi dei dati e delle evidenze. Il dialogo professionale è uno scambio tra pari nel quale una parte non cerca di imporre il proprio punto di vista all'altra, ma si impegna nel confronto e, attraverso la conversazione, la riflessione e l'orientamento alle pratiche, crea le condizioni per un apprendimento trasformativo (Simoncini et al., 2014). Il rapporto tra l'esperto e la scuola avviene in un'ottica formativa, in cui è possibile un confronto tra pari che offre alla scuola la possibilità di

portare il proprio punto di vista – anche critico – e di preservare i propri spazi di autonomia.

In tre istituti, nei quali il percorso formativo effettuato non ha avuto l'andamento auspicato e che inizialmente hanno rifiutato la visita di *follow-up*, è stato implementato un protocollo adattato, approfondendo maggiormente la natura delle difficoltà incontrate dal personale coinvolto, i limiti e sostenendo gli intervistati nell'esplorazione di eventuali aspetti emergenti positivi. La predisposizione del protocollo adattato è partita dalla riflessione sugli eventi specifici che hanno riguardato l'abbandono del progetto o la natura delle difficoltà incontrate e che, per ovvie ragioni, si ripercuotono sulla valutazione complessiva dell'esperienza.

CONCLUSIONE

Il *follow-up* ha avuto un riscontro molto positivo sia da parte delle scuole sia da parte degli esperti che lo hanno condotto⁸. Le scuole, durante le visite degli esperti, hanno potuto “far memoria” della formazione ricevuta: l'intervallo temporale dall'intervento ha consentito un distanziamento cognitivo sufficiente per interpretare e dare significato alla propria esperienza, consentendo una riflessione sulle conoscenze acquisite e le relative connessioni con le pratiche e i processi successivamente implementati. Il *follow-up* ha dunque rappresentato un momento ulteriore di consolidamento e sintesi dei significati attribuiti alla formazione sull'autovalutazione: ne è emersa la necessità di un accompagnamento sia successivo alla formazione per le scuole coinvolte sia per la messa a sistema e l'approfondimento di quanto sperimentato in formazione. In questo senso, la modalità di dialogo professionale tra il personale delle scuole coinvolte e gli esperti ha rappresentato una risorsa estremamente utile per una ulteriore riflessione sui bisogni formativi sulla valutazione e i percorsi di miglioramento da implementare.

Ricerche-intervento come VfS, nella prospettiva più ampia finalizzata al miglioramento, dovrebbero consentire alle scuole di acquisire nuovi strumenti per operare delle riflessioni sui propri processi e per individuare delle possibilità alternative di

⁸ Sia le scuole che gli esperti hanno avuto momenti dedicati di confronto con il gruppo di ricerca sugli esiti e le modalità del *follow-up* durante il convegno finale del Progetto PON Valu.E, tenutosi a Roma il 18-20 ottobre 2023, <https://value.invalsi.it/portale/convegno-finale-del-progetto-pon-valu-e-innovazione-nella-valutazione-scolastica/>.

approccio rispetto ai processi più tipicamente praticati. La valutazione delle ricadute della formazione Vfs ha cercato di cogliere gli elementi di cambiamento intercorsi a seguito dell'intervento, in alcuni casi contribuendo al riconoscimento da parte dei beneficiari del cambiamento avvenuto. Attraverso il *follow-up* è stato possibile farsi carico anche dell'esperienza problematica di alcuni partecipanti e, attraverso di essa, approfondire le motivazioni individuali, organizzative e contestuali che, in ottica di sviluppo, devono essere tenute in considerazione nella pianificazione successiva. Nell'attività di *follow-up*, la valutazione ha rappresentato inoltre una opportunità di emersione dei differenti punti di vista: anche se alcune riflessioni da parte delle scuole possono essere state incipienti, in via di gestazione, sono allo stesso tempo molto importanti ai fini della realizzazione delle azioni di miglioramento.

Questi elementi sono ancora più rilevanti se consideriamo che si è cercato di cogliere i cambiamenti avvenuti nei beneficiari di un percorso formativo sull'autovalutazione scolastica, il cui impatto sarebbe stato molto complesso da valutare altrimenti, date le molte variabili intervenienti.

Le attività formative hanno coinvolto le scuole in quanto comunità di pratiche, promuovendo il rafforzamento delle competenze dei dirigenti scolastici e dei docenti sulla valutazione, attraverso attività collaborative e di confronto che hanno rafforzato il carattere sociale dell'esperienza formativa.

La valutazione delle ricadute delle attività di formazione e supporto del Progetto Vfs, attraverso il quadro di riferimento adottato, ha enfatizzato l'importanza di considerare non solo le ricadute a livello individuale ma soprattutto gli effetti a livello di intera comunità scolastica, nei differenti ambiti considerati: pratiche valutative, educative e didattiche, gestionali, collaborazione interna e sviluppo professionale, collaborazione esterna e *networking*, cultura valutativa. La considerazione delle condizioni abilitanti o ostacolanti, come la complessità strutturale della scuola e le caratteristiche del personale, l'attenzione posta alla lettura del contesto interno ed esterno delle scuole coinvolte evidenzia una consapevolezza delle sfide che possono influenzare le ricadute della formazione.

Anche nella valutazione della formazione, il focus sulla ricostruzione del processo e sull'attribuzione di valore ai cambiamenti può essere connesso ai principi della formazione come bene comune: la valutazione della formazione, proprio perché è uno strumento di creazione e acquisizione di conoscenza, può essere intesa come

impegno sociale, rafforzando l'idea che il miglioramento nell'ambito educativo è un risultato collettivo che contribuisce al bene comune.

Alla luce di queste premesse, nell'attuale panorama sullo sviluppo professionale dei docenti, risulta quanto mai urgente un superamento di proposte formative basate prevalentemente sulla trasmissività e sul numero di ore di formazione erogato (che rimane un elemento formalmente richiesto) a vantaggio di altre maggiormente innovative in grado di stimolare le capacità critico-riflessive dei docenti a partire dal proprio contesto di lavoro per rendere la formazione significativa e sostenibile, partecipando a gruppi di ricerca-formazione, community di studio e approfondimento, attraverso una condivisione autentica, non formale, del percorso di apprendimento che i docenti stessi promuovono (Colombo, 2017). Lo sviluppo professionale dei docenti è allo stesso tempo una responsabilità specifica anche per l'amministrazione centrale (Cerini, 2015) e periferica, anche in relazione ai meccanismi di retroazione che la valutazione delle ricadute potrebbe comportare.

Evidenziamo, in ultimo, alcuni aspetti critici della proposta di valutazione delle ricadute della formazione che abbiamo presentato. Questo follow-up si inserisce nell'ambito di un progetto sperimentale, che ha coinvolto un campione ristretto di scuole, del quale sono ancora oggetto di studio gli esiti e i relativi approfondimenti per validarne il modello e gli strumenti: ulteriori riflessioni di natura teorica e metodologica sono ancora in corso.

Un aspetto non trascurabile, infine, è rappresentato dal costo dell'operazione complessiva, in termini di risorse umane e finanziarie, che ne potrebbe rendere limitata la messa a sistema.

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THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA AS A SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE. A SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE PRACTICES OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

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Abstract The topic of sustainability is nowadays at the centre of a debate that is gradually being articulated and enriched, highlighting its complexity, and emphasising the need for a holistic and ecosystem approach (Bhattacharjee & Debnath, 2022; Hinzen & Schmitt 2016; Leicht, Heiss & Byun, 2018; Lundvall & Fröberg, 2022; Malavasi, 2020; Stein et alii, 2022). The 2030 Agenda, signed by all UN countries in 2015, commits governments, educational communities and individuals towards a new model of sustainable development, capable of re-establishing a balance among different systems before a point of no return is reached. Sustainability is not a purely environmental issue. The 2030 Agenda introduces targeted pathways in which schools become the place that can support the work of young people towards the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (Ministry of Education). At the heart of Goal 4, there is quality education as the basis for improving people's lives and achieving sustainable development. This contribution reports the results of the SWOT analysis of good educational practices about environmental education carried out in the Sicilian territory from 2000 to the present. The SWOT analysis is part of a broader process of elaboration and validation of new innovative and sustainable educational practices in line with the 2030 Agenda, capable of creating a bridge of sharing with neighbouring countries, and Tunisia in particular, in order to make the Mediterranean a sustainable resource. The data that emerged from the analysis made it possible to identify strengths and weaknesses in environmental education practices. On this aspect, specifically, we want to highlight what has already been achieved in recent years and what still needs to be worked on in order to achieve goals 4 Quality Education, 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities, 13 Fighting Climate Change; 14 Life Under Water and 15 Life on Earth, which the 2030 Agenda proposes.

INTRODUCTION

The European Union, in the aftermath of the pandemic crisis that hit the entire planet in 2020, has planned for EU member states investments and reforms to accelerate the ecological and digital transition, improve the training of workers and

female workers, and achieve greater gender, territorial and generational equity. With the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) approved in 2021, Italy seizes the opportunity to resume a path of sustainable and lasting development. It is an opportunity to re-educate the population with civic values that go beyond individual interests or those of single parties (Malavasi, 2022).

In recent decades, environmental education has been restricted to extracurricular time and often entrusted exclusively to environmental associations. The processes triggered, though significant, have not really made a permanent change of citizens in the desired directions possible. In order to achieve education for sustainable development, it is necessary to create a relationship of primary importance between education and the environment, implementing projects to address the ecological emergency that we are experiencing today, which takes its cue from the old paradigms that for years saw the environment as a resource to be drawn from to satisfy one's needs. The space around us tends to influence the lives and actions of those who live there; therefore, the study of the environment is fundamental because it presents itself as an empirical referent rich in connections that stimulate knowledge (Orefice, 2000). A greater ethics of responsibility needs to grow in order to become aware of the consequences of human actions and for greater solidarity between man and the biosphere (Biagoli et al., 2022, p. 3).

In light of this, it becomes opportune to make daily choices and actions that are characterised by a sense of responsibility, of awareness towards the environment, to measure the extent to which one's actions are compatible with the environmental needs of the world we inhabit today. The idea of a truly sustainable civilisation therefore requires a profound cultural transformation that can synthesise environmental protection, human well-being and economic productivity into a single objective for the education of the future (Birbes, 2022).

This paper shows the results of a swot analysis conducted on 36 environmental education practices carried out over the last 20 years in Sicily. The SWOT technique involves analysing the situation from four areas: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The first two aspects are considered controllable; they are those on which it is possible to act and base possible future actions; the other two elements constitute threats to the balance or situation. After considering the negative and positive needs and conditions, it is necessary to know how to foster the most appropriate learning in view of achieving the chosen objectives (Anello, 2020).

2030 AGENDA AND SUSTAINABLE CITIZENSHIP

Nowadays, the issue of sustainability is at the centre of a debate that is progressively being articulated and enriched, highlighting its complexity while emphasising the need for a holistic and ecosystemic approach. It is, in fact, an issue that must necessarily be addressed in a global and systemic manner, placing the protection of humankind within the more general defence of all living systems. All human actions decisively influence the ‘fates’ of the world system. Global development and the orientation of one’s learning towards self-fulfilment and personal fulfilment understood as a full and dignified existence represent the ultimate goal of the 2030 Agenda (Costa, 2022; Nussbaum, 2010).

The aim of the 2030 Agenda, signed by all UN countries in 2015, is precisely to commit governments, educational communities and individuals towards a new model of sustainable development, capable of re-establishing a balance between the different systems before a point of no return is reached. Since 1955, the legislative path of ‘citizenship education’ has been articulated in a series of theoretical and operational proposals linked to the concept of belonging to a community (Borghi, 2014). With time, however, this seems to be insufficient to satisfy the insatiable thirst for new ideas on the process of development and progress of society, especially for young people, who wonder what the planet will mean for their future.

In recent years, we have witnessed a real cultural change in our way of thinking and acting, transforming citizenship education into ‘sustainable citizenship’, a concept that encompasses all those practices that citizens of the world can implement to protect the environment and promote awareness of the impact that human actions have on the planet (UN, 1972).

In Italy, in December 2018, the Ministries of the Environment and Education signed a memorandum of understanding on environmental education and sustainable development in schools, committing to collaborate in the implementation of a joint programme for schools of all levels.

On 21 August 2019, Law No. 92 was published in the Official Gazette proclaiming the launch, as of the 2019/2020 school year, of the compulsory study of Civic Education in all school orders starting from primary school. The national experimentation of this first form of sustainable education at school was then interrupted with the pandemic, only to be mentioned again in Ministerial Decree no. 35 of 22 June 2020.

The introduction of sustainable citizenship education provides an opportunity to initiate a dialogue on caring for the environment, encompassing all fields of knowledge and life from the individual citizen to large communities. Caring about education in, with and for the environment means designing the future society and the future for society (Birbes, 2014). The pedagogy of sustainable development is based, as it can be seen, on meta-cognition as well as competence-related processes, providing students with a perspective of meaning that is also oriented towards education outside school. Education and training, therefore, turn out to be resources at our disposal to eradicate any superficial behaviour.

Education for sustainable citizenship has seen a community of practices mature in recent decades that provide a map of useful values for being active and participatory subjects in the daily life of the communities to which they belong. There will be a real chance for recovery and resilience if interventions are effectively directed at designing the blueprint for an inclusive society ready to rebuild the educational pact between culture and natural resources, cultivating hope and cherishing human resources.

The goals of the 2030 Agenda aim to build a world with equitable and universal access to quality education at all levels, health care and social protection, where physical, mental and social well-being is ensured for all, emphasising that no one will be left behind.

Specifically, Goal 4.7 states that by 2030, it is necessary to

ensure that all students acquire the necessary skills to promote sustainable development through, *inter alia*, education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and the appreciation of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development (United Nations, 2015).

Schools are already working to ensure that the everyday actions of future citizens are characterised by a sense of responsibility, awareness towards the environment and in line with the demands it places on us (Biagioli et al., 2022). Therefore, the school must put an end to the centralising use of the classroom as an island of cognitive self-sufficiency (Biagioli, 2018), and give pedagogical value to the environment that presents itself as an empirical referent rich in connections that stimulate knowledge (Orefice, 2000).

A recurring theme within the 17 goals of the 2030 Agenda is the achievement of well-being by citizens, not only understood as a condition of physical or economic well-being, but in a broader and more global sense. Education for sustainability addresses economic growth, social, environmental and institutional needs, helps people to increase well-being and end poverty, world hunger and differences between countries, generations and genders. In order to put the world on a sustainable path, the involvement of institutions, governments, individual citizens, associations, schools, universities and research centres is indispensable. The emergency of the wellbeing of citizens and the planet must be resolved by thinking first of all of a change of perspective that affects education: it is necessary to break down the old educational paradigms that saw the environment as a resource to be drawn on to satisfy one's needs and to start thinking of it as a common good. Indeed, pedagogical reflection, a precious resource for and of the future, strives to promote awareness of the freedom and responsibility of the individual: every citizen of the world has a duty to respond to the complexity and emergency that the environment in which we live communicates to us (Grange, 2018, p. 109). Pedagogical knowledge is thus called upon "to elaborate original hermeneutic perspectives on the most debated environmental issues, to offer sustainable project contributions to form a competent and responsible citizenship, the promotion of which requires the close commitment of businesses and institutions" (Malavasi, 2007, p. 18).

EDEN-MED: FOR A SUSTAINABLE MEDITERRANEAN. THE TRANSNATIONAL PROJECT

The analysis of environmental education practices carried out in this research is part of a broader process of elaboration and validation of new innovative and sustainable teaching practices in line with Agenda 2030, capable of creating a bridge of sharing with neighbouring countries, and in particular with Tunisia, to make the Mediterranean a sustainable resource. Since 2021, the Department of Psychological, Pedagogical, Exercise and Educational Sciences of the University of Palermo has been one of the associated partners of the EdEn-Med Project: Environmental Education for a Sustainable Mediterranean, part of the Italy-Tunisia 2014-2020 Cross-Border Cooperation Programme, adopted by the European Commission on 17 December 2015. The challenge of the project is to build a society deeply rooted in environmental culture, as a guarantee of a truly sustainable development for the existence of man and his

quality of life, as well as the well-being of all living beings and protection of the resources available on our planet.

The project aims at establishing a lasting cooperation between the two territories of Southern Sicily and Tunisia, which overlook the Mediterranean Sea, in order to improve the socio-economic and environmental situation through the creation of an international network for the exchange of experiences, the sharing of good practices and the testing of innovative methodologies aimed at promoting effective and lasting actions for the acquisition of stable environmental care behaviours, thus mobilising decision-makers and local authorities, and in particular schools and school offices, as a strategic tool to implement cross-border Mediterranean environmental education processes.

The project takes into account scientific innovations on environmental issues (health, nutrition, mobility, natural resources, climate change, use of renewable resources, social and environmental wellbeing, environmental protection) and engages with formal and informal institutions involved in environmental education. The project involves various actors with expertise in education and the environment, including: for Tunisia ANPE (National Agency for the Protection of the Environment), CIFIIP (International National Centre for the Training of Trainers and Pedagogical Innovation), the University in the Higher Institutes of Continuing Education and Training and the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences of Tunis; for Italy, the CNR (National Research Council of Capogranitola), ARPA Sicilia (Regional Agency for Environmental Protection), ORSA (Sicilian Regional Observatory for the Environment) and the Department of Psychology, Educational Science and Human Movement of the University of Palermo- Agrigento Territorial Pole.

The aim of the project is not only to solve the environmental problems and the multiple risks that threaten the whole of humanity, but to ensure a change in human behaviour, going to act directly on the new generations. “Only pedagogical action is able to induce tangible effects in the perception, attitudes and therefore the behaviour of young people” (Lavano et al., 2023, p. 11).

SWOT ANALYSIS

This paper reports the results of a SWOT analysis of good educational practices on the theme of environmental education carried out in the Sicilian territory from 2000 to the present.

The SWOT Analysis, or SWOT matrix, is a strategic planning tool used to make appropriate decisions to achieve an objective (Weirich, 1982; Pahl, Richter, 2009).

The SWOT technique involves analysing the situation of potential intervention recipients from four areas: Strengths and Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

For the University of Cambridge, a strength is a resource or capability that the organisation can use to achieve an objective; a weakness is a limitation or defect in the organisation that will prevent it from achieving its objectives; an opportunity is a favourable situation in the organisation's environment; a threat is an unfavourable situation in the organisation's environment that is detrimental to its strategy. A threat can be an external constraint that could cause problems.

The picture that emerges highlights the positive and negative, controllable and non-controllable polarities of the situation, making it easier to identify the aspects that need to be acted upon, the supports that derive from the situation, those that can be activated, and the potential risks that need to be paid attention to. In fact, after having read the needs and the negative and positive conditions, it is necessary to know how to foster the most appropriate learning and participation in appropriate ways.

Specifically, in the context of the present research, the swot analysis allowed us to identify the practices that have been most widespread in Sicily over the last twenty years, thus at the time of the socio-cultural and pedagogical transition that has affected Italy, and with respect to the 2030 Agenda, which are the objectives that have been most dealt with and achieved, and which instead still require considerable effort on the part of the Sicilian community.

Thirty-six environmental education and sustainable education practices carried out by schools, research centres, universities and environmental protection agencies were examined, some of which include:

- Global Change, Environmental Sustainability and Biodiversity
- Biodiversity, Science and Technology For Environmental Sustainability

- Sustainability Education: Methodologies and Guidance Tools With Responsible And Conscious Choices
- Infeas Network
- X-Polli: Nation
- Sicilienvironment
- Snpa Network
- Citizen Science Together with Citizens
- Infea Sicily
- At School with Nature-The Air We Breathe
- The Sustainable Use of Environmental Assets: From Management Policies To Social Perception
- The Case Study of The Oriented Nature Reserve Of Capo Gallo
- The Future of Gaia
- Energy Planning Tools and Practices Towards Smart Cities- Proposal of Tools, Methodological Regulations and Design Considerations.
- Life Cycle Assessment
- Vegetable Gardens, Gardens and Pollinating Insects

Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and risks emerged from the analysis conducted on the relationship between positive-internal/external factors and negative-internal/external factors (Table 1).

From the analysis of strengths and weaknesses, critical points and opportunities, it was possible to assess environmental education practices. A first obvious point is the need to create pathways for the continuous training and updating of the actors involved in education (not only students, but also teachers, educators, school leaders and families). A second necessary point concerns the training of experts and trainers in education policies for meaningful and sustainable development. A third point concerns the implementation of lifelong learning practices to disseminate the culture and ethics of sustainability not only in educational contexts, but in all areas of society.

	<i>Positive factors</i>	<i>Negative factors</i>
<i>INTERNAL FACTORS</i>	<i>Strength</i>	<i>Points of weakness</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of local associations; • targeted interventions; • presence of easily accessible protected areas to put into practice what has been learned; • greater knowledge of the problems and criticalities of the physical territory in which one lives; • creation of workshops, FAD courses, training/information material and all of the tools produced to build awareness; • evaluation of a maintenance and care intervention of green areas and gardens in schools • limit climate change and enhance the use of clean energy; • addressing public health threats; • manage natural resources more responsibly; • improve the transport system and land use management; • underline and analyse the role of education, training, information and environmental research for the development of a fair, democratic, participatory and environmentally friendly society, respectful of life on the planet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High economic cost; • teacher training still not adequate to the required needs; • the partial involvement of institutions; • little investment in protected centres; • little attention paid to some of the objectives of the 2030 Agenda; • lack of laboratory activities within the school curriculum; • lack of laboratory experts.
<i>EXTERNAL FACTORS</i>	<i>Opportunity</i>	<i>Risks</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create network; • valuing the resources that the environment offers us; • environmental requalification as a tool for growth and improvement of quality of life; • greater attention to policies for the enhancement of protected areas; • give international visibility to environmental education research and achievements; • conservation and enhancement of the local and national environmental and cultural heritage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustainable education of the elite; • absence of integrated projects involving adults and children; • lack of incisiveness in environmental protection; • poor monitoring of environmental policies by administrations. •

Table 1. Swot analysis: strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and risks of environmental and sustainable education practices analyse.

In light of the results obtained, it is believed that schools should potential their curricula on sustainable education starting from the following goals that the 2030 Agenda proposes, and then work on the remaining ones:

- Goal 4 Quality Education;
- Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities;
- Goal 13 Combating Climate Change;
- Goal 14 Life Under Water;
- Goal 15 Life on Earth.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, there is still a long way to go to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda. Rethinking education within broad phenomena that affect everyone on planet earth requires “learning values such as respect for life and human dignity necessary to ensure social harmony” (UNESCO, 2019, p. 39). There are already several aspects that institutions and learning communities need to explore so as to promote and develop sustainable education. Schools are in the best position to contribute to the attainment of new possible worlds, recognising themselves as ‘agents of change’, as the main actor in an intentional process of change aimed at forming future sustainable citizens capable of living in a better world. The only road ahead is that of an acceleration on more ‘traditional’ models of education, capable of putting itself into play through new constructs for sustainable development.

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VERSO UNA COMUNITÀ EDUCANTE. RIFLESSIONI TRASVERSALI TRA SCUOLA, UNIVERSITÀ E TERZO SETTORE

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Abstract I temi dell'inclusione, dell'innovazione e delle trasformazioni tecnologiche hanno assunto un ruolo centrale nei dibattiti politici e pedagogici del nostro tempo, guidando la ricerca verso una partecipazione più autentica dei cittadini nello sviluppo della conoscenza e nella costruzione di comunità educative. In linea con gli obiettivi 4 e 4.a dell'Agenda 2030, è cruciale promuovere attività di ricerca finalizzate a progettare una nuova architettura dei sistemi educativi e formativi, strettamente legata alle emergenze e alle opportunità del territorio, con l'equità e la valorizzazione delle risorse come principi fondamentali al fine di contrastare l'esclusione e ridurre il divario tra ricerca e pratiche per un cambiamento sostenibile. Nella riflessione pedagogica sull'incoraggiamento dei valori inclusivi e democratici, il dialogo emerge come un elemento cruciale per creare relazioni partecipative, comprensione e tutela della diversità. Le pratiche dialogiche offrono un terreno fertile per esaminare ruoli, strumenti, forme e responsabilità all'interno delle comunità, evidenziando il loro potenziale emancipativo. Sulla scorta di tali premesse, il contributo presenta i risultati dei primi passi mossi verso l'avvio di una Ricerca-Azione Partecipativa che coinvolge Università, Scuola e Terzo Settore. Inquadrata nei principi teorici dell'Universal Design for Learning, dell'Outdoor Education e del Capability Approach, la metodologia adottata privilegia la conversazione informale del World Café per promuovere un dialogo finalizzato a generare una riflessione condivisa sui contesti educativi inclusivi e ad attivare processi di trasformazione, considerando il ruolo cruciale delle innovazioni tecnologiche e del contesto territoriale nella co-costruzione di comunità educanti.

1. INTRODUZIONE

L'obiettivo 4 dell'Agenda 2030¹ lega imprescindibilmente la realizzazione di uno sviluppo sostenibile ad uno dei temi ormai dominanti nel dibattito pedagogico e politico,

¹ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

quello dell'inclusione. È dunque necessario convogliare ogni sforzo educativo verso la costruzione di contesti capaci di massimizzare il potenziale personale, sociale e lavorativo promuovendo i valori fondativi della convivenza democratica, della cittadinanza globale e della costruzione di un'identità plurale, valorizzando l'interconnessione comunitaria e partecipativa dell'esperienza umana (Booth & Ainscow, 2014). In quest'ottica, la comunità si configura come il luogo privilegiato per l'incontro autentico e l'educazione assume il compito di promuovere una cittadinanza consapevole, orientata alla costruzione di reti relazionali e alla condivisione di progetti comuni (Broccoli, 2019; Esposito, 2006). La scuola assume, così, un ruolo cruciale, poiché funge da fulcro per la riflessione e l'azione educativa che si innestano nei complessi ecosistemi in cui le comunità si muovono e le persone si sviluppano (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Epstein, 2018; Ferrara & Moscato, 2022).

Il nesso inscindibile tra educazione e organizzazione sociale è un tema caro alla tradizione filosofica e pedagogica che affonda le sue radici nelle riflessioni deweyane sulla formazione dell'uomo e del cittadino: la società democratica, in questa visione, è una forma di vita associata, in cui l'educazione gioca un ruolo fondamentale nell'instaurare una consapevole partecipazione ai problemi comuni, ponendo l'accento sulla necessità di un costante processo di perfezionamento e di innovazione sociale, che si realizza attraverso il confronto e la contraddizione (Dewey, 1968; 1984). Da questa prospettiva, la scuola è chiamata a rispondere alle istanze democratiche di partecipazione, appartenenza ed autodeterminazione (Meirieu, 2013), abbracciando i valori della comunità. Una scuola caleidoscopica, in equilibrio tra dialogo, problematizzazione, sostegno, ricerca e collaborazione reciproca, in grado tanto di interpretare i mutamenti sociali quanto di creare ponti fertili tra comunità, istituzioni, famiglie e alunni, configurandosi come mediano per la costruzione di nuove culture, politiche e pratiche inclusive volte a promuovere tanto lo sviluppo della persona quanto del progetto comunitario (Pedone, 2014).

A partire da queste premesse e nella cornice della co-costruzione di nuove comunità (Zamengo & Valenzano, 2018), ha preso il via nel novembre 2022 una Ricerca-Azione Partecipativa (PAR) che ha coinvolto Università, alunni, insegnanti e rappresentanti del Terzo Settore del territorio palermitano, con l'obiettivo di attivare processi partecipativi di co-progettazione e co-costruzione di servizi educativi innovativi, rispondenti ai reali bisogni emersi dalla comunità. La ricerca si colloca nel dominio della *Human Design-based Research* (Sanders & Stappers; 2008) e le sue finalità rispondono

alle indicazioni fornite dal PNR 21-27 e dal REACT-EU: esse, infatti, guidano la ricerca scientifica verso nuovi approcci di crescita, enfatizzando l'innovazione ed il coinvolgimento attivo dei cittadini con l'obiettivo di contrastare le disuguaglianze, eliminare le barriere che generano disparità, contrastare l'esclusione e ridurre il significativo divario tra ricerca e pratica, che rappresenta un ostacolo al cambiamento sostenibile. In particolare, nel PNR 2021-27 si promuove attivamente una ricerca scientifica volta a ridefinire i sistemi educativi con un focus sull'inclusione e sull'equità, attraverso strategie che favoriscano la collaborazione tra ricercatori e attori sociali. In tal senso, l'attività di ricerca qui presentata si orienta verso la costruzione di ambienti partecipativi, rappresentando un'opportunità per promuovere l'innovazione attraverso il coinvolgimento attivo di tutti i protagonisti dei processi educativi e formativi nella progettazione di interventi mirati, con attenzione ai bisogni territoriali e alla creazione di servizi eticamente responsabili.

2. FRAMEWORK TEORICO

La fase iniziale della PAR, che costituisce il nucleo di questo contributo, si è focalizzata sull'analisi delle opinioni e dei bisogni dei partecipanti attraverso quattro linee guida tematiche ben definite.

La prima linea di ricerca si concentra sull'analisi dei contesti dell'apprendimento. Nella prospettiva qui assunta, la scuola non rappresenta l'unico luogo possibile per l'apprendimento ma, piuttosto, essa è parte integrante di un sistema più ampio e articolato di formazione che coinvolge una varietà di contesti, formali, non formali e informali. La letteratura evidenzia l'importanza di considerare l'interazione tra esperienze di apprendimento quotidiane e scenari sociali più ampi nell'analisi dell'educazione e della formazione (Pontecorvo et al., 1995). Apprendere è, dunque, il risultato di un'esperienza di partecipazione attiva alle pratiche delle comunità in cui le conoscenze prendono forma (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Ciò mette in luce la limitazione dei tradizionali contesti educativi, come scuole e istituti accademici, nel riconoscere e valorizzare appieno il potenziale di apprendimento degli individui. Di conseguenza, emerge la necessità di adottare nuovi modelli di acquisizione del sapere che, da una parte, favoriscano un dialogo più vivo e interattivo tra la persona e il mondo circostante (Paparella & Martiniello, 2016); dall'altra che mirino a promuovere

l'autocoscienza, il cambiamento e la flessibilità, contribuendo così alla crescita sia dell'identità personale che di quella comunitaria.

Un altro aspetto cruciale riguarda l'innovazione tecnologica e il suo impatto sull'educazione. È fondamentale che l'integrazione di nuove tecnologie nell'ambiente educativo sia guidata da una prospettiva pedagogica che ponga al centro il benessere degli alunni e il loro sviluppo organico (Calvani, 2013). Le tecnologie offrono nuove opportunità per l'apprendimento, ma è essenziale garantire che esse siano utilizzate in modo inclusivo e responsabile, promuovendo la partecipazione di tutti gli alunni e rispettando le diversità individuali. In breve, l'approccio sostenibile all'innovazione tecnologica nelle scuole deve tenere in considerazione le sfide della contemporaneità e l'impatto che esse hanno avuto e hanno sulla società. La scuola deve adattarsi a questi cambiamenti integrando ambienti fisici e digitali, formali e informali, per sostenere l'empowerment degli alunni e favorire lo sviluppo di una comunità educativa autentica (Fabiano, 2019), guidata dalla condivisione di un'intenzionalità comune e capace di concepire nuove forme e modalità per ambienti di apprendimento orientati alla partecipazione, dove oggetto e soggetto si trasformano reciprocamente. In quest'ottica, gli orientamenti dell'*Outdoor Education* emergono come un importante interlocutore in quanto favoriscono l'esplorazione e l'apprendimento pratico attraverso esperienze dirette con la natura e il territorio, sostenendo gli alunni nello sviluppo di legami più solidi con la comunità locale e un senso di rispetto e appartenenza verso l'ambiente, favorendo così la formazione di cittadini responsabili e comunità democratiche (Pedone & Moscato, 2022).

La terza linea di ricerca prende spunto dall'*Universal Design for Learning (UDL)*² si concentra sull'*engagement*, ovvero il coinvolgimento emotivo e cognitivo degli alunni nell'apprendimento. L'UDL è un quadro didattico e pedagogico che mira a creare contesti inclusivi e culture di inclusione, sia all'interno che all'esterno delle scuole, con l'obiettivo di formare alunni capaci di autonomia decisionale e di interagire efficacemente con una società complessa. Il modello si basa su una vasta ricerca sull'apprendimento umano, in particolare sulla scoperta dell'esistenza di tre reti neurali che corrispondono ai prerequisiti per l'apprendimento delineati da Vygotskij: il cosa, il come e il perché dell'apprendimento (Mayer et al., 2014). Ed è proprio l'elemento del "perché" a riguardare la sfera dell'affettività, ossia il modo in cui gli alunni monitorano

² <https://udlguidelines.cast.org/>.

l'ambiente interno ed esterno per stabilire priorità, motivarsi e impegnarsi nell'apprendimento e nella gestione dei comportamenti. Queste caratteristiche sono influenzate da molteplici fattori di natura neurologica, culturale, relazionale e sociale, che a loro volta influenzano la nostra percezione della realtà. La percezione di sé stessi non è lineare ma un intricato intreccio di elementi (Hattie, 2012), che permea l'intero contesto educativo. È fondamentale accogliere questa complessità umana e farle guidare l'azione educativa, orientandola verso lo sviluppo di fiducia, apertura, orgoglio e il desiderio di partecipare attivamente, agire, apprendere e condividere esperienze.

L'ultima linea di ricerca fa riferimento al *Capability Approach*, che pone l'accento sulle capacità e i funzionamenti delle persone, focalizzandosi sullo sviluppo di competenze e abilità che consentano loro di realizzare appieno il proprio potenziale (Nussbaum, 2011). Le capacità si configurano come una serie di opportunità, tra di loro correlate, di scegliere e di agire: non sono semplicemente delle abilità insite nella persona, ma comprendono anche le libertà o opportunità create dalla combinazione di abilità personali e ambiente politico, sociale ed economico. Per questa ragione si distinguono tra innate, interne e combinate. Le capacità innate sono le abilità fondamentali, cioè quelle capacità intrinseche comuni a tutti gli esseri umani che costituiscono la base per lo sviluppo di altre capacità; le capacità interne, invece, sono formate e sviluppate all'interno dei contesti di vita e in interazione con essi, comprendendo le competenze acquisite attraverso l'istruzione e l'esperienza. Infine, le capacità combinate rappresentano il risultato della connessione tra le capacità interne e le condizioni esterne, come l'accesso ai beni, alle risorse e ai diritti. Il *Capability Approach*, dunque, enfatizza le capacità di agire, partecipare e esprimere se stessi, generare *empowerment*, come diritti fondamentali per il completo sviluppo della persona, per la sua piena cittadinanza e per la promozione di processi democratici. Da questa prospettiva emerge una stretta interdipendenza tra il contesto, le persone e le loro capacità d'azione: le comunità educanti possono efficacemente funzionare solo attraverso un costante dialogo e un'immaginazione collettiva del presente e del futuro. Questo implica la creazione di un progetto condiviso che promuova l'uso della libertà individuale attraverso la partecipazione attiva e il confronto.

3. LA RICERCA

Dal quadro teorico sopra descritto, attraverso la ricerca ci si è proposto di identificare strategie e approcci pratici che consentissero alla comunità educante di prendere forma e integrarsi nei processi di apprendimento delle nuove generazioni. In particolare, l'obiettivo è stato quello di sviluppare un modello di progettazione partecipata che coinvolgesse attivamente tutti gli attori del processo educativo, inclusi gli alunni, i docenti, i genitori, le istituzioni e le realtà locali del territorio palermitano. In quest'ottica, la PAR è stata assunta come intervento educativo in grado di consentire ai partecipanti di autodeterminarsi all'interno di un approccio di ricerca che prevedesse la definizione di obiettivi comuni e un campo di interazione condiviso, utilizzando una comunicazione simmetrica che abolisce la distinzione tra ricercatori e partecipanti. È adottato un approccio integrato e intenzionale per intervenire nella realtà concreta e apportare cambiamenti significativi. Questa è essenzialmente una pedagogia dell'azione e della ricerca che attiva i processi di coinvolgimento individuale e comunitario attraverso un metodo specifico di indagine (Orefice, 2006). Inoltre, è una pedagogia della comunicazione e della relazione, basata sul dialogo come pratica di libertà umana; una comunicazione definita formativa poiché nell'interazione tra dialogo e ascolto si costruisce una comunità che non solo si educa e si forma, ma anche si trasforma (Anichini et al., 2012).

3.1 Il World Cafè

La scelta metodologica per la fase di avvio del percorso è ricaduta sul World Cafè³. La necessità di adottare un approccio partecipativo e inclusivo nell'ambito educativo è motivata dalla convinzione che lo sviluppo di pratiche efficaci e significative non debba limitarsi alla comunicazione tra ricerca e scuola, ma debba prima di tutto riconoscere il valore unico delle prospettive individuali e collettive all'interno della comunità educante, incoraggiando una partecipazione attiva e una condivisione di conoscenze e risorse, favorendo la fioritura della dimensione pragmatica e della generatività (Picone, 2021).

Uno dei principi cardine del World Cafè è la centralità dell'individuazione dei temi e delle questioni da affrontare, proposti ai partecipanti sotto forma di domande capaci

³ www.theworldcafe.com.

di stimolare processi riflessivi e di cambiamento. Partendo dai temi chiave individuati, la formulazione delle domande ha inteso stimolare la riflessione e il dibattito sui temi educativi ritenuti cruciali. Le domande-stimolo proposte, che hanno riguardato l'integrazione di esperienze extrascolastiche e tecnologie nell'apprendimento e gli aspetti motivazionali dell'apprendimento, sono:

- in che modo le esperienze extrascolastiche e le tecnologie possono migliorare le esperienze di apprendimento?
- Cosa vi fa sentire bene quando imparate cose nuove? Cosa pensate si possa fare per rendere l'apprendimento più interessante?
- Disegna la tua scuola ideale.

L'intento finale è stato quello di condividere i risultati con la comunità e avanzare insieme verso l'individuazione degli obiettivi della PAR.

Nell'organizzazione dei World Café abbiamo mantenuto la struttura organizzativa tradizionale che prevede la suddivisione dei partecipanti in gruppi più piccoli, che si riuniscono intorno a tavoli (*café*) per discutere un determinato argomento o domanda. Ogni tavolo è stato coordinato da un facilitatore (*host*), che ha guidato la conversazione e ha incoraggiato la partecipazione attiva di tutti i membri del gruppo, affiancato da uno o più assistenti (*reporter*). Dopo un periodo di tempo prestabilito, i partecipanti si sono spostati in nuovi gruppi e si sono uniti a tavoli diversi, portando con sé le idee e le riflessioni emerse dalla precedente discussione. Questo processo di rotazione dei partecipanti tra i diversi tavoli è stato ripetuto per tre sessioni, al fine di consentire un arricchimento continuo delle conversazioni e una circolazione delle idee. Durante le discussioni, i partecipanti sono stati incoraggiati a prendere appunti o disegnare su fogli di carta posti sui tavoli, in modo da catturare le idee chiave e le intuizioni emerse dalle conversazioni. Alla fine della sessione, è stata organizzata una fase di condivisione e sintesi delle principali idee e conclusioni emerse dai diversi gruppi, al fine di identificare punti comuni, sfide e opportunità (Brown, 2002).

Il World Café è stato articolato in 18 tavoli di lavoro animati dagli scambi e dai contributi di 272 partecipanti provenienti dalle scuole del primo e del secondo ciclo, dal Terzo Settore e dall'Università (Tab. 1). La media dei partecipanti per ogni tavolo è di 13 persone. Al fine di favorire l'atmosfera informale tipica della metodologia del World Café, dopo ogni round di discussione (della durata di 30 minuti) è stata inserita una breve pausa durante la quale sono stati offerti degli spuntini. Questo momento

di relax ha permesso ai partecipanti di muoversi liberamente negli spazi a disposizione e di interagire con gli altri tavoli di lavoro, facilitando così una spontanea condivisione e scambio di idee (Schieffer et al., 2004).

Realtà	Partecipanti	Enti	Tot	
Scuole	Studenti	D.D.S. "Edmondo De Amicis"	210	
		D.D.S. "Nicolò Garzilli"		
		I.C.S. "Giovanni Falcone"		
	Insegnanti	I.C.S. "Silvio Boccone"		20
		I.I.S.S. "Ernesto Ascione"		
		Liceo Classico "Vittorio Emanuele II"		
Terzo Settore	Operatori	Bio Lab	22	
		Centro Astalli		
		Cesie		
		Cooperativa Idee in Movimento		
		Cooperativa Libera...Mente		
		Ecomuseo del Mare		
		Elia e il Profeta		
		Giardino di Madre Teresa		
Università	Studenti	13		
	Ricercatori	7		
			272	

Tab. 1. Composizione del gruppo di partecipanti.

3.3 I RISULTATI EMERSI

L'elaborazione dei dati grezzi (rappresentati dalle schede di raccolta dei temi emersi compilati dai *reporter*, dai fogli di appunti prodotti dai partecipanti, dai cartelloni di sintesi di ogni round elaborati dagli *host*, dai disegni raffiguranti le scuole ideali di ogni gruppo e dalla videoregistrazione dell'incontro di narrazione e restituzione dei risultati) è stata effettuata secondo la metodologia della *Qualitative Content Analysis*⁴ (Schreier, 2012).

⁴ Il processo di analisi include una prima revisione dei dati, effettuata indipendentemente da ognuna delle tre ricercatrici, seguita da un'analisi congiunta volta alla categorizzazione induttiva dei contenuti. Successivamente, i dati emersi sono stati clusterizzati, ancora una volta singolarmente e poi in assetto collegiale, per individuare somiglianze; l'interpretazione è stata guidata dal quadro teorico. Il continuo processo di confronto e negoziazione delle istanze emerse ha permesso una triangolazione dei ricercatori, volta ad assicurare il

La prima fase di analisi ha condotto alla segmentazione dei dati in parti discrete al fine di individuare elementi rilevanti e significativi e all'identificazione, a partire dalle domande poste, di 5 macroaree:

- extrascuola (A.1);
- tecnologie (A.2);
- benessere (B.1);
- supporto all'interesse (B.2);
- scuola ideale (C).

Successivamente, esse sono state declinate in ulteriori aree tematiche emerse dall'individuazione di parole e significati ricorrenti, per i quali sono state calcolate le occorrenze e le percentuali e delle quali si riporta di seguito una breve sintesi.

A. In che modo le esperienze extrascolastiche e le tecnologie possono migliorare le esperienze di apprendimento?

In risposta alla prima domanda è emerso che gli apprendimenti extrascolastici in attività come sport, arte e musica sono considerati fondamentali per la creazione di ambienti di apprendimento innovativi e inclusivi. Queste esperienze non solo stimolano aspetti emotivi e fisici, ma anche la metacognizione, soprattutto la comprensione e il rispetto delle regole. Essere coinvolti in queste attività permette agli alunni di sperimentare un curriculum dinamico e partecipare attivamente verso obiettivi comuni (Tab. 2).

Ciò suggerisce di rivalutare la staticità delle aule per favorire una maggiore libertà di movimento e una varietà di opportunità di apprendimento, che consentono agli alunni di esprimere le proprie conoscenze e abilità in modi diversificati.

superamento del *bias* del singolo e garantire all'analisi un certo grado oggettività (Trincherò, 2015).

In che modo le esperienze extrascolastiche (sport, hobby, gruppi musicali, gruppi amicali, ...) e le tecnologie possono migliorare le esperienze di apprendimento?

A.1 Extra-scuola

Risposte	Occ.	%
Gruppo, relazioni e dialogo	17	21
Sport	12	15
Arte ed espressione	9	11
Metacognizione	9	11
Musica	5	6
Rilassamento	5	6
Sfera emotiva	4	5
Coltivare le proprie passioni ed avere tempo per sé	3	4
Educare il corpo	3	4
Nuove esperienze e attività pratiche	3	4
Rispetto delle regole	3	4
Contatto con la natura	2	3
Educare la mente	2	3
Spazi diversi dall'aula	2	3
Esigenza di movimento	1	1

Tabella 2. Temi emersi in riferimento alla macroarea A.1

Anche l'impiego delle tecnologie si conferma essere una risorsa importante per l'apprendimento (Tab. 3). I partecipanti riconoscono la loro utilità nel reperire rapidamente informazioni online e nell'accesso a contenuti mediatici e strumenti di studio che potrebbero integrare o sostituire i materiali didattici tradizionali. Tuttavia, le tecnologie non sono solo viste come strumenti di supporto, ma anche come mezzi per il coinvolgimento diretto e l'interattività durante le lezioni, con un'enfasi sull'inclusione e la scoperta di culture diverse. Emergono anche le potenzialità di sviluppo di competenze pratiche attraverso l'utilizzo di videogiochi come *Minecraft* insieme alla promozione di diversi tipi di memoria e intelligenza. Tuttavia, i gruppi di lavoro hanno individuato anche dei rischi: l'efficacia dell'apprendimento non è determinata solo dall'uso delle tecnologie, ma soprattutto dalla loro integrazione intenzionale e sistematica nell'ambito educativo.

In che modo le esperienze extrascolastiche (sport, hobby, gruppi musicali, gruppi amicali, ...) e le tecnologie possono migliorare le esperienze di apprendimento?

A.2 Tecnologie

Risposte	Occ.	%
Accesso rapido alle risorse e alle informazioni	6	15,4
Interattività e coinvolgimento	6	15,4
Svago e relax	5	12,8
Tools per lo studio e in sostituzione dei materiali didattici	5	12,8
Supportare l'apprendimento delle lingue	4	10,3
Rischio di distrazione e/o dispersione delle informazioni	3	7,7
Inclusione e partecipazione	2	5,1
Sviluppo competenze pratiche	2	5,1
Contenuti mediatici come mediatori didattici	1	2,6
Integrate alla didattica	1	2,6
Rischio per la socialità	1	2,6
Scoperta di culture diverse	1	2,6
Sviluppare diverse memorie	1	2,6
Utili per i gradi scolastici superiori	1	2,6

Tab. 3. Temi emersi in riferimento alla macroarea A.2.

B. Cosa vi fa sentire bene quando imparate cose nuove? Cosa pensate si possa fare per rendere l'apprendimento più interessante?

L'analisi delle discussioni nate a partire dalla seconda domanda-stimolo ha evidenziato che l'elemento emotivo-affettivo emerge come fondamentale (Tab. 4 e 5). I partecipanti sottolineano l'importanza di creare un clima interpersonale sereno e accogliente, che fornisca chiare coordinate relazionali. Il rinforzo positivo, i *feedback* costanti e il piacere di approfondire ciò che interessa sono elementi che contribuiscono a rendere l'esperienza di apprendimento positiva.

Cosa vi fa sentire bene quando imparate cose nuove? Cosa pensate si possa fare per rendere l'apprendimento più interessante?

B.1 Benessere

Risposte	Occ.	%
Clima sereno e regole chiare nelle relazioni con i docenti e il gruppo dei pari	11	27
Imparare per sé stessi/e	9	22
Gratificazione e rinforzi positivi	6	15
Approfondire ciò che interessa e incuriosisce	4	10
Imparare divertendosi	3	7
Raggiungere obiettivi	3	7
Varietà didattica e di contesti	3	7
Lavoro di gruppo	2	5

Tab. 4. Temi emersi in riferimento alla macroarea B.1.

Cosa vi fa sentire bene quando imparate cose nuove? Cosa pensate si possa fare per rendere l'apprendimento più interessante?

B.2 Supportare l'interesse

Risposte	Occ.	%
Clima sereno, ascolto e regole chiare nella relazione con i docenti e col gruppo dei pari	9	13,4
Varietà didattica e di contesti (outdoor)	8	11,9
Valorizzare e supportare stili di apprendimento e capacità personali di ognuno	7	10,4
Coinvolgimento attivo, gioco e interattività	6	9
Musica di sottofondo	5	7,5
Prevedere pause frequenti e piacevoli	5	7,5
Utilizzo della multimedialità e della tecnologia	5	7,5
Approfondire ciò che interessa e incuriosisce	4	6
Mediatori, semplificatori e organizzatori	4	6
Apprendimento esperienziale	3	4,5
Promuovere e supportare la metacognizione	3	4,5
Anticipazioni e feedback	2	3
Combinare lo studio con lo sport e il movimento	2	3
Vivere ambienti puliti e adeguati	2	3
Domande aperte e fuori dal comune	1	1,5
Raggiungere obiettivi	1	1,5

Tab. 5. Temi emersi in riferimento alla macroarea B.2

La possibilità di variare le esperienze didattiche e i contesti è considerata una risorsa importante per favorire il benessere durante l'apprendimento: l'accesso a condizioni, strategie e strumenti innovativi consente a tutti i partecipanti ai processi di apprendimento di ampliare le proprie capacità. La didattica dovrebbe privilegiare la partecipazione attiva, l'approccio ludico e le interazioni che vanno oltre la tradizionale lezione frontale. Questo può avvenire attraverso l'uso di mediatori, l'adozione di approcci multimediali e tecnologici e l'opportunità di affrontare domande aperte e stimolanti. La maggioranza dei partecipanti suggerisce che relazioni interpersonali autentiche e un clima rilassato favoriscono l'efficacia dell'apprendimento. Questi elementi consentono espressione libera, scoperta di sé e coinvolgimento emotivo. Nell'ambito scolastico, si auspica spazio per coltivare interessi personali e fare esperienze coinvolgenti, promuovendo non solo la conoscenza ma anche il saper fare e il saper essere, essenziali per la crescita individuale e collettiva.

C. Disegna la tua scuola ideale

L'obiettivo ultimo dei tavoli di lavoro è stata la condivisione di uno spazio generativo per lo scambio di idee, opinioni, vissuti e bisogni dei membri della comunità coinvolta. Per tale ragione, l'ultimo round del World Cafè ha visto i partecipanti intenti a definire e co-progettare la loro scuola ideale.

Dall'analisi dei dati (Tab. 6), emerge chiaramente il desiderio di avere ambienti accoglienti e curati, sia interni che esterni, integrati con elementi naturali e persino animali. Questi ambienti consentirebbero non solo lo svolgimento di attività didattiche in aule dotate di tecnologia e spazi per l'attività fisica, ma soprattutto di trascorrere momenti di svago e aggregazione.

I partecipanti ai tavoli di lavoro, infatti, evidenziano il primato delle relazioni come cuore pulsante della scuola, desiderando vederla come una comunità che si prende cura di sé stessa e dedica tempo alla crescita collettiva e individuale dei suoi membri. Essi immaginano la scuola come un luogo protetto e di benessere, dove ognuno è valorizzato e supportato nello sviluppo delle proprie capacità e modalità di apprendimento. Per realizzare questo scenario, ritengono necessario superare la struttura scolastica tradizionale e adottare curricula trasversali che favoriscano lo scambio e la condivisione di esperienze pratiche. In conclusione, emerge chiaramente che il

fulcro della scuola dovrebbe essere la creazione di una comunità inclusiva e solidale, che sostenga e promuova il benessere di tutti i suoi membri.

Disegna la tua scuola ideale		
C. Scuola ideale		
Risposte	Occ.	%
Spazi curati e accoglienti, interni ed esterni e integrazione di elementi naturali e/o animali	12	21
Scuola come comunità che si prende cura di sé stessa	7	13
Spazi per attività ricreative e di aggregazione per svago, indoor e outdoor (cinema, teatro, aula musica, ...)	7	13
Aule informatiche e supporti tecnologici	4	7
Spazi adeguati per le attività motorie e sportive	4	7
Biblioteca	3	5
Primato della relazione sullo spazio fisico	3	5
Curricolo trasversale	2	4
Domande aperte e sforzo comunitario per la risposta	2	4
Necessità di movimento	2	4
Più esperienze pratiche	2	4
Spazi e risorse per la commensalità	2	4
Abbattimento barriere architettoniche	1	2
Ambienti adeguati dedicati agli ambiti del sapere	1	2
Circolarità fisica e di apprendimento	1	2
Scuola come luogo protetto di ben-essere per tutti, sospeso dal giudizio	1	2
Trascorrere tempo a scuola per socializzare, al di fuori delle attività curricolari	1	2
Valorizzare e supportare stili di apprendimento e capacità personali di ognuno	1	2

Tab. 6. Temi emersi in riferimento alla macroarea C.

4 CONCLUSIONI

Le linee di ricerca sopra esposte evidenziano la necessità di adottare un approccio olistico e inclusivo all'educazione che tenga conto delle diverse esigenze, capacità e contesti di apprendimento degli individui; un approccio capace di riconoscere e valorizzare l'importanza delle esperienze reali e delle relazioni con il territorio per promuovere tanto processi significativi di apprendimento quanto empowerment e sviluppo integrale sia degli alunni che delle comunità. Ciò mette in luce il nesso inscindibile che è necessario promuovere e valorizzare tra il piano educativo e un piano sociale e politico più ampio, coinvolgendo attivamente studenti, scuole, famiglie e

attori sociali in una cornice che vede gli spazi, fisici e relazionali, come educanti su due binari: da un lato, essi creano connessioni tra diverse esistenze e prospettive sulla vita; dall'altro, parallelamente, rappresentano il riflesso di coloro che li animano, dell'intreccio dei rapporti che li caratterizzano e del costante evolversi delle comunità. I risultati emersi dai dibattiti dei tavoli di lavoro hanno messo in luce la volontà di condividere esperienze che offrano la possibilità di offrire l'opportunità di dialogare e riflettere per co-costruire nuovi percorsi educativi e trans-formativi verso una nuova architettura di comunità autenticamente includenti, sostenibili, democratiche, educanti.

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THE MARGIN BETWEEN POPULAR EDUCATION, THE UNDERCOMMONS AND THE OUTSIDERS: PRACTICING RESEARCH AND EDUCATION OTHERWISE

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Abstract This paper, based on 9 months of ethnographic research with some communitarian processes of Popular Education in Bogotá, addresses the tense margin between Popular Education, Undercommons, and Outsiders, thus imagining research and education otherwise. Dealing with studying as ‘what you do with other people’ (Harney and Moten, 2013, p. 110), it first redefines ethnographic research methodologies by advocating for a departure from conventional Social Sciences approaches, emphasizing conviviality, relationality, and dialogical engagement. This reconceptualizes research as a militant and friendship-based endeavour rooted in acknowledging shared struggles. Later, drawing on Decolonial and Black Studies frameworks, it examines how the concept of the ‘common’, coupled with social justice, needs critical inquiries, particularly if addressing education, starting from the recognition that education as a common resource underscores the non-neutrality of hegemonic culture. The paper employs the Undercommons as both a pragmatic framework and an inspiring vision for reimagining political structures and resistance practices. It highlights the importance of engaging politically with outsiders and recognizing differences to establish alternative educational frameworks. Through a case study of a popular school in Bogotá, Colombia, the essay eventually illustrates how these theoretical concepts can inform tangible community-based educational initiatives, bridging theory and real-world action in the pursuit of social justice.

A PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

When I first presented this paper at the conference “Education as Commons – Democratic Values, Social Justice and Inclusion in Education” in April 2023, I had no idea what would have happened in the following months. At that time, I was scared, I didn’t feel ready to approach fieldwork. In fact, I didn’t know how to get involved in the projects of Popular Education I had identified and how to do it in the right way. Exactly 10 days after the conference I left for Colombia. Almost immediately, all the fears and the sensation of inopportunity I felt, vanished. Starting to participate in the

projects flew somehow in a natural way. Certainly, I made numerous incorrect and ineffective attempts to engage with certain realities, mainly driven by my desire to meet my academic expectations. However, in many instances, the most captivating and significant aspect of ethnography lies in the unexpected discoveries and occurrences that surpass initial anticipation.

Even though I experienced working with young adolescents in Popular Pre-Icfe and Pre-University, which at the time of the conference I presented as the first *research object*, I could not have imagined that I would have spent most of my time with children aged 4 to 13, with Venezuelan migrants, with cultural projects in the first working-class neighborhood of Bogotá – my beloved La Perseverancia – and with many young and passionate educators who became friends. I also collaborated with an Afro-religious foundation outside the capital city, and supported some powerful Guardians of the river Bogotá in a popular school based on a soccer pitch.

When I presented this paper, I was unaware of the multiple territorial implications of Popular Education. It became evident: I had written about something I had never truly experienced, merely grasping at the illusion of understanding.

The objective of my research was to conduct a detailed ethnography that examines the intersection and articulation between Popular Education, cultural politics, and neighborhood and communitarian movements/practices in Bogotá, with the aim of identifying and analyzing how these dynamics can contribute to a decolonial reformulation of pedagogy. Reflecting on this journey, a crucial step involved acknowledging that many of the assumptions and expectations were, to some extent, flawed, unrealistic, excessively theoretical, and overly optimistic. However, upon completing the ethnographic research and revisiting the paper and critical theoretical framework I had chosen, I had the opportunity to reflect, from a more empirical perspective, on the concepts of ‘Outsider’ and ‘Undercommons’ in their articulation with Popular Education, the communities, cultural politics, and territories.

Additionally, I took very seriously a piece of advice that was given to me that day.

UN(DER)COMMON METHODOLOGIES FOR ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

I clearly remember the rapid exchange I had with Professor Taglietti, who was the moderator of the panel, after my presentation: “you should try to engage with the

Undercommons in your daily practice, as a methodology to investigate”. We discussed the possibility of using the multiple critical lenses of the Undercommons during fieldwork, not only as theoretical tools to imagine alternative ways to traditional education, but as empirical instruments to deal with reality while doing ethnography. In fact, if the main aim of the conference was to rethink education as common by questioning the “contemporary neoliberal processes of enclosure and commodification of education”, thus moving towards social justice, it was essential to reconsider the methodology employed in ethnographic research as well, considering the colonial legacy of the discipline. This originated a set of initial questions: what social science would I like to contribute to building through my research? What social science have I embraced? Who am I in the fieldwork? Can I engage with decoloniality from my positionality?

As Mignolo asserts, if decoloniality lies in multiple “options”, there exists no rigid or predetermined way to put it into practice; it is an ongoing and open-ended project (2011). It embodies the opportunity to apply, across various contexts, the methodologies employed by decolonial thought. Thinking about ethnography, by echoing Rivera Cusicanqui’s perspective, involves embracing “the inclusive ‘we’—a homeland for everyone—that envisions decolonization”, juxtaposed with the “exclusive, ethnocentric ‘we’” in order to problematize and bring an end to the colonial present (2012, p. 97). It also comes with acknowledging the privilege and power that come with assuming the “Western academic’s authoritative stance” and putting it somehow at the service of communities (Bejarano et al. 2019, p. 8).

From the moment I first approached the field, I realized that to grasp how Popular Education should be enacted to attempt decolonizing the very notion of education, and to genuinely embrace the critical and transformative project envisioned by it, it was necessary to reconsider the methods through which I was trying to understand. In my specific case, engaging in ethnography has transformed into a reflective educational and decolonial experience. Within this interplay, the fieldwork has provided not only the critical framework for understanding how Popular Education can deconstruct traditional discourses on education but also the critical space to dismantle the role of the investigator stemming from a Western academic background.

I was much more interested in making sense of how to engage in alternative education projects rather than investigating them. While the distinction may seem subtle, allow me to clarify. My methodology began to slip somewhat out of my control,

beyond academic and normative rules. I felt myself becoming immersed in the processes, forgetting momentarily that I was a PhD student conducting fieldwork. Perhaps from an institutional and academic perspective, it might not be viewed favorably, but here came the first opening from Moten and Harney. They emphasize that coalitions emerge from recognizing that the current system is damaging to all involved. Their perspective underscores that assistance isn't required; rather, acknowledgment of shared struggles is crucial:

the coalition emerges out of your recognition that it's fucked up for you, in the same way that we've already recognized that it's fucked up for us. I don't need your help. I just need you to recognize that this shit is killing you, too, however much more softly, you stupid motherfucker, you know? (2013, p. 140-141)

As I witnessed and felt the injustices through the perspectives of other educators, students and children, the urgency to give my contribution in the *conspiracy* against an unjust system, its racist and poorphobic structures and its elitist education, became imperative. So I stepped outside the imaginary academic walls and became part of the projects, an ally, thereby embracing a political and social commitment by using fieldwork as a tool for social justice against oppression. At least I tried. I'm still trying. I wasn't investigating anymore; I simply became a militant learner, in the truest sense of the word, trying to absorb as much as possible about Popular Education.

I decentered my academic project and I intertwined ethnography, activism —drawing inspiration from Fals Borda's Participatory Action Research (IAP)— and friendships as mutually reinforcing elements, seamlessly integrating them. As emphasized by Torre (2020), decolonial methodology is founded on the adoption of practices oriented towards shared knowledge and the utilization of participatory research methods. It fuels “the communal management and elaboration of knowledge” (p. 462). However, it goes beyond this; it also entails the deconstruction of what is traditionally defined as the *research object* thus transforming it into a political engagement and a practice of love.

What if we intend research investigation in the same way Moten and Harney, drawing on Black Radical Tradition, had theorized the concept of “study” in/for/as the Undercommons? That is, studying as “what you do with other people” (2013, p. 110)? In this way, if research is not ‘extract from’ but ‘learn with’, it becomes the process that comprehend all the daily practices that take form in the relations, in the conviviality:

“it’s talking and walking around with other people, working, dancing, suffering, some irreducible convergence of all three, held under the name of speculative practice” (ibidem).

Gradually, I realized that a genuine commitment to conviviality held the key to the question of what type of social inquiry I wished to adopt, thus paving the way for exploring new avenues in envisioning a discipline that prioritizes relationships. In fact, from the interviews with educators, we assumed that the moments of conviviality and sharing, both within and outside educational settings, played a crucial role in establishing trust. Conviviality emerged as the primary tool through which I cultivated sincere and loyal relationships thus creating a profound sense of emotional connection, fostering the formation of friendships, communities, and love in a radical manner. The same interviews were conducted in moments of pure joy – sharing a beer with loud music, savoring a chicken empanada on a grassy viewpoint, playing with a dog I was taking care of. Moments in which, as friends, we gave each other the space-time to confabulate, thus dismantling the unilateral nature of the interview process, learning from the bilateral and chaotic movement of dialogue. Therefore, rather than focusing on the unilateral transmission and extractivism of information and knowledge, the act of investigating, studying and teaching, evolved into a radical process of becoming-together as a community, thus refocusing as socially engaged practices. If “the academy is structured to defend the colonial approach to scholarship and to privilege those who collaborate to maintain it” (Bejarano et al. 2019, p. 4), research investigations, if intended as radical projects of co-creation, are antagonistic to much of what happens in educational institutions and this perfectly embodies the practice of the Undercommons, studying with the Outsiders, as academic Outsider.

WHY UNDERCOMMONS

The exploration of the concept of the “common”, articulated with social justice, prompts critical inquiries into its inclusive boundaries and the allocation of recognition and agency within this supposedly shared, hierarchyless, and power dynamics-less domain. Questions such as “who counts as human in the common?” and “who is granted recognition and agency within this shared space?” arise, shedding light on how coloniality shapes inclusion and exclusion within the common as well (Juárez

& Pierce, p. 145). As noted by Torres Carrillo in reference to Latin America, “globalization under neoliberalism” has intensified the dismantling of social systems, by privatizing public services such as healthcare and education and expropriation of common lands/goods, while disrupting opposing forces. All this in the name of the market, a presumed democracy, and Western civilization (Torres Carrillo, 2002, p. 110). Pedagogical relationships inherently hold political significance, as they involve redefining our connections to education, knowledge, and each other. Viewing education as a common resource/practice underscores the importance of recognizing that school culture is not neutral; rather, it embodies specific ideologies and politics that shape society, what De Lissovoy names “hidden curriculum” (2012). Therefore, schooling functions as a mechanism through which neoliberal politics consistently produce citizens who paradoxically are educated to understand their freedom within the same framework of subjugation and submission. In fact, we are currently witnessing the colonization of social justice, where both structural and cultural policies shape the very notion of what can be considered just or unjust. As Da Silva aptly points out, when addressing calls for social justice, the colonial framework of the state interprets it through lenses that perpetuate the construction of the *other* as inferior (look: da Silva, 2007, 2014, 2016). This phenomenon is closely linked to what Gonzales defines as “internal colonialism” which refers to the dynamics that permeate various domains of social life, including education, with the aim of reinforcing and exacerbating social “pluralism” and its inherent hierarchical relationship of dominance and exploitation (2009, p. 197).

This analysis isn’t a generalized and universalized critique of the education system; instead, it aims to illuminate how the pursuit of the common -if expropriated and exploited- could *inadvertently* serve as a means of exclusion, perpetuating structural mechanisms of coloniality. Rather, it is an invitation to take seriously the imperative to contemplate the intersection of education as a shared common good with the hardships faced by communities and individuals enduring persistent forms of economic exploitation, coloniality and contemporary forms of *necropolitics*: urban gentrification, merit-based pay and other accountability politics tied to classroom performance and productivity, punitive disciplinary approaches within schools, and the marginalization of certain populations due to austerity measures (Means, 2013 in “Educational Commons in Theory and Practice: Global Pedagogy and Politics,” 2017, p. 141). Therefore, the formulation of alternative communal education arises as a feasible

pathway in line with wider efforts to put an end to the world *as we know it*, thus promoting a decolonial social justice. The concept of Undercommons, grounded in marginalized viewpoints and functioning as a political strategy of opposition, provides a divergence from settler colonial and racial capitalist ideologies that persist in shaping conversations about the communal educational sphere without questioning the very whole system.

The notion of the Undercommons can be employed as both a pragmatic framework and an inspiring vision to rethink traditional political frameworks and envision alternative paths forward forms of resistance. Nonetheless, bringing this vision to fruition within the existing system presents formidable challenges, in fact defining the Undercommons proves demanding itself, reflecting the inherently open-ended nature of decoloniality as well. The Undercommons embody a space that emerges from the deep connections among those who have been marginalized. Unlike conventional bonds formed around shared possessions or spatial ownership, their connection does not stem from the communal use of goods or space, but rather from their shared experience of exclusion. As noted by Halberstram in his introduction of the book, the Undercommons encompasses a diverse range of individuals: “black people, indigenous peoples, queers, and poor people” (p. 6). Instead of seeking validation from the system that has marginalized them and caused their struggles, the Undercommons yearn for rupture. They assert the urgency to “dismantle, tear down the structure that currently constrains the ability to find each other” (ibidem). The Undercommons are a grassroots collective endeavor, a dissenting “project of love” that proposes both an alternative approach to pedagogy and a political stance that transcends the established structures of power, including the education system. So, instead of idealizing the concept of the common, the focus should shift towards the perpetual flux of social interactions that collectively work to deconstruct our shared reality that still affect and colonize commons themselves, from the difference, as outsiders, but always in an antagonist touch with the system:

We’re just anti-politically romantic about actually existing social life. We aren’t responsible for politics. We are the general antagonism to politics looming outside every attempt to politicize, every imposition of self governance, every sovereign decision and its degraded miniature, every emergent state and home sweet home. We are disruptive and consent to disruption. We preserve upheaval. Sent to fulfill by abolishing, to renew by unsettling, to open the enclosure whose immeasurable

venality is inversely proportionate to its actual area, we got politics surrounded. We cannot represent ourselves. We can't be represented (Harney, Moten, 2013, p. 20).

This resounds with what Givens terms the tradition of “fugitive pedagogy”. Fugitivity represents the Black educational endeavor that unfolded in defiance of prevailing social structures, both during and after slavery. This entails acts of physical and intellectual subversion undertaken by individuals to attain an education, constituting a liberating practice of transgression. Reimagined within the contemporary context of alternative education, fugitivity, defined as “being other than the colonial settlement”, entails a practice of challenging and rejecting imposed norms. Hence, the act of being a fugitive signifies not capitulation but opposition to the system through vibrant collaboration, rejecting institutional and political dictates and fostering the emergence of alternative social spaces. The real common is thus outside. This is significant because questioning power from the margins is fundamentally different from doing so from the center, and these voices from the margins provide crucial contributions to offer alternative interpretations of the exercise of power and its challenges.

STUDENT OUTSIDERS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENCE

To recalling this fugitivity, I chose the expression “Student Outsider” drawing on the title *Sister Outsider* of the collection of essays and speeches written by Audre Lorde:

Those of us who stand outside the circle of this society's definition of acceptable women; those of us who have been forged in the crucibles of difference – those of us who are poor, who are lesbians, who are Black, who are older – know that survival is not an academic skill. It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths. For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change. (1984, p. 112)

Drawing from the inspirational insights of Lorde's discourse, it's important to accentuate the significance of maintaining a position outside structures that impede authentic societal transformation. Lorde herself imparts the invaluable lesson of the dual significance of *difference*, which encompasses both a sense of engagement to inhabit and a sense of detachment to recognize, epitomizing the liminal space she delineates as the “raw and powerful connection from which our personal power is

forged” (ibid). So to be in the margin means to be part of the whole but outside the main body, involving transgression and political gestures of defiance. In this context, being positioned outside as a student or as an educator entails choosing to establish an alternative educational framework external – but always in touch – to the institutionalized one. The margin here serves a dual function: it is the hermeneutic space for understanding the social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions and struggles that intersect in a constant tension, and the domain from which to resist and envision alternatives to the system by reshaping the very sense of the political. It emerges as a ‘battlefield’ where forms of resistance and antagonism manifest in tension, constantly relocating the political within the everyday dynamics of urban neighborhoods, in a continuous process of interweaving between the personal and the communal, towards a new political ontology *from below* that goes beyond simplistic and dualistic relations imposed by western humanism.

It was this marginality that bell hooks identified as a “space of radical openness” for the production of a counter-hegemonic discourse in education (1989). The radical openness should be based on what Moten and Harney define as “living in incompleteness” (2021), a transformative practice characterized by collective and collaborative improvisation that transcends individualistic identities. This involves embodying common power, where intersubjectivity materializes as a state of “difference without separability” to create conditions that transcend conventional ideas of individual citizenship, freedom, and property. These efforts seek to extend beyond the confines of individualized property ownership and the institutionalized apparatus of educational politics (Simone, 2022; Da Silva, 2016).

POPULAR EDUCATION FOR THE (UNDER)COMMONS

Popular Education seeks, by embracing a transformative commitment, to reform existing structures from within, thus signalling a willingness to reject the homogenizing tendencies of mainstream education. It resonates with the ethos of the Undercommons, occupying a perspective that transcends conventional power structures and social dynamics. I would like to underscore other possible articulation by addressing the ongoing redefinition of the transformative path through the concept of “popular”. In its dynamic nature, continually evolving in its tension as ‘terrain of struggle’ where resistances, antagonisms, and affects, move the political from

everyday life and territories, the concept of “popular” resonates with the incompleteness, so the unpredictability, of the Undercommons. These interconnections evoke AbdouMaliq’s idea of the popular as a “kind of choreography of trajectories, backgrounds, aspirations, and particular resources that attempt to position themselves” (Cielo, 2018, p. 156), thus always open to other forms of experimentation.

The projects in which I have been involved exemplify this escape from clear and close definitions. I won’t delve into detailed explanations, I’ll endeavor in Guardianes del Rio Popular School to offer an example of a practice rooted in the margin between Popular Education and Undercommons; exploring how cultural politics and communitarian practices, that entail the appropriation of common space and the deconstruction of dominant discourses that affect it, intersect.

The Popular School “Guardians of the River” in Villa Cindy has a unique eco-pedagogical approach centered on raising awareness among children about the systemic injustices present in Colombian neoliberal society, particularly concerning nature, Venezuelan migrants, and marginalized communities of Bogotá. This initiative stems from the specific context of the neighborhood, situated along the banks of the Bogotá River which is mostly populated by Venezuelan immigrant families engaged in informal waste collection and recycling. The Guardians of the River, through their approach, which they define as “pedagogy of the conspiracy”, works in the tension between autonomy and negotiations with formal institutions to continually question the macrostructures of dominant culture.

One of their aims is to rethink with children the question of the commons, their importance and the rights to inhabit them as collective spaces freed from power dynamics. Their pedagogy claims for the river, the football pitch, the nature, the streets, the school, the libraries, the whole world as commons to be reappropriated by community. They experiment with the general antagonism and its capacity to give new senses to the world, and fugitivity, that “being in motion” that considers formal institutions to be obstacles in the organization of different lives (Harney, Moten, 2013, p. 11).

Their pedagogical models engage in dialogue with children to identify structural issues and guide them in using new languages to deconstruct the overarching narratives framing their lives. In this way, children actively participate in creating resistance and antagonism from the margins. They learn to address problems through artistic and cultural practices capable of altering the perception of relationships

towards a reinvention of human (and non-human) bonds within the spaces they engage with. Central to this endeavor is the popular-communitarian political aspiration to conceptualize novel moral standards governing social life and the equitable distribution of communal resources through a concerted effort to collectively reclaim both tangible and intangible goods/spaces/knowledges accessible to the community (Gutiérrez Aguilar, 2015).

For example, each year, they organize a parade in the neighborhood Villa Cindy, a moment of pure joy and rebellion. It is a collective carnival where various processes of Popular Education come together to occupy public space to claim the importance of interculturality, criticize capitalist appropriations and exploitations, to make recognized the importance of recycling and caring for the environment. A manifestation of general antagonism through a practice of love and conviviality: for a few hours, the streets are filled with children dressed as animals, educators with bird wings, batucada bands, giant puppets, dogs, and circus performers. For a few hours, public space regains its vitality while being lived in alternatives and uncommon ways, with other performances, other *more than human* bodies, and the languages of collective improvisation.

That day during the parade, a man forced to pause his hurried drive, as children staged their theatrical tale at a crossroad, cried out: “You’re mad!”.

The founder of the Guardians, dancing with a towering puppet, replied screaming, “Yes, we’re mad, and what of it?”.

Behold, the Undercommons. Reclaiming what we have in commons from outside by using other forms of political action, languages and strategies that the center cannot comprehend. In fact, to bring coloniality to an end thus building real social justice, “one does not speak truth to power, one has to inhabit the crazy, nonsensical, ranting language of the other, the other who has been rendered a nonentity by colonialism” (Harney, Moten, 2013, p. 6).

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SCHOOL SEX EDUCATION IN PORTUGAL: BETWEEN PUBLIC AND INTIMATE

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Abstract School Sex Education (SSE) has been asserting itself in Europe, by influence of international organizations concerned with health promotion (WHO) and education of children and young people (UNESCO) and by the intervention of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In Portugal, SSE has also been imposing itself as a domain of educational intervention (Vilar, 2009) and today integrates the "Education for Citizenship", a curricular area present in primary and secondary education, as a transversal and transdisciplinary theme. What justifications do the public authorities advance for the inclusion of sex education on the school menu? Which themes are part of this considered educational Common Good? What controversies can SSE generate in plural and increasingly multicultural societies? This paper intends to address these questions, based on the Portuguese case. The methodology used consisted of a documentary analysis of several educational policy instruments (legislation, national strategies, and subject contents) in force in the last decades. As a result, the analysis identified a certain ambivalence between a biomedical approach (inspired by preventive medicine aimed at avoiding public health problems) and a psychosocial approach (inspired by the search for individual well-being), which refers to the tension between discipline and freedom which is at the heart of modernity (Wagner, 1996).

THE EMERGENCE OF MODERN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS: TEACHING OR EDUCATING?

The process of building modernity in the Western world began at the end of the 18th century and one of its structuring elements was the design of modern public education systems. The modern education systems – nationwide, unified and, in certain countries, centralised (Barreto, 1995) – represented a slow undertaking throughout the 19th century, inspired by the founding principles of the imagined project of modernity (Wagner, 1996). On the one hand, a new conception of the individual, freed from the chains that tied him to a given destiny by birth. On the other hand, an extreme valorisation of Reason, as the new redeeming faith of Humanity in the face of the various manipulations to which its obscurantism had hitherto subjected it.

Finally, the notion of the Common Good as a collective ambition legitimising the action henceforth led by the State.

In fact, one of the pillars of modernity is the creation of public education systems. It is through the school that States intend to build a *new individual*, autonomous, freed from ignorance by Reason; but also a *new citizen*, by promoting a set of knowledge, values and behaviours, common denominators for participation in the public sphere (Durkheim, 1968). Education for citizenship has therefore always been a constituent element of the education systems.

In recent decades, school sex education (SSE) has become established in Europe (Ketting and Ivanova, 2018) as an area of knowledge considered important for healthy personal and social development. In line with European trends, in Portugal, school sex education has also been imposing itself as a domain of educational intervention (Vilar, 2009) and today integrates the “Education for Citizenship”, a transversal school curricular area present in primary and secondary education.

Based on the Portuguese case, this paper aims to answer three questions that the inclusion of this knowledge in the school curriculum in Portugal raises:

- what justifications do the public authorities advance for the inclusion of sex education on the school menu?
- Which themes are part of this considered educational Common Good?
- What controversies can school sex education generate in plural and increasingly multicultural societies?

METHODOLOGY

To answer the research questions, we adopted a methodological design based on documentary analysis. We collected legislation on health and sex education, in general, and school sex education, in particular; we gathered educational policy texts on health education and citizenship education; and we completed the analysis with the curriculum content of the subjects in which sexuality and reproduction are covered in both primary and secondary education.

The time frame set for this study spans from the 1970s to 2023, as we wanted to capture the trends of change observed after the fall of the dictatorship in Portugal on 25 April 1974. This is also a period of intense international change with regard to

issues of sexuality and sexual health, so it is important to understand possible connections and interdependencies between global movements and national policies.

Thus, the documentary corpus used consists of 21 pieces:

- a) six Government Plans concerning the *promotion of gender equality* (1997, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2013, 2018).
- b) four legislative milestones concerning *sexual health* (1982, 2007, 2010, 2018)
- c) seven pieces of legislation regulating *sex education and family planning* (Law no. 3 of 1984 and Ordinance 52/1985; Law no. 120/1999 and Decree-Law 259/2000; Law no. 60/2009 and Ordinance 196-A/2010, Decree-Law no. 55/2018).
- d) four educational policy documents containing guidelines on *citizenship and sex education* (1998 – Interministerial Plan for Sex Education and Family Planning; 2000 – Ministry of Education publishes the “Guidelines for Sex Education in Schools” in October; 2005 – Order 25995/2005 (2nd series), 16 December – Obligation for schools to include sex education in their educational project).

Once the documents had been collected, they were read and analysed using a thematic categorical content analysis in accordance with the research aim.

To answer question 1 “What justifications do the public authorities advance for the inclusion of sex education on the school menu?” we analysed in detail the general legislative preambles and the educational legislative preambles, in particular, which contain arguments justifying the policy that is intended to be carried out.

In order to answer question 2 “Which themes are part of this considered educational Common Good?” we analysed the content of the determinations included in the documents, in order to identify the themes introduced over the period of time under study and to determine any priorities successively put forward by the legislator.

The answer to question 3 “What controversies can school sex education generate in plural and increasingly multicultural societies?” lies at another level of approach. From the analytical level used in the previous questions, we now move on to the conjectural level. How do the values of citizenship that inspire political choices regarding sexual health and sex education, understood as expressions of the Common Good – whose legitimacy is seen as unquestionable – fit in with a more multicultural

society, whose diverse groups are urged to express their “voice” and demands seen as legitimate ingredients of fuller citizenship?

SEXUALITY AS A SOCIAL PROBLEM

All societies are faced with risks (either natural, social or individual), but what distinguishes contemporary societies from previous ones is the *awareness* of those risks (Beck, 1992). This awareness stems from the dissemination of scientific knowledge as a formula for deciphering the world, thanks to universal education systems, disseminated on a large scale, which are the basis for the generalisation of modernity’s “expert systems” (Giddens, 1994).

In fact, the perception of risk often inspires forms of anticipation or “colonisation” of the future (Giddens, 1994: 207). Thus, the ability to perceive, anticipate and deal with virtual risks through the mobilisation of information or the intervention of experts has itself become a vital skill (Beck, 1992) in contemporary times. The recent pandemic period, with extreme political measures put in place to limit the spread of the virus and the damage it caused, is a clear example of risk awareness – in this case, for public health.

The risk prevention work carried out by the public authorities in many areas (environmental, epidemiological, economic, security risks, etc.) therefore represents a new dimension of the “common good” today.

The idea that it is necessary to educate about sexuality is based on the belief that there are risks associated with sexual behaviour and that it is important to prevent them. This idea applies particularly to young people, who are perceived as a vulnerable group. Teenagers, in particular, are seen either as victims of their naivety – as “being at risk” – or as protagonists of irreverent and risky experimentation – as potentially performing “risky behaviours” (Le Breton, 2002; Rabot, 2011; Gausson et al., 2016). In this sense, adolescent sexuality is considered a potential “social problem” that needs to be tackled by offering knowledge tools that favour “informed and safe choices” in the field of sexuality.

As one of the pillars of modern societies in charge of providing scientific knowledge to create autonomous and free *individuals*, but also *citizens* united by common values and rules needed to live and participate in society (Durkheim, 1968), the public

education system is naturally considered the most appropriate place to promote sex education.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CONCERNS AND SCHOOL SEX EDUCATION JUSTIFICATIONS

The emergence of sex education in Portuguese schools stems from a broader concern for sexual and reproductive health that began to take its first steps in the 1960s. The commercial launch of the first combined oral contraceptive pill in 1960, which arrived in the country two years later (Alves, 2014), is no stranger to this renewed interest. The “scourge” of unwanted births, abortion – illegal in the country at that time – and illiteracy in family planning was the reason for the growing interest in “sexual information” as a common good to be provided by health professionals.

The revolution of 25th April 1974, which abolished the dictatorial regime in Portugal and established democracy, gave rise to new social movements and an accelerated “liberalization of sexual behaviours” (Vieira, 2012, p. 21). Demands in the field of sexual and reproductive health grew considerably (access to contraception, legalisation of abortion, etc.), associated with the fight for women’s rights and the demand for gender equality. At the same time, homosexuality was decriminalised in 1982, in response to long-standing demands.

Equality between men and women regarding sexual health was at the time the main normative trigger to justify school sexual education. Following heated debates in society and parliament, the legislator approves, in 1984, the first law dedicated to the topic. Law No. 3/1984 on “Sexual Education and Family Planning” establishes, among other things, free consultations on family planning and access to contraceptive means provided by the NHS; and school sex education (SSE), as well. Article 2 on Sex education of young people states that:

The fundamental duty to protect the family and the duty to co-operate with parents in the education of their children *shall commit the State to guarantee the sexual education of young people through schools, health organisations and the media* [our emphasis]

The outbreak of a new disease – HIV/AIDS – in the 1980s refocused political concerns with sexual and reproductive health in the prevention of sexually transmitted infections. At the Ministry of Education, AIDS prevention was the basis of the integration of sexual education into the Health Promotion and Education Program. However, it

was only in the late 1990s that Law 120/99 reinforced “(...) guarantees of the right to reproductive health” and addressed “sexual education in primary and secondary education establishments”. The aim was clear: it

consecrates measures within the scope of sexual education, reinforcing access to family planning and contraceptive methods, namely *with a view to preventing unwanted pregnancies and combating sexually transmitted diseases, namely those transmitted by HIV and the hepatitis B and C viruses* [our emphasis]

Despite the scourge of AIDS, the principle of equality between men and women also continues to inspire sexual and reproductive health policies. In 1997, the first “Global Plan for Equal Opportunities” was approved, stating that

In view of the challenges currently facing Portuguese society, *a policy of equal opportunities for women and men* is not only a democratic imperative, but also an essential condition for development [our emphasis]

Six years later, the “II National Plan for Equality 2003”, reaffirms equality between men and women as a principle of citizenship and advocates the need for this value to be transmitted (also) through the education system.

The schools play a fundamental role in the transmission of values and in young people’s career choices. For this reason, it is imperative that the gender dimension is included in the education of children and young people *from the earliest levels of education in order to eliminate gender stereotypes and promote education for equality* [our emphasis]

The turn of the century ushers in a new cycle of approaches to sexual health, which has repercussions on the understanding of what school sex education should be. Associated with the quest for individual well-being and the safeguarding of minority rights, issues of gender identity and discrimination based on sexual orientation, as well as domestic or dating violence (Carvalho & Figueiredo, 2012) emerge as themes that reflect sexuality as a wider agenda for the defence of human rights. With a strong influence from the political directives issued by international organisations that are prevalent in this field, such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), but also the UN/UNESCO, the European Union and the Council of Europe, as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), sex education policies in Portugal have progressively broadened their scope. 2007 was established as the European Year of Equal

Opportunities for All, which inspired a more inclusive agenda. The “IV National plan for equality – gender, citizenship and non-discrimination” drawn up in 2011 reflects this shift, in the following terms:

The 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All was a milestone in the advancement of public equality and non-discrimination policies, including *the area of sexual orientation and gender equality*. (...) In Portugal, this legacy has translated into countless advances in the fight against discrimination against LGBT people. (...) This area thus seeks to consolidate public policies to promote equality and combat discrimination against LGBT people, raise awareness among the general population about non-discrimination and empower civil society organisations representing LGBT people [our emphasis]

In a context of wider recognition of sexual rights, the new law (Law no. 60/2009) that reinforces the implementation of school sex education considerably expands the objectives of this curricular area. Article 2 states that

The aims of sex education are:

- a) The valorisation of sexuality and affectivity between people in individual development, respecting the pluralism of conceptions existing in Portuguese society;
- b) The development of skills in young people that allow informed and safe choices in the field of sexuality;
- c) The improvement of young people’s affective-sexual relationships;
- d) Reducing the negative consequences of risky sexual behaviour, such as unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections;
- e) The ability to protect oneself from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse
- f) Respect for difference between people and for different sexual orientations
- g) The valuing of a responsible and informed sexuality
- h) The promotion of gender equality
- i) The recognition of the importance of the participation of parents, pupils, teachers and health technicians in the educational process;
- j) Scientific understanding of the functioning of reproductive biological mechanisms;
- l) The elimination of behaviour based on sexual discrimination or violence on the grounds of sex or sexual orientation.

The last two National Plans for Equality (2013 and 2018) go in the same direction as the previous one, with the latter broadening the scope of the situations of discrimination it aims to combat:

The (...) Government recognises equality and non-discrimination as a condition for building a sustainable future for Portugal (...). In this context, it has prioritised intervention in the *labour market and education*, in preventing and combating *domestic and gender-based violence*, and in combating *discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sexual characteristics*, guided by the constitutional principles of equality and non-discrimination and the promotion of equality between women and men [our emphasis]

The most recent document that provides thematic guidelines for school sex education is the National Strategy for Citizenship Education (2017), a transdisciplinary curricular area present from the 1st to the 9th year of schooling. In the presentation of the Strategy, the authors refer to the various international commitments made by Portugal (EU, Council of Europe; UN, UNESCO), whose documents clearly inspire and guide citizenship education policies in the country. In the next section, we will explore the contents of this curriculum area.

THEMES

So far, we have identified the justifications that public authorities have put forward over time for including sexuality education in the school curriculum. It is now important to know what these contents consist of, which are evaluated as a common good to be promoted through the school.

The first law specifically dedicated to “Sex Education and Family Planning” (Law No. 3/1984) refers that

School curricula shall include, in accordance with the different levels of education, *scientific knowledge* about human anatomy, physiology, genetics and sexuality, and shall contribute towards *overcoming discrimination* on the grounds of sex and the traditional division of functions between women and men [our emphasis]

In fact, in addition to the reference to democratic values, such as gender equality, the low level of schooling of the Portuguese population (compulsory schooling was set at 6 years in 1984) seemed to demand additional scientific knowledge about the human body – particularly in terms of the reproductive system – in order to avoid unwanted pregnancy and abortion.

Fifteen years later, the government once again refers to the obligation for the primary and secondary education curricula to include sexual health contents. Law no. 120/99 determines the themes to be covered:

adequate information on human sexuality, the reproductive system and the physiology of reproduction, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, contraceptive methods and family planning, interpersonal relationships, sharing responsibilities and gender equality.

Once again, bio-medical scientific knowledge prevails over civic values – in this case, gender equality. The topic of sexually transmitted infections is emphasised here for situational reasons, as explained in the previous point.

This century has seen some changes in the approach to school sex education.

In 2009, the law that “establishes the system for implementing sex education in schools” (Law 60/2009) states that “it is up to the government to define the appropriate curricular guidelines (of sex education) for the different cycles of education.” In addition to teachers, partnerships with health centres and other organisations are promoted. The topics to be covered for the different school levels are defined. In addition to bio-medical knowledge, the curriculum also includes ethical and psychosocial concerns. This is the case with “abusive approaches”, “gender identity doubts/problems”, “the ethical dimension of human sexuality”, “prevention of abuse”.

Emphasising the role of the state, not only in promoting this cross-curricular area, but also in determining the content for each level of education, the legislator also stipulates the obligation for the school to inform families “(...) of all curricular and non-curricular activities developed within the scope of sex education”. This precaution reveals that sex education is an area that may not reach consensus. Although the State determines the selection of curricular contents and prescribes programmatic guidelines to be worked on by teachers, it recognizes that tensions may arise between some families and the school in this matter, as it can be understood as entering the sphere of the intimate.

The most recent directive in matters of sexual education dates from 2017 (“Health Education Framework”) and lists the themes included in the area “Affections and Education for Sexuality”:

- “Identity and gender” (topics such as gender identity, affective and sexual orientation, biological sex, gender expression);
- “Affective relationships” (topics concerning educating affection, preventing violence);
- “Values” (values of respect, tolerance and sharing);
- “Development of Sexuality” (including contraceptive methods, homosexuality, the “first time”);
- “Maternity and Paternity” (awareness of the responsibility of motherhood/fatherhood, teenage pregnancy);
- “Sexual and reproductive rights” (various components of Human Rights related with sexuality and reproduction).

By adding “affections” to “sexual education” as the title of this curricular domain, the legislator reinforces the subjective dimension associated with school sex education. In fact, from this diachronic analysis, what we have been observing is “a shift in the discourses generated about sexual education – from a biomedical vision to a psychosocial perspective” as Carvalho and Figueiredo (2012, 75) put it.

CONTROVERSIES

Sex education policies in schools involve political-scientific disputes over different types of knowledge (public administration, academic experts), and different types of advocacy (local and national associations, non-governmental organisations, international organisations). Such disputes could be expressed most acutely in the local implementation of SSE. In fact, its operationalisation is based on a multifaceted conception of responsibility (legislator, schools, teachers, parents and students) in a chain of participation and co-responsibility not always convergent (Resende, Beirante & Gouveia, 2018).

The legislator recognises potential difficulties of SSE implementation given the sensitive nature of the subject, as stated in Decree No. 19 737/2005 preamble:

Considering the regime established by Decree-Law No. 259/2000, as well as the guidelines for sex education in schools that are currently in force, but also *the*

difficulties in their application in schools, and also considering the sensitivity with which the themes in question are received by public opinion [our emphasis]

For a few students, some topics of the SSE curriculum explored in the classroom – namely, those of normative and psychological nature – may be considered a “sensitive topic”. This means that it is likely to “lead to the exposure of behaviours or attitudes that: i) would normally be kept private; ii) may result in offence, social censure or disapproval; and iii) may cause discomfort to the actor” (Wellings, Branigan and Mitchell 2000, cited by Augusto 2019, 100). Similar to the concept of “vulnerability”, “sensitivity” – of the topic or subjects dealt with – is a contextual concept, meaning that its innocuousness depends on the subjective interpretation/assessment of the actors involved and even the way it is dealt with (Hilário and Augusto 2021, 309) – in the classroom, in this case. It is worth mentioning that “sex education” was the theme selected at national level for the 2010 session of the Youth Parliament initiative. Among the recommendations made by 7th to 9th graders to the Portuguese Assembly of the Republic at the plenary session on 25 May 2010 was the following: “*6-Guarantee the right of each student to accept or refuse sex education presented by schools*” (Parlamento dos Jovens Básico, 2010).

This compulsory, top-down imposition of an SEE curriculum as an expression of the Common Good, whose legitimacy is unquestionable, can come up against several challenges. Disputes may arise over the definition of boundaries between the public (State-Common Good) and the private (Family – values/beliefs); but also over the legitimacy of the school’s interference in matters considered to be of an intimate nature (a “sensitive topic”); or even disputes over the appropriate age of exposure of children to certain content about sexuality.

Furthermore, in plural and increasingly multicultural societies, disputes over sex education are likely to become more intense. In fact, how can the defence of “tolerance and acceptance of multiculturalism” and the otherness (advocated by the legislator) be reconciled with the SSE version of values relating to sexuality, considered as the most legitimate one? How can schools and teachers deal on a day-to-day basis with students and/or families who hold other values and practices when it comes to sexuality?

FINAL REMARKS

In conclusion, this analysis shows that the sexuality of children and young people seems to be considered a social problem, incorporating potential risks, which justifies preventive educational intervention. In Portugal, the political actors inaugurated the process of including sex education in schools in 1984, following a path that took on different contours. Over the years, the definition of risks and problems has varied. The “problems” have shifted from a focus on public health (unwanted pregnancy and abortion; sexually transmitted infections) to human rights (gender equality; non-discrimination based on sexual orientation).

The influence that international organisations have exerted on national guidelines on sex education was also evident. The link between sexuality and human rights has become increasingly prevalent in the various documents produced by these agencies to which the country is a signatory member.

Furthermore, the diachronic analysis of the legislative documents, syllabus and contents concerning school sex education shows a shift from a biomedical perspective (scientific approach) to a bio-psychosocial approach to sexuality (from society to the individual – and his/her rights). This normative centrality given to sexuality as a human right, guided by a set of values defined as a Common Good to be safeguarded by the state, may not meet with consensus in increasingly multicultural societies. In this sense, are contemporary societies witnessing a progressive fragmentation of school systems, as some have suggested (Barrère and Delvaux, 2017)?

Undoubtedly, one of the great challenge facing education systems – and societies in general – will be in the very form of “doing society”, i.e. in the definition of the “common good”.

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Section 2

SCHOOL-SOCIETY-COMMUNITY

SWOT ANALYSIS APPLIED TO THE 'PARTNERSHIP FORCE'S MODEL': PATHWAY TO VALIDATION OF A SCHOOL-FAMILY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP MODEL

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Abstract The confusion and lack of clarity regarding the practices of school-family involvement and participation to be implemented (Epstein, 2018) and the little scientific evidence on the functionality of the partnership models devised, is one of the persistent critical issues with regard to the school-family-community relationship today. For this reason, a new model, the Partnership Force's Model (PFM), was developed with the aim of doing justice to the complexity and plurality of components involved. The model was developed from a study of the scientific literature on the subject and a survey developed with teachers, parents and school managers aimed at understanding how the relationship is realised in everyday teaching practice (Albanese, 2022). In this contribution we report on the SWOT analysis of the PFM model carried out by 41 pairs of future teachers after participating in the training module dedicated to school-family communication. The SWOT analysis is part of a broader process of validation of the model that is in full implementation for the definition of good practices of school-family-community involvement. The reflections developed within the SWOT analysis have highlighted clusters of responses capable of identifying the strengths and opportunities offered by the model, but also the weaknesses and risks inherent in it. This led to a redefinition of the model.

INTRODUCTION

The confusion and lack of clarity with respect to the practices of school-family involvement and participation to be implemented (Epstein, 2018) and the scarce scientific evidence on the functionality of the partnership models devised, represent one of the persistent critical issues with respect to the school-family-community relationship today.

Although it may seem an outdated topic, the educational-didactic practices in which the different educational agencies have to communicate and collaborate seem to highlight a situation in which work still needs to be done on communication, on dialogue, in order to implement a serene and open relationship that starts from and

reflects the educational and training needs of students (Chiusaroli, 2021; Barca & Tripaldi, 2019).

While it is still uncertain what kind of partnership is most functional, it is well established that family involvement in school activities is associated with improved pupils' academic success (Jeynes, 2007; Houtenville, 2008; Axford et al., 2019) and overall school effectiveness (Muijs & Reynold, 2017), as well as increased family satisfaction (Lindsay et al., 2016; Vasarik et al., 2018).

The conviction that the school-family relationship must become a priority of teachers' professional task and role is a fundamental requirement for there to be real collaboration (Chiusaroli, 2021); also, because where the potential and benefits of the role of families are not recognised, they can become obstacles to change (Avvisati et al., 2013; Castro et al., 2015).

Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic has clearly shown the crucial role of families with respect to the educational task (Toci et al., 2022) and critical communication.

Many contributions have highlighted that an integrated community approach is necessary given the mutual influences involved in the development of the person (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Epstein, 1996; Epstein et al., 2018, Goodall, 2018). However, models often attempt to delve into some aspects while leaving out others.

For this reason, a new model, the Partnership Force's Model, was developed with the aim of doing justice to the complexity and plurality of components involved. This contribution discusses the SWOT analysis of the model carried out by 41 prospective teacher pairs after participating in the training module dedicated to school-family communication. It is part of a broader process of validation of the model to be implemented for the definition of good practices of school-family-community involvement.

1. THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

The Partnership Force's Model is the result of the encounter between the study of existing models and the analysis of the needs of teachers, parents and school leaders carried out in a previous study (Albanese, 2022). Specifically, the reflection takes its start from the pedagogical-epistemic speculation of Pati (2019), who posits educational co-responsibility in terms of the right/duty of the two educational institutions to undertake a collaborative pathway in which proposals, activities, expectations are shared and co-designed. It is clear, however, that this must take place with respect

for the specific competences of each (Zini, 2011) and the pedagogical principle of educational coherence (Dusi, 2006).

In addition to this, the reflection is nourished by international research and studies; among them, for example, the Funds of Knowledge Theory is of interest as it is founded on the idea that families possess a wealth of knowledge and resources dictated by their socio-cultural background that influences children's development in terms of the acquisition of knowledge and skills (Moll & Greenberg, 1990; Oughton, 2010). The main contribution provided by work on family knowledge funds is to develop both theory and methods through which educators can approach and document family knowledge funds to base educational-didactic work on the knowledge, resources, and strengths that families possess (Moll, 2019).

Other studies, such as the one just mentioned, that focus on families have also emphasised other relevant aspects; for example, some scholars emphasise how the socialisation processes experienced within the family are crucial (Christenson & Havy, 2004; Zins et al., 2004). Indeed, family socialisation processes influence children's social-emotional development and this has repercussions in the school environment and in the improvement of school engagement (Greenberg et al., 2003), as well as in the pro-social behaviour and social responsibility of students (Denham & Weissberg, 2003; Greenberg et al., 2003; Zins et al., 2004). Within the framework of their social-emotional programming model, Zins, and colleagues (2004) describe the central role of parental involvement in schools.

Based on these insights, there is a need to develop interventions aimed at increasing parenting skills (Spath et al., 2008).

Shifting the focus to teachers and managers, research shows that education professionals are not sufficiently prepared/trained to work productively and harmoniously with their students' families (Epstein, 2013; Evans, 2013; Saltmarsh et al., 2014; Willemse et al., 2016). Professor Epstein (2013) points out that very often future teachers in universities are prepared unsystematically, through highly specialised courses and little through the curricula themselves; thus, while recognising the importance of this, not enough work is done on providing future teachers with the necessary tools to initiate effective and efficient pathways in which families are valued (Epstein & Sanders, 2006).

Yet, all the models applied to the study of partnership in the literature consider the school as well as the family and the community. Among them, as pointed out by the

study of Yamauchi and colleagues (2017), four theoretical frameworks that scholars tend to use to explain school-family partnership were found to be recurrent:

- the Bioecological Theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979, 2001);
- the Social Capital Theory described by Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1987), Lareau (1987) and other scholars;
- the Overlapping Spheres of Influence theory by Epstein (1987, 1996, 2013);
- the Funds of Knowledge theory of Moll and colleagues (1992);
- some authors have also frequently applied two other conceptual frameworks: Epstein's Types of Family Involvement (1987, 1996) and the model described by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler and colleagues (1995; 2005) on the Parent Involvement Process.

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory (1979; 1994; 2001) emphasises the influence of social, community and political contexts on human development. The ecological model devised by the American psychologist, in fact, represents a theoretical horizon of meaning that well emphasises the interdependence between systems and their influence on the development of the individual.

The Social Capital Theory "has had the merit of drawing attention to the importance of informal, personalistic ties" (Piselli, 1999). Social capital is characterised by productivity: it is a resource for action that makes it possible for the individual and/or the community to achieve an end that could not otherwise be achieved except at great cost (Coleman, 1994). Being a dynamic and situational concept, the main difficulty of this theorisation lies in the attempt to reduce the object of study to a definition.

The Model of Overlapping Family and School Spheres of Influence (Epstein, 1987; 1992; 1996) describes the relationship and mutual influence between parents, schools, and the local community. This model combines psychological, educational, and sociological perspectives on social institutions to describe and explain the relationships between parents, schools, and local environments. The three spheres are the family, the school, and the local community; the overlapping of the spheres represents the partnership between these three institutions, while the child is placed in the centre as the focal point.

More recently, the Parent Socialization Model by Eccles and Harold (2013) considers the dynamic processes between school and family. Specifically, five variables are analysed by the authors: family, community, child, teacher, and school characteristics. The characteristics linked to the five variables have direct and indirect effects on each other. There is also a second group of variables that influence each other and have direct effects on the child's or young person's educational outcomes: teachers' beliefs and habits, parents' beliefs, and habits.

PARTNERSHIP FORCE'S MODEL

The Partnership Force's Model places at the centre the child's educational development ("Child education") to which various forces ("Force") contribute: the teacher force (T-force), the school-school headmaster force (S&SL-force), the parental force (P-force) and the community force (C-force) and a substratum of forces that are not immediately explicit and/or conscious ("Sub Force"). To all this must be added a general force (G-force) coinciding with the general cultural, political, economic conditions that also influence the child's growth path.

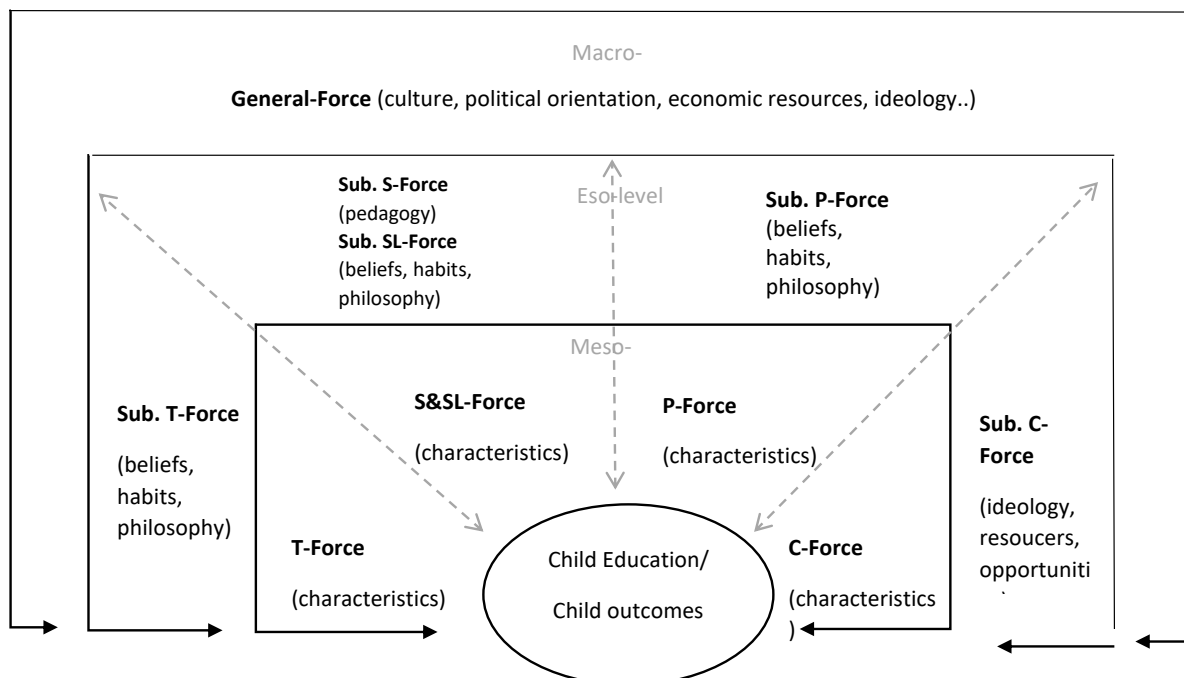


Image 1. Partnership Force's Model (Albanese, 2022).

Child's outcomes-Education means the achievement of a holistic and integrated development that aims at the development of one's own worldview, self-perception, self-esteem, awareness of one's own biases, the development of subjective value goals, the development of hard and soft skills, the creation of short- and long-term goals, one's own expectations, the ability to make active and conscious choices, expected and experienced performance.

Please refer, instead, to the table below for a more detailed explanation of what is meant by force and sub-force.

<i>Teachers-Force (T-Force)</i>	<i>School and School Leadership-Force (S&SL-Force)</i>	<i>Parents-Force (P-Force)</i>	<i>Community-Force (C-force)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sex - age - education - temperament - attitudes - expertise - knowledge - skills - flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - physical structure - architecture - building - computer lab - science lab - Organizational and management skills - expertise - temperament - attitudes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - education - family income - occupation - number of children - employment status - ethnicity - cultural traditions - family structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - city - district - neighborhood - geography
<i>Teachers Force's substrate</i>	<i>School and School Leadership-Force's substrate</i>	<i>Parents-Force's substrate</i>	<i>Community-Force's substrate</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - worldview - efficacy beliefs - values - teaching strategies - biases - method - motivation - expectations for child's performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -pedagogical orientation - worldview - efficacy beliefs - values -management strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - worldview - efficacy beliefs - values - parenting styles - biases - motivation - expectations for child's performance - perceptions of child's abilities - other interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - culture - traditions - resources - opportunity - associations - human resources - policy

Table 1. Forces Legend.

MODEL VALIDATION PATHWAY

The validation pathway of the Partnership Force's Model consists of two phases: the first involved 92 future teachers of the Master's degree course in Primary Education Science at the University of Palermo (A.A. 2022/2023) and is based on the SWOT analysis of the model; the second is based on the possibility, once the first phase has

been completed, of developing a good practice of educational co-responsibility in agreement with teachers and parents starting from the Partnership Force's Model.

The first phase, the subject of this contribution, in turn involved the implementation of several actions:

- 1) training of students, future teachers, on the theoretical framework of reference;
- 2) explanation of the Partnership Force's Model and Swot Analysis;
- 3) division of the students into pairs and analysis of the model;
- 4) analysis of the results of the Swot Analysis;
- 5) modification of the model.

The students who developed the Swot Analysis of the model numbered 94 (4% male and 96% female) and had an average age of 22 years.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Swot analysis is "a choice-support analysis that responds to a need to rationalise decision-making processes" (Storti, 2009). It is based on the review/analysis of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities and threats. Swot analysis highlights the main factors, both internal and external to the context being analysed and can predict the success of a programme/plan, as well as allowing for the analysis of alternative development scenarios; finally, it supports the setting up of a coherent strategy with respect to the context being acted upon (Storti, 2009).

In this study, the Swot analysis was developed following the participatory method, i.e., the method of conducting the analysis through group work.

The data matrix was organised according to the four sections that gather the characteristics identified as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and risks.

Strengths

According to the study participants, the strengths can be summarised in the five categories identified in Table 2, in which the clusters of responses generated are indicated in terms of frequency. In order of the recursiveness of the answers, the primary advantage is the balance between the direct and indirect (external and internal)

characteristics of the subjects involved in the model, the consideration of the specific context (the local community), the identification of the characteristics involved in the educational relationship, the influence of different formal and informal education agencies, the centrality of the student/student and his/her integral development.

	<i>Cluster</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
1	Identification of the characteristics of all those involved in the educational relationship	19
2	Centrality of the pupil and his or her integral development	7
3	Balance between direct and indirect (external and internal) characteristics of the subjects involved	27
4	Consideration of the specific context	21
5	Influence of the different educational agencies (formal and non-formal)	16

Table 2. Strengths.

Weaknesses

According to the study participants, the weaknesses can be ascribed to the six categories identified in Table 3, in which the clusters of responses generated are indicated in terms of frequency. In order of the recursiveness of the answers, the primary disadvantages are: not taking into account the time and degree of development of the child (and the changes therein), not mentioning the specificities of the child, not taking into account the internal relationships between members of the same force, not considering the difficulties in the interaction of the systems, the discordance of values between the different systems, the non-generalisability of the contexts.

	<i>Cluster</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
1	Disregard difficulties in the interaction of systems	5
2	Does not consider the child's time and degree of development (and related changes)	18
3	Not considering the child's particularities	16
4	Not considering the internal relationship between members of the same force	13
5	Value discordance between the different systems	3
6	Non-generalisability	2

Table 3. Weaknesses.

Opportunities

According to the participants in the study, the opportunities relate to the seven categories identified in Table 4; the clusters of responses generated are indicated therein in terms of frequency. In order of the recursiveness of the answers, the primary opportunities are the improvement of collaboration and interaction of the different educational contexts, the enhancement of the local context and its specificities, the centring of actions on the child, the use of a reference point for the construction of tools, the creation of networks, the reference point for action and the design of systemic interventions.

	<i>Cluster</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
1	Useful reference point for action	3
2	Useful reference point for building tools	7
3	Improving collaboration and interaction between contexts	21
4	Centre the action(s) on the child	12
5	Creating a network	6
6	Enhancing the context and specificities	17
7	Designing systemic interventions	3

Table 4. Opportunities.

Threats

According to the participants in the study, the threats relate to the five categories identified in Table 5; the response clusters generated are indicated therein in terms of frequency. In order of the recurrence of responses, the primary threats are the possible emergence of conflicts or resistance between the forces involved, the complexity of the model, the possible divergence of values and perspectives between the various forces, the lack of resources, the possible dispersion with regard to the long-term action that the model might entail.

	<i>Cluster</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
1	Complexity of the model	13
2	Long-term action (dispersion)	9
3	Divergence of values and perspectives	11
4	Emergence of conflicts/resistance	18
5	Lack of resources	11

Table 5. Threats.

Table 6 and 7 shows the elements added following the revision of the model at the conclusion of the SWOT analysis carried out.

<i>Teachers-Force (T-Force)</i>	<i>School and School Leadership-Force (S&SL-Force)</i>	<i>Parents-Force (P-Force)</i>	<i>Community-Force (C-force)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sex - age - education - temperament - attitudes - expertise - knowledge - skills Flexibility - <i>Communication</i> - <i>peer interaction</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - physical structure - architecture - building - computer lab - science lab - Organizational and management skills - expertise - temperament Attitudes - <i>Communication</i> - <i>interaction</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - education - family income - occupation - number of children - employment status - ethnicity - cultural traditions family structure - <i>communication</i> - <i>family relationship</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - city - district - neighborhood - geography
<i>Teachers Force's substrate</i>	<i>School and School Leadership-Force's substrate</i>	<i>Parents-Force's substrate</i>	<i>Community-Force's substrate</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - worldview - efficacy beliefs - values - teaching strategies - biases - method - motivation - expectations for child's performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pedagogical orientation - worldview - efficacy beliefs - values - management strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - worldview - efficacy beliefs - values - parenting styles - biases - motivation - expectations for child's performance - perceptions of child's abilities - other interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - culture - traditions - resources - opportunity - associations - human resources - policy

Table 6. Forces Legend revised.

Personality
Talents
Special educational needs
Temperamental specificities
Communication and peer interaction
Level of development

Table 7. Child education – additional dimensions.

As shown by the analysis of weaknesses, criteria were included that could refer to communication and interaction processes, as well as family ties. Furthermore, with respect to the child, it was necessary to consider other aspects such as personality, the presence of special educational needs, communication skills, and the level of development.

CONCLUSION

The obvious criticality of the Swot analysis concerns the fact that: “the four groups of elements are not related, and there is no way of understanding whether, all together, they produce a favourable or unfavourable picture for the implementation of the Programme, and why, and where action can possibly be taken to improve” (Bezzi, 2005). For this reason, although the SW has resulted in an improvement of the model, we reserve the right to further refine it through the second phase of validation, in which the objective to be developed will be to build a good practice from the theoretical framework of the Partnership Force’s Model. This will provide practical-empirical feedback that could lead to further refinement of the model.

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THE CONTINUUM IN EDUCATION: BLUEPRINTS AND TOOLS IN THE EUROPEAN YOUTH FIELD*

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Abstract The emergence of an educational model that places the subject at the centre of the decision-making process has gained attention from European institutions in recent decades. This model prioritizes expressiveness, self-realization as well as a variety of training methods and experiences. It has become an integral part of policies aimed at young people and education, particularly those of the European Commission and the Council of Europe. Recommendations, resolutions, and guidelines increasingly emphasise the need for synergy and dialogue between the actors and different systems, such as schools, vocational training, continuous training, and corporate training, to establish agreements and connections. Starting from this scenario, the contribution aims to illustrate the initiatives of the European institutions that promote integration between the different dimensions of education (formal, non-formal, and informal). The practical developments of the approach promoted by the European institutions are shown through the analysis of some tools aimed at guaranteeing the recognition of the Learning Continuum initiatives. The European institutions are committed to promoting the recognition of experiences lived by young people in non-formal and informal educational contexts. This is done through the Youth Pass and the European Youth Work Portfolio. Finally, this contribution highlights the challenges that arise during the path towards integration. It also aims to demonstrate the critical issues related to the recognition of non-formal and informal education in Italy. These processes continue to struggle to gain recognition in the educational system.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EXPERIENTIAL DIMENSION IN THE EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL TRADITION

Today, more than ever before, the contemporary social scenario is constantly being shaped by risks of instability and discontinuity that make it necessary to rethink education in terms of ‘flexibility’.

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Furthermore, the educational tradition fostered by the European institutions already in earlier times emphasised the dimension of flexibility, which is reminiscent of the experiential dimension, anticipating by far the most recent needs. These categories play a crucial role in the European debate on education, being at the centre of the most recent considerations, research and policies in the field of education.

The need to resort to experientiality and flexibility reflects the need to shorten the distance between formal education systems and the labour market and occupational developments. The distance and dispersion between the learning acquired by subjects in formal systems and the multiple demands of the labour market seem to persist, despite the efforts of both research and policymaking (Besozzi, 2017). Secondly, the importance of the social dimension of learning must be considered. Everyday experience, often steeped in dense relational networks, is the terrain in which experience matures (Jedlowski, 2005) and where – albeit through non-linear paths and even contradictions and ambiguities – learning processes can develop. Everyday life, relationality and experience are concepts that should be considered with critical caution, neither emphasised nor exalted in an absolute manner, but, if appropriately and critically used, can constitute fertile perspectives of analysis and experimentation in the sphere of contemporary educational processes (Reggio, 2008).

Another aspect to be considered is that if the only criterion for the valorisation of the individual coincides with the possession of qualifications at a formal level, individuals – even if they possess high-level qualifications – could find themselves in a state of inadequacy (educational, occupational, social) that would not account for their substantial qualities, thus becoming the cause of exclusion processes. In this sense, flexible and horizontal learning paths aimed at enhancing individual aspirations would help to avoid this condition.

The experiential dimension, therefore, if adequately assumed in the sphere of educational policies and practices, would make it possible to respect and valorise the multiplicity of learning strategies, styles and intelligences; in its concreteness – it obliges us to make explicit the strategies adopted or adoptable, methods of approach, emotional experiences, stimulating processes of awareness development and self-training (Batini & Surian, 2008).

The need arises to concretely pursue efforts to recognise the equal dignity of these forms of learning with respect to traditionally formal situations.

The question of the validation of experiential learning is a crucial issue within the European institutions. For several years now, learning acquired through mobility experiences has been regarded as an important element for developing citizenship and participation competences, as well as intercultural and social competences. A mobility experience is one of the ways to grow both personally and professionally, since by taking part in cultural contexts different from their own confronts the participants with their own limitations, enabling them to understand how to overcome them, thus enhancing their skills (Devlin et al., 2017; Öz & Van Praag, 2022).

It is thanks to the support of European institutions that mobility has now become the flagship of the youth field. It allows young people to grow in a world with blurred borders and frontiers, with distances that are easier to overcome as well as with an increase in international social capital (Cairns et al., 2018).

Against this background, for more than 30 years the programmes promoted by the European institutions in favour of young people have progressively focused on the valorisation of “non-formal and informal learning opportunities”, with the main objective of “improving the level of the key competences and skills of young people, including those with fewer opportunities” (European Commission, 2011, p. 28). This has been done through mobility projects for not only young people but also youth workers and youth leaders, through actions oriented towards the development of knowledge, competences and skills in the youth sector (Merico et al., 2020).

On the basis of these factors – taking into account the growing importance attributed at a European level to non-formal and informal education systems, as well as the research results showing how much mobility experiences have an impact on young people’s experiences – it is necessary more than ever to push for the integration of the formal system with the informal and non-formal systems, while respecting and valorising their specificities.

In the following paragraphs, the operational tools that the European institutions make available to promote integration between formal, informal and non-formal education systems will be analysed and examined in detail, also in the light of research carried out in the international context.

FOSTERING EDUCATIONAL DIMENSION INTEGRATION: THE ROLE OF 'YOUTH PASS' AND THE 'EUROPEAN YOUTH WORK PORTFOLIO' TOOLS

The final Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention in 2015 states that “Youth work is not a luxury but an existential necessity if Europe is to effectively address its concerns about social inclusion, cohesion and equal opportunities, and commitment to values of democracy and human rights.” Furthermore, as non-formal and informal learning is one of the key principles of youth work, it is no surprise that the Declaration also calls for greater “recognition and validation of the learning and achievement that takes place through youth work in non-formal and informal learning environments”¹.

This plea for better recognition of the value of youth work and non-formal learning is not new. It is yet another milestone in a long process that began back in 1998. The Final Declaration of the Council of Europe’s 5th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth in Bucharest in April 1998 similarly invited Member States to recognise the abilities young people acquire from non-formal education. Although progress seems slow overall, there have been many improvements regarding the validation of non-formal learning in both the fields of education and youth. In December 2012, the European Council issued a Recommendation asking the Member States to establish strategies for the validation of non-formal and informal learning by 2018. In the youth field, thanks to the launch of the Youthpass scheme in 2007, the educational value and focus of European youth work has gained greater visibility, and its impact on the learning achievements of young people across the continent is now much more tangible².

This debate has led to the development of several tools promoted by European institutions for the validation of the skills acquired through mobility experiences: reference will be made to the “Youth Pass” and the “European Youth Work Portfolio”. These instruments aim to consider the importance of soft skills, i.e. all those personal or transversal competences that young people need to cope with life, develop their own responsibility, participate in social life and improve their opportunities in

¹ For more information:

<https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/eywc-websitedeclaration>.

² For more information:

https://www.youthpass.eu/downloads/13-62-385/ValuedByYouValuedByOthers-all-pages_web.pdf.

the labour market. These skills are also reflected in the intercultural dimension, which makes it possible to recognise and rethink the acquired premises and stereotypes (of which one is often only partially or not at all aware of) (Chisholm et al., 2011; Bárta & Šmideková, 2017, Merico et al., 2020).

Incorporated in this framework, the two key tools to facilitate the validation and recognition of skills and competences acquired through non-formal education/learning aim to support young people in the identification, description and evaluation of competences, with the intention of contributing to the recognition of non-formal and informal education as well as the integration of the latter with the formal dimension.

The two previously mentioned instruments will be discussed in the next sections, starting with the YouthPass.

The Youth Pass

The decision to adopt this instrument was based on the clear need for young people and youth organisations to affirm their participation in the Erasmus+/Youth in Action Programme and to reflect on the learning outcomes developed. Ultimately, the YouthPass is a tool through which the participants in European programmes can describe what they did and demonstrate what they learned.

Youthpass was introduced in 2007 under the EU Youth in Action (YiA) programme as an instrument for recognising the learning outcomes obtained in the activities supported by the programme. Participants use the Youthpass certificates to describe what they learnt during their project. Not only does the Youthpass support participants when reflecting on their personal learning process, it also contributes to the social recognition of youth work and improves the employability of young people since they are able to document their acquired competences (European Commission, 2007).

The kind of learning process that young people undergo in European youth programmes is complex. Participants in youth exchanges, volunteering projects, training courses and other kinds of activities experience a form of learning that is often more about personal development, social skills, personal awareness, self-assurance, etc. These are all skills that are not learned by completing a few simple steps. Learning about our own behaviour, our attitudes, our relationships with others and our personal goals in life is a process that never ends; one in which we take steps

forward, sometimes steps back, and in which we develop new questions and new goals. It is also more difficult to identify the exact moment we undergo a learning process that relates to personal development, since this happens in situations that are frequently unplanned. It is not as if there is one session about assertiveness during the programme, and after that session the participants know how to be assertive. They might find themselves in a variety of situations during the programme – on a coffee break, or maybe socialising with other participants in the evening – where they act more assertively. Maybe they really did plan it, but sometimes it may just have happened and they only realised it at that very moment or a day later (Maguire, 2017).

Therefore, it is clear that the YouthPass is not only a certificate of participation, but allows all the participants taking part in international mobility to be encouraged to define their learning objectives at the beginning of their involvement, to review how they are learning during the process and to adjust their learning objectives if necessary; to reflect on their learning individually and with others after the end of the activities, while also having the certainty of a written record, not only of their participation but also of their learning outcomes.

Those involved in the youth field can recognise the importance of the YouthPass. Whereas, actors outside this field attach little importance to it, nor are they able to understand the added value that working with young people can provide to society in general.

This issue is part of a broader discourse that has to do with the difficulty of framing and recognising what is defined in the European lexicon as youth work, i.e. that series of activities and initiatives in the field of non-formal and informal learning, generally positioned outside school contexts, which aims at the personal and social development, integration and active participation of young people (European Commission, 2018).

The Youth Work Portfolio

This growing relevance has placed youth work and non-formal education at the top of the political agenda of many national governments and international institutions (Walther et al., 2006, Coussè et al., 2010; Nolas, 2014) and led to the development of an additional tool aimed at recognising and validating the competences acquired through participation in European programmes: the Council of Europe's 'Youth

Work Portfolio' was developed in cooperation with the European Commission and the European Youth Forum between 2004 and 2009. The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio is a tool to help those doing youth work, primarily youth workers and youth leaders, but also managers and administrators, to assess and further develop their youth work competence and that of the people under their supervision (Council of Europe, 2015).

A Youth Work Portfolio includes a self-assessment based on the Portfolio competence framework and a learning development plan that allows the user to set up learning goals. The process of the Portfolio is not a one-off process. It is thought as a dynamic process, from self-assessment to setting learning goals, to self-assessment of achieved goals and learning, to setting up other learning goals, and so on.

The portfolio initiative is a specific example of the Council of Europe Member States' commitment to promoting the recognition of youth work based on the principles of non-formal education. This commitment was formalised through the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to the Member States on the promotion and recognition of the non-formal education/learning of young people.

The portfolio proposal is linked to several other projects undertaken by other European institutions, in particular the European Commission, and the various bodies involved in the implementation of their lifelong learning agenda, such as the national agencies of the Erasmus+ programme, the SALTO Resource Centres and CEDEFOP.

The definition and objectives underlying the portfolio and the YouthPass are very similar; however, promoting their value and spendability is not an easy task. Greater awareness and real effectiveness of these tools could be achieved through the collaboration and support of a wide range of potentially interested actors and organisations such as, for example, educational institutions, the participants themselves, youth workers and youth leaders, trainers, involved organisations, youth services National Youth Agencies, Local Authorities, National Governments and, finally, potential employers.

In the wake of the European Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning of 20 December 2012, it is necessary to consider the important role that the process of integrating the three dimensions of education can play in rethinking education, in improving the supply of skills to the labour market, in promoting mobility as well as in improving competitiveness and economic growth.

EXPLORING YOUTHPASS CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES: THE PROJECT RAY EVIDENCE

This section provides an in-depth examination of the YouthPass, analysing its meaning, applicability, and value through the results of the Italian sub-sample of the RAY project (Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of Erasmus+: Youth in Action). The RAY project is a collaborative initiative of 31 National Agencies responsible for Erasmus+: Youth in Action, along with their research partners. The Institute of Educational Science at the University of Innsbruck and the Generation and Educational Science Institute in Austria are coordinating the RAY project. The project aims to provide valid and reliable documentation to study and understand the processes and outcomes of the E+/YiA programme, verifying the achievement of the programme's objectives and priorities. The RAY project is divided into three components. "Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of Erasmus+: Youth in Action" (RAY-MON), "Research project on competence development and capacity building in Erasmus+: Youth in Action" (RAY-CAP), and "Research project on long-term effects of Erasmus+: Youth in Action on participation and citizenship" (RAY-LTE) aim to provide a comprehensive and accurate overview of the programme dynamics and its long-term influences.

The project (RAY) highlighted how participation in EU Youth in Action (YiA) projects contributes to the development of all the key competences for lifelong learning. It states that "While the most distinct development is reported for interpersonal, social and intercultural competences as well as for communication in a foreign language, a significant development is also stated for sense of entrepreneurship, civic competence, cultural awareness and expression, and learning competence ('learning to learn')."³

RAY-MON and RAY-CAP focus on the YouthPass. RAY-MON aims to monitor the E+/YiA Programme and improve the quality of its supported projects. RAY-CAP studies the Programme's impact on the development of the competences and skills of youth workers, leaders, as well as those who work with young people and have participated in the Programme's training and support activities.

Regarding the methodology used, the RAY-MON research conducted two multilingual surveys in CAWI mode. One was administered to young participants, and the other to youth workers/youth leaders involved in projects funded within the

³ For more information:

https://www.researchyouth.net/documents/ray_policybrief_2014.pdf

framework of E+/YiA. Each programme beneficiary was interviewed between two and ten months after the end of the project in which they had participated. This allowed for a more distant and reflective point of view on the experience and its perceived effects.

For the Italian sub-sample, a total of 1912 questionnaires were considered, of which 318 were addressed to youth workers/youth leaders and 1594 to youth participants.

Conversely, RAY-CAP employed a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews. For the Italian sub-sample, 12 participants were interviewed, selected from the Italian organizations involved in the E+/YiA-supported projects. Each participant underwent three interviews: before the start of the project, 2-3 months after the end of the project, and one year after the end of the project.

The interviews conducted in RAY-MON revealed the widespread use of the tool in projects and the significance of its reflective dimension.

On the other hand, the RAY-CAP interviews highlighted the challenges associated with acknowledging non-formal learning and the applicability of the tool beyond EU programmes. This suggests the need for additional investment to promote the recognition of the tool and its potential value in other contexts.

In RAY MON, a significant finding is that 77.4% of the interviewed youth workers reported using the YouthPass in the project. The respondents' feedback indicates that the entire process of releasing the tool was satisfactory across all the dimensions considered in the questionnaire, with a satisfaction level consistently exceeding 85%.

Finally, it is worth noting that 69.8% of the youth workers whose organization applied for and received a financial contribution for the implementation of a project from the National Agency of their country stated that the YouthPass online tool was easy to use. The data regarding young people participating in projects were also very positive. 71.8% of those interviewed obtained a YouthPass certificate during their participation, with 96.8% receiving it in connection with the specific project to which the questionnaire was administered.

Upon analysing the in-depth interviews conducted during RAY-CAP, it becomes clear that there are several critical issues. The questionnaire administered to the participants highlights three issues. The use of the certificate outside of the youth field is low. Only 30.6% of those who received at least one certificate used it for job applications, internships, study courses, etc. There is a perception of difficulty in

recognition in the working context. Only a narrow majority (56.4%) of those who presented it thought that the tool was appreciated.

However, it is acknowledged that the YouthPass certificate has potential. According to a survey, 63.9% of the respondents believed that the certificate was useful in finding a job, being accepted for an apprenticeship, or a course of study. The research data indicate that there are difficulties in recognizing non-formal learning and using the certificate tool outside of EU programmes. However, the young people interviewed believe that the tool has potential. Overall, the certificate and its completion process appear to be positive.

To further explore the elements that arose regarding the monitoring of the Programme's effects, we will now examine how the individual projects adopted and completed the YouthPass, as well as how it was evaluated by the beneficiaries who were interviewed. We will also investigate whether and how it is recognised and used in the labour market, based on the results of RAY-CAP.

The interviewees acknowledge the positive impact of YouthPass in terms of reflecting on and assessing their learning:

The YouthPass is about thinking about what one has learnt; in the sense that when one finds the sheet to fill in... asks those guiding questions... one then finally reflects and puts one's ideas back into place a bit (Man, participant in a transnational cooperation activity).

However, it is also recognised that the instrument holds significant value at an EU level, particularly within the context of youth policies:

Credit your ability to stand... also your experience... of being in extended European contexts. So I use it for that... And then it's always linked to paths that I've done, which have very defined themes or areas... that are extremely coherent with my path. For me it's like showing that I have a specialisation in..." (Woman, participant in a transnational cooperation activity).

When considering the recognition and usability of the tool in a national context, significant criticalities emerge. Testimonies indicate that the YouthPass is not widely known and is rarely used by public and private companies.

I don't understand actually what it is. Why it is for (...) What is it good for and how one could use it (...) That is why I did not finish it. It has not been brought home for me (Man, participant in a transnational cooperation activity).

On the other hand, some of its features make it de facto unsuitable to valorise acquired experience and skills, even for the recruitment of professionals in the youth sector. Thus, even when its potential usefulness is recognised, its lack of conciseness is questioned, which is ill-suited to the needs of the national labour market:

But in my opinion, it is useful (...), but in short: words on words... on skills... all these things here, the most beautiful things in the world... but the employer will never read it (Woman, participant in a transnational cooperation activity).

These elements highlight a broader issue: the disconnection between the European and national (and local) dimensions, and a national regulatory framework that struggles to acknowledge non-formal education (and therefore the professionals working in it) as a distinct field of learning.

Two needs arise from this. The first is the need for a connection with companies and various employment agencies.

The second aim is to promote greater attention to non-formal education and the instruments that certify the competencies of those who work in this field. This will facilitate their recognition in contexts beyond the youth field for which they were originally designed.

In summary, the self-assessment of competences provided by YouthPass is a clear strength, but also has limitations. It is not a universally recognized certificate in the labour market, particularly at the national level. The challenge ahead is arduous and complex, requiring effort from both institutions and the policies in place, as well as young people who are the final recipients of the process. To improve the visibility and value of YouthPass, it could be disseminated through government initiatives. This could involve issuing it in non-formal educational pathways such as scouting, community service, local voluntary work, and environmental protection initiatives. This would provide young people with the opportunity to share what they have learned in various learning contexts. Furthermore, it is recommended that schools at all levels formally acknowledge the learning and skills acquired in informal and non-formal contexts, based on successful examples such as the University of Padua and the University of Cagliari.

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TRA IL GIOCO DEL CALCIO E LE CODE DI SIRENA. LE SOGGETTIVITÀ TRANS* NEI LIBRI ILLUSTRATI 0-11 ANNI*

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Abstract A partire dal progetto FAMMI CAPIRE. Le rappresentazioni dei generi, dei corpi e delle sessualità nei libri illustrati 0-18 anni e dalla sua traiettoria teorica, il contributo presenta un focus sulle rappresentazioni delle soggettività trans* nei libri illustrati presenti nella bibliografia del progetto. Fammi Capire nasce in Italia nel 2016 e rappresenta un interessante osservatorio su cosa l'editoria abbia proposto in questo lasso di tempo, contribuendo a fotografare e condizionare l'immaginario delle persone in crescita. Questo pur mantenendo caratteristiche di asistematicità e parzialità posizionata dello sguardo nella ricerca. Potentissimi strumenti di mediazione e crescita, i libri illustrati forniscono modelli e rappresentazioni che incidono nella fase di costruzione del proprio immaginario e della propria identità; entrano a far parte del proprio bagaglio di punti di riferimento; possono trasformarsi in interessanti codici per leggere la realtà. Se da un lato rivendichiamo la presenza di albi e storie in cui ogni soggettività possa riconoscersi, narrazioni che facciano proprio un approccio intersezionale e non limitino la rosa di possibilità che offrono alle persone piccole, dall'altro monitoriamo il rischio di sovradeterminare la definizione di sé e creare etichette o tendenze omologanti. Partendo dall'analisi del testo iconico e verbale di alcuni dei titoli selezionati per il progetto Fammi Capire, ci poniamo la questione di come vengano rappresentate le soggettività trans*: quanti tabù si continuano a trasmettere? Quanto sono inclusive o escludenti alcune specifiche rappresentazioni? Se l'urgenza della diffusione o della sensibilizzazione a un determinato tema supera l'attenzione per la qualità, si può ancora parlare di strumenti potenti dentro alla pratica educativa? Quando le rappresentazioni mantengono chi legge dentro a una zona di conforto, seppur stereotipata, e quando, invece, disgregano e questionano tale zona "protetta"?

* Il presente contributo è frutto di un lavoro congiunto. Qualora si rendesse necessario in ambito accademico, queste le attribuzioni individuali delle singole parti: paragrafo 1 Elena Fierli; paragrafo 2 Sara Marini.

1. PURCHÉ SE NE PARLI?

The majority of the 1990s LGBTQ children's books were extremely didactic, written for the sole purpose of filling a void in the literature. Whether the stories were actually interesting or ones that children wanted to hear seemed to be less important than normalizing and humanizing the experiences of rainbow families – albeit only same-sex families and their children. (Naidoo, 2012, p. 44, cit. in Spallaccia, 2021, p. 85)

Libri didascalici e scritti per colmare un vuoto nella letteratura. Con queste parole Naidoo centra uno dei punti fondamentali che riguarda la letteratura a tema¹ e, dato che si parla di albi illustrati, le rappresentazioni. Nel suo lavoro (pubblicato nel 2012), l'autrice traccia una panoramica di quella che chiama *trans-themed literature* e individua in *X: a fabulous child's story* (di Lois Gould e Jacqueline Chwast, 1978) il primo libro di letteratura per l'infanzia che racconta esplicitamente di una persona non genderizzata, ma sottolinea come si debbano aspettare poi quasi 30 anni (Spallaccia, 2021: 86) perché appaia un accenno più esplicito alle identità trans* (2005, *The day Joanie Frankenhauser become a boy* di Frances Lin Lantz) e un albo illustrato in cui una persona non cisgender sia effettivamente rappresentata senza eccessive metafore (*10,000 dresses* di Marcus Ewert, illustrato da Rex Ray, 2008).

Tra la storia di X e *10.000 dresses* passano, abbiamo detto, circa 30 anni ma il tempo sembra scorrere molto più lentamente, e la consapevolezza anche. Come affermano Oltra-Albiach e Pardo (2019: 42), inoltre, la pretesa visibilizzazione della “diversità” in contesti educativi e familiari si contraddice con l'evidenza del fatto che, in realtà, si tratta soprattutto di una letteratura di consumo interno a determinate nicchie molto definite dove il messaggio – e torniamo all'analisi di Naidoo – conta sicuramente di più rispetto alla qualità dell'albo che si pubblica.

Questo posizionamento spinge il ragionamento verso una questione “estetica” perché, quando si parla di letteratura (sia che si tratti di prosa, sia che si tratti di albi o graphic novel) se valutiamo il valore letterario di un testo dobbiamo soffermarci anche sulle immagini e sul loro potere di costruire un immaginario che, in un modo o nell'altro, andrà poi a influire sul nostro comportamento e sulle dinamiche che attiviamo nelle relazioni e nella socialità.

¹ Per un approfondimento sui libri a tema si vedano Gramantieri, 2012 e Fierli et al., 2019.

Si aprono quindi due scenari.

Da un lato, crediamo fortemente che il fatto che si tratti di libri a tema non dia a queste storie un lasciapassare automatico per essere inserite nell'ambito della letteratura: la qualità dei libri (il progetto editoriale, il carattere scelto per il testo, la carta, le illustrazioni, la qualità della scrittura o della traduzione) spesso non è alta e sembra non interessare chi li produce. Ci troviamo, nella maggior parte dei casi, di fronte a prodotti che, più che dispositivi culturali, sembrano essere prodotti informativi e di diffusione di un tema specifico (Naidoo, 2012; Miller, 2022). Gli studi sulla percezione delle immagini e sulla costruzione di paradigmi e canoni a cui fare riferimento affermano che ci abituiamo con facilità a modelli che classifichiamo come riconoscibili e familiari e questo influisce profondamente nella costruzione del nostro immaginario (Handler Spitz, 2006; Allan, 2015). Non solo. La scarsa attenzione alla qualità letteraria ed estetica dell'albo significa, a nostro parere, continuare a sottostare al paradigma violentemente capitalista del consumo bulimico di immagini, senza un pensiero critico che guidi lo sguardo, frettoloso, dove la quantità vince su tutto, che comporta prima di tutto l'annullamento di uno sguardo consapevole e, in secondo luogo, l'omogeneizzazione del gusto e una spinta al ribasso (Zizioli, 2019; Fierli, 2023; Gombrich, 2002; Rancière, 2008; Berger, 1972; Bernardi, 2014). Spesso non si anela al piacere della lettura e del guardare e, anzi, si tratta di libri che sembrano chiudere il tema dell'identità dentro a un ennesimo canone che, alla fine, informa, senza rompere davvero gabbie e normative.

D'altra parte, però, è innegabile quanto queste storie siano urgenti e necessarie. Sono esattamente le storie di cui abbiamo bisogno per far uscire dall'ombra persone e vissuti, per far sì che chiunque legga un libro possa ritrovarci la propria storia o immaginarsi nel futuro, per far parlare chi non ha voce e per imparare a guardarci intorno. Lo afferma Miller già all'inizio del suo saggio sugli albi LGBTQ+, quando sottolinea come certi libri siano necessari per rendere concreto un intero collettivo, un'intera comunità, perché hanno la capacità di farcela immaginare.

This indicates that children's picture books can foster a sense of collective identity and help develop an imagined community by encouraging readers to understand their experiences as part of a larger story. Readers of LGBTQ+ children's picture books (...) find their experiences affirmed in children's culture that accounts for queer identities and experiences. (...) In other words, stories, like those found in LGBTQ+ children's books, undertake essential sociocultural work. They make legible, and by extension knowable, what would otherwise hover below the surface of our collective consciousness. (...) LGBTQ+ children's picture books have the

potential to create imagined queer collectives that can have real consequences on experiences of community belonging and building as well as social and psychic transformation. (Miller, 2022, p. 3-4)

Dentro a questa complessità, vogliamo soffermarci sull'analisi di un gruppo di libri, selezionati per il progetto *Fammi Capire*², che raccontano le soggettività trans* favorendo la fuoriuscita di queste dalla zona d'ombra del non detto, del non rappresentato, del non riconoscibile.

Partiamo dall'assioma che, nella maggior parte dei casi, l'editoria per l'infanzia e l'adolescenza non rischia, non osa, non prende posizione quando si tratta di affrontare temi come i corpi che crescono, le identità, le sessualità, le relazioni. Nonostante l'attuale produzione letteraria young adult e alcune graphic novel facciano attenzione ai temi LGBTQ+, e in particolare alla rappresentazione di identità "dissidenti", gli albi illustrati continuano a trasmettere ed eternizzare modelli e situazioni estremamente stereotipate e una visione del mondo rigidamente binaria e cis-eteronormativa. I libri che raccontano le soggettività trans* non fanno eccezione: spesso scritti esclusivamente con la "buona volontà" di colmare un vuoto di rappresentazione e visibilità, altrettanto spesso non superano l'esame della qualità. Sfogliando questi libri, infatti, si possono spesso individuare una serie di marcatori ricorrenti. Il primo è la tendenza a narrare anche le soggettività trans* in termini binari, cioè quasi sempre come una transizione da un polo all'altro dello spettro di genere (MtoF o FtoM, con una grande preponderanza del primo caso). Il secondo è lo sviluppo della storia: una prima fase di perplessità da parte di chi circonda la persona protagonista, addirittura rifiuto, e poi il lieto fine solo nel momento in cui ciò che appare un indefinito tentativo di affermazione di sé coincide con una transizione, quindi comunque con un'affermazione binaria della propria identità. Non si lascia quasi mai spazio a processi più complessi di questionamento, affermazioni di generi non binari, percorsi non lineari e

² Il progetto *Fammi capire. Le rappresentazioni dei corpi, dei generi e delle sessualità*, nato nel 2016, si trova proprio a fare i conti, costantemente, con questa ambiguità. *Fammi Capire* promuove la letteratura di qualità per l'infanzia e l'adolescenza e ricerca, dentro alle rappresentazioni, anche l'attenzione al tema estetico, alla cura delle immagini, alle competenze di chi illustra, scrive e traduce; ricerca l'attenzione per la costruzione di un pensiero critico, che passa anche per la non omologazione del gusto, per il consumo non acritico (l'abbiamo detto, non capitalista) delle immagini e per la costruzione di un immaginario libero e consapevole; indaga la relazione tra ciò che vediamo e i nostri comportamenti e tra ciò che vediamo e la nostra capacità di immaginarsi nel futuro. Per un approfondimento sul progetto, si veda Fierli et al., 2020a.

categorizzanti. Sottolinea Spallaccia (2021) come, nonostante a partire dagli anni Novanta l'introduzione della teoria *queer* e *trans** abbia implicato una messa in discussione del binarismo normativo dei generi (Bernini 2017), ancora oggi si perpetua, anche attraverso il linguaggio che si usa, una visione binaria che cancella tutte le altre possibilità come, per esempio, le soggettività non binarie.

Most of these books feature children or teens who either transition before the book begins, or contemplate doing so over the course of the story. However, language in this area is always shifting, and the umbrella term “trans” is also – rightly or wrongly – sometimes used to refer people who are genderqueer or non-binary, to cross-dressers, to drag kings and queens, and to intersex people, amongst others. (Butler, 2020, p. 11)

È evidente che la tematica della rappresentazione delle soggettività *trans** non si possa risolvere esclusivamente rovesciando gli stereotipi tra il maschile e il femminile, concentrando l'attenzione quasi esclusivamente sull'espressione di genere (non sul questionamento dell'identità) e non mettendo in dubbio la visione binaria (ed egemonica) della realtà. Ci sembra interessante, a questo proposito la riflessione di Joan Coats, che puntualizza:

most picturebooks invoke gender schema not only through modes of appearance, but also through modes of behavior and activity. Even Morris Micklewhite does not challenge the boy schema articulated by Stephens (1996) when it comes to his behavior; his desire to wear a dress is not because he is focused on building relationships through empathy and identification with the girls in his class, nor does he demonstrate care, a desire to please others, or an ability to share. Rather, he behaves like a competitive, independent, rapacious, active person, who also wants to wear a dress. (Coats, 2018, p. 125)

Dunque, il tema cui siamo chiamat³ a prestare attenzione è: stiamo proponendo letteratura di qualità che preveda soggettività, percorsi di crescita e modelli di relazione non cis-etronormati? Stiamo proponendo buona letteratura che non riproduca nuove gerarchie nell'offerta editoriale? Stiamo leggendo storie che rimandino rappresentazioni veritiere, complesse, in cui potersi e volersi immedesimare? O ci stiamo accontentando in nome di un *purché se ne parli* comunque numericamente residuale?

2. CAMPI DA CALCIO E CODE DI SIRENA

Le criticità ci sono, ed è particolarmente utile riflettere su di esse per riconoscerle e superarle. Questo vuol dire saper scegliere i libri che si leggono, ma anche saper sottoporre a critica ciò che proponiamo, integrarlo con altre letture, con discussioni, non necessariamente scartare quei titoli.

Le criticità che ci propone l'editoria italiana riguardano da un lato, abbiamo detto, la qualità del progetto editoriale: la scrittura, le illustrazioni che possono essere non professionali, non accattivanti, non coinvolgenti, mal costruito il rapporto tra testo e immagini. Insomma un insieme di fattori che rivelano come il libro sia pensato più per essere pubblicato che per essere letto, riletto e amato. Dall'altro lato abbiamo da valutare come sono trattati i temi e uno dei fattori problematici che si ripetono riguarda l'ambiguità tra espressione e identità di genere, nonché le soluzioni proposte, gli scenari di benessere descritti. Il rischio che in questo caso vediamo è quello dell'invisibilizzazione, in altre forme rispetto all'assenza *tout-court* e, dunque, la neutralizzazione di tutte le differenze esistenti tra le persone che non si riconoscono in un modello culturale e sociale cis-eteronormato. Non distinguere un bambino cisgender che rivendica l'espressione della propria maschilità indossando una gonna e soffre nel sentirsi chiamato "bambina", da una bambina assegnata maschio alla nascita che sta affermando la propria identità, equivale a misconoscere entrambi³. Per non parlare della valorizzazione di esperienze non conformi, accompagnate dalla specifica che si tratti solo di travestimento, di un gioco circoscritto nel tempo e nella funzione.

Proviamo a guardare nel merito alcuni di questi libri riconoscendone i punti forza e di debolezza, con particolare attenzione al contesto italiano e volgendo lo sguardo all'estero per colmare dei vuoti in modo funzionale al ragionamento che stiamo portando avanti.

La gonna viola di Fede è un libro spagnolo vincitore nel 2022 del premio Narrating Equality e in virtù di questo pubblicato in Italia dalla casa editrice internazionale NubeOcho Ediciones. Il protagonista è un bambino cisgender che adora il suo baule dei travestimenti e in particolare una gonna viola, che usa per interpretare tanti personaggi diversi. A volte Fede va in giro mascherato e un giorno, sentendosi chiamare "bella bambina", reagisce: "Perché mi ha chiamato bambina? Sono un bambino!". Tornato a casa Fede non vuole più indossare la gonna, così il papà gli racconta di come esistano luoghi dove gli uomini indossano le gonne e la mamma gli parla di

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11 anni

Fanny, Mary, Luisa, Marlene... donne che si sono battute per avere il diritto di indossare i pantaloni. Il giorno dopo decide di andare a scuola sicuro, tranquillo e deciso, con la sua gonna viola e: “se mi chiamano bambina, dirò che sono un bambino”. L’edizione del libro, la scelta della carta e della copertina flessibile sminuiscono la qualità di questo oggetto libro, ed è un peccato.

Un aspetto cui fare attenzione, inoltre, non è responsabilità del volume ma di chi lo media e lo promuove: abbiamo visto, infatti, come questa venga promossa e descritta come la storia di un’affermazione di genere trans*. Questo travisamento misconosce l’affermazione di un’identità di bambino da parte del protagonista e contribuisce a invisibilizzare storie di affermazione di genere di persone piccole transgender e non binarie che in questa narrazione non si vedono rappresentate.

Principessa Kevin è un titolo che ha una grande diffusione e che anch’esso parla dell’espressione di genere non conforme di un protagonista cisgender, nominato sempre al maschile, che vuole travestirsi da principessa. Lo sviluppo della narrazione risulta però contraddittoria. Da una parte si legge infatti il misconoscimento di una rivendicazione identitaria affermativa, rappresentata nell’incipit: “Kevin è una principessa, punto”. Questa forza appare negata e contraddetta dallo svolgimento successivo, dall’uso del pronome maschile da parte di Kevin e dalla rivendicazione di potersi vestire come gli pare. Dall’altro lato, anche l’interpretazione che si tratti di una rivendicazione radicale per un’espressione di genere non conforme alla maschilità dominante, cis-eteronormata, da parte di un bambino cis, verrebbe svilita da quanto segue: il bambino infatti “non capisce cosa ci sia di male a travestirsi così. Quando ci si traveste è per non farsi riconoscere”. Una frase che sembra sostenere più un processo di copertura che di affermazione di genere. Al disagio mostrato nei confronti dei tacchi che fanno male ai piedi, della gonna troppo lunga e del trucco irritante, sintetizzato dalla domanda “come fanno le ragazze?”, la risposta fornita dall’amica Cloe vestita da drago, “hai ancora un sacco di cose da imparare prima di essere una principessa” non fa che rafforzare la normatività di genere, la necessità di un processo educativo verso la conformità e la sovrapposizione tra “ragazze” e “principesse”. Ne esce rafforzato il portato di stereotipi culturali e gabbie di genere in cui sono socialmente costrette. La conclusione del protagonista “la prossima volta mi travestirò da sirena” non sembra rispondere ai nostri interrogativi, lasciando sospeso il dubbio su quale forma di riconoscimento sociale Kevin cerchi, che possa rappresentare agio in rapporto ai suoi bisogni e non come forma di adattamento rispetto alle pressioni e alle *microaggressioni* descritte nel testo.

Un libro che racconta un coming out riguardo la propria identità di genere è *L'importante è che siamo amici*. La protagonista manifesta esplicitamente il suo transgenderismo e il suo non riconoscersi nel sesso assegnatole alla nascita, comunicando anche il suo nome scelto: “Ho bisogno di essere me stesso, Errol. Nel mio cuore ho sempre saputo di essere un orsacchiotto femmina e non maschio. Vorrei chiamarmi Tilly, non Thomas”. Quello che appare come un inciampo è che Tilly è un animale, anzi è “Thomas l’orsacchiotto”, così viene presentata in apertura. Elemento che appare problematico dato che Errol e Ava, con cui si relaziona, sono invece due persone umane cisgender. La cornice è il racconto di un’amicizia che rappresenta uno spazio di agio e di supporto in cui Tilly può aprirsi e sentirsi sostenuta: “Non mi importa che sei un orsacchiotto femmina o maschio, a me quello che importa è che siamo amici”, “Sei il miglior amico che un orso possa avere”.

Pregevole per la qualità del volume, delle illustrazioni e della costruzione della narrazione è l’albo *Julian è una sirena*. Julian è un bambino genderizzato sempre al maschile, che, accompagnato dalla nonna, esprime la sua passione per le sirene, vive un’esperienza metamorfica in sogno, e trova la sua dimensione di benessere travestendosi con una lunga tenda/coda a strascico, il rossetto e una collana di perle, con il sostegno costante di *abuela* che coronerà questa esperienza andando insieme alla Mermaid Parade di Coney Island. Una storia che tematizza apparentemente un bambino dall’espressione di genere non conforme. La rappresentazione di quello che ci appare come un processo di affermazione di genere di una soggettività trans*, è resa invece dalle poetiche illustrazioni delle pagine centrali senza parole. Quando Julian si addormenta leggendo e sogna di immergersi nel mare, spogliarsi dei suoi vestiti e trasformarsi in sirena, vedendo spuntare una lunga coda al posto delle gambe e crescere lunghi capelli neri. La scelta appare come letterariamente legittima e valida, con il pregio di lasciare a chi legge la chiave interpretativa. Ancora una volta la domanda, in questa sede, riguarda l’invisibilizzazione: la storia non nomina e non offre parole al processo di affermazione, a differenza delle altre parti del testo in cui Julian negozia, anche verbalmente, con la nonna i propri desideri in merito alle possibilità espressive di un genere nominato sempre al maschile.

Citiamo poi alcuni titoli non tradotti in italiano, interessanti rispetto a ciò che il mercato editoriale ancora non offre nel nostro paese.

I am Jazz è un titolo del 2014, mai tradotto in italiano, che racconta l’infanzia di Jazz Jennings, il suo percorso di affermazione di genere come bambina, iniziato da piccolissima, il sostegno dei genitori, l’accesso alle terapie e a un processo medicalizzato

e il conforto di una coda di sirena da indossare. Un'esperienza, tra altre differenti di infanzie transgender, che certamente nell'editoria italiana non trova spazio di narrazione per un pubblico di persone piccole.

Cua de sirena è invece un libro catalano, anch'esso non tradotto nel nostro paese, le cui uniche criticità riguardano, a nostro avviso, la qualità della pubblicazione, la scelta della carta, la copertina flessibile. Un peccato per un titolo che offre un punto di vista prezioso, quello di una persona piccola che questiona il binarismo come unica soluzione. A Roc piace giocare a pallone, andare in spiaggia, fare i castelli di sabbia, fare il bagno. In occasione di una festa sceglie di travestirsi da sirena, con una gonna perfetta, che sembra proprio la coda mancante. Ma un bambino, seguito subito dopo da altri³, lo prende in giro: "un bambino con la gonna!! Un bambino sirena!". Roc se ne va in lacrime, seguito dalle frasi canzonatorie. Cerca conforto sulla spiaggia, si nasconde in una grotta e si addormenta. Quando si sveglia è circondato da una famiglia di sirene e la sua gonna si è trasformata in una coda vera; scopre di saper nuotare agilmente, vedere e respirare sott'acqua, ma dovrà essere sicuro di voler restare una sirena per sempre. "Non devi deciderlo ora", spiega la sirena più vecchia, "domani alla stessa ora torneremo e potrai darci la tua risposta. Non sentirti sotto pressione, tranquillo". Mentre il protagonista è alle prese con la sua "difficile decisione", un granchio si avvicina a portare consiglio: "Tu sei preoccupato perché non sai decidere se essere una sirena o un bambino umano. Ti voglio dire che le cose non sempre devono essere in un modo o nell'altro. Perché siamo spinti a dover essere bianco o nero, buono o cattivo, bambino o bambina, ragazzo o ragazza, uomo o donna, sirena o essere umano. Tu puoi anche pensare di essere entrambe le cose". Ecco la scelta di Roc: essere un bambino, uscire dall'acqua, giocare a pallone, andare al cinema, ma anche conservare la sua coda di sirena, senza vergogna, senza soffrire le prese in giro.

Quello che resta per noi una questione aperta e controversa riguarda *Heartstopper*, la storia di un gruppo di adolescenti scaturiti dalla penna di Alice Oseman, che si confrontano quotidianamente con la propria sessualità, le domande e le scoperte riguardanti generi e orientamenti sessuali, l'attrazione, i cambiamenti, i posizionamenti, lo stigma, i bullismi, i legami di solidarietà. Nel gruppo il personaggio di Elle, ragazza transgender, è tratteggiato con grande cura, ed ha riscosso enorme successo anche nella trasposizione in video. È particolare però un elemento che ci è saltato agli occhi. In fondo a ogni volume ci sono delle sintetiche schede dell³ personaggio³ che nei primi due titoli riportano alcune informazioni tra le quali *genere* e *sessualità*.

In questo caso Elle è presente, insieme ad altri personaggi secondari, con una scheda più sintetica che riporta solo *nome* e *chi sei*. Nei volumi successivi il protagonismo di Elle cresce e parallelamente troviamo un altro cambiamento: se ora la sua scheda è in alto tra le prime, da tutte è stato tolto il campo relativo al *genere*, né è presente *sessualità* o *orientamento sessuale*. L'effetto risulta stridentemente invisibilizzante, sia nella prima versione che nella seconda.

Ma esistono, anche nella letteratura illustrata pubblicata in Italia, persone trans in cui immedesimarsi, tra le pagine di una narrazione coinvolgente da leggere, sfogliare e raccontare senza sosta. È il caso di *Solleone*, opera d'esordio, a fumetti, di Noah Schiatti. La storia di un'amicizia estiva tra Andante e tre ragazzine, nell'età di passaggio dall'infanzia alla preadolescenza. Una natura piuttosto selvaggia offre sorprese, scoperte, e la possibilità di aprirsi, ascoltarsi confidarsi e conoscersi nel profondo. Andante afferma il proprio rifiuto per un'identità di genere femminile "Andante, mi chiamo così. E voglio che mi chiami così. Mi fa male se mi chiami femmina". E si confronta con le reazioni che suscita nelle amiche, dall'indifferenza, all'accoglienza, alla ritrosia e al fastidio verso un posizionamento così difficile da afferrare. Quello che il bambino rivendica è tempo, rispetto e l'uso del pronome maschile: "Lia... adesso non è importante. Voglio solo non essere preso in giro".

Una storia di conoscenza di sé attraverso le relazioni, di affermazione del proprio percorso di questionamento del binarismo di genere e delle norme che lo regolano è quella del libro *Io sono mare* di Cristina Portolano. Anche in questo caso un fumetto per persone piccole (ma non solo). Protagonista Mare, che compie un viaggio dalla propria camera – in cui la nonna rimanda tutta la normatività del contesto sociale in cui vivono – alle profondità marine. Qui ritroviamo le pressioni identitarie ("Da dove vieni? Non sei come noi. A che specie appartieni? (...) Sei maschio? Sei femmina?"), la diffidenza verso chi non si presta a essere immediatamente categorizzato, ma anche l'incontro con la famiglia dei pesci pagliaccio, con la grande matriarca, con la trasformazione di Franky in lei: "è diventato bellissima".

Buffalo bella è un libro particolare per la sua genesi e per il suo stile diretto e complesso, in grado di parlare di persone piccole a persone piccole, adolescenti e adulte. Un titolo che riesce a sottoporre, in modo magistrale, gli interrogativi, gli effetti che riguardano la scoperta, l'affermazione, i questionamenti di genere in età evolutiva e fa dialogare la storia personale di Bill/Bella o Annabill/Bufalo Bella con le gabbie binarie della lingua: "Allo stato civile/non sanno come trattare/chi non sta in una sola

casella/chi non sta in una sola vocale.” Una storia di fluidità di genere, che rievoca la libertà infantile di scartare di lato come un cowboy davanti ai binari e ai dettami che regolano la crescita di bambine e bambini: “A quel tempo/non c’era problema/potevo essere Bill/potevo essere Bella/ Annabill e Buffalo Bella”; poi gli anni successivi “nel cortile dei più grandi” quando “Lei o lui/il o la/non è più/un dettaglio/futile” ma “una bomba di notizia: una lui”, mentre c’era “(...) chi pregava:/torna in te/una lei”. Fino all’affermazione limpida e tenace “io sono chi sono/io sarò chi voglio.” Un albo che l’autore Olivier Douzou ha dedicato a sua figlia, un libro che all’interno della lingua vive e lotta, che ha richiesto pertanto un lavoro di riscrittura in italiano, nella traduzione di Giusi Quarenghi, che ha portato a un risultato splendido e prezioso.

E concludiamo con un albo brasiliano e non tradotto, *Maremoto*, pubblicato da Ôzé, dalle illustrazioni poetiche e coinvolgenti. Il dilemma di una figura protagonista, mezza umana e mezza pesce, che vive in una comunità in cui sirene e tritoni hanno esperienze e ruoli differenti, dove il sistema sesso/genere non fa che rinforzare quel senso di percepirsi un essere diviso, nel corpo, nei sentimenti, nei desideri. L’auspicio finale è rappresentato dalla tavola che mostra un’esplosione, che scaturisce dal bacino, nel punto di congiunzione tra busto umano e coda di pesce, che pervade lo spazio circostante, e dall’affermazione di avere un Maremoto dentro di sé.

CONCLUSIONI

Nel corso di questa analisi abbiamo individuato modelli ricorrenti, maggiore o minore attenzione alla qualità dei libri e la necessità di colmare un enorme vuoto nella rappresentazione delle soggettività trans*. Non si tratta di risposte o soluzioni definitive, ma di proporre riflessioni che lasciano aperte domande e questionamenti su un primo, esiguo, gruppo di albi che mettono a tema la possibilità di superare una visione binaria ed eteronormativa del mondo. Restano evidenti, nonostante tutto, l’invisibilizzazione che l’editoria per l’infanzia e l’adolescenza continua ad avallare e la trasmissione di pregiudizi e stereotipi legati a una visione del mondo egemonica e patriarcale, in cui la matrice cis-eterosessuale detta il canone di rappresentazione e narrazione. È necessario che l’editoria si metta al passo con i tempi, addirittura divenga modello di rottura e superamento degli stereotipi, e che assuma un’attitudine di ascolto e osservazione che sembra, a volte, venire meno sotto la pressione di paradigmi fossilizzati e credenze difficili da sradicare.

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BACK TO THE FUTURE: NOTES ON THE ORIGINS OF THE (LONG) DEBATE ON THE CONTINUUM IN EDUCATION*

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Abstract For a long time, mainstream sociology understood education almost exclusively in a “formal” sense. Since the early 1980s, in the face of an increasingly crisis in schooling, it emerged a perspective that emphasised circularity and interdependence within the educational system. However, the issue of the symbiotic relationship between schooling and no-schooling has crossed the sociological debate since its origins. In order to trace back the main issues emerging from this “old story”, the paper focuses on some particularly significant perspectives that stressed the relationship between formal, non-formal and informal educational contexts: J. Addams’ “applied sociology”, the “Educational sociology” of F.M. Thrasher and P. G. Cressey, the “sociology of democratic planning” of K. Mannheim and the systematic distinction between formal, informal and non-formal education emerging from P. Coombs’, M. Ahmed’s and T. Labelle’s contributions. These perspectives can serve as snapshots useful for identifying standpoints that animate the contemporary debate on the “continuum in education”.

1. NOTES ABOUT A LONG DEBATE

The question of education has always been at the core of sociological debate, as can be seen in the work of classical thinkers (Ribolzi, 2012; Besozzi 2017). However, for a long time and until the 1970s, at both the theoretical and empirical levels, mainstream sociology significantly reduced its meaning, understanding education almost exclusively in a “formal” sense, as a vertical and intentional process of transmission that takes shape within a specific institutional dimension – the school, the university (Giovannini, 1987). This path can be understood in terms of a process of functional differentiation, which has led to the emergence and consolidation of an intrinsic autonomy of the “educational system”, whose crucial nodes are identified in the formal

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organisation of education and the professionalisation of teachers (Luhmann & Schorr, 1979).

The most obvious consequence of the consolidation of a paradigm based on the school-centred model is the residual nature of the role, functions and relevance of other educational contexts and agencies (Mongelli, 2006; Ribolzi, 2012; Ballantine, Stuber & Everitt, 2022). This does not mean, however, that the dimension of the so-called “no schooling” has not been the subject of attention and analysis. This has been the case since the 1980s, when the school-centred model was criticised (Besozzi, 2006; Chisholm, 2008) in the face of an increasingly evident crisis in schooling (Cesareo, 1974). What emerged was a perspective that called into question the centrality of the formal sphere and emphasised the dimensions of circularity and interdependence (Besozzi, 2006), leading to the emergence of a new de-verticalised image of the educational system (Giovannini, 1987). It is precisely here that can be found the boundaries of an analysis which – in thematising the categories of “extended educational system”, “integrated educational system”, “educational ecosystem”, “polycentric educational processes” (Mongelli, 2006; Chisholm, 2008; Colombo & Censi, 2010; Besozzi, 2017) – draws the attention of the Sociology of Education to the question of the “continuum in education” (Merico & Scardigno, 2022b).

However, we should not think that the hypothesis of the need to understand education as a broad, polycentric and integrated process is a recent and, above all, original issue within the sociological debate. On the contrary, it is possible to verify how the issue of the symbiotic relationship between the educational processes that take place in formal, non-formal and informal contexts has crossed the sociological debate on educational processes since its origins (Merico & Scardigno, 2022a). It is – this is the proposal we want to put forward – an “old story”, which today has become a matter of urgency.

Therefore, an “old story” with some significant traces being in the work of Georg Simmel, Charles H. Cooley and George H. Mead, as well as in the thinking of Talcott Parsons and even in Niklas Luhmann. However, if we take a long-term view, attentive to unearthing the anticipatory capacity of perspectives that in many cases have struggled to be recognised, it is possible to trace a more explicit thematisation that has made it possible, albeit with different emphases, to define the intimately plural nature of educational processes (Rogers, 2005; Jeffs & Ord, 2017). It is not possible to provide a detailed reconstruction of this debate here. We have therefore preferred

to attempt to provide snapshots, focusing on a few particularly significant cases that are useful for identifying standpoints that animate the contemporary debate.

2. J. Addams' "Applied Sociology"

In the sociological tradition, the recognition of the relevance of the no-schooling (and its link with formal education) can be traced back in the debate that arose at the beginning of the 20th century based on John Dewey and Georg H. Mead's pragmatism. Moving from the distinction between "play" and "game" (Mead, 1934), Mead developed an analysis that led him to emphasise the criticalities and contradictions that ran through the reform of the US school organisation and to draw attention to the need to *connect* the aims and methods of different educational agencies (Mead, 1999). On the other hand, according to Dewey (1938), traditional methods were incapable of valorising the educational value of experience, which instead constitutes one of the cornerstones of his "Laboratory School" (Durst, 2010).

Building on the assumptions of Mead and Dewey, and from the perspective of *applied sociology*, Jane Addams' proposal is based on the experience of *Hull House*: the settlement, founded in Chicago in 1889, was an incubator of new social programs and some of the most significant reform campaigns have been in favour of workers', women's and children's rights (Deegan, 1988). Jane Addams and the residents of *Hull House* drew on their experience as researchers who were sensitive to the everyday lives of young people (Condliffe Lagemann, 1994). They pointed out that the forces and institutions governing the city were not aware of the life manifested on the city streets (Merico, 2023). At the same time, these women made a sharp criticism of the state school, which they considered – in continuity with Dewey's positions – to be the bearer of a culture totally separated from experience (Addams, 1905). In this respect, Addams believed "that public schools should be neighborhood centers, connecting people to each other and the life of the city rather than functioning as a place apart" (quoted in Sayles, 2005: 127).

It is precisely from this principle that the *Hull House* activists and reformers outline their commitment to young people, implementing activities that – along a horizontal logic – complemented schooling with language classes, reading of literary masterpieces, vocational training, outdoor classes, excursions, theatre, and so on (Addams, 1910). This was accompanied by a specific focus on "Recreation as a Public Function" (Addams, 1912). This latter element would, over time, contribute to the creation and

proliferation of youth clubs, playgrounds, and other public recreational facilities throughout the United States: all interventions that, together with the effort to train dedicated professionals, constituted the essential prerequisite for fostering the growth process of young people (Deegan, 1999; Solomon, 2005).

Ultimately, building on the assumptions of Mead and Dewey and taking on the perspective of *applied sociology*, Jane Addams (1994) argues for a broad view of educational processes, always taking into account “the consequences, in terms of behavior, social sensibilities, and attitudes toward self and others, of existing and possible patterns of social relationship and of available and needed opportunities for meaningful work, recreation, growth and renewal” (Condliffe Lagemann, 1994, p. 3).

3. THE “EDUCATIONAL SOCIOLOGY” OF F.M. THRASHER AND P. G. CRESSEY

A second standpoint can be identified in the field studies carried out by a group of youth researchers who academically grew up in the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago and who later contributed to the elaboration of “Educational Sociology”, a discipline developed in the first decades of the 20th century in the United States at the instigation of E. George Payne (Barnhouse Walters, 2007).

Within a more articulated path, here we will refer to the contribution of Frederic M. Thrasher and Paul G. Cressey (Merico, 2015; 2016). Trained with Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, Thrasher owes his fame to his research on gangs. When analysing youth gangs in the mid-1920s, Thrasher (1927a: 190) recognised how “the effective education of the boy (...) takes place far more vitally outside the school-room in those informal contacts which escape conventional supervision”. From this consideration, Thrasher bases his analysis of educational processes on the concept of “situation complex”, according to which “in order adequately to comprehend the meaning and functions of social institution, it is essential to make a scientific study of the social setting or context within which such an institution developed” (Thrasher, 1927b, p. 71).

The application of this principle implies the need to evaluate the effectiveness of the educational process according to the capacity of each institution – be it a school or a social service – to consider the typical social contexts of the community in which it operates and to adapt its modes of organisation and operation to its specific characteristics (Thrasher, 1928). This is coupled with the need to observe the everyday lives

of young people, their interests, their social relationships, the groups to which they belong, their relevance in defining patterns of behaviour and the control mechanisms they put in place: only in this way is it possible to understand the attitudes, actions and cultural models on the basis of which each young person constructs and interprets their own experience.

Counting on the collaboration of Cressey, Thrasher further developed this analysis during later projects they coordinated in New York on the Boys' Clubs and on "Motion picture and youth" (Merico, 2015; 2016). The analysis of the social contexts in which young people construct their experience carried out in the *Boys' Club Study* allowed Thrasher to identify three problematic nodes. Firstly, the fact that educational institutions relate to young people along an individualistic and sectoral perspective, i.e. without taking the overall articulation of their *social contexts* as a reference. Secondly, it emphasises the scant attention paid by formal and non-formal agencies (such as the schools and the *Boys' Clubs*) to informal education, i.e. to those unintentional and unconscious educational processes that, taking the form of "social contagion", become "so effective that the personality and character of the child are shaped by them in a thousand of different ways" (Thrasher, 1934, p. 471). Finally, Thrasher warns that the effectiveness of the educational process depends on the ability to involve all the agencies operating in the local community and, above all, to define a set of principles upon which to base the *community coordination* of services aimed at young people, with particular reference to the cooperation between the school system and the agencies involved in coping with *social problems* (Dimitriadis, 2006).

This reflection is further explored with reference to the role of the media, especially cinema and comics, in the socialisation process of young people (Merico, 2016). Faced with the fears of those who were inclined to see in the processes of constructing the youth imaginary a potentially "diseducative" medium, capable of contributing to increased levels of delinquency, the New York University researchers clearly distanced themselves from any hypothesis of censorship (Thrasher, 1940). Recognising cinema as one of the most powerful means of informal education at the time, they emphasised the need to analyse cinema "by reference to the specific social backgrounds of each individual" and socialisation agencies. At the same time, calling for "a more enlightened attitude" on the part of teachers towards cinema and the then

emerging media, they emphasise the need to adopt a careful perspective on “the relationship of the commercial cinema to the school and to educational policies” as a premise of a necessary and broader “educational advance and coordination” (Cressey, 1934, pp. 511-515).

4. THE “SOCIOLOGY OF DEMOCRATIC PLANNING” OF K. MANNHEIM

The debate on the interplay between schooling and no-schooling will find a relevant turning point in Karl Mannheim’s definition of education: a theme which, although often undercurrent, ran through the entire scientific production of the Hungarian-born sociologist, and then found expression in the lectures he delivered in 1946 at the Institute of Education of the University of London (Merico, 2019).

Moving from recalling that “the main educative agent is the community”, in sharp contrast to the Functionalist theory, Mannheim’s main argument is the distinction between two ways of understanding education: the “formal, institutionalized aspects of education such as are to be found in the schools, and the broader more generalized notion of social education”. This is a crucial aspect of his analysis, which returns the *Sociology of Education* to the leading task of analysing the relationship between schools and other educational agencies. At the same time, it implies that education can no longer be thought of “in terms of compartments”; rather, he claims, “education has to be considered as one and indivisible” (Mannheim & Stewart, 1962, pp. 19-20).

In other words, in Mannheim’s perspective it is possible to identify an “osmotic relationship” between social structure and educational processes, as well as, more generally, between education and cultural change (Casavecchia, 2022). On the one hand, as he had already pointed out in *Essays on Sociology of Knowledge* (Mannheim, 1952), education is an essential resource to enable individuals to consciously face and experience social transformations. On the other, the changes sweeping through society require appropriate changes in the educational system (Canta, 1997). This connection takes on specific relevance in the context of the crisis European societies went through between the 1930s and 1940s. The Hungarian-born sociologist was well aware of the contradictions typical of totalitarian regimes and liberalism, characterised by educational models that tended, one, to favour propaganda and, then, to reproduce social inequalities (Canta, 2006; Casavecchia, 2022). According to Mannheim (1935; 1943), overcoming those contradictions required a path capable of

establishing a “*militant democracy*” based on the coexistence of the values of social justice, freedom and respect for the individual. It is here that his proposal based on the concept of *democratic planning* takes shape (Mannheim, 1950), i.e. a “Third Way” within which the earlier educational processes and techniques had to be replaced by a wide integral educational policy (Remmling, 2015; Canta, 2023) being able – as Mannheim (1943, p. 47) had already pointed out – “to affect our whole educational system, as the latter will have to assist in educating a whole generation for entirely new tasks”.

On the basis of these premises – with reference to a society called upon to rebuild its foundations after a radical crisis – Mannheim elaborates an analytical path useful for understanding the complexity of educational processes (Vara Coomonte, 2001). Mannheim (1943: 83) emphasises that “it is no longer possible to confine the problem of education to the school”, as it is to be understood “as a part of the broader context of social processes”. This is followed by the need to valorise the cooperation – or, more distinctly, the “spontaneous integration” – between the formal educational agencies and a wide range of educational actors and contexts – such as the primary and informal groups, the home, church, and public life – in which what he defined “social education” takes place (Merico, 2019). Typically, Mannheim concludes by invoking an old adage, according to which “the coat must be cut according to the cloth, but it must be also cut according to the would-be wearer” (Mannheim & Stewart, 1962, p. 76): a useful metaphor to reaffirm the necessarily open, continuous and constantly changing nature of educational processes.

5. BEYOND THE DUALISM?

The period between the 1970s and the early 1980s represents a crucial moment for the development of the international debate on “no schooling” and its effects on economic and social development (Rogers, 2005). A debate that takes place in a scenario marked by a twofold goal: first, the definition of international policies for developing countries; second, the search for an alternative to formal education capable of meeting the basic educational needs of young people and to ensure adult literacy (Simkins, 1977).

In such a scenario, the idea of an “open” education seemed to be the most suitable answer to respond – from the micro to the macro level – not only to the dilemma of the educational systems’ crisis, but also to the social and economic development of

the Global South (Coombs, 1968; 1985). It is not by chance, we assume, that in the same period they developed the works that constitute the main theoretical foundations of the new debate on the relationship between schooling and no-schooling: to mention but a few, the UNESCO well-known report *Learning to be*. The world of education today and tomorrow, in which a specific light was shed on lifelong education (Faure et al., 1972), as well as Philip Coombs' and Manzoor Ahmed's (1974) and Thomas Labelle's (1976; 1982) contributions.

While from different perspectives, these scholars first systematised the distinction between formal, informal and non-formal education. According to this perspective, the former refers to the “highly institutionalized, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured “education system”“. Informal education, on the other hand, refers to the “lifelong process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment – at home, at work, at play”. Finally, non-formal education includes “any organized, systematic, educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, adults as well as children” (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p. 8; LaBelle, 1982).

These inputs stressed the need to pay specific attention to the peculiarities of the no schooling, meant as a complement to the formal dimension, as well as to their mutual integration, considered as the “effort” that best responds to the challenges of social crisis and changes (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974). Despite their specificity, the different ways of educating can be understood as pieces of a mosaic that takes shape along a logic of complementarity (Ahmed, 1982) which, therefore, opposes and overcomes the positions of those who understood the relationship between formal, non-formal and informal in terms of subordination or alternative. Therefore, we can argue that in the climate of “emergency” of the mid-1970s not only the three dimensions received for the first time a specific “label”, but also that the link between formal, non-formal and informal education was finally “discovered”. In brief, an awareness has emerged that we need to go beyond the logic of the dualism between schooling and no schooling, to instead thematise the three-dimensional and complex matrix of educational processes (Labelle, 1982).

6. TOWARDS THE “CONTINUUM IN EDUCATION”

If looked at in perspective, the debate that took shape at the same time as the programmes in favour of developing countries has brought a long-term reflection to maturity: as we have tried to say, an “old story” – reconstructed through these snapshots – based on what can be described as a “broad vision” of education (Faure et al., 1972, p. 172 ff.), and that has led to a “shared” perspective which recognises the formal, non-formal and informal dimensions as integral to the educational process.

In other words, although often under-recognised, it is thanks to the long debate reconstructed in the preceding pages that what Gert Biesta (2022) recently referred to as sensitivity towards education’s “integrity” has emerged. The latter being the framework in which take on value and meaning all those contributions that, in recent decades, have focused on the concept of “educational polycentrism” (Giovannini, 1987), on the multidimensionality of educational processes (Riboldi, 2012), on the de-verticalised image of the educational system (Besozzi, 2017), as well as on the synergies between differentiated agencies (Mongelli, 2006)¹. To ensure clarity, it is important to avoid any ambiguities. It should be noted that there is no intention of de-institutionalisation behind this proposal. Rather, it is necessary to consider the “recomposition” logics that can overcome the traditional separation and fragmentation between different educational contexts (Besozzi, 2009).

It is from here that the possibility of advocating the recognition of the “continuum in education”, that is the interaction and hybridisation between formal, non-formal and informal educational contexts in which the logic of traditional separation is overcome, so as to embed integration in education (Merico & Scardigno, 2022b).

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¹ On these aspects, see Fausta Scardigno’s essay in this volume.

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THE COOPERATION BETWEEN YOUTH WORK AND SCHOOLS: BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN INFORMAL, NON FORMAL AND FORMAL EDUCATION*

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Abstract Within the more general non-formal education sector, youth work in Europe is recognised as a field of practice specialised in socio-educational work with adolescents and young people. It comprises a range of activities carried out by voluntary or paid youth workers who operate between the informal sphere of everyday life (leisure, peer group, etc.) and the formal institutional sphere of the school system. The aim of this paper is to explore the limits and potential of youth work as an active agent in building forms of co-operation between school and other informal and non-formal educational and learning environments and places. Particular attention is paid to the difficulties and possibilities of developing more dialogical forms of cooperation based on a willingness to create new learning environments in which the potential of formal, non-formal and informal learning is recognised and fully exploited.

1. WORKING ACROSS DIFFERENT LEARNING AND EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

For the European Union, youth work is a form of out-of-school education carried out by professional or voluntary youth workers that contributes to the development of young people. Since the Treaty establishing the European Union in 1992, exchanges between youth workers have been one of the measures aimed at developing the European dimension of education policy. Over a period of three decades, the European Union have increasingly prioritised the professional development of youth workers, with a particular focus on the validation of their skills and the development of “innovative services, pedagogies and practice” (European Commission, 2009, p. 11).

In Italy, youth work includes both longer-standing traditions of out-of-school socio-educational activities – in the Catholic sector and in other denominations, in the

* The findings presented in this paper are part of a larger research project, the results of which were published in: Maurizio Merico & Fausta Scardigno, *Il continuum dell'educazione. Teorie, politiche e pratiche tra formale, non formale e informale*, Milan: Ledizioni, 2022.

scout world, in the educational side of ARCI – and more recent forms and organisations developed since the 1980s, also thanks to the beginning of public policies in the youth field and the programmes for youth promoted by the European Union – Youth Aggregation Centres, Youth Information Centres, Civil Service, and associations involved in projects funded by European programmes, from the first Youth for Europe to the most recent Erasmus+ Youth (Morciano, 2021).

Core elements of the specific identity of youth work can be found in the results of the European debate on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. Since 2004, this debate has promoted the recognition of youth work as a specialised provider of non-formal and informal education for young people. Organisations working in the field of youth work (public or private, formal and informal, run by adults and/or young people) are required to train young people in basic skills that fall within the social and relational domain as well as those relevant to education and training. In terms of educational methods, youth work emphasises unstructured learning that can take place spontaneously in leisure time (informal learning). In addition, youth work attaches greater importance to the dynamics of social and emotional learning experiences than formal, school-organised education, which focuses primarily on cognitive resources. The educational methods of youth work therefore emphasise the centrality of the learner and the voluntary nature of participation.

A specific feature of youth work is the ability to work in different contexts and to combine them. For example, youth work activities can be carried out in spaces specifically designed for young people (centre-based or indoor youth work), in open spaces chosen to carry out specific activities (outdoor youth work) and in spaces where young people meet spontaneously in their free time (detached youth work). Educational institutions can also designate spaces where young people can interact with youth workers in their free time or as part of specific projects in collaboration with school staff (school-based youth work) (Sapin, 2009). The latter category refers to experiences in which schools and youth workers attempt to bring together different educational methods. Indeed, the learner-centred methods practised by youth workers are a potentially useful tool for educational institutions and non-formal education actors (e.g. vocational training centres) to overcome the limitations of educational methods that place little emphasis on the active participation of learners.

At European level, youth work encompasses a range of practises that have multiple impacts (social inclusion, participation, interculturality, transition to work and training) thanks to different activities (sport, arts, active citizenship, volunteering, youth

mobility, etc.). In addition, youth work tends to be permeable, as it's inherently called to collaborate with actors from different sectors (school, counselling, work, justice, culture, health, etc.) (Morciano, 2021).

Kiilakoski (2015) has pointed out the specific, cross-site nature of youth work. According to this author, the flexibility of youth work allows it to work in everyday situations such as indoor public spaces dedicated to youth work (open-access youth centres or youth clubs), other indoor public spaces not dedicated to youth work (e.g. sports facilities, libraries, cultural centres, hospitals, social services, schools, etc.), outdoor public spaces (e.g. urban or rural parks) and virtual spaces.

2. THE YOUTH WORK PROCESS AS AN INTERPLAY BETWEEN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND INFORMAL LEARNING

Youth work can be seen as a multi-site environment in which young people experience their free time as “time for themselves” (Cavalli & Calabrò, 2008). This means that young people are offered the opportunity to seek direct contact with their deeper interests and vocations in the areas of education, employment or leisure. The time spent in youth work organisations and projects therefore takes a variety of forms, that alternate and combining recreational gratification, creativity, cultural experience, training for employment and the creation of social bonds. For this reason, youth work can offer experiences of “semi-leisure” that move between freely chosen activities and the acceptance of social commitments whether in the field of employment or civic field (Dumazedier, 1998). Such a perspective leads to viewing youth work as an environment in which informal learning and non-formal educational experiences can co-exist.

The informal learning experience refers in particular to the opportunity to engage with youth work in a spontaneous, autonomous and flexible way. It is therefore a learning experience that is not anchored in a specific organised body of knowledge (European Commission, 2001), that engages young people on different levels (cognitive, emotional, value-based, application-oriented) (Beckett & Hager, 2002) and in which they perceive a high degree of freedom in terms of *what* and *how* they learn (Falk, 2005).

The dimension of non-formal learning in turn refers to activities that are more structured in terms of content and methodology (Dohn, 2010). However, even in this case,

the learning objectives are formulated directly by the young people based on their interests, relying on adult youth workers to provide the necessary resources (classrooms, experts, learning materials, etc.) (Mocker & Spear, 1982). In addition, non-formal learning opportunities provide young people with more opportunities to enter into a relationship with adults than informal learning opportunities. The nature of the interaction between young people and the adults who play a role in non-formal educational processes (teachers, experts, professionals, etc.) forms the basis of several studies evaluating out-of-school educational practises and programmes (Rhodes, 2004). Such studies tend to confirm the value of educational approaches able to foster autonomy and a freedom of choice among young participants.

The concept of *positive experience* can help to investigate the way in which the combination of the experience of independence (characteristic of *informal learning*) and interdependence with the adult (more relevant to *non-formal education*) may have a positive impact on the well-being and the life transitions of the young. From the perspective of social pedagogy this means highlighting the role of the adult who “facilitates a person’s increasing ability to access resources themselves” (Cameron & Moss, 2011, p. 44). Such a role requires the containment of the hierarchical component in the relationship between the young and the adult youth worker in favour of an equal relationship in which each has both the power and responsibility to play their own active role in the design and implementation of the educational project (Cameron & Moss, 2011, p. 76).

Specifically, the concept of positive experience in social pedagogy refers to those experiences that have the power to have a lasting positive influence on the course of an individual’s life and at the same time improve the quality of everyday life in the present (Cameron & Moss, 2011, p. 38). These experiences are, in particular, generated by four main drivers: *empowerment* defined as the power to exercise change over one’s life as well as the own life context (social, cultural, political etc.); a *feeling of happiness* in the present and a state of well-being in the long term (physical, mental, emotional and social); *relationships* able to foster autonomy and, at the same time, act as a guide for accessing new resources; *holistic learning* inasmuch as it is able to link different levels (emotional, cognitive etc.) and contexts (formal, non-formal and informal) together (Cameron & Moss, 2011, p. 34-38).

3. COOPERATION BETWEEN YOUTH WORK AND SCHOOLS: POTENTIAL AND CHALLENGES

The previous section emphasised the natural vocation of youth work to dynamically and flexibly combine processes of informal learning and more structured experiences of non-formal education. This characteristic makes youth work an important resource with regard to the goal of linking formal education at school with other contexts and forms of learning. If youth work can already be seen as a relational space that relies on the synergy between informal and non-formal educational processes, its involvement in projects and activities in the school context helps to broaden, diversify and enrich the formal educational experience in continuity with other sources, settings and forms of learning.

The potential of youth work as a bridge-builder between informal, non-formal and formal education also arises from the fact that it is a form of cross-border socio-educational practise (Batsleer & Davies, 2010). On the one hand, the specificity of youth work seems to be to bridge the gaps or frictions that arise between the interventions of a variety of educational institutions and services (family, school, vocational training, employment services, social and health services, leisure, etc.) by promoting effective synergies in cooperation. On the other hand, youth workers endeavour to create neutral relational spaces in which they support young people in dealing with the tension between the normative pressure of the adult institutional world and the need for spaces of autonomy. As a boundary practice, youth work seeks possible forms of cooperation with institutions and organisations responsible for various policy areas aimed at the young population. The EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, for example, recognises that youth work activities can help young people to “mature key competences and skills at personal, professional and entrepreneurial levels, such as those of teamwork, leadership, interculturalism, project management, problem solving and critical thinking, [*while also being*] able to act as a bridge to study, vocational training or work activities” (European Commission, 2018).

According to current research literature, the most frequently occurring obstacles in the collaboration between youth work and schools are attributed both to an asymmetry of power in favour of the school organisation and a widespread perception of incompatibility between different educational approaches and methods.

Regarding power relations, even in cases where the value of their contribution is recognised in principle, schools tend to place youth workers in a fundamentally subordinate position to teachers. Rather than being seized as an opportunity to build new

forms or spaces of learning, schools “see youth workers as occupying a supportive but subservient role to that of teachers. That is, they provide or facilitate activities that are supplementary to those of the teacher in the classroom (Corney, 2006, p. 19). The school, therefore, mainly expects youth workers to support teachers in their institutional tasks, adapting to the time and content of their teaching programme as well as to the overall functioning of the school organisation (Sapin, 2009). This asymmetry of power occurs more frequently in national contexts where the figure of the youth worker is not formally recognised by the legal system. This is the case in Italy, where there is still no national or regional law framing the professional figure of the youth worker, nor specific training courses dedicated to it.

Based on Smith’s (1988) historical reconstruction, the divergence between educational objectives and approaches is the main cause of distrust and suspicion between youth workers and teachers over time. This difficulty of integration on the pedagogical level has been framed in different ways: between formal and informal education (Smith, 1988); between standardised and flexible/adaptive practices (Rosseter, 1989); between compulsory and voluntary participation (Blackham & Smith, 2018); between remedial (of learning deficits, behavioural difficulties, etc.) and promotional approaches (stimulation and support of skills and attitudes) (Bowie, 2002).

Even when the educational methods of youth work are recognised and accepted by schools, this normally happens in projects linked to the achievement of their institutional objectives. The cooperation experiences, therefore, are mainly associated to the aim of *compensating for* the limits of formal education, in the face of those problems that the school is unable to tackle effectively with its own competences and resources. Youth workers, therefore, are generally called upon to work with young people placed in different risk or vulnerability categories. Schools expect youth workers to help students with their homework, to improve school performance, to become more motivated towards studying, to manage their behavioural difficulties, etc. (Morgan et al., 2008; Coburn & Gormally, 2015).

Youth work is therefore increasingly recognised as an effective method of engaging young people who are (or are at risk of becoming) disengaged from mainstream education. In this case, the specific added value of youth work compared to social work or more traditional school-based pedagogies becomes clearer. Working with disadvantaged or at-risk students is of course an important area where youth workers can make a significant contribution. However, if youth work specialises primarily in

working with problematic students, there is a risk of social labelling and the resulting dynamic of demotivation among young people who are classified as “problematic”.

When considering how to promote co-operation between youth workers and school staff, the resistance of youth workers should also be taken into account. Coburn and Gormally (2015), for example, point to the need to overcome an overly rigid or static interpretation of the approach that characterises youth work, which often insists on the problem of divergence or incompatibility with the pedagogical and teaching methods of schools. Rather, more emphasis should be placed on the creative ability of youth workers to find new ways to put the specific principles and orientations of youth work into practice, even when they seem to conflict with the professional culture of schools. Specifically, the authors consider how the key principles at the heart of youth work can be applied in schools.

In the school context, for example, the principle of *focusing on young people* means adopting a holistic view of young people, looking at their lives as a whole and not differentiating where and how they spend their time (e.g. in or out of school, with youth workers or with teachers, etc.).

The youth work principle of *voluntary participation* raises the problem of incompatibility with the compulsory nature of formal schooling. In this case, as highlighted by Ord (2009), youth workers can create the conditions for a voluntary and meaningful form of engagement and participation to emerge over time, also enabled by the mediation work they do in the relationships between students, teachers and the school institution. The challenge for youth workers might therefore be to “facilitate participation rather than rely on it happening immediately” (Blackham & Smith, 2018, p. 26). For example, the youth worker’s contribution can be to support young people in reflecting on the imposing nature of school as perceived by them, but at the same time helping them to develop a proactive and participative attitude that tries to influence the change of school programmes and methods in order to make them more in tune with their own interests.

The endeavour to go beyond the prevailing one-to-one relationship between teachers and students stems from the principle of youth work to *foster associations, relationships and community*. To ensure meaningful engagement and avoid a labelling effect, work groups should involve together more vulnerable or at risk students (e.g. less engaged students) and other participants. In addition, youth workers and teachers

should set the main objectives for the project assigned to the groups, but the direction should be set by the young people.

Finally, the principle of *Being friendly* can seem rather vague in a school context. A possible adaptation of this principle in school can be based on the model of the three P's (Smith, 2012): youth workers can be friendly (Personal), but at the same time operate on a relational/confidential level (Private) and maintain professional boundaries (Professional). The perspective of youth work as a form of *educational accompaniment* can help to clarify how youth workers can operate on both personal, private and professional levels. Chiara Biasin (2010) defines *accompaniment* as an attitude of the youth worker "to go alongside" the young person and to create the necessary conditions for the facilitation of self-knowledge, the expression of thoughts, imaginative and creative abilities, the formulation of proposals, the ability to make choices and take responsibility for putting them into practise. In such a supportive relationship, the adult does not use his or her position of authority to bring about an expected change in the young person, but rather tends to create a relationship among peers in which "dialogue, listening, empathy and respect (...) create the conditions for the two partners to become co-authors (Biasin, p. 116). The youth worker thus appears as a friendly and professional figure (Young, 2006), and the relationship with young people can be at the same time "explicitly personal and professional, informed by the concept of a professional heart" (Cameron & Moss, 2011, p. 121).

4. CONCLUSIONS

How can formal education in schools and the hybrid space of non-formal and informal education in youth work be related? Lass Siurala (2012) distinguishes three possible perspectives: they can be seen as *independent* and therefore do not require special co-operation; youth work can be used as an *alternative*, especially for those students who have particular difficulties in dealing with the formal education system; or the contribution of youth workers can *complement* formal education if they achieve additional outcomes that schools and formal education seem to miss.

Based on the research literature reviewed in this paper, the third perspective of a complementary role for youth work seems to be the most appreciated and practised in schools. However, Siurala points out the possible risks of commodification of youth work when it is expected to be integrated into formal education as a complementary practise:

Even if dominant rhetoric is to better integrate non-formal learning into formal education (complementary relationship), critical voices say that formalisation of non-formal learning endangers its voluntary nature and emancipatory essence. Critical educationalists have even claimed that non-formal learning has become commodified (...) to the extent that it has become a decontextualised, ahistorical and apolitical activity (Siurala, 2012, p. 107).

This risk is mainly exacerbated by the increasing institutional pressure to evaluate youth work, which also includes the evaluation of co-operation between youth work and schools. One possible consequence may be an excessive and somewhat paradoxical “formalisation of non-formal education”.

This move towards formalization may result mainly from the growing demand for programmes that are designed in order to demonstrate the extent to which they are able to respond to the problems and needs of particular groups of young people (*target-based* and *outcomes-based* programmes). In such programmes, there exists the risk that young people feel more like “users” or “passive consumers” than as an active part of a shared and participatory process with adults (Davies & Merton, 2009). This risk is seen by some as acceptable provided that the explanation of the theoretical and methodological foundations of youth work practices leads to demonstrated improvements in quality (European Commission and Council of Europe, 2011). However, the relational processes peculiar to youth work are characterized by a strong element of unpredictability, so that youth worker is in a position to seize opportunities and address problems that arise during the live educational process. The risk of losing the ‘unexpected and unplanned’ emerging in the process of youth work led Jon Ord to question if “it makes more sense to plan for opportunities and not outcomes” and to argue that “it should not necessarily be able to predict with any degree of certainty what those outcomes may, or may not, be until the process of youth work has developed, and the work unfolded” (Ord, 2012, chapter 6).

In the face of such risks, another possible perspective is to build dialogic and synergetic forms of cooperation between youth work and school, considered as partners, with the common intention of creating new teaching-learning environments at the interface between the resources offered by both, each of them having their own autonomy and competences. This perspective also emerges from the final declaration of the third European Youth Work Conference, which emphasises the need to “go beyond the idea of integrating non-formal education and learning into formal

education settings and rather work towards a coordinated system enhancing collaboration and cooperation between distinct sectors working on a common purpose”¹.

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¹ Final Declaration of the 3rd European Youth Work Convention Signposts for the future, p. 13, https://www.bonn-process.net/downloads/publications/2/3rd%20EYWC_final%20Declaration.pdf?version=89567f5ed19ce0dc9732a4415bc256fd

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I GIOVANI, IL DIRITTO E LA GESTIONE DEI RISCHI DURANTE LA PANDEMIA*

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Abstract Questo lavoro esplora i vissuti dei giovani italiani nel periodo pandemico, secondo una prospettiva attenta alla dimensione normativa. Lo studio esamina come le disposizioni anti-Covid siano state incorporate nei contesti di vita quotidiana, mediante complessi e ambivalenti processi di loro accettazione, interpretazione e di rifiuto. La ricerca empirica ha consistito in 70 interviste discorsive, con fotostimolo, realizzate con giovani dai 18 ai 25 anni, sia studenti sia lavoratori, sia italiani sia seconde generazioni, e residenti in differenti regioni. La prospettiva qualitativa ha permesso di indagare le 'buone ragioni' attraverso cui i giovani hanno dato senso e giustificato le loro azioni, sulla base di più profonde disposizioni verso il diritto, le istituzioni e la sfera etica. La lente teorica della legal consciousness di Ewick e Silbey costituisce un primo riferimento chiave. Tuttavia, il quadro teorico si compone di un richiamo anche ad alcuni elementi delle 'culture del rischio' di Mary Douglas e agli studi, di derivazione bourdieusiana, sulla dimensione strutturale delle disposizioni etiche e morali. Tale framework consente di indagare empiricamente le tensioni tra agency e struttura, interrogando come i diversi repertori culturali siano stati messi in gioco, ma anche interpretati e rivendicati, nei diversi contesti di vita quotidiana. L'analisi proposta si basa sulla discussione di quattro esperienze idealtipiche. Si articolano, quindi, le storie di alcuni giovani, il cui vissuto ha un carattere rappresentativo di alcune modalità caratteristiche di significazione e d'azione degli intervistati. Si sono, quindi, individuate, secondo una logica fuzzy, quattro strategie emblematiche: la cooperazione solidaristica, la manipolazione opportunistica, la ragionevolezza burocratica e la contestazione impenitente. In sintesi, le modalità attraverso cui i giovani hanno fronteggiato le disposizioni normative rivelano complessi intrecci tra disposizioni tacite e dinamiche di ragionamento e d'azione situate.

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INTRODUZIONE

Pensare al rapporto tra giovani e diritto nel contesto della pandemia richiama immediatamente alla mente alcune rappresentazioni mediatiche che li ritraggono come irresponsabili trasgressori di norme. Al di là delle visioni stereotipate dei giovani come devianti oppure vittime della crisi pandemica (Melro, Girão & Carreira, 2024), molte ricerche hanno rilevato che adolescenti e giovani adulti hanno mostrato elevati livelli di adesione alle normative governative, atteggiamenti prosociali per il benessere collettivo (Timonen et al., 2021; Franzen & Wöhner, 2021; Cheng et al., 2021)

In questo contributo, considereremo l'esperienza del diritto e della gestione dei rischi nel contesto pandemico da parte dei giovani, superando una prospettiva focalizzata sulla mera adesione o violazione delle norme. S'intende cercare di comprendere come, i giovani hanno gestito le loro relazioni interpersonali valutando i rischi dettati dall'elevata incertezza e le normative emanate per contenere i contagi. Verranno quindi considerati i significati, gli utilizzi e i posizionamenti rispetto al diritto nel suo intrecciarsi con altri ordini normativi come quello etico-morale e medico-scientifico. Partendo dalla cornice teorica della *legal consciousness* (Silbey & Ewick, 1998), l'obiettivo è analizzare come i giovani abbiano contribuito alla (ri)produzione dell'ordine sociale, in particolare del diritto nelle sue dimensioni istituzionale e simbolica. Inoltre, attingendo al filone di studi di derivazione bourdieusiana che si interroga sull'origine strutturale degli orientamenti valoriali (Sayer, 2005; Skeggs, 2004), si cercherà di comprendere se esistono differenze nelle esperienze di giuridicità riconducibili a forme di differenziazione sociale.

In questo lavoro, dopo aver esplicitato la cornice teorico-analitica, presenteremo i risultati di una ricerca qualitativa che ha coinvolto 70 giovani che hanno narrato la loro esperienza della pandemia.

LEGAL CONSCIOUSNESS E MORALITÀ DEL QUOTIDIANO

L'oggetto di analisi del campo di studi sulla *legal consciousness* è l'esperienza del diritto di comuni cittadini nelle situazioni di vita quotidiana. Nella sociologia del diritto, questi studi sono collocati nell'ambito più vasto della cultura giuridica esterna che concerne le percezioni, opinioni e rappresentazioni del diritto da parte di coloro che non appartengono a ruoli professionali e istituzionali riconducibili al "cerchio magico" del diritto (Friedman, 1978). Un riferimento centrale in questo campo di ricerca

è stato il lavoro di Ewick e Silbey (1998) che hanno definito la *legal consciousness* come il processo di partecipazione alla costruzione sociale della giuridicità. Con questo termine si intendono i significati, le fonti di autorità e le pratiche culturali comunemente definite come “giuridiche” da parte di esperti o comuni cittadini, in spazi e contesti istituzionali o informali. Esse documentano tre narrazioni prevalenti: *Before the law* che esprime un’esperienza del diritto come ambito separato dalla quotidianità e dotato di autorevolezza, prevedibilità, oggettività e imparzialità, che riflette un atteggiamento di lealtà verso le istituzioni giuridiche; *With the law*, che riconduce ad un’esperienza del diritto percepito come concreto e presente nella vita quotidiana e ad una capacità individuale di agire attraverso il diritto, in quanto esso è esperito come un’arena nella quale si possono utilizzare regole preesistenti o inventarne delle nuove per perseguire propri interessi e finalità; *Against the law* che definisce l’esperienza degli individui che si sentono “intrappolati” dal diritto, perché vittime di un potere arbitrario o ingiusto e che attraverso sotterfugi, aggiramenti e inganni cercano una tregua dal suo raggio di azione. Queste storie rappresentano repertori culturali la cui accessibilità e polivocalità è ciò che sostiene la legittimità e la *long durée* del diritto come istituzione e come riferimento simbolico (Ewick & Silbey, 2020).

Ricerche successive hanno evidenziato che la coscienza giuridica non emerge come un attributo degli individui ma come una costruzione relazionale: essa si sostanzia attraverso pratiche che prendono forma nella relazione con specifici oggetti, individui e contesti (Chua & Engels 2019). Pertanto, ha una natura processuale, uno stesso individuo può sperimentare varie forme di legalità in momenti e situazioni diverse.

L’esperienza della giuridicità, inoltre, è fortemente intrecciata e mediata da altri campi normativi, come la morale, il sapere medico-scientifico ed economico (Cowan, 2004). Gli studi socio-giuridici hanno riconosciuto il pluralismo normativo come condizione normale e prevalente delle società complesse (Ferrari, 2022, Merry, 1990; Santos, 1983?). Il diritto collabora con altre strutture sociali per generare significati e regolare l’azione sociale (Ewick & Silbey, 2020).

In questa direzione appaiono rilevanti gli studi che mettono in evidenza il carattere intrinsecamente normativo del modo in cui gli attori sociali si rapportano ai loro contesti d’azione. Sayer (2011) sostiene che il rapporto che gli attori hanno con i loro mondi è valutativo e rimanda alla preoccupazione per il modo in cui sono trattati dagli altri, per il proprio e altrui benessere. La dimensione etica o morale è parte integrante della razionalità pratica con cui affrontano la vita quotidiana (Sayer, 2005; 2011; Skeggs, 2004).

Partendo da queste cornici teoriche, moralità e giuridicità emergono come processi situati e fortemente interconnessi.

Il lavoro di Sayer riprende la prospettiva bourdieusiana sulle pratiche come forme di agire che incorporano elementi preriflessivi e prerazionali; Gli stati affettivi e la moralità sono considerate come componenti fondamentali del modo con cui gli individui si orientano nelle interazioni sociali, che rimandano ai processi di socializzazione (Sayer, 2005).

L'accostamento con la prospettiva bourdieusiana e le suggestioni proposte da Sayer permette di situare lo studio della *legal consciousness* entro una cornice teorica più ampia che apre alla dialettica tra posizioni e prese di posizioni nel campo sociale, secondo uno sguardo centrato sugli orientamenti valoriali e normativi, che guidano l'agire quotidiano e plasmano il nostro senso identitario.

CULTURE DEL RISCHIO

La dimensione valoriale della stratificazione socio-economica e culturale è stata approfondita da una recente indagine quantitativa di De Keere (2020). Questo lavoro consente di riflettere sullo spazio sociale nei termini di spazio morale. Inoltre, tale studio si apre al lavoro analitico sulle culture del rischio di Mary Douglas (Douglas, 1970; 1982; Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982). Questa lente è messa in gioco anche nella nostra analisi. Il lavoro pionieristico di Douglas, sulle culture dei rischi, costituisce uno strumento euristico chiave per l'analisi dell'esperienza pandemica caratterizzata da estrema incertezza. Sono state considerate due dimensioni chiave individuate dall'antropologa britannica: la griglia e il gruppo (Douglas, 1970, 1982; Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982). Esse permettono di riflettere su come le norme e i valori orientano l'agire sociale. La categoria analitica della griglia sottolinea la dimensione eterodiretta dei vincoli 'subiti'; mentre quella del gruppo rimanda a una dimensione 'auto-diretta', basata su un senso di obbligazione e di reciprocità che deriva dal sentirsi parte di una comunità.

Questo *frame* concettuale è già stato declinato in letteratura anche mediante un'interazione con la prospettiva della *legal consciousness* (Halliday & Morgan, 2013; Pieraccini & Cardwell, 2016; Merry, 1990. Tale filone di studi prende parzialmente le distanze dalla prospettiva originaria (Silbey & Ewick, 1998), che enfatizza una natura

intrinsecamente contingente. Sia quest'ultime ricerche citate sia lo studio di de Keere (2020) tematizzano, invece, le strategie culturali dentro dinamiche strutturali. Riprendendo l'impianto dello studio di de Keere (2020) e mettendolo in dialogo con la prospettiva della *legal consciousness*, il nostro lavoro intende riflettere sulla tensione tra struttura e azione e sull'intreccio tra determinismo e *agency*.

METODOLOGIA

La ricerca si basa su 70 interviste discorsive a giovani tra 18 e 25 anni, maschi (40) e femmine (30), italiani (57) e con background migratorio (13), studenti (49), lavoratori (19) e in cerca di occupazione (2).

Si sono esaminati taluni ambiti tematici: famiglia, relazioni amicali e sentimentali, studio/lavoro e rapporto con la sfera normativa. Il tema del diritto non è stato trattato esplicitamente (Ewick & Silber, 1998) nella prima parte dell'intervista lasciando che la dimensione giuridico-normativa emergesse spontaneamente dai racconti degli intervistati. Esso è stato inserito solo nella parte finale.

I vari ambiti sono stati introdotti da stimoli visuali, immagini che avevano lo scopo di sollecitare stati affettivi ed una narrazione più fluida. Ciò corrisponde ad una precisa esigenza metodologica. Nella ricerca sui valori, come osservano Jarness e Friedman (2016), è sempre presente una tensione irriducibile tra 'sé viscerale' e 'sé onorevole'. L'elicitazione con fotostimolo permette di avere accesso a informazioni ulteriori rispetto a quelle fornite dalle narrazioni, spesso influenzate della gestione delle impressioni.

Le interviste sono state analizzate con MaxQDA. Mediante l'approccio della template analysis (Cardano & Ortalda, 2021) le categorie analitiche del quadro teorico sono state usate per avviare la codifica dei dati mediante una continua categorizzazione dei temi rilevanti ed emergenti dal corpus testuale.

REPERTORI CULTURALI E DINAMICHE QUOTIDIANE: PROFILI IDEALTIPICI

Nell'analisi che segue, si propone un'articolazione di alcuni profili idealtipici dei giovani intervistati mediante il riferimento a quattro esperienze.. Tali idealtipi sono rappresentativi delle disposizioni e prese di posizione che emergono con maggiore nitidezza, secondo una logica *fuzzy*. Attraverso lo strumento euristico delle storie dei

singoli intervistati, s'intende esemplificare l'intreccio tra la dimensione contingente e contestuale e, al contempo, la natura strutturale dei repertori culturali messi in gioco nei diversi contesti d'azione.

5.1. La solidarietà collettivistica

Questo profilo identifica le esperienze di giovani che attribuiscono un carattere di stampo 'solidaristico' al proprio agire, basato su una ligia adesione alle disposizioni normative. Nelle narrazioni ricorrono richiami a un'idea del bene comune. Esso costituisce il principale *frame* di senso attraverso cui interpretano e ricostruiscono gli avvenimenti delle loro vite durante la pandemia. Tali pratiche sono riconducibili all'orientamento classificato '*before the law*' da Silbey e Ewick (1998). Si ritrovano qui soprattutto giovani con basso capitale culturale ed economico ma inseriti in percorsi di studio a livello universitario, e, tra di essi, migranti di seconda generazione. L'esperienza vissuta da Eloisa è rappresentativa di questo peculiare modo di vivere, contrassegnato da un valore prioritario attribuito a un senso del 'Noi' contrapposto a una logica individualistica, della soddisfazione delle sole necessità private. Eloisa è una studentessa filippina che ha terminato la laurea triennale. Nel corso dell'intervista, prende ripetutamente le distanze dai comportamenti 'egoistici' dei propri coetanei e di membri della comunità filippina. Essa spiega come sia stata e abbia continuato a essere molto prudente, riducendo al minimo le uscite e i contatti. Il richiamo a un ordine valoriale di stampo collettivista conduce al riconoscimento di una reciproca 'comunanza di destini', laddove la protezione di sé è legata a doppio filo a quella altrui. Ad esempio, argomenta:

Ma, allora, penso che molta di questa gente [riferimento al photovoice] non creda al /virus/ (...)c'è gente così, ma penso anche molti no? Che se ne freghino molto. Io so di molti giovani che, essendo giovani, dicono, hanno ancora di questa idea no? Che siano solamente gli anziani e i malati a essere colpiti (...) e anche per una questione di egoismo e anche di un po' di ignoranza sono usciti a fare questi assembramenti senza preoccuparsi minimamente del virus (...) in Via Italia (...)c'era un sacco di gente e dovevo andare in farmacia, a prendere una cosa, e mi ricordo di aver trovato tutta questa gente (...) molti dicevano: 'eh sono all'aperto, mi tengo giù la mascherina. Solo che è ovvio che sei all'aperto però se siete tutti e cinquecento senza la mascherina (...) e non è tanto sicuro. (Eloisa)

Nelle sue parole, si rileva una importanza secondaria data alle istituzioni e ai vincoli legali, laddove il rispetto delle normative è tematizzato come una questione anzitutto

individuale. Si riverbera, quindi, una forte dimensione douglasiana identitaria del gruppo, e una più debole dimensione della griglia, legata alle imposizioni esterne.

io vabbè ho avuto già la mia prima dose di vaccino, perché ho una persona fragile a casa, mio papà. Però prima ero molto, ho passato un anno e non ero mai uscita, sono uscita pochissimo, anche perché oppure vedo solamente i miei due amici, che so con chi escono e sono sicura che anche loro stanno attenti (...) perché ehm... essendo molto ansiosa, mi mette ansia il fatto che molte persone, ad esempio, posso uscire con un amico, non so questo mio amico con chi esca. (Eloisa)

Inoltre, le sue narrazioni permettono di riflettere sulla co-esistenza dei diversi codici morali che danno forma all'agire quotidiano. Eloisa racconta come il periodo pandemico sia stato vissuto con particolare apprensione anche a causa della malattia del padre. Si osserva, quindi, un intreccio tra diversi registri morali laddove si ha un richiamo a una dimensione, in qualche misura, più 'particolaristica' – legata al benessere di un familiare- accanto a un più profondo senso di solidarietà e del bene comune.

5.2. La manipolazione opportunistica

Questo profilo si contraddistingue per un insieme di atteggiamenti opportunistici nei confronti delle normative anti-contagio. Le principali strategie -pratiche, discorsive e di significazione- messe in atto da questi giovani rimandano alla categoria definita da Silbey e Ewick (1998) come *'with the law'*. Nelle narrazioni, ricorre un'ambivalenza tra un più generale riconoscimento della necessità delle misure anti-Covid e la rivendicazione di una loro 'traduzione' e interpretazione contingente e soggettiva. Esemplificativa è, a tal proposito, la storia di Arianna, una ragazza neolaureata, che svolge lavori saltuari in vista dell'iscrizione alla magistrale. Lei, come la maggior parte di questo gruppo d'intervistati, proviene da una famiglia con elevato capitale economico e culturale. Durante il periodo delle restrizioni più rilevanti, ha vissuto a casa con la madre, alternando periodi, relativamente estesi, nell'abitazione del fidanzato, violando le norme anti-Covid. Ha mantenuto anche delle relazioni con una cerchia di amici, ristretta a un gruppo stabile, e ha continuato a incontrare i nonni, per un'esigenza affettiva ritenuta prioritaria.

ribadisco, non è, forse anche perché avevo comunque molta responsabilità nei confronti dei membri anziani della famiglia per cui, se uscivo, uscivo con pochissime

persone, più o meno sempre le stesse, gli amici sono stati gli ultimi che ho visto... per cui sempre molto con i piedi di piombo. (Arianna)

Il suo modo di rendere semanticamente malleabile le restrizioni normative sembrerebbe richiamare quella sicurezza su di sé propria dei giovani 'privilegiati' (Skeggs, 2004; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970). E' opportuno osservare anche la compresenza con diversi registri morali, come quello relativo alla responsabilità verso gli altri, seppure declinato in termini 'particolaristici'. Si osserva un debole senso sia della griglia sia del gruppo *à la* Douglas. Ad esempio, Arianna, raccontando della sensazione di libertà provata durante le prime uscite e il progressivo ritorno alla vita normale, si sofferma su un punto chiave:

in modo del tutto sincero ho infranto il fatto di non andare dai nonni, cioè io ci andavo quasi quotidianamente (...) E, quindi, da una parte c'era: 'nonna, non posso venire' e la nonna che non capiva quasi perché, no? Perché loro: 'bè ma sei qua, vieni no?' E, quindi, ero divisa tra il se non ci vado, passami il termine, muore perché non vede nessuno. se se ci vado c'è il rischio del contagio (...) alla fine ho scelto di andare. Quindi, ho infranto delle, delle regole in questo senso e, in realtà, anche in zona rossa (...) non sempre però è capitato che due volte o tre andassi dal mio ragazzo e ci stessi quindici giorni, in modo tale da non muovermi più (...) Più che altro perché all'inizio cioè non, non è che non capissi: è che mi chiedevo okay, non, non ho non ho altri contatti, cioè se io prendo la macchina e vedo le stesse due persone sempre, non ho altri contatti con l'esterno, quindi non nuoccio a nessuno. (Arianna)

Nelle sue parole emerge quel senso della 'traduzione' opportunistica in base alle urgenze della propria vita quotidiana. Le norme giuridiche sono lette e re-interpretate alla luce di considerazioni 'pratiche', mediante il richiamo a una 'necessaria ragionevolezza' situata. Nelle razionalizzazioni, si ritrova, purtuttavia, una certa ambivalenza dei diversi ordini valoriali: la fedeltà alle proprie necessità sentimentali, ma anche un valore della famiglia e una sorta di protezione per i nonni. Essa sembrerebbe aver reso compatibili – mediante un processo di continua ri-significazione – le strette normative con le proprie esigenze individualistiche e con un certo bisogno di attenzione agli altri, priorizzando quelli della propria cerchia affettiva.

5.3. La ragionevolezza burocratica

Questa strategia si contraddistingue per un orientamento verso un rigido rispetto delle procedure e delle normative. Le narrazioni degli intervistati si avvicinano alla modalità di vivere e dare senso al diritto che Silbey e Ewick (1998) definiscono *'before*

the law' e, nella logica douglasiana, a un deciso senso del gruppo e a una più lieve percezione d'imposizione esterna. Esse si contraddistinguono per un richiamo ricorrente a un'idea di neutralità e d'intrinseca superiorità del diritto, rispetto alle opinioni e alle necessità delle persone comuni. Questo *frame* culturale sembrerebbe caratterizzare con maggiore intensità alcuni degli intervistati provenienti da famiglie con elevate risorse culturali ed economiche. L'esperienza di Giorgia è in tal senso paradigmatica.

d'estate ci siamo sempre divertiti quando si poteva, altrimenti non saprei che dirti. (...) Riguardo al covid [avere timori]? Non in particolare, cioè non ci pensavo, avevo la mascherina e quindi mi sentivo al sicuro. (...) Penso la mascherina al chiuso e in situazione di assembramento siano adeguate, abbastanza adeguate, il vaccino adeguatissimo (...)anche lo spostamento era adeguato durante le zone rosse. (Giorgia)

Nelle sue parole, emerge l'idea di una netta gerarchia tra l'autorevolezza delle istituzioni, chiamate a elaborare e imporre regole, e 'il senso comune' delle persone, necessariamente fallace nella comprensione degli aspetti scientifici e tecnici della gestione pandemica. Si osserva, in sostanza, un carattere indiscusso riconosciuto al diritto e al suo necessario 'potere disciplinare'. La legittimazione delle normative si richiama, quindi, a un riconoscimento di saperi esperti e di competenze legate alla capacità d'intervento delle istituzioni, siano esse i comitati scientifici così come le forze dell'ordine. Giorgia esprime una fiducia 'sistemica' verso le misure anti-Covid. Ad esempio, interrogata sulla 'adeguatezza e ragionevolezza delle norme' e sui timori, spiega:

Ero arrabbiata e triste, però come puoi contestare un lockdown? Un po' lo capivo quindi non ero arrabbiata con Conte e i vari ministri, ma più che altro ero arrabbiata con tutti coloro che hanno fatto come le parevano e in mezzo mi ci metto pure io. (...) Qualsiasi volta che andavo a fare i giovedì universitari dai miei amici(...) tutti sono diciamo quasi "molesti" nel senso che tentano il contatto fisico (...) mi capitava di avere un forte mal di testa pensavo "la settimana scorsa ho fatto una cazzata" però poi puntualmente sentivo la mia amica che stava con me e lei non aveva niente quindi solo paranoie mie. (Giorgia)

Tuttavia, emerge anche un'ambivalenza, dentro a un più generale *frame* 'procedurale' laddove si rilevano anche atteggiamenti di parziale violazione e di 'sospensione' del diritto. Si tratta di rivelazioni che emergono in conclusione all'intervista e che mettono parzialmente in discussione la posizione 'burocratica' mantenuta nel corso della conversazione. L'intervistata spiega, in particolare, di aver messo in pratica

comportamenti contrari alle disposizioni normative, sotto la spinta della propria ricerca amicale e di un bisogno di socialità. Emerge, quindi, l'idea di 'poter aprire' una parentesi momentanea di libertà, seppure dentro a una quotidianità segnata da un rispetto 'razionale' delle leggi.

5.4. La contestazione impenitente

Questo profilo si caratterizza per una più netta contestazione sia dell'opportunità delle leggi sia della necessità del loro rispetto. Essa si avvicina alla categoria individuata da Silbey ed Ewick (1998) come '*against the law*' e alla combinazione douglasiana di scarso senso del gruppo ed elevato senso della griglia. Questa strategia interpretativa di 'rifiuto' sembrerebbe essere diffusa soprattutto nei ragazzi con minori risorse culturali ed economiche familiari. Un caso emblematico è costituito da Marco, un giovane diplomato. Egli racconta di come, dopo la primissima fase di lockdown, abbia cercato di riprendere le proprie abitudini, disattendendo alle normative, ritenute ingiuste e poco utili.

beh a fine lockdown ho ricominciato a uscire con i miei amici e l'estate l'ho passata come se non ci fossero restrizioni perché effettivamente dal mio punto di vista nessuno ha rispettato quello che era il dpcm nè bar nè ristoranti nè quant'altro. Siam tornati un pochino alla normalità per quel breve lasso di tempo (...) è stato come rivivere un po' la normalità, strano comunque perché c'era il discorso del coprifuoco quindi la paura di dover andare a casa presto cosa che non ha fatto nessuno (...) [a Capodanno] abbiamo dovuto aspettare la mattina dopo e questa cosa ti fa specie diciamo perché hai sempre il pensiero appunto che ti stai muovendo nell'illegalità (...) ero preoccupato per una possibile multa, discutibile, ma non nella parte del torto, perché non pensavo che certe norme fossero giuste, non mi sembrava di far nulla di sbagliato in quel momento. (Marco)

Si può osservare la compresenza, seppure secondo gradi d'intensità ridotti, di altri richiami valoriali, come quelli di stampo solidaristico o procedurale. Ad esempio, Marco racconta di alcune attenzioni che ha, nonostante tutto, riservato per la propria madre e per le sue preoccupazioni, per quanto poco condivise:

per fortuna abitavamo e abitiamo [io e la mia ragazza] relativamente vicino nello stesso comune quindi anche con lei nel primo periodo quando le leggi erano un pochettino più dure ci vedevamo sempre in giro perché non volevo che venisse a dormire da me, cioè io non è che non volessi, era più mia madre che aveva paura

del virus (...) poi mia mamma (...) è sempre stata abbastanza ligia a quelle che sono state le leggi emanate, quindi sì ci vedevamo in giro e basta. (Marco)

[far rispettare le regole] solo al lavoro perché per l'appunto devo farlo quando poi magari sono il primo a non rispettarle se sono per conto mio. (Marco)

Nelle sue narrazioni emerge, tuttavia, una prevalenza di un atteggiamento di contestazione impenitente in cui il rifiuto delle normative è accompagnato da una sorta di atteggiamento fatalista verso i rischi del contagio. Si rileva la convinzione dell'impossibilità di poter gestire il virus e della scarsa utilità delle misure intraprese dalle istituzioni. In questo *frame* interpretativo, la disattesa delle norme rimanda sia a un'esigenza primaria di soddisfazione dei propri bisogni individuali immediati, di benessere e di socialità sia a una più profonda sfiducia verso il mondo istituzionale.

DISCUSSIONE E CONCLUSIONI

L'analisi ha evidenziato come i giovani abbiano sperimentato un complesso intreccio tra sfere normative dal quale il diritto emerge sia rafforzato, sia subordinato rispetto ad altri ordini normativi o al perseguimento di specifici obiettivi. Infatti, nelle narrazioni il diritto emerge come un riferimento costante, tuttavia esso è sperimentato in modi diversi, secondo le forme individuate da Ewick e Silbey (1998) ma strettamente legati a considerazioni di ordine morale che molti intervistati hanno declinato come preoccupazione generalizzata per il benessere degli altri, e a orientamenti valoriali più ampi che riguardano il rapporto tra sé e gli altri e con la dimensione eteronoma del controllo agito dalle istituzioni sociali.

Sono emerse anche delle differenze nelle pratiche di azione e di significazione. In tal senso, si sono rilevati alcuni repertori culturali ricorrenti che caratterizzano maggiormente, in senso idealtipico, talune categorie d'intervistati. Essi rivelano una dimensione strutturale, legata alle diverse risorse culturali ed economiche del tessuto familiare. Queste evidenze confermano quelle linee interpretative che partendo da Bourdieu riconducono le differenze valoriali e normative entro forme di stratificazione socio-economica e culturale, mostrando così come l'influenza di tali stratificazioni continui ad agire anche in società altamente individualizzate. Dall'altro, riprendendo alcuni aspetti della teorizzazione sulla legal consciousness, in merito alla dimensione situata dell'agire sociale, si evidenzia come le pratiche e le forme di confronto con la dimensione giuridico-normativa siano affatto monolitiche e coerenti.

Nelle narrazioni individuali sono infatti emerse esperienze multiple di giuridicità e la presenza di tensioni e incoerenze. Emerge come i contesti relazionali (la valutazione delle aspettative e dei bisogni degli altri), le situazioni contingenti (la vicinanza delle abitazioni, l'assenza di controllo sociale formale) e i contesti sociali (spazi pubblici e privati) abbiano contribuito a plasmare le pratiche sociali incluse le forme di adesione o violazione delle norme. Tuttavia, pur in presenza di elevati livelli di contingenza, l'analisi evidenzia come gli intervistati abbiano valutato e fatto diversamente ricorso ai molteplici repertori e schemi culturali di coscienza giuridica che permeano il nostro contesto sociale.

Dentro l'intreccio e la tensione tra le diverse sfere normative (Sayer, 2005), possiamo ritrovare anche l'interconnessione tra disposizioni e prese di posizione, tra le dimensioni affettive e valoriali dell'habitus e quelle normative che permeano i contesti d'azione degli attori sociali. Si ritiene che tale tensione e dialettica analitica permetta di dar conto delle tendenze e peculiarità dell'esperienza giovanile della pandemia nel contesto sociale italiano.

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EMBEDDING INTEGRATION IN EDUCATION: A CHALLENGE STILL OPEN*

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Abstract Since the 1980s, sociological studies have paid increasing attention to the progressive diversification of educational and learning contexts. This paper offers an overview of the main challenges coming from the need to “embedding integration in education”, in the framework of sociological research on the crisis of the school-centric model, the progressive development of a poly-centric educational scenario, the importance of non-schooling, and the growing need of an integrated education system. Based on the current international research literature, some theoretical models useful for the governance of integration in education are discussed, with a particular attention to the construction of new teaching-learning environments based on the hybridization of a variety of sources, contexts, methods, and actors.

1. THE EMERGENCE OF EDUCATIONAL POLYCENTRISM

In the school-centred education model that prevailed until the 1970s, the centrality of the school represented a fundamental value. The public school was the main repository and agent for the transmission of knowledge with respect to which every other learning content and educational-training approach was subordinate. As Mongelli (2006) states, “the crisis of school-centrism exploded as the mismatch between educational pathways and the skills required by companies became evident”, along with the exponential growth of “multidimensional educational/training interventions” (pp. 371-372). The concept of *educational polycentrism* was introduced by Vincenzo Cesareo (1976) to focus on this element of discontinuity in the evolution of the school system during the 20th century. All these changes took place in a social and economic scenario where traditional educational agencies are no longer the only

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guarantors of security, protection, and consolidated biographical paths of social and work integration.

Giovannini (1997) reviews the key themes and concepts that guided sociological research on polycentrism in education in the 1990s. For example, research on the *extended education system* looked at the increase in the supply of learning opportunities that could *fill a learning gap* left by the state school. In a regulatory framework increasingly oriented towards recognising free competition between different providers in education, the focus of the research shifted to the opportunity of free choice on the part of the students, potentially being able to combine a plurality of experiences offered by both public and private actors operating according to profit or non-profit logics. The concept of an *integrated education system*, on the other hand, emphasised the need for coordination between different agencies involved in the territory. While the centrality of the school did not disappear, it was still the school's task to attract actors, projects, and opportunities from the local area as well as to ensure coherent integration with the school curriculum. The concept of the *parallel school* highlighted the growing importance for schools to attract and multiply educational opportunities in addition to the curricular ones.

The need to respond rapidly to the demands of an increasingly changing economic and labour scenario has fuelled a process of progressive development and recognition of out-of-school opportunities, which Angela Mongelli (2006) identifies in the spheres of informal and non-formal education, which in turn are included in the macro-category of *no-schooling*.

According to the definition contained in the Recommendation of the Council of the European Union on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (2012/C 398/01), the sphere of *formal education* includes educational channels governed at an institutional level (e.g. school, university, vocational training), where learning pathways are based on structured programme and whose completion leads to formal qualifications recognised by the law.

The sphere of non-formal education, on the other hand, encompasses a range of actors mainly operating in the private sector who offer educational and training courses. They may recognise training credits, but do not issue qualifications (diplomas, certificates) with a legal value recognised on a par with those issued in the sphere of formal education.

Finally, the sphere of informal education encompasses all the experiences intertwined with everyday life that can indirectly have an educational impact (in the family, at work, in the use of digital media, in voluntary work, in travel experiences, the cultivation of hobbies and do-it-yourself etc.). As specified by Mongelli (2006), it encompasses a variegated set of “educational situations scattered throughout society (...) that, while not presenting educational intentions, turn out to be so” (p. 384).

While the learning that takes place in the informal sphere is not linked to an organised and structured body of knowledge and tends to affect different levels of experience (cognitive, emotional, applicative, etc.), in the non-formal sphere there remains a certain degree of structuring of educational contents and methods, although, unlike the educational offer in the formal sphere, the non-formal one presents a more marked dynamism and ability to respond to the needs, interests and curiosity of the target audience.

2. THE IDEA OF AN “INTEGRATED EDUCATION SYSTEM”

The growing impact on biographical paths resulting from learning experiences located in contexts *other* than formal ones pushes schools towards a cultural overcoming of the residual vision of *no-schooling* with respect to school learning. Instead of the logic of instrumental use of no-schooling or of its partial incorporation in the school curriculum, Angela Mongelli (2006) recalls the essential terms of what it means to open up to a pathway of *integration* between formal, non-formal and informal. Specifically, this author associates integration to the development of a *network* between different agencies that share a framework of common rules and carry out a convergent project towards the development of the competences expected by the beneficiaries, as well as required by the institutions (for the need of educational socialisation anchored to the principles of citizenship) and by the labour market.

As recently highlighted by Luisa Ribolzi (2020), the need to create networks is also a response to the functional overload from which schools are victims, due to the growing social expectations on their role no longer centred on specialised learning (basic subject knowledge, sector-specific knowledge and skills), but pushed to play a more comprehensive educational role in different spheres of growth paths (e.g. environmental education, health education, etc.). However, the same author points out how there is still “a lack of project integration that recognises the school’s role as a coordinator and mediator between the various proposals, among which it is necessary to

establish a hierarchy subordinated to general educational goals and to the provision of a quality service capable of responding to emerging needs” (p. 104).

With specific reference to how the role of educational institutions is changing, Mongelli (idem) frames and summarises three directions of change:

- the assumption of a coordinating role between a plurality of educational agencies;
- participation in networks of actors who, while retaining their own autonomy, collaborate on an equal footing in structuring an integrated educational offer;
- the shift from priorities centred on the functioning of the school system (e.g. teaching functions, structuring of supply, etc.) to those focused on the needs of the users.

These directions of change also require an overcoming of the consolidated idea in Italy of integration as the *link between school and the world of work* through vocational training (Corsi, 2010). The challenge of integration has always called for the need to structure a strategy and network action not only between schools, vocational training and businesses, but also between them and a growing plurality of collective actors working in the public sector and the Third Sector having an impact on the educational-training level (social services, family counselling centres, voluntary work, religious organisations, educational and cultural associations, online learning communities and platforms, etc.), as well as training agencies operating for profit according to market logic.

3. INTEGRATION AS CREATION OF “TRANSITIONAL SPACES” OF LEARNING AND EDUCATION

The *intersectionality theory* developed by Noam and Tillinger (2004) can help to focus on possible ways to build an integrated education system. This theory seems useful to reflect on the limitations of integration models based on the “incorporation” of the non-formal into the formal education system, especially as a way to compensate for the failure of formal methods in schools. In contrast, intersectionality theory prioritises the construction of new teaching-learning environments based on a combination of opportunities, resources and experiences offered across the educational continuum from formal to informal education (and vice versa).

In particular, this theory seeks to focus on how to build partnerships between schools and non-formal educational agencies able to develop “transitional or potential spaces” of education and learning, namely flexible and *third* spaces of “mediation” and accommodation between the subjectivity of the young (their desires, interests, intrinsic motivations, needs of autonomy, innovation potentials etc.) and the adults/institutions’ pressures and expectations towards social integration and transition to adulthood. As highlighted by the authors, they are spaces in which youth can be supported to “bridge the many worlds they traverse” (family, successive educational levels/steps, job transitions etc.). Therefore, they are “spaces between spaces” designed to be “protective, challenging, and age-appropriate (...), offering a variety of ways (...) to experience and demonstrate knowledge and skills” and to meet the needs of adolescents for “experimenting, forming an identity, solving crises, and making choices” (Noam & Tillinger, 2004, p. 15).

At a sociological level, a *transitional space* can be conceived as a space able to support youth agency, which include the ability to deal with socio-structural constraints and to develop creative ways to fulfil the own potential by exploiting opportunities and coping with limitations of the own life and social contexts. Such intermediary spaces created by cooperating partners correspond to the type of program they develop and implement for the young students. They are “intermediary” also because they don’t belong entirely to any specific partner.

A review of relevant research literature in Positive Youth Development (Morciano, 2015) helps to identify the specific features of the learning experiences expected to be shaped by a “transitional/potential space”:

- An experience based on the principles of co-learning, co-planning, and a synergy between the different resources presented by teachers/educators and learners, along with a tendency toward an equal sharing of decisional power (Naima, Wong, Zimmerman, & Parker, 2010).
- A scaffolding approach based on a “supportive relationship” (Cameron & Moss, 2011) based on “dialogue, listening, empathy, and respect (...)” and the creation of conditions “to make the two partners co-authors of the pathway, each moving according to their own outlook” (Biasin, 2010, p. 116).
- Learning as a *Positive Experience*, namely able to support: learners’ *empowerment* (in terms of choice, decision and ability to search for developmental resources); feeling of *happiness* in the present; a state of *well-being* in the long

term (physical, mental, emotional and social); *relationships* with adults able to foster autonomy and, at the same time, act as a guide and key for accessing new resources; *holistic learning* inasmuch as it is able to link different levels (emotional, cognitive, values, practical) and contexts (formal, non-formal and informal) together (Cameron & Moss, 2011).

The concept of *authentic learning* has also been included in research on bridging in and out-of-school learning experiences. By adopting the framework of *situated learning*– which is based on the assumption that learning occurs within situational contexts inasmuch knowing cannot be separated from doing – Rule (2006) identified the main components of an *authentic learning*: Activities developed around real-world problems that mimic the work of professionals in a given discipline; Support to open-ended inquiry, thinking skills, and metacognition; Active engagement in a community of learners; Empowerment through choice.

4. THE BUILDING OF TRANSFORMATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The *Intersectionality Theory* of Noam & Tillinger (2004) developed a typology of possible partnerships with the aim to identify progressive stages of evolution of partnership toward the goal to create an “intermediary space” able to effectively function as a “transitional/potential space” for young people. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of the four types of partnerships identified by this theory, conceptually depicted in Figure 1. The basic assumption is that the more a partnership is able to create “transitional” educational spaces for young people, the closer it will be to the characteristics of a transformational partnership.

Noam and Tillinger (2004) highlight some difficulties and challenges of building transformative partnerships:

- the excessive absorption of energy in the search for public funds, even in the face of the absence of continuous financing mechanisms especially for non-formal education actors
- the cumbersomeness of the bureaucratic procedures required to formally report the funding received;
- the need to operate in a flexible, adaptive, responsive and reflective way during the implementation process of a project, which often comes into conflict with the high level of structuring, standardization and bureaucratization of

the public school organization, as well as with the model hierarchical on which this is structured.

Type of partnerships	Intermediary space of cooperation	
	Intersection pertaining the program	Intersection pertaining the management
<i>Functional:</i> discovering overlapping interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate program components • Minimal joint planning • Focus on the efficiency of tasks • Belief that too much cooperation can hinder the successful work of each partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource-driven (applying for public bid) • Power-oriented (hierarchical model)
<i>Collaborative:</i> Joining forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint goal settings • Learning from each other • Joint use of spaces and resources • Balanced importance to individual responsibility & cooperation • Stress to making things run 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability-oriented • Establishment of joint operating system • Focus on procedures, discipline code, order (e.g. conflict resolution)
<i>Interconnected:</i> inclusive system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint decision making • More priority to synergies between partners • Sense of intimacy between partners • Collaboration centered around the relationships among the individuals (not organizations' representatives) • Spaces for participation of young people, families and local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication-oriented • Mutual support • Less power/hierarchy oriented
<i>Transformational:</i> (Changing all partners)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners cooperate to develop new and innovative programs (new way to work with young people, families, communities etc.) • Learning as a process that transform value and perspective of partners while working together • Partnership working is felt more as a "way of life" than as a strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-construction of new organization to implement an innovative/new program • Focus on the process (reflective building of approaches, unexpected outcomes) rather on expected outcomes

Table 1. Types of partnership between schools and out-of-schools actors.

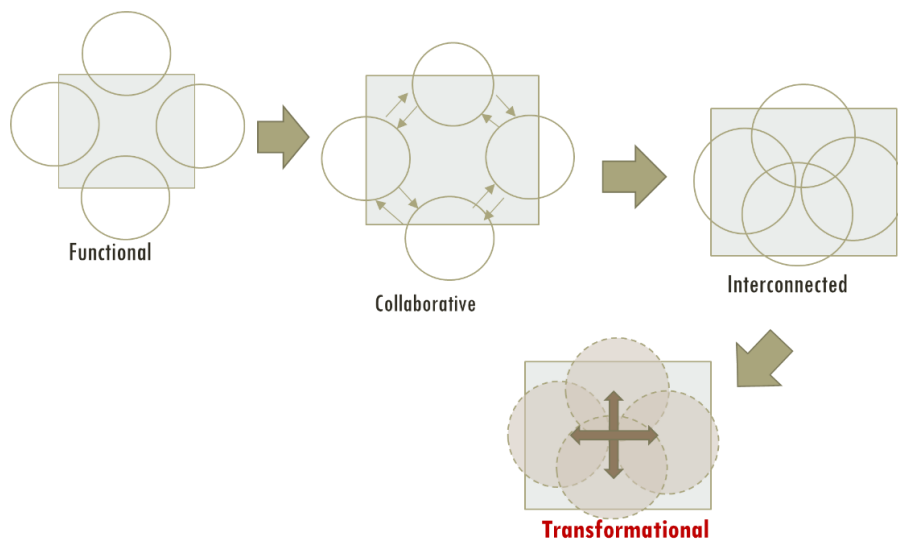


Figure 1. From functional to Transformational partnerships between non formal and formal education.

CONCLUSIONS

Why is it becoming increasingly urgent to find a way to make the most of the advantages of creating learning environments capable of synergistically and creatively integrating sources and methods deriving from formal, non-formal and informal contexts? The research literature on the topic tends to insist on integration as a factor capable of having an impact on a range of cognitive and emotional skills which overall respond to the need to proactively manage (and not passively suffer) the uncertainty and complexity in training and work paths. For example, at a cognitive level, in a review of the literature on the use of digital media in programs based on the combination between school and out-of-school learning, empirical evidences focus on the skills of *knowledge synthesis*, namely the ability to combine prior and new knowledge, to shift across multiple levels of thinking skills, and to drawn from/and make connections among different disciplinary domain (multi-disciplinary learning) (Wong & Looi, 2011).

By applying the Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom, 1959), impact have been evidences on higher level of thinking skills (analysing, evaluating, creating). By adopting a life skills approach, such impacts involve critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, and decision-making. The tendency of programs based on the integration between learning resources in and out of school to promote group activities, may also support the development of social skills (interpersonal communication,

empathy, conflict management, group creativity etc.) in the relation with peer, teachers, non formal educators and other adults involved in the activity from the local community.

They are also skills that seems relevant to the challenges of exploring, identifying, capturing, exploiting potential *life chances* in the own life course, defined as opportunities for personal growth, the fulfilment of capabilities, desires and hopes (Dahrendorf, 1981). The fluidity and dynamicity of the social and economic environments mean also a high probability of unplanned events that may occur in the own life trajectory and may potentially develop into an opportunity. The studies of “life courses” (Ross, 2005) that deal with *life events*, able to generate an impact on educational and career paths are particularly useful from this perspective. Drawing on the “psychology of the life cycle” (Sugarman, 2003) such events can be defined as a *chance event* when occurring as “life events that instigate change” (Schlossberg et al., 1995). The theory of *planned happenstance* (Miller, 1983; Mitchell et al., 1999) may, for instance, be adopted in order to study how unexpected events can become resources for learning and the career of the individual. According to this theory, the recognition of *chance events* can, for example, be facilitated by certain personality traits such as curiosity, an exploratory attitude or optimism (Mitchell et al., 1999; Hitlin & Elder, 2007).

Outcomes expected from formal-non formal-informal learning integration should also involve skills more relevant to the emotional or affective dimension. An increase of students’ motivation for learning has been more frequently observed in research literature about how to bridge in-school and out-of-school learning (Fallik et al., 2013). In general, it is assumed that such integration can make learning as a resource of *sense and meaning making*, specifically in coping with new, unfamiliar and changing situations, problems and challenges, but also in critically reflecting on ethical issues, as well as on the personal and collective sense on which choices are founded. Researchers on formal-non formal integration argue for a vision of *learning as a sense-making experience*, rather than a process of knowledge transfer. As suggested by Wong & Looi (2011) “apart from the formal curriculum covered in the school, any experience or encounter in a learner’s daily life is a potential resource for her sense making” (p. 52).

The functionalist sociological perspective, which assigned the public school the task of supporting the harmonious integration of young people into the social and occupational structure, is proving to be less and less effective in understanding the

pushes for change coming from the above outlined scenario. On the other hand, there emerges the need for a perspective that is more open to grasping the dynamics of interaction and communication between a plurality of educational agencies and resources. A perspective, capable of observing the fluidity, versatility and dynamism of the different forms and experiences of teaching-learning, including their coexistence in the same organisational context.

Faced with such changes, the need to develop cultures, practices, organisational forms and projects oriented towards the progressive integration of schooling and non-schooling emerge. Thus, overcoming the long-standing phase of scattered experimentation entrusted to spontaneous initiative in the territories, together with the necessary synergies with the social and socio-health services aimed at intervening in situations of the most acute vulnerability; the latter exacerbated or provoked by the impact of the pandemic and the foreseeable long-term negative effects on the educational pathways, the transition from school to work and the life trajectories of young people.

The challenge of integrating formal, non-formal and informal still calls for a change in educational institutions (Merico & Scardigno 2022), whose role should be increasingly centred on information, orientation, accessibility and evaluation of the plurality of learning opportunities parallel to the formal ones, but also on a stimulating action to increase the plurality and quality of learning opportunities in the territory and digital space.

Faced with these emerging needs in a profoundly changed educational and training context, Vincenzo Cesareo in 2010 urged research to focus on three levels of attention: competition between knowledge; changing cognitive and learning styles; and questioning the latent curricula (Cesareo, 2010).

With respect to the *competition between knowledge*, Cesareo recognises the outdatedness and futility of visions based on the artificial distinction between curricular and extra-curricular knowledge. A more fertile attitude on the part of schools, on the other hand, would be to work on equipping students in the exploration, selection, critical evaluation and use of the educational media disseminated in their (physical and digital) environment. Furthermore, with a view to transforming its own role, schools are increasingly called upon to understand the factors of attractiveness that other agencies in the field of training and education rely upon.

Regarding *learning styles*, an open area of research looks at the coexistence and interaction between linear-sequential models based on speech, multimedia models based on images, and the return to the use of the written word enabled by social networks.

Finally, changes in the educational scenario call into question the school's *hidden curriculum*, i.e. the educational culture rooted in the school institution in the form of underlying principles and *modus operandi* crystallised in its functioning, which risk feeding resistance and rigidity in the school towards a change required by the growing competition with other educational agencies and the plurality of learning spaces and resources conveyed by new media. With respect to this last point, further efforts are needed to understand how digital technologies can act as integration resources between different learning contexts. For example, research on *Mobile-assisted Seamless Learning* (MSL) insists on the importance to activate processes of gradual and systematic incorporation of mobile learning activities into the formal curriculum. Instead of the more common assignment of a one-off activity assisted by the mobile technology, teachers should gradually develop an approach where learners are continuously encouraged to explore and use learning in non-formal contexts, to pick up unexpected learning opportunities, to apply formal knowledge in real-life situations etc. (Wong et al., 2010).

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Section 3

Selection, Inclusion, Inequalities

LA DIMENSIONE COGNITIVA DELLO STUDENTE ECCELLENTE. UNO STUDIO ATTRAVERSO L'ANALISI DEI RISULTATI DELLE RILEVAZIONI NAZIONALI INVALSI 2022

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Abstract Gli studenti eccellenti sono stati a lungo un tema marginale all'interno del più ampio dibattito sui processi di apprendimento nella scuola italiana. La questione della democratizzazione degli studi e la sempre maggiore attenzione verso una scuola capace di accogliere tutti e di "non lasciare indietro nessuno", per garantire a ogni studente standard minimi di apprendimento, sono stati prioritari e hanno lasciato poco spazio per altre questioni. In tempi recenti, tuttavia, si è approdati a un concetto multidimensionale di equità e accanto al dovere costituzionale di aiutare gli studenti più deboli in situazione di disagio e difficoltà, si è affiancato il dovere istituzionale di promuovere il "diritto all'eccellenza". Partendo da alcuni studi dell'OCSE, per mezzo delle indagini Pisa, in Italia si è sviluppato un timido filone di ricerca attento a fare luce sul fenomeno dell'eccellenza. Questo paper vuole continuare su questa strada, perseguendo due obiettivi: la parte teorica vuole apportare alcune riflessioni al fine di provare a individuare le caratteristiche dello studente eccellente mentre per la seconda parte empirica si utilizzeranno i dati delle Rilevazioni Nazionali INVALSI 2022, perché la dimensione dell'eccellenza relativa alle hard skill è più facilmente quantificabile e misurabile.

1. INTRODUZIONE

Dalla seconda metà del Novecento, anche sulla scia della *Dichiarazione Universale dei Diritti dell'Uomo*, in molti Paesi europei, il progressivo perseguimento di una scolarizzazione di massa segna il passaggio da una scuola riservata a pochi verso una scuola aperta indistintamente a tutti.

Così avviene anche in Italia; infatti, la nascente *Costituzione* all'articolo 34 afferma che: "la scuola è aperta a tutti. L'istruzione inferiore, impartita per almeno otto anni, è obbligatoria e gratuita". Nei decenni successivi si è allora susseguita una serie di

leggi, decreti e circolari ministeriali volti ad assicurare, in particolar modo agli studenti con fragilità personali e svantaggi familiari, risorse e strumenti necessari per garantire la frequenza scolastica e per assicurare anche il raggiungimento di un traguardo formativo.

Fino a tempi relativamente recenti si riteneva che “gli studenti più competenti non avessero bisogno di attenzioni speciali o mezzi aggiuntivi. Di conseguenza, il compito di sviluppare, in ambito scolastico, provvedimenti formativi o di altro tipo per gli individui più abili era ampiamente trascurato” (Mönks e Pflüger, 2005, p. 3). Soltanto negli ultimi decenni si è iniziato a superare l’ideale di uguaglianza per approdare verso un concetto multidimensionale di equità (Bottani e Benadusi, 2006), più coerente con una visione di istruzione e di politiche capaci di garantire *chance* educative a tutti gli studenti, caratterizzati da un’attenzione verso qualsiasi tipo di diversità e differenze individuali e sociali, e non unicamente ancorata “verso il basso” (Pedrizzi, 2022).

Pertanto, accanto al dovere costituzionale di aiutare gli studenti più fragili, si è affiancato un secondo impegno¹ nel promuovere il “diritto all’eccellenza”, al fine di valorizzare il potenziale degli studenti più brillanti e di non sprecarne i talenti, con ricadute positive non solo per l’individuo ma anche per l’intera collettività (Oecd, 2009; Besozzi, 2017).

Su questa spinta, sono state condotte le prime ricerche sul tema. A partire dai primi studi dell’OCSE, attraverso l’indagine Pisa, si è iniziato a riflettere sul tema degli studenti resilienti, ovvero studenti che, sebbene una situazione familiare fragile perchè in condizione di svantaggio sul fronte socio-economico e culturale, riescono a raggiungere risultati elevati e apprendimenti nettamente sopra la media. Questo filone di ricerca, seppure resti ancora un tema molto marginale, si sta gradualmente facendo spazio anche in Italia, viaggiando su due binari. Accanto a studi di carattere teorico che, in modo pionieristico, stanno cercando di identificare i tratti caratteristici di uno studente eccellente (Barabanti, 2018), parallelamente, sono state condotte alcune ricerche empiriche, talvolta di carattere locale e rivolte ad alcuni gruppi specifici di studenti, che hanno provato ad aprire nuove prospettive di riflessione (Barabanti, 2019; Santagati, 2019; Barabanti, 2021) e a prendere in considerazione sia le caratteristiche personali che possono essere correlate al successo scolastico

¹ Infatti, il già citato articolo 34 della *Costituzione* aggiunge che “i capaci e i meritevoli, anche se privi di mezzi, hanno diritto di raggiungere i gradi più alti degli studi”.

(Barabanti e Tortora, 2021) sia il ruolo differenziato e variabile dei contesti scolastici e delle realtà locali nel favorire il successo formativo, soprattutto degli studenti più svantaggiati (Giancola e Salmieri, 2018; Stevens e Dworkin, 2019).

Questo contributo vuole continuare il lavoro di analisi sul tema con una duplice finalità. Nella prima parte dello studio, di natura teorica, a partire dalla letteratura si vogliono apportare alcune riflessioni al fine di provare a individuare le caratteristiche dello studente eccellente; la seconda parte del lavoro, di natura empirica, vuole mettere in luce, attraverso i dati delle Rilevazioni Nazionali INVALSI 2022, alcune dimensioni e caratteristiche del fenomeno, considerando unicamente la dimensione dell'eccellenza relativa alle *hard skill*, poiché più facilmente quantificabile e misurabile.

2. GLI STUDENTI ECCELLENTI: UNA DEFINIZIONE POLISEMICA

Al momento, non esiste una definizione esaustiva e condivisa di studente eccellente. L'esiguità della letteratura in merito porta, oltre che a una difficoltà definitoria e a un vuoto concettuale, anche al facile tranello di chiudere semplicisticamente la questione equiparando gli studenti eccellenti agli alunni *gifted* – definiti anche *plusdotati* o ad alto potenziale – o agli studenti *top performer*, ovvero coloro che ottengono risultati brillanti in una prova standardizzata (Barabanti, 2018).

La letteratura sociologica, oltre a tenere in considerazione i buoni risultati scolastici per considerare eccellente uno studente, pone l'accento anche su altre qualità e caratteristiche, come l'interesse e la curiosità nell'apprendere, l'impegno e la motivazione personale, la partecipazione proficua alle attività della classe, e certe "doti socio-relazionali", tra cui il rispetto delle regole, l'attenzione empatica verso i compagni, l'altruismo e una certa dose di *leadership*. Una visione polisemica di eccellenza è quella che emerge dalle opinioni degli *stakeholder* della scuola, ovvero dirigenti scolastici e docenti di scuola primaria e secondaria di primo e secondo grado (Barabanti, 2018; Santagati, 2019), che confermano ciò che, circa mezzo secolo fa, aveva già evidenziato Talcott Parsons parlando di "buoni allievi": possedere un certo livello di abilità cognitive e prestazionali e specifiche caratteristiche comportamentali, sociali e morali (Parsons, 1972). In fondo, eccellenti o non eccellenti, la scuola ha sempre monitorato e valutato sia la dimensione dei contenuti disciplinari che quella del comportamento.

Volendo utilizzare una classificazione attualmente molto diffusa, seppure ancora dibattuta, la visione più condivisa che sembra farsi strada in merito all'eccellenza è quella che attribuisce a tale studente competenze sia cognitive, ovvero *hard skill*, che competenze non cognitive, ovvero *soft skill*.

2.1. Studente eccellente: un bagaglio di competenze cognitive e non cognitive

Il primo punto di riflessione, nell'individuare l'identikit di studente eccellente, è quello di riflettere sull'essere in possesso di certe caratteristiche, che siano cognitive o non cognitive, riferite soprattutto alla sfera della *competenza*.

Non si tratta di un passaggio scontato né privo di possibili critiche. Lo stesso termine inglese "*skill*" in uso anche in italiano come traduzione *tout court* di "competenza" meriterebbe ulteriori approfondimenti e considerazioni. Tuttavia, seppure manchi una definizione unanime, possiamo condividere l'idea di David Haselberger e altri colleghi secondo cui la competenza rappresenti "una combinazione dinamica di abilità cognitive e meta-cognitive, abilità interpersonali, intellettuali e pratiche accanto a valori etici (...) [che] consentono agli individui di adattarsi e di comportarsi positivamente in modo da affrontare efficacemente le sfide della vita quotidiana e professionale" (pp. 82 e 89). Le competenze, così intese, diventano un'esigenza sempre più avvertita in tutti i paesi industriali e, soprattutto, post-industriali, dei mondi professionali e del lavoro, della scuola e, in più in generale, della società tutta per poter contare su cittadini (ma anche studenti prima e poi lavoratori) flessibili e capaci di gestire traiettorie "poco lineari", perché dotati di capacità relazionali ed emotive utili per affrontare con responsabilità – in autonomia o in gruppo, a seconda dei casi – le situazioni di emergenza (Viteritti, 2018) in una società caratterizzata sempre più da rischio e incertezza (Giddens et al., 1999). Così vista, l'eccellenza a scuola non è quindi meramente collegata solo a doti eccezionali ma ha anche un carattere di "spendibilità" per il bene individuale e della società.

Inoltre, il secondo elemento che porta ad agganciare il tema dell'eccellenza a quello della competenza deriva dal fatto che questa, a differenza di altre dimensioni più psicologiche o interne all'individuo (come la personalità o l'intelligenza), si rende manifesta in una *performance* e, pertanto, può essere sottoposta a monitoraggio, misurazione e valutazione (Hofstee, 2001; Ackermann, 2018; Scheerens, 2020).

Le caratteristiche considerate per identificare uno studente eccellente non sono tratti intrinseci del soggetto e l'essere eccellente non è una sorta di "informazione genetica", statica e permanente dello studente, ma una costruzione sociale che si basa su elementi variabili da una realtà scolastica ad un'altra, ma anche tra Paese e Paese e tra diversi momenti storici e sociali (Berger e Berger, 1977). Per esempio, l'idea di affiancare competenze non cognitive a quelle cognitive nell'identificare l'eccellenza è frutto anche di una certa evoluzione dello scenario che è andato sempre più definendosi verso la fine degli anni Novanta e che voleva sgretolare l'egemonia gracile e infruttuosa del cognitivo in molte pieghe delle società, tra cui il mondo del lavoro e dell'istruzione. Infatti, accanto a metodi nozionisti e accademici, centrati su concetti, definizioni e contenuti, iniziano a contrapporsi, ancora ora non sempre con successo, metodi che vogliono lavorare ed educare per situazioni complesse, con ancoraggio ai contenuti ma anche a dimensioni più legate alla creatività, al pensiero critico e all'apprendimento cooperativo (Chiosso e Grassi, 2021).

Inoltre, il crescente interesse per le competenze non cognitive può anche dipendere dal loro effetto positivo sui percorsi di istruzione, sul successo scolastico e, in termini di maggiore appetibilità, sul mercato del lavoro (Heckman e Kauts, 2012; Maccarini, 2019).

Sono molte le Nazioni dell'Unione Europea che, seppure con differenze significative tra Paese e Paese, hanno integrato nei loro curricoli scolastici percorsi di apprendimento sulle competenze socio-emotive (Cefai et al., 2018). La consapevolezza di un intreccio tra competenze cognitive e non cognitive, portando un impulso attuativo anche tra Paesi membri, è stato poi anche sottolineato dal Parlamento Europeo e dal Consiglio Europeo che, nel 2006, hanno emanato la Raccomandazione relativa alle competenze chiave per l'apprendimento europeo in cui, accanto a buone competenze di base (*literacy, numeracy e basic digital skill*), ritengono necessarie per poter affrontare la complessità e il continuo cambiamento delle società attuali anche le competenze civiche, di pensiero critico, di iniziativa e imprenditorialità e di *problem solving* (European Union, 2018).

2.2. Monitorare le dimensioni dell'eccellenza

La valutazione delle competenze è da alcuni decenni un tema di grande interesse, in particolare a partire dagli anni '70 del Novecento, visto il tentativo di diverse

organizzazione internazionali (come l'IEA, l'UNESCO e l'OCSE) di misurare i livelli degli apprendimenti e confrontarli tra Paesi (Giancola e Lovecchio, 2018).

Sebbene non tutti siano del parere che il *testing* possa permettere una valutazione incentrata sul costrutto di competenza (Perrenaud, 2004; Benadusi, 2018; Ceroni, 2021), il monitoraggio delle competenze cognitive da parte di prove standardizzate e su larga scala, in particolare a seguito del grande impatto apportato al tema dalle prove Pisa dell'OCSE, è stato centrale. Infatti, le *hard skill* sono maggiormente evidenti, quantificabili e misurabili (Agasisti et al., 2021) al punto che la loro valutazione è diventata uno dei capisaldi dell'attività scolastica (Salmieri, 2018). Le *soft skill*, invece, sebbene non stiano mancando campagne per la rilevazione anche delle competenze socio-emotive da parte dell'OCSE (Oecd, 2015), per esempio, con un conseguente forte impatto sull'opinione pubblica e sugli attori della scuola (Previtali, 2021), sono più difficilmente identificabili – Schereens e colleghi (2020) parlano infatti di “*non-cognitive blob*” – misurate e operazionalizzate (De Groot e Medendorp, 1986; Di Francesco et al., 2015).

Ecco perché, sebbene per ritenersi eccellente uno studente debba essere in possesso di competenze sia cognitive che non cognitive, come discusso nelle pagine precedenti, in questo studio approfondiremo empiricamente solo la dimensione cognitiva.

3. METODOLOGIA

Come dichiarato nel paragrafo precedente, questo lavoro analizza una dimensione specifica delle eccellenze, ovvero quella cognitiva. Nello specifico, si considerano le *hard skill* misurate dalle Rilevazioni Nazionali che INVALSI somministra ogni anno agli alunni nelle prove di Italiano, Matematica, Inglese *Reading* e Inglese *Listening*, volte a verificare quello che la normativa prevede e che fanno riferimento ad aspetti degli apprendimenti che gli studenti dovrebbero sapere e saper fare al termine di ogni ciclo scolastico². Il punto di partenza della preparazione delle prove standardizzate sono le Indicazioni nazionali e le Linee guida, che descrivono i traguardi che gli allievi devono raggiungere e che, pertanto, rappresentano il punto di riferimento del

² Alla luce della vigente normativa, in particolare del Decreto Legislativo n. 62 del 13 aprile 2017 “Norme in materia di valutazione e certificazione delle competenze nel primo ciclo ed esami di Stato”, a norma dell'articolo 1, commi 180 e 181, lettera i), della legge 13 luglio 2015, n. 107.

lavoro didattico di ogni insegnante. Il punto di arrivo delle somministrazioni, per i gradi scolastici 8 e 13, è l’assegnazione ad ogni alunno di un livello di competenza, basato sul punteggio ottenuto alla prova e associabile a un traguardo raggiunto, tramite il quale si può descrivere analiticamente cosa l’alunno “conosce ed è in grado di fare” (Desimoni, 2018a).

Lo step successivo è stato quello di definire operativamente gli alunni “eccellenti” considerati in questo lavoro: si identificano come cognitivamente eccellenti gli studenti che, alle prove INVALSI di grado 8 o di grado 13, hanno raggiunto i livelli più alti in tutte le quattro prove sostenute, ovvero il livello 5 sia per la prova di Italiano che quella di Matematica e, contestualmente, il livello A2 o il livello B2 per entrambe le prove di Inglese (rispettivamente per il grado 8 e 13). Si è proceduto, quindi, ad incrociare la variabile dicotomica “eccellenza” così creata con le altre informazioni disponibili dai dati INVALSI relative alle caratteristiche della scuola, dell’alunno e della sua famiglia.

È chiaro che, per come sono costruite le prove INVALSI, ci troviamo nel campo delle competenze “cognitive”, già descritte al paragrafo 2.1, al quale si ritiene opportuno aggiungere solo alcuni aspetti di natura tecnica legati alle prove di apprendimento in questione:

- le prove INVALSI non misurano tutte le competenze, misurano l’apprendimento di alcune dimensioni delle competenze afferenti alle dimensioni dell’Italiano, della Matematica e dell’Inglese, ritenute indispensabili per l’apprendimento anche delle altre discipline, così come nella vita, per la cittadinanza o sul lavoro;
- la somministrazione nella modalità *Computer-Based Test* (d’ora in poi CBT) ha comportato una maggior validità dei dati, legata all’aumento della partecipazione (al 2022 superiore al 90%) e all’annullamento del fenomeno del *cheating*³, presente invece con le prove cartacee.

³ Il *cheating* (letteralmente: barare, imbrogliare) è un fenomeno rilevato attraverso un controllo di tipo statistico sui dati e si riferisce a quei comportamenti “impropri” tenuti nel corso della somministrazione cartacea delle prove INVALSI: risposte suggerite da altri studenti (*student cheating*), o suggerite più o meno esplicitamente dai docenti (*teacher cheating*) o, infine, risposte modificate in fase di immissione dati nella maschera per la raccolta dei risultati delle prove (INVALSI, 2017).

3.1. I dati utilizzati

Sono stati utilizzati i *database* delle prove INVALSI somministrate al grado 8 e 13, ovvero a conclusione della scuola del primo (ultimo anno della scuola secondaria di primo grado) e del secondo ciclo (ultimo anno della scuola secondaria di primo grado). L'anno di somministrazione considerato è stato, *in primis*, il 2022 (ovvero l'anno scolastico 2021/22), e poi si sono fatti dei confronti con le prove svolte nel 2019 e nel 2021⁴: questa finestra temporale, da un lato, garantisce una maggior robustezza delle analisi condotte e, dall'altro lato, permette alcuni confronti tra pre-pandemia post pre-pandemia. Si ricorda inoltre che le prove INVALSI ai gradi scolastici considerati, poiché somministrate nella modalità CBT ed essendo "ancorate", permettono confronti attendibili nel tempo (Desimoni, 2018b).

In base alla definizione operativa di "eccellenza" fornita al paragrafo precedente, si considerano per le successive analisi i soli studenti che hanno sostenuto tutte le quattro prove INVALSI dei gradi/anni considerati, come riportato in Tabella 1.

	Grado 8			Grado 13		
	2019	2021	2022	2019	2021	2022
Totali iscritti	564.988	577.214	569.451	479.622	505.447	500.371
Hanno sostenuto almeno una prova INVALSI	552.673	527.320	544.475	463.931	419.928	474.030
Hanno sostenuto le quattro prove INVALSI	540.232	512.612	527.082	447.336	387.998	445.397

Tabella 1. Alunni partecipanti alle prove INVALSI per numero di prove sostenute. Valori assoluti. Anni scolastici: da 2018/19 a 2021/22. Fonte: nostre elaborazioni su dati INVALSI.

Gli alunni possono non aver sostenuto una prova in quanto assenti il giorno della prova o perché inclusi tra gli alunni "dispensati"⁵; inoltre non sostengono la prova di Italiano gli alunni delle scuole di lingua slovena e tedesca.

⁴ Nell'anno scolastico 2019/20, a seguito della chiusura delle scuole da febbraio-marzo 2020 per via dell'emergenza sanitaria da Covid-19, le Prove INVALSI non sono state svolte.

⁵ Ovvero studenti con bisogni educativi speciali (BES) che rientrano nelle tutele della L. 104 del 1992 e della L. 170 del 2010 oppure che non rientrano in questi casi ma che sono comunque in possesso di una certificazione clinica.

3.2. Le variabili e gli indici

Le variabili disponibili, oltre ai risultati degli alunni in termini di livelli di competenza, espressi numericamente con modalità comprese tra “livello 1” (il livello più basso) e “livello 5” (il livello più alto), sono quelle rilevate prima e durante le prove tramite le segreterie scolastiche (in fase di iscrizione alle prove, ovvero verso novembre di ogni anno scolastico) e per mezzo del Questionario studente (somministrato al termine delle prove CBT di Italiano e Matematica).

Le variabili prese in considerazione in questo lavoro sono quelle relative:

- alla scuola: l'area geografica (Nord Ovest, Nord Est, Centro, Sud, Sud e Isole)⁶; il tipo di gestione (scuola statale, trattata insieme alle regionali ed alle provinciali, e scuola paritaria); la macrotipologia di indirizzo unicamente per la scuola secondaria di II grado (Licei, Istituti tecnici e Istituti professionali);
- all'alunno: genere; origine (nativo, straniero di prima generazione e straniero di seconda generazione, calcolata in base al luogo di nascita dichiarato di padre, madre e alunno)⁷; regolarità del percorso (regolare/anticipatorio e posticipatorio)⁸;

⁶ Le regioni che compongono ogni macro-area territoriale non coincidono con la suddivisione adottata dall'Istat, ma si mantiene quella utilizzata da INVALSI, ovvero: Nord Ovest (Piemonte, Lombardia, Liguria e Valle d'Aosta), Nord Est (Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Emilia-Romagna e le province autonome di Trento e Bolzano – in questo solo caso le scuole di lingua italiana), Centro (Marche, Lazio, Toscana e Umbria), Sud (Abruzzo, Molise, Campania e Puglia) e Sud e Isole (Basilicata, Calabria, Sicilia e Sardegna).

⁷ Per studente “nativo” si intende un alunno nato in Italia o all'estero con almeno un genitore nato in Italia; si intende “straniero di prima generazione” uno studente nato all'estero con entrambi i genitori nati all'estero mentre “straniero di seconda generazione” uno studente nato in Italia con entrambi i genitori nati all'estero.

⁸ Si definisce come “regolare” lo studente che frequenta una classe corrispondente alla sua età anagrafica secondo la normativa vigente, “anticipatorio” se più giovane rispetto alla classe di riferimento e “posticipatorio” se con uno o più anni in più rispetto alla classe di riferimento. Si ricorda che non necessariamente la condizione di posticipatorio è indice del fatto che l'alunno sia ripetente; infatti potrebbe, per esempio, essere uno studente con background migratorio e, rispettando la normativa, essere stato inserito nella classe immediatamente inferiore rispetto a quella corrispondente alla sua età anagrafica.

- alla famiglia dell'alunno: l'indice di ESCS relativo al *background* socio-economico familiare del singolo alunno e medio della sua classe di appartenenza (per entrambi: Basso, Medio-Basso, Medio-Alto, Alto)⁹.

4. ANALISI E RISULTATI

Complessivamente, si contano, a livello percentuale, più studenti cognitivamente eccellenti al grado 8 rispetto al grado 13: 6% al termine del primo ciclo e 3,9% a conclusione del secondo ciclo (Tab. 2). La differente quota di alunni cognitivamente eccellenti rispetto ad alcune variabili personali e di contesto ricalca, per sommi capi, quanto già emerge (seppure al rovescio) nelle analisi sugli alunni svantaggiati e con fragilità cognitiva (ovvero coloro che si attestano ai livelli più bassi, ovvero quei livelli di competenza considerati inadeguati rispetto al grado scolastico frequentato) e, in generale, nel quadro messo solitamente in luce nei Rapporti nazionali INVALSI (INVALSI, 2018; 2019; 2022).

A livello territoriale, le regioni nel Nord Italia hanno valori più elevati rispetto al Centro e, con un divario più ampio, rispetto alle zone del Mezzogiorno. Entrando maggiormente nel dettaglio con un dato aggregato provinciale (Fig. 1), emerge come, seppure con differenze tra province non distanti e appartenenti alla stessa regione, si rimarchi nettamente la spaccatura tra Nord e Sud, con un Centro Italia che si colloca in una posizione intermedia.

⁹ Tale indice viene calcolato a partire da alcune informazioni (raccolte dalle segreterie delle scuole e in base alle risposte a un questionario rivolto agli studenti) tra cui il livello di istruzione dei genitori, la loro professione e la presenza di alcune condizioni materiali domestiche (Campodifiori et al., 2010). All'indice ESCS viene attribuito un valore numerico che permette di ordinarlo in modo crescente; a ciascuno studente viene quindi associato un valore numerico dell'indice ESCS in modo che possa essere collocato su questa distribuzione ordinata in uno dei seguenti quattro aggregati:

- Primo quartile (fino al 25% della distribuzione dell'indice ESCS): studenti di livello basso;
- Secondo quartile (dal 25% al 50% della distribuzione dell'indice ESCS): studenti di livello medio-basso;
- Terzo quartile (dal 50% al 75% della distribuzione dell'indice ESCS): studenti di livello medio-alto;
- Quarto quartile (dal 75% al 100% della distribuzione dell'indice ESCS): studenti di livello alto.

		<i>Grado 8</i>	<i>Grado 13</i>
<i>Tutti gli studenti</i>		6,0	3,9
Area geografica	Nord Ovest	7,7	6,1
	Nord Est	7,6	5,9
	Centro	6,5	3,6
	Sud	3,8	1,9
	Sud e Isole	2,7	1,5
Gestione della scuola	Statale, Provinciale o Regionale	5,8	4,1
	Paritaria	10,7	1,7
Macrotipologia di indirizzo	Liceo	-	6,6
	Istituto tecnico	-	1,0
	Istituto professionale	-	0,1
Genere	Maschi	5,6	4,1
	Femmine	6,3	3,7
Origine	Nativi	6,6	4,2
	Stranieri I generazione	1,1	1,3
	Stranieri II generazione	2,4	1,8
Regolarità del percorso	Regolare (o anticipatorio)	6,2	4,6
	Posticipatorio	0,5	0,5
ESCS dello studente	Basso	2,0	1,2
	Medio-Basso	4,5	2,7
	Medio-Alto	7,3	4,4
	Alto	12,1	8,4
ESCS medio della classe di appartenenza dello studente	Basso	2,9	0,1
	Medio-Basso	5,0	1,0
	Medio-Alto	6,2	5,8
	Alto	9,7	13,2

Tabella 2. Alunni cognitivamente eccellenti al grado 8 e al grado 13, per area geografica, gestione della scuola, macrotipologia di indirizzo, genere dello studente, sua origine e regolarità del percorso, indice di ESCS dello studente e medio di classe. Quota percentuale sul totale degli alunni considerati. A.s. 2021/22. Fonte: nostre elaborazioni su dati INVALSI.

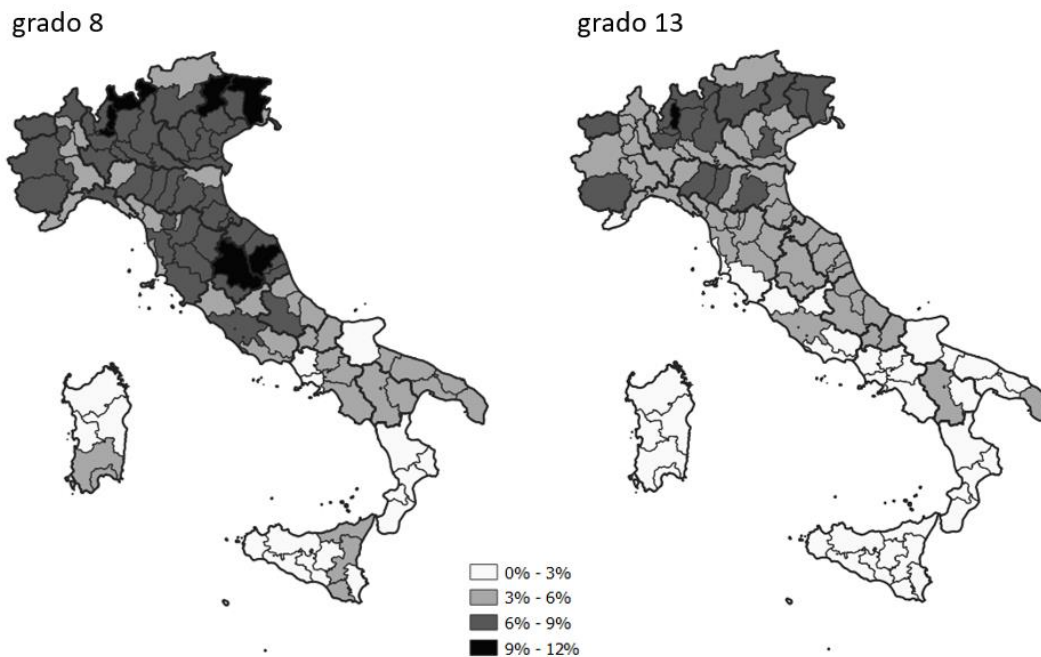


Figura 1. Alunni cognitivamente eccellenti ai gradi 8 e 13, per provincia d'Italia. Quota percentuale sul totale degli alunni considerati. A.s. 2021/22. Fonte: nostre elaborazioni su dati INVALSI.

La segregazione formativa, frutto anche di un orientamento scolastico che porta a considerare le filiere di scuola secondaria di secondo grado non secondo i bisogni formativi e professionali degli studenti ma in un'ottica di differente status e prestigio, emerge anche da questa nostra analisi (Tab. 2): gli studenti cognitivamente eccellenti si concentrano quasi esclusivamente nei Licei (6,6%) rispetto agli Istituti Tecnici (1%) e, soprattutto, agli Istituti Professionali (0,1%).

Rispetto al genere (Tab. 2), non si evidenzia un trend ricorrente tra grado 8 e 13: nel primo caso prevalgono le ragazze (6,3% rispetto, +0,7 punti percentuali rispetto ai loro compagni) mentre nel secondo caso i ragazzi (4,1%, +0,4 punti percentuali rispetto alle loro compagne). Si verifica la medesima condizione confrontando i dati rispetto alla gestione della scuola: quota più alta nelle scuole paritarie al grado 8 (10,7%, +4,9 punti percentuali) mentre maggiore nelle scuole statali, provinciali e regionali al grado 13 (4,1%, +2,4 punti percentuali).

In misura ridotta, ci sono anche studenti che raggiungono i livelli più alti tra i posticipatari (0,5 in entrambi i gradi) rispetto ai regolari e agli anticipatari (rispettivamente: 6,2% e 4,6% nei due gradi scolastici). Inoltre, l'analisi della dimensione cognitiva dell'eccellenza conferma anche che esiste una minore quota di studenti con

performance brillanti tra alunni di origine immigrata (in particolare se di prima generazione) rispetto ai loro compagni italiani (Barabanti, 2021), soprattutto per il grado 13.

Come afferma buona parte della letteratura sociologica ed economica, le caratteristiche sociali, culturali ed economiche delle famiglie degli studenti, già a partire dalla prima infanzia, hanno un ruolo cruciale per gli apprendimenti e sulle possibilità di successo scolastico; infatti, gli alunni che vivono in condizioni di vantaggio sociale, culturale ed economico hanno maggiori possibilità di conseguire risultati più elevati durante tutto il percorso scolastico (a mero titolo di esempio: Cobalti e Schizzerotto, 1994; Brint, 2006). Seppure non manchino casi di studenti cognitivamente eccellenti anche tra coloro che hanno un valore di ESCS Basso o Medio-Basso (i cosiddetti studenti resilienti), la quota si fa significativamente maggiore per coloro che hanno un *background* familiare più avvantaggiato (quartile Medio-Alto e Alto) in entrambi i gradi scolastici considerati. Più in dettaglio, il *background* socio-economico medio di classe risulta significativamente maggiormente associato alla condizione di eccellenza nel grado 13 rispetto al *background* familiare del singolo alunno; questo stimola riflessioni e spunti per approfondimenti: da una parte conferma il peso del *peer effect*, dall'altro suggerisce un approfondimento per gestione e macrotipologia di indirizzo della scuola, due aspetti strettamente legati alla dimensione contestuale delle classi.

Confrontiamo ora la quota di studenti cognitivamente eccellenti nelle ultime prove somministrate (a.s. 2021/22) in rapporto alla situazione pre-pandemica (a.s. 2018/19) e *post-lockdown* (a.s. 2020/21) sia a conclusione del primo (Tab. 3) che del secondo ciclo (Tab. 4). Si assiste in modo significativo a una loro netta diminuzione a seguito dell'emergenza pandemica, in particolare nella secondaria di secondo grado (-0,2 punti percentuali al grado 8 mentre -3 al grado 13). La pandemia, e la conseguente sospensione della didattica in presenza, ha fatto emergere con forza il problema del *learning loss*, ovvero della perdita di livelli di apprendimento tra gli studenti a seguito dell'interruzione forzata dei percorsi di apprendimento per un periodo prolungato di tempo (INVALSIopen, 2021; 2022). Sebbene questo "cigno nero" non abbia fatto che acuire una condizione già svantaggiata (Colombo et al., 2020; 2022), esso non ha interessato esclusivamente gli studenti più fragili; infatti, effetti negativi sono stati rilevati anche in altre fasce di studenti, tra cui quella di coloro che riescono a raggiungere prestazioni elevate. Il fatto che tra a.s. 2020/21 e 2021/22 la situazione

		<i>2021/22 vs. 2018/19</i>	<i>2021/22 vs. 2020/21</i>
<i>Tutti gli studenti</i>		-0,2	0,1
Area geografica	Nord Ovest	-0,4	0,5
	Nord Est	-0,6	-0,3
	Centro	-0,5	=
	Sud	-0,3	0,2
	Sud e Isole	=	0,1
Gestione della scuola	Statale, Provinciale o Regionale	-0,2	-,1
	Paritaria	-0,4	=
Genere	Maschi	-0,1	0,1
	Femmine	-0,5	0,1
Origine	Nativi	-0,2	0,1
	Stranieri I generazione	-0,3	=
	Stranieri II generazione	-0,3	0,1
Regolarità del percorso	Regolare (o anticipatorio)	-0,5	=
	Posticipatorio	=	0,1
ESCS dello studente	Basso	0,6	0,7
	Medio-Basso	0,4	1,0
	Medio-Alto	0,4	1,2
	Alto	-0,7	-0,2
ESCS medio della classe di appartenenza dello studente	Basso	0,2	-0,1
	Medio-Basso	-0,1	0,2
	Medio-Alto	-0,4	=
	Alto	-0,8	0,1

Tabella 3. Alunni cognitivamente eccellenti al grado 8, per area geografica, gestione della scuola, genere dello studente, sua origine e regolarità del percorso, indice di ESCS dello studente e medio di classe. Quota percentuale sul totale degli alunni considerati. Differenza in punti percentuali tra anni scolastici 2018/19 e 2021/22 rispetto a 2021/22. Fonte: nostre elaborazioni su dati INVALSI.

		<i>2021/22 vs. 2018/19</i>	<i>2021/22 vs. 2020/21</i>
<i>Tutti gli studenti</i>		-3,0	0,1
Area geografica	Nord Ovest	-5,0	0,5
	Nord Est	-5,0	0,1
	Centro	-2,6	0,1
	Sud	-1,3	0,2
	Sud e Isole	-1,1	0,2
Gestione della scuola	Statale, Provinciale o Regionale	-2,8	0,2
	Paritaria	-8,9	-0,4
Macrotipologia di indirizzo	Liceo	-5,0	0,1
	Istituto tecnico	-1,6	=
	Istituto professionale	=	=
Genere	Maschi	-3,3	0,1
	Femmine	-2,8	=
Origine	Nativi	-3,2	0,1
	Stranieri I generazione	-1,6	0,1
	Stranieri II generazione	-3,3	=
Regolarità del percorso	Regolare (o anticipatorio)	-3,7	=
	Posticipatorio	-0,9	0,1
ESCS dello studente	Basso	-2,4	-0,3
	Medio-Basso	-3,8	-0,1
	Medio-Alto	-4,3	0,1
	Alto	-6,7	0,3
ESCS medio della classe di appartenenza dello studente	Basso	-0,8	-0,2
	Medio-Basso	-2,2	-0,2
	Medio-Alto	-2,1	2,1
	Alto	-3,3	3,0

Tabella 4. Alunni cognitivamente eccellenti al grado 13, per area geografica, gestione della scuola, macrotipologia di indirizzo, genere dello studente, sua origine e regolarità del percorso, indice di ESCS dello studente e medio di classe. Quota percentuale sul totale degli alunni considerati. Differenza in punti percentuali tra anni scolastici 2018/19 e 2021/22 rispetto a 2021/22. Fonte: nostre elaborazioni su dati INVALSI.

sia solo debolmente migliorata è, di certo, un positivo flebile segnale che dimostra che il crollo generalizzato riscontrato subito dopo la pandemia si sia arrestato, ma è anche prova del fatto che si faccia ancora fatica a trovare elementi che siano segnali di un sostanziale recupero.

Nonostante si stiano mettendo in campo ingenti risorse e copiosi investimenti per le politiche scolastiche e i professionisti della scuola così come i decisori politici si stiano prodigando per mettere in atto una serie di azioni e di progetti volti ad arrestare l'arretramento degli apprendimenti e a invertirne la rotta, si assiste, su più fronti (apprendimenti, socialità, difficoltà motivazionali e psicologiche degli studenti, ecc.) a una fatica del sistema nel contenere un problema che, per usare termini più propri all'ambito sanitario, sta avendo anche in ambito scolastico un effetto di lunga durata, una sorta di long-Covid, che rischia di danneggiare il futuro di questa generazione e di aggravare pesantemente una situazione già prima insoddisfacente e che, nel complesso, non sta risparmiando nessuno, nemmeno gli studenti eccellenti, ovvero uno di quei gruppi su cui si potrebbe contare al fine di valorizzarne i talenti in vista di un miglioramento della società tutta.

5. CONCLUSIONI

In questo lavoro si è cercato di aggiungere elementi di analisi e riflessione sul tema degli studenti eccellenti, filone di ricerca ancora poco dibattuto ma che sta a piccoli passi inserendosi sempre più nel novero dei temi affrontati riguardo all'equità in istruzione e a *policy* scolastiche e di *welfare* attente a una piena personalizzazione degli apprendimenti così che ogni studente possa, nel rispetto delle peculiarità personali e di contesto, trarre *chance* e il maggiore vantaggio dal proprio percorso scolastico.

Nella prima parte si è sottolineato come, sebbene manchi una definizione condivisa di studente eccellente, la letteratura (soprattutto sociologica) e l'opinione dei professionisti della scuola convergono sul fatto che si è soliti considerare eccellente un alunno che possiede spiccate doti non solo cognitive/disciplinari ma anche legate alla sfera morale e comportamentale. Nella seconda parte si è voluto mettere in luce alcune dimensioni e caratteristiche del fenomeno in questione nella sua dimensione cognitiva – poiché oggetto di monitoraggio delle prove standardizzate su larga scala, nazionali e internazionali – utilizzando i dati delle Rilevazioni Nazionali INVALSI

2022. Questa scelta ha di certo permesso di avvalersi di una grande mole di dati, per quantificarne il fenomeno e per individuarne alcuni tratti ricorrenti, anche attraverso confronti geografici e temporali; tuttavia, ha ristretto il tema dell'individuazione di studenti talentuosi unicamente su ciò che è monitorato da tali prove.

Ciò che emerge, complessivamente, è che gli studenti cognitivamente eccellenti, così intesi in questa analisi, sono una fetta molto esigua rispetto alla totalità degli studenti e in diminuzione con il prosieguo del percorso di studi: 6% al grado 8 e 3,9% al grado 13. Inoltre, il quadro generale messo in luce in questa ricerca *ad hoc* su questo gruppo di alunni non si discosta significativamente da altre analisi condotte sugli apprendimenti degli studenti: anche qui incidono fortemente l'appartenere a una particolare zona geografica, la propria origine etnica e lo status socio-economico e culturale della famiglia e, a seguito dei vari *lockdown* negli anni scolastici 2019/20 (a livello nazionale), 2020/21 (a livello regionale e provinciale) e 2021/22 (a livello più locale) si sono verificate perdite di apprendimento e ricadute anche sull'eccellenza.

Tuttavia, una lettura più attenta dei dati, capace di andare oltre alla situazione più ricorrente, permette di far luce sul fatto che, anche nelle condizioni contestuali di maggiore fragilità, ci possono essere spiragli di segnali positivi di situazioni di successo negli apprendimenti, non da intendersi come “eventi rari e miracolosi” o come eccezioni statistiche, bensì come possibilità concretizzabili sotto certe condizioni (Lahire, 1994). Accanto a fattori familiari e individuali – tra cui la il senso di rivalsa, la motivazione e la tenacia – già oggetto di indagine di studi qualitativi e quantitativi (Verhaeghe et al., 2017) anche il contesto scolastico in cui vive lo studente ha un ruolo chiave; infatti, gli esiti dei percorsi di apprendimento – e, pertanto, anche di successo scolastico – dipendono fortemente dalle istituzioni scolastiche, dal tipo e dalla qualità dell'offerta formativa, dalle modalità di monitoraggio, dalla valorizzazione degli apprendimenti, dalle misure di orientamento alla scelta, tutti elementi che concorrono a definire anche le caratteristiche facilitanti l'emergere di studenti di talento (Barabanti e Santagati, 2020). Questi risultati possono aiutare i decisori politici e gli attori della scuola a ripensare e ad agire con la convinzione che il successo sia possibile anche per gli studenti che solitamente sono più associati a condizioni di vulnerabilità e che questo possa avere positive ricadute anche all'interno della classe stessa.

Un'ultima considerazione in merito al fatto che, vista la natura dei dati utilizzati, risulta improbabile poter indagare le caratteristiche peculiari degli studenti eccellenti al fine di trovare “tendenze di traiettoria” e di evidenziare eventuali fattori che ne

spieghino il fenomeno o che fungano da *boosting effect*. Questo sarebbe possibile adottando un approccio sia quantitativo che qualitativo: nel primo caso, attualmente non possibile, per mezzo di un Questionario Studente, somministrato in chiusura delle prove cognitive delle Rilevazioni Nazionali, permetterebbe di raccogliere informazioni preziose su ambiente di provenienza, motivazioni e strategie di apprendimento (a titolo di esempio: IPRASE, 2021); nel secondo caso si potrebbe ricorrere alla tecnica delle storie di vita e autobiografie, capaci di entrare in profondità sulle vite di questi studenti ed evidenziarne, per esempio, fattori e condizioni personali e sociali favorevoli all'eccellenza, utili poi anche per poter offrire specifiche indicazioni operative (a titolo di esempio: Santagati, 2019).

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EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN FRANCE: BETWEEN INCLUSION AND ASSIGNMENT

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Abstract In France, civic service allows young people to engage in collective projects and can be seen as a common space for youth, including those who have dropped out of school. This paper sets out to examine the place that early school leavers occupy in the civic service scheme and the ways in which they use it. It is based on a survey conducted at the request of the Agence du Service Civique. The approach presented here is based on a mixed methodology: statistical processing of administrative data and exploitation of the qualitative survey. The results show that early school leavers occupy a specific place within the civic service, carrying out the socially less valued missions that require few academic skills. They are more likely than others to interrupt their mission early. The young people who persevere show a high level of satisfaction, linked to a dimension of social and professional integration, more than civic commitment. It is clear that civic service draws partially its inspiration from education as commons, but its links with the academic, professional and marketing worlds contribute to the reproduction of social hierarchies.

School systems have difficulty fulfilling their mission of integration and leave little room for the self-expression of young people in difficulty (Downes, 2013), a situation far from the ideal of education as a common good (Pechtelidis & Kioupkiolis, 2020). However, other institutional spaces are being developed with the aim of social mixing and developing community involvement and projects. In France, civic service is a scheme for young people between the ages of 16 and 25 whose aim is to strengthen national cohesion and social diversity by having missions carried out of general interest. It allows young people to engage in a collective project and can be seen as a common space for young people, including those who have dropped out of school.

In this article, we reflect on the place of young dropouts in the civic service system. Even if it covers a mosaic of missions and structures, this scheme is governed by

rules, has principles and gives a new identity to young people, particularly through the status it provides. It is presented by the policy makers as a unified system that aims to unite volunteers around a common youth culture. But what place is actually given to school dropouts within civic service? How do they take up the scheme? And more generally, how do the civic service scheme and the fight against school dropout relate to each other? In the first part of our analysis, we present the context in which civic service is mobilized to combat early school leaving. The methodology of the survey constitutes the second part. The third part presents the results of the survey in terms of entry into the scheme and a fourth part reports on the experience of young people.

CIVIC SERVICE AND THE FIGHT AGAINST EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING: THE PRINCIPLES OF A YOUTH POLICY

In France, policies to tackle early school leaving have been developed gradually since the 1980s. If we consider the European classification of these policies (Eurydice, 2014), they are strongly focused on intervention and compensation, to the detriment of prevention (Bernard, 2021b). An apparatus for identifying school dropouts, networks of establishments, inter-institutional partnerships and arrangements for adapting schooling or adapted training courses has been put in place to respond to the 77,000 school leavers (annual average 2018-2020) who leave the education system before completing a full secondary education. Overall, in 2021, there will be 430,000 young people aged 18 to 24 who have dropped out without returning to training, i.e. 7.8% of this age group (DEPP, 2022).

Civic service is open to all young volunteers between the ages of 16 and 30, within the framework of missions of general interest lasting a maximum of 12 months. Created in 2010, it was included in policies to combat school dropout since 2018, as a possible solution after a break in schooling. Since that date, young people in a dropout situation who are accepted into civic service can be offered support by the National Education system, or even part-time training as part of the Mission de lutte contre le décrochage scolaire (MLDS), which constitutes a “combined civic service” (CCS) (Bernard et al., 2021). For example, of the 87,400 civic service volunteers received in 2021, 17% had not obtained a secondary school diploma (Venet, 2022). As can be seen, from this point of view, civic service is just one of several compensatory measures. This role has also been strengthened by the compulsory training

requirement for 16-18 year-olds, which has been in place since the start of the 2020 school year: civic service is one of the outcomes recognised by the training requirement when a young person leaves school prematurely.

In order to analyse the way in which young dropouts receive this policy of combating school dropouts through civic service, it is necessary to examine the objectives of this policy and their interaction with the institutions in charge of carrying it out (schools, popular education associations, reception structures).

The aims of anti-dropout policies can be analysed through the prism of the educational conventions model (Verdier, 2008; Bernard, 2019). This model allows us to highlight the principles of justice that can be mobilized to legitimize a particular policy direction within educational institutions. These institutions, like all institutions, can be defined as places of compromise between different principles of justice, in order to stabilise their activity and their area of intervention, while at the same time being potentially subject to criticism and threatened by destabilisation (Boltanski, 2011). While the core of the education system is largely dominated by an academic convention based on excellence, competition, and ranking, the democratisation of schools has been accompanied by the strengthening of the universalist convention that sees schools as the institution for the integration of all pupils, whoever they may be.

The fight against early school leaving is part of this conception of the school, by setting a universal objective of school completion, whereas in a system of academic convention, letting people drop out is a solution for maintaining the hierarchy of academic success. However, another element in the fight against early school leaving must be taken into account: the early orientation of the most disadvantaged pupils towards vocational training. This justification is supported by the vocational convention, according to which the mission of the school is to prepare for working life, especially if the pupil cannot find a place in general education. The combination of these two conventions structures an institutional compromise in which public action is centred on intervention and compensation, within the framework of measures peripheral to the school system, such as the MLDS actions for access to qualifications, or in structures independent of the school, as shown by the important place occupied by the Missions locales, among others, in ensuring the follow-up of the training obligation of 16–18-year-olds. In this otherwise complex set, the aim is to intervene as early as possible in order to organise guidance towards vocational training courses leading to the least qualified trades (Bernard, 2018).

If the fight against dropping out of school has a universalist aspect, the same is true for civic service. Its principle is explicitly based on an integration objective aimed at satisfying the general interest: “Civic service aims to strengthen national cohesion and social diversity and offers any volunteer the opportunity to serve the values of the Republic and to commit to a collective project by carrying out a mission of general interest with an approved legal entity” (Article 8 of the Act of 10 March 2010 establishing civic service). One of the specific features of civic service lies in the notion of volunteerism and commitment, which differentiates it a priori from measures to combat early school leaving, whose attendance is based more on institutional prescription. However, the inclusion of civic service in a “collective project” clearly situates its legitimacy in the civic city (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006), in which it is a matter of “overcoming the singularities that divide in order to unite everyone” (ibid., p. 231). Moreover, the structures supporting civic service (notably Unis Cité) claim to be part of popular education, whose principles are in line with civic and universalist justifications (Morvan, 2011; Brusadelli, 2022).

However, there is a distance between these principles and the concrete experience of civic service. For some young volunteers, particularly the less qualified, civic service may be perceived more as a professional experience than as a militant commitment (Houdeville and Suaud, 2019). For host organisations, the use of civic service, like other forms of voluntary commitment, sometimes resembles employment in disguise (Simonet, 2010; Ihaddadene, 2015).

Thus, in addition to the civic dimension of the meeting between volunteers from different social backgrounds and the host organisations (associations or public bodies) carrying out a mission of general interest, there are other professional, economic and even commercial dimensions. Host organisations are subject to efficiency considerations, and the supervision of civic service volunteers must take this into account. For young people in civic service, it can be an opportunity to gain professional experience in a given sector (socio-cultural activities, sport, culture, etc.), and therefore to potentially add a line to a CV with an eye towards a view to finding a job. The concrete exercise of civic service management is a form of compromise between these different dimensions (Bernard et al., 2022).

Volunteers who have dropped out of school do not experience civic service in the same way as young people with a university degree. Their family, social, and educational backgrounds have been marked by numerous disruptions, which leads to a strong social disqualification, but also to a loss of self-confidence (Bernard, 2021a).

In this context, civic service can be a form of social recognition (Houdeville and Suaud, *op. cit.*).

However, the link between institutional principles and operations and the pathways of these young people who drop out of the program remains to be explored: how is orientation or selection towards civic service carried out? What is the probability of completing a mission or, conversely, of dropping out? Which missions are more particularly entrusted to young people who have dropped out? How do they take up these assignments?

METHODOLOGY

To answer these questions, we use data from a survey we conducted in 2020-2021 in a department in the south of France at the request of the Civic Service Agency (CSA). The CSA chose this department because of the presence of a combined civic service (CCS) scheme, which allowed us to compare the civic service experience of young people in CCS with that of young voluntary dropouts on ordinary civic service missions. The survey is essentially based on a qualitative methodology. Forty-five young volunteers were interviewed, mostly on the premises of the host organisations (Unis Cité, MLDS, etc.), mostly during their mission. The questions asked concerned the young people's awareness of civic service and their arrival, their educational, family, professional and social backgrounds, the activities carried out as part of their civic service mission, their relations with their supervisors, their living conditions and their future prospects. After transcription, the interviews were analysed by theme.

Of the 45 young people interviewed, 17 were in CCS, i.e. part-time training at MLDS, the other half in a structure, the other 28 in ordinary civic service. There were slightly more girls than boys in the sample (24 vs. 21). The average age of the young people surveyed was 18.4 years, but there was a significant age gap between young people in CCS (16.7 years on average) and young people in ordinary civic service (19.4 years on average). This gap shows in particular that young people in CCS access civic service directly (or almost directly) after leaving school. From this point of view, the combined civic service can be seen as a form of reception facility for drop-outs from the national education system. Young dropouts in ordinary civic service, in contrast, access civic service after other experiences, including those of inactivity. Working-class backgrounds are largely over-represented. It is difficult to identify the socio-

professional status of the fathers, as many volunteers do not know their fathers or have a very distant relationship with them. More significant is the socio-professional status of the mothers. If we add together the mothers who had declared themselves to be unemployed or housewives and those who were employees as service workers (e.g. saleswomen, secretaries, hospital workers, nursing assistants), we have more than 80% of the volunteers for whom the mother's status is known (i.e. 36 out of 45). This same grouping gives almost all the statuses for the mothers of CCS volunteers, which means that recruitment to this scheme is even more socially marked.

We can draw a portrait of the sample in terms of educational level, specifying the level reached at the time of dropping out. 5 had not gone beyond secondary school, and they were all in CCS. 11 had attended general and technological courses of study. The largest proportion therefore came from vocational education (30 out of 45).

The young people welcomed into the CCS have a lower level of education when they enter civic service. They are more likely to come from secondary schools, and most of them have only completed the second year of secondary school, the vast majority of them in the vocational stream. The other volunteers have more varied educational backgrounds, coming from various vocational, general and technological streams, from the level of 1st year of CAP (the first degree of vocational education) to baccalaureate level (secondary education).

In addition, we also have the administrative files on civic service entries for 2019 at national level (ELISA database made available by the CSA, N=80887). They provide us with data on the gender, age and level of training of the volunteers, the type and duration of the missions they carry out, and the type of structure in which they carry them out. Young people who have dropped out of school, i.e. who have not obtained a secondary school diploma (baccalaureate or vocational training certificate), represent 17% of civic service volunteers, which is a substantial proportion of the population, which would suggest that civic service is a socially mixed programme. We used the ELISA data to further specify the place of drop-outs in civic service through factor analysis and statistical modelling that measured the probability of interrupting the civic service mission before its end and the probability of completing a particular training course according to the level of qualification.

ACCESSIBILITY TO CIVIC SERVICE: THE ENTRY OF SCHOOL DROP-OUTS INTO CIVIC SERVICE

A prescribed access to civic service

The civic service scheme remains poorly known by this fragile demographic public, which is looking for an occupation rather than a civic or citizen commitment. The young people explain that it is a question of doing a civic service “rather than wasting a year” and “not doing anything”, as Suzy says:

No, it makes sense. Already it makes me work, I hadn't done anything for a year and three months, so it's much better for my morale and everything to do something, even physically it's... (...) You get back to a healthy rhythm of life in fact. (24 years old, 2nd year professional)

The analysis of the interviews reveals that access to civic service for young people who have dropped out of the labour market is often prescribed by social and professional integration actors. A significant proportion of young people apply for a civic service mission on the basis of a prescription from the Mission locale (17 out of 45). Institutional pressure is not systematically experienced as a constraint by young people. Doing civic service is an alternative to returning to training or entering working life. It is also a way of coping with the social and/or family pressure that comes with the young person's inactivity.

Before I wasn't doing anything...I had finished my studies, but it had been two years already. I hadn't done anything for a year. I registered with the Mission locale. And they found me this internship (sic) and, as a result, I'm doing civic service. (Walid, 20 years old, final year of vocational training)

The strong involvement of mothers is reflected in the interviews with the young people. Some fifteen young people, the majority of them women, mentioned receiving help from their mothers (without the question being explicitly asked). The mother's intervention is reflected in attitudes of moral support and continuous attention to the effects of dropping out of school. This phenomenon is more common in the least disadvantaged families. For example, Soraya, aged 22, interrupted school during her first year of technological studies. She lives with her father (a recruitment officer) and her mother (a human relations manager in a telecommunications company). Soraya recounts the “pressure” – excessive in her eyes – that her parents put on her: “They were always telling me to work, work, work”. When she decided to leave high

school before the baccalaureate exams as a reaction to family pressure, it was under her mother's influence that she turned to civic service: "My mother didn't want me to do anything; so that's why I'm doing civic service".

The investment of families, and in particular mothers, in civic service is a way of countering the effects of early school leaving. The scheme is a way for the young person to find socially accepted activities. For example, Louise, aged 18, tells how, after talking about it together, her mother, who was also "looking around a bit", ended up coming across the Unis-Cité website, thus finding a way to "reassure herself" about her daughter's fate: "[my mother] is happy. Well, I'm doing something, so it reassures her and it allows her to think about my future (...) For her, it's like a job, yes, it's an activity!".

Entering civic service: a discovery of the scheme

The expectations of young drop-outs when they enter the civic service are relatively homogeneous. Initially, young people keep their distance from the scheme, not knowing what the missions will consist of.

Frankly, I went like that because I had no idea what civic service was. I went fishing, so to speak. I didn't have any expectations or anything, just to find out what it was all about. (Clara, 18 years old, 2nd year professional)

Only five respondents chose civic service on the basis of a skill they had acquired in their leisure time (in computers or music) or to extend a previous experience in the field of mutual aid and community involvement. Thus, most volunteers discover the activities and socialisation methods once they are involved in the scheme. Civic service is motivated by an obsession to get out of a "do nothing" situation and to find an occupation in the absence of activity. Young people, like Léa, explain that inactivity becomes difficult to live with: "I did nothing for a long time, for at least 7 months I did nothing. It was hard" (16 years old, 3^e). Inactivity also becomes unjustifiable because "you have to be registered somewhere". The stigma of being a dropout is internalised, but is also felt by the parents, as in the case of Soraya: "My mother didn't want to see me doing nothing, so that's why I'm on civic service".

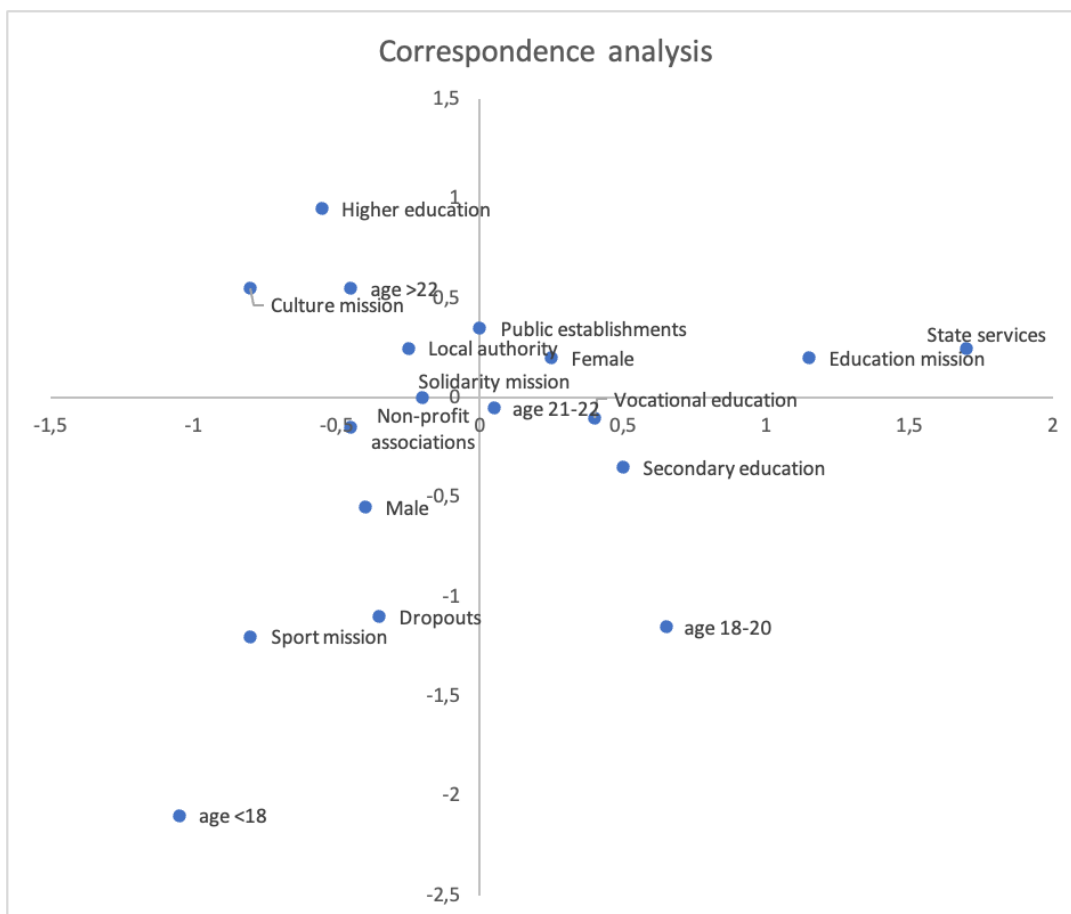
Questions of commitment or citizenship are not often addressed by young people. Civic service is seen more as a socialising activity: "For me it was mainly about

meeting other young people, doing my missions and above all not doing anything for a year, doing something useful and enriching” (Pedro, 22 years old, final year of vocational training).

It also allows them to think in terms of autonomy, particularly through the financial compensation they receive for their activities.

Assignments 'assigned' to dropouts

Young people who have dropped out of school have a specific place in civic service. They carry out missions that are socially less valued and require few academic skills. The missions they are offered are limited and standardised. A correspondence analysis of the data provided by ELISA shows that the characteristics of the volunteers can be distinguished according to two main factors: the type of host organisation, which contrasts with that of non-profit associations and the state services, and the level of training of the volunteers, which contrasts with that of university graduates and school dropouts (see graph).



Axis 1: 30.7%, Axis 2: 26.8%

It is clear that volunteers occupy very different positions according to their level of education, which tends to undermine the image of social diversity that civic service is given. In particular, young people do not take up the same missions, as can be seen in the graph that compares young people with a university degree who are close to the “culture, environment and memory” missions with young drop-outs who are close to the “sport” missions. The factorial analysis also shows that young people who have dropped out are over-represented among men and among the youngest volunteers.

To go further, and in particular to reason “all other things being equal” in order to eliminate the bias of the composition of the different groups of young people, we modelled the probability of doing a given type of mission according to the level of diploma, controlling for this effect with the available variables: the gender and age of the volunteers¹. The table below shows the results of these models.

In addition to very significant gender effects, they partly confirm the previous results, i.e. a certain polarisation according to the level of qualification. We can see, for example, that higher education graduates are much more likely than others to be involved in “culture, environment and memory” missions. However, unlike a descriptive analysis, it is not the “sport” missions that are most associated with drop-outs, but the “solidarity” missions².

Relative probabilities of occupying a mission (odd ratios from binary logistic regressions)

This polarisation refers more to professional convention than to a universalist or civic logic. The structures in charge of the orientation and assignment of young people who have dropped out of school adjust the qualities of the individuals to the skills expected by a given mission, and even anticipate the training dimension of the

¹ We did not include the “type of facility” variable in these models because of the endogeneity bias with the dependent variable.

² The over-representation of ‘sport’ assignments in the ACM is therefore linked to the greater presence of men in the group of dropouts, for assignments where women are poorly represented.

“profession” that the civic service experience represents. This is evidenced by the explicit justifications given by a regional manager of the administration for youth, sport and associations:

It’s the idea of saying that we have to give these young people something concrete: typically, there are missions which remain very much in the direction of projects, in communication, in partnership actions and which could not... which are close to a profession. So, these are not the missions that will be given to these young people, because they need a school background, a little appetite for writing, real writing skills in general. So we’re going to put them instead on missions that will, in fact, call on human relations (...) to be in direct contact, to have direct visibility on their action, so that it is concrete and of general interest.

	<i>Sport</i>	<i>Solidarity</i>	<i>Culture</i>	<i>Education</i>
Sex (ref male)				
<i>Female</i>	0,20	1,36	0,92	1,92
Age	0,82	1,05	1,10	0,97
Training level (ref Dropouts)				
<i>Vocational education (CAP)</i>	0,80	NS	0,77	1,44
<i>Secondary education</i>	1,09	0,78	0,76	1,56
<i>Higher education</i>	1,57	0,55	1,66	0,93

Significant at 0.01 level.

Dropouts who drop out of the system more

The ELISA file gives us information on the interruptions of civic service missions. They may be due to professional integration (signing of a fixed-term or permanent contract) or a return to study. However, they can also be the result of the volunteer’s absenteeism, abandonment of the post or even “serious misconduct”. Nearly 5% of assignments are terminated early by mutual agreement between the volunteer and the host organisation, which may also suggest a break due to the unsuitability of the assignment for the volunteer. If we exclude interruptions due to professional integration or resumption of studies, 10% of missions end before their end date. This figure rises to 17% for school dropouts, compared to 7% for university graduates. In order to ensure that this discrepancy is not linked to differences in host structures and missions carried out by young people according to their level of qualification, we

carried out a logistic model of the probability of dropping out of civic service. The results are given below.

Relative probability of dropping out of a civic service assignment (odd ratios)

<i>Sex (ref. male)</i>	
Female	1,07
<i>Age</i>	1,06
<i>Training level (ref. dropout)</i>	
Vocational education	0,82
Secondary education	0,67
Higher education	0,49
<i>Assignment type (ref. solidarity)</i>	
Education	0,60
Culture	0,77
Sport	0,35
<i>Host structure (ref. non-profit association)</i>	
Local authority	NS
Public establishment	2
State service	0,76
<i>Duration</i>	NS

Significant at 0.01 level

We see that the odd ratio measuring the relative probability of dropping out of a civic service decreases steadily from dropouts to graduates. For the latter, the relative probability of dropping out is twice as low as for dropouts. It should also be noted that “solidarity” assignments, where dropouts are over-represented, are, all other things being equal, the missions where the probability of dropping out is the highest.

The civic service commitment is therefore not self-evident for young school dropouts, who are more fragile than others and more likely to find themselves in difficulty with the missions assigned. This result reflects the tension between the principle of voluntary work, which is the basis of civic service, and the reality of the prescription, which, for some, transforms the scheme into a form of assignment like any other.

THE EXPERIENTIAL DIMENSION OF CIVIC SERVICE: A REMOBILISATION DYNAMIC

Civic service: a discovery through the prism of sociability

Nevertheless, most of the young people interviewed about their experiences of civic service expressed great satisfaction. The missions proposed, or even imposed, on the young people seem to motivate them, particularly through the relationships they develop with their peers and the beneficiaries of the scheme. For most of the young people, the missions involve friendly visits to the elderly (at home or in retirement homes). There are also educational missions with pupils (in primary schools, colleges, sports centres). On the fringes, some young people carry out missions related to digital technology (communication, content creation, IT assistance) or sustainable development (animation, landscaping work).

Due to limited places, age, educational level and the health crisis, volunteers' assignments are not always chosen. The missions do not correspond to their future aspirations in terms of employment or training.

Commitment to the mission depends on the degree of involvement of the volunteer in relation to his or her ambitions. For example, Pedro mentions the gap between his civic service mission and his professional project:

It's nothing like that. Haha. Afterwards, it's true that I like human contact a lot, that is to say talking to people, trying to understand and everything, so that can be related to psychology even if it's very far away, but in itself I don't know (...). I think above all that it was an enriching experience for me, humanly speaking.

Although the missions are not always engaging, the social relations and the perceived usefulness produce a remobilisation for many of these young people. Jeanne explains that she “never misses work [this is how she refers to visits to the homes of the elderly] because I know that the elderly are waiting for us. It's not good” (16 years old). For Thomas, her presence prevents “them [the elderly] from falling into loneliness” (16 years). Some volunteers, such as Clara, are confronted with people they consider to be in more difficulty and allow them to reflect on interpersonal and intergenerational sociability.

Well, the experience of being with people, because I'm very solitary, I don't necessarily go to people like that. To talk, to get to know new people too. And to visit the elderly too, I've learnt, how to put it (...) it makes me a bit sad to see elderly people who have their family, who don't go to see them or who rarely call them

Civic service as a professional world for school dropouts

Civic service is an experience that is similar to work, particularly in terms of interpersonal relations and a particular relationship with time. Through this scheme, they seek social and professional recognition, justified by the monthly bonus. The allowance amounts to 473€, and constitutes a modest income that helps to alleviate the economic constraints that weigh on many young people. The young people value the activities they carry out and what they get out of them. They do not learn a trade, but gain beneficial experience and skills to put on their CV.

The expectations I had were perhaps motivation in the professional sense. The fact of being in civic service, it immerses you a little more in the professional world. And then over a long period. It's not just two weeks, three weeks or just one month. It's really 9 months. So it's not nothing either. It's like the prequels of work. (Mickaël, 20 years old, 1^{ère} techno)

In our survey, for about ten young people, the civic service mission is really professional and is part of a pathway to integration, in a logic of professional agreement. For example, Salomé (18 years old, 1^{ère} general) explains that she and three other volunteers have been offered a contract to work as education assistants at the school where they were doing their mission. On the other hand, some young people have idealised the civic service or the job they had in mind. These young people are faced with a disenchantment that leads them to reconsider their professional future.

The missions re-mobilise young people, enabling them to escape from the marginality caused by the school dropout, by living what they describe as a social and professional experience, rather than a civic one. The form of inclusion or commonality created by civic service therefore manifests itself differently according to the educational level of civic service volunteers. While the most highly educated young people will experience civic engagement, or even militancy, the least educated will be more sensitive to the opportunities for activity in the broad sense offered by the scheme (acquisition of valued social skills, discovery of professions, etc.).

CONCLUSION

Civic service is partly a means of combatting early school leaving. In an institutional context where there are many schemes, it nevertheless is an innovation in terms of educational policy. Whereas the usual schemes tend to separate school dropouts

from other young people in order to provide them with appropriate training or support, the civic service system welcome young people with inclusive range of educational profiles, from a macro-social standpoint. At a more micro level, social diversity can be found in the training activities provided by accreditation structures, particularly the large popular education federations (Unis-Cité, Ligue de l'enseignement, etc.), but also in certain practices that explicitly aim to bring together young people from different social backgrounds. These are institutional approaches that are truly innovative in an environment marked by strong social segregation of young people, including in the school system, which places civic service at the heart of universalist and civic convention. However, our survey also undermines the logic of assigning young people who have dropped out of school, and this does so at two levels. The first is upon entry into civic service. While in principle this engagement should be based on a voluntary commitment, the majority of school dropouts enter by institutional or family prescription. This can be seen as a sign of the low visibility of civic service in working-class areas, but also within schools. The second concerns the missions carried out. There is a certain polarisation of missions, which in a way tends to ready the division of labour in which young people are destined to participate. For some, civic service is a gateway to a chosen and valued professional world: culture, the environment, heritage, while for others it prepares them for the less valued professions of personal assistance. There is a tension here between the objective of inclusion and practices of differentiation, between a space of opportunity for all and the logic of social reproduction.

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EDUCATION AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND COMMON GOOD: THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF GENERATION X IN A DIACHRONIC COMPARISON

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Abstract The analysis of inequalities over time, especially those related to education, has been a relevant topic in the social sciences. This study proposes a diachronic approach based on cohorts-generations from the postwar era to the contemporary period. It highlights the expansion of educational level but also how persistent gaps between social classes remain stable despite this expansion. In the article we then focus on the pivotal role of “Generation X” as a turning point in relation to the slowdown of a development deemed infinite and inevitable, seeking to open a reflection on the educational destination of future generations.

INTRODUCTION: EDUCATION AS INDIVIDUAL AND COMMON GOOD IN THE ITALIAN CONTEXT

As well known in literature (Behrman, 1997; Schuller et al., 2004), education plays a crucial role both personal and aggregate level. On a personal level, education shapes the individual’s knowledge, skills, and abilities. It contributes to personal growth, intellectual development, and the acquisition of competencies that can enhance life’s opportunities for social mobility. Simultaneously, education contributes to the overall well-being and development of society (Fägerlind & Saha, 2016). Well-educated individuals tend to adopt healthier lifestyles, have access to superior healthcare (Marmot & Wilkinson, 2005). In this sense we can consider the education as a common good and a fundamental pillar of the democracy. A well-educated population tends to have better health outcomes (Giancola & Colarusso, 2020), an overall higher quality of life (Edgerton, 2011) and Improves and strengthens participation in civic and democratic life (Assirelli, 2014). Informed citizens, fostered by education, are more likely to contribute to community development and engage in civic responsibilities. These benefits are shared by the entire community, making education a common good. From an economic perspective, a well-educated population contributes to

economic growth and innovation (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2010). Individuals with higher education levels are better equipped to navigate the workforce, adapt to technological advancements, and contribute to the development of new ideas and industries (Oecd, 2019). Historically, education is a potential key driver of social mobility, offering individuals from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to improve their socio-economic status and break the cycle of poverty. It also plays a crucial role in promoting equal opportunities and reducing social and economic inequality. At the same time, we have to be careful because social systems are characterized by persistent inequalities (Pfeffer, 2008; Ball 2010). This contradiction is evident if we look at the Italian case in a diachronical perspective (Ballarino & Checchi, 2006; Giancola, 2010; Triventi, 2014; Gremigni, 2020). The increasing in the participation and achievement on education tells us nothing about social class differentials. The hypothesis of this paper is that the expansion of the participation in education and the decrease of social inequality in educational achievements do not go hand in hand. Starting from a theoretical approach that attempts to balance the concepts of cohort and generation, on the INAPP PLUS 2018 database, we propose an analysis that on the one hand shows how and how much the shares of the population with an upper secondary degree and a tertiary degree have increased, and on the other, we record class gaps that remain stable as the educational qualification above the educational threshold saturated in the previous cohort-generation transition increases. Therefore, we consider whether and how much the effects of ascriptive variables (first and foremost social origin) affected the identified cohorts-generations in a context of increasing participation. We then focus our attention on generation defined as “X,” caught between the economic boom of the 1960s and the first global crises, the saturation of lower educational levels, and the transformation of public and labor policies.

COHORT OR GENERATION? THE CASE OF THE X-ERS

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in the concept of generation in Italy (Istat, 2016; Casavecchia, 2021). Following the sociological heritage of Mannheim (1952), we define a generation as a group of individuals linked by generational unity, living in a well-known historical period. However, this concept has historically posed challenges, particularly in standard-type analyses, due to its lack of clear boundaries. Norman Ryder proposed a solution by introducing the concept of a cohort (1965). In his vision, a cohort refers to a group of individuals who experience the

same event at the same time with distinct boundaries. Although these two concepts may seem like rivals, the cohort concept aims to address the historical problem of generations, the lack of clear boundaries and unknown duration (Berger, 1960; Spitzer, 1973).

Numerous solutions have been proposed in the debate to resolve questions, such as the cohort generation (Elder, 1978) or social/sociological generations (Woodman & Wyn, 2015). In this case, we will use the term “cohort-generations” because the cohort is a fundamental instrument for our standard-type analysis, and the concept of generation allows us to approach the analysis, interpretation, and construction of groups that share similarities in terms of time and socio-historical cultural ties.

Our focus is on the cohort-generation X in comparison with the preceding generation, the Baby Boomers, and the subsequent one, Generation Y. This generation is named after Douglas Coupland’s novel (1991), which describes the youth situation in the 1980s and 1990s. The cohort-generation X and its successors experience changes in the social system’s political and economic complexity (Cassina et al., 2015), particularly in government and welfare (France, 2016), education and labor (Breen & Muller, 2020), and family and relationships. Of interest to us, embedded in this broader process undergone by Generation X, is the paradox of the expansion of upper secondary education and the liberalization of access to university (Giancola & Benadusi, 2015), alongside a reduction in opportunities due to extensive labor market deregulation that seems to have increased the climate of uncertainty, particularly in employment.

Examining cohort-generation X within this framework of change, we observe how it has been labeled over time as “transitional” (Istat, 2016) and “invisible” (Merico, 2004). In the contemporary age, this generation is the first to experience significantly worse living conditions than its predecessors, despite generally improved social conditions and expanding education. While living, educational, and working conditions were improving in some respects, the mobility that characterized the decades before the advent of Generation X, along with the associated opportunities, was diminishing (Schizzerotto, 2002). The conditions of younger generations increasingly resembled those of the early 20th century (Schizzerotto et al., 2011).

HYPOTHESIS, DATA, AND METHODOLOGY

To understand the dynamics of the expansion of education and the persistence of inequality during the early years of the young age of cohort-generation X, we utilized the INAPP PLUS 2018 (Participation, Labor, Unemployment, Survey) database. The survey is based on a large sample of Italians, focusing specifically on individuals' education, including their educational path, and family background.

In alignment with previous literature, the age groups representing the cohorts are defined as follows:

- 30-39 years old (born between 1989/1988 and 1980/1979), approximating Generation Y.
- 40-49 years old (1979/1978 and 1969/1970), approximating Generation X.
- 50-64 years old (1968/1969 and 1953/1954), approximating the first Baby Boomers.
- 65-74 years old (1953/1952 and 1944/1945), approximating the second.

In the two youngest age groups, individuals still in education were excluded, resulting in a marginal reduction in the sample that remains statistically significant. The sample includes 36'944 cases, weighted to 36'035'280.

The primary objective is to illustrate the dual dynamics of the democratization of access and participation in the educational system, juxtaposed with the persistence of inequalities related to social origin and structural elements inherent to the Italian educational system (e.g., the tripartite structure of school tracks at the upper secondary level; Benadusi & Giancola 2014).

We hypothesize that, in line with the principles of maximally maintained inequality (MMI) (Raftery & Hout, 1993), participation in education increases while class inequality among education levels remains unchanged. This analytical approach aligns well with Randall Collins' (2019) fundamental observations regarding the inflation of educational credentials over time. The Italian case is paradigmatic in this sense, as the democratization of access to a given level of education (as seen with the 1962 reform of lower secondary education) is linked, after a few years, to inflation in terms of the attainment of that educational credential. This shift steadily elevates the distinctive level of education concerning entry into the labor market or the achievement of more prestigious social positions.

To address questions related to the expansion of education, education differentials, determinants of it, and the probability of graduating, we employed single and bivariate analyses initially, followed by multivariate linear (Marzadro & Schizzerotto, 2014) and multinomial models.

THE CONTRADICTIONARY EFFECTS OF THE EXPANSION OF PARTICIPATION

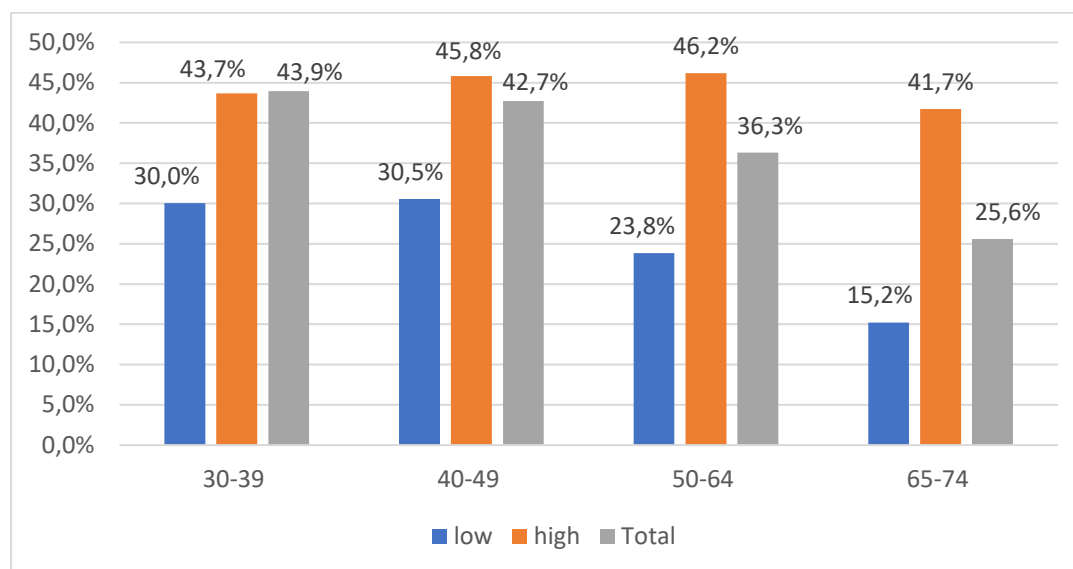
Supported by evidence, the level of education of Italians is increasing over time. The most commonly attained educational level for the oldest generation (65-74 years old) and Baby Boomers (50-64) is lower secondary, at 43,6% and 47,1%, respectively. For the X-ers cohort-generation (40-49 years old) and Y-ers (30-39), the most achieved level is upper secondary, with rates of 42.8% for the former and 44% for the latter.

		Cohort-generation				Total
		30-39 y.o.	40-49 y.o.	50-64 y.o.	65-74 y.o.	
Level of Education	Primary	0,6%	1,0%	3,8%	20,0%	5,3%
	Lower Secondary	29,7%	37,9%	47,1%	43,6%	40,5%
	Upper Secondary	44,0%	42,8%	36,4%	25,7%	37,7%
	Tertiary	25,7%	18,3%	12,7%	10,7%	16,4%
Total		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

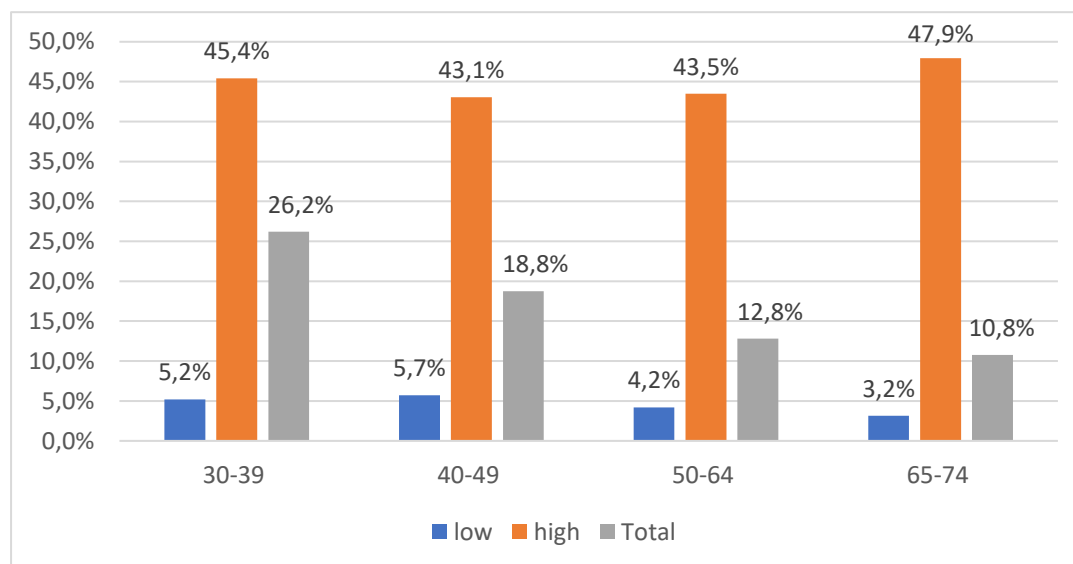
Table 1. Expansion of education among cohort-generation. Source: Authors elaboration on INAPP PLUS 2018

From the oldest to the youngest cohort-generation, tertiary attainment is increasing, although it remains a marginal percentage of the total. It increases by only 15 percentage points from with a clear rise between the X-ers and Boomers (by 5.6 percentage points) and between the X-ers and Y-ers (by 7.4 points). In Table 1, it is possible to observe that among X-ers, educational attainment substantially improves compared to the previous generation. For the Y-ers, the change seems to be consolidating, driven both by policies promoting openness and the reduction of barriers to entry, and the need for skills in the new knowledge market. The expansion of education appears to reduce the distance between the highest and the lowest social strata. The gap between “classes” in graduation attainment drops below 20% for the first time in cohort-generation X, and in Y this decreases again to below 15%. This effect can be defined as a democratic effect of education, as it demonstrates the potential for achieving equity through it (Benadusi & Giancola, 2021). While the

benefits of expansion are evident at the upper secondary level (Graph 1), the perverse effects of this phenomenon must be addressed at the tertiary level (Graph 2). At the tertiary level, degree attainment increases, however, when examined through the lens of social class or status, we observe that the distance between social strata remains constant.



Graph 1. Effect of expansion at upper secondary level. Source: Authors elaboration on IN-APP PLUS 2018.



Graph 2. Maximally Maintained Inequality at tertiary level. Source: Authors elaboration on INAPP PLUS 2018.

The gap, in our case, is most significant among those aged 65-74 (44.7 percentage points) and narrows to Generation X (37.4 points). For the youngest cohort-generation, this distance begins to grow again, reaching 40.2 percentage points gap between the highest and lowest strata. This result aligns with the principles of the MMI: if a level of education reaches saturation among members of the upper class, then the class distance, along with inequalities, is transferred to the next level, as visible in this specific case (Raftery & Hout, 1993).

THE FACTORS AFFECTING THE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

To observe some of the determinants of education, we developed a linear regression model in which we assign a pseudo-ordinal score ranging between 1 and 4 to educational levels (Marzadro & Schizzerotto, 2014). The model accounts 27% of the variance ($R^2=0.270$). The independent variables considered are the gender, the family status, and the cohort generations age range described in the previous paragraph.

	Non-std. Coefficient		Std. Coefficient	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	Sign.
(Costant)	2,008	0,00		0,00
Male (vs. Female)	-0,043	0,00	-0,026	0,00
medium-low family status (vs. low)	0,162	0,00	0,077	0,00
medium family status (vs. low)	0,349	0,00	0,169	0,00
medium-high family status (vs. low)	0,581	0,00	0,283	0,00
high family status (vs. low)	1,078	0,00	0,537	0,00
cohort-generation 30-39 y.o (vs 65-74 y.o)	0,317	0,00	0,156	0,00
cohort-generation 40-49 y.o (vs 65-74 y.o)	0,303	0,00	0,163	0,00
cohort-generation 50-64 y.o (vs 65-74 y.o)	0,244	0,00	0,143	0,00

Table 2. Determinants of education. Source: Authors elaboration on INAPP PLUS 2018

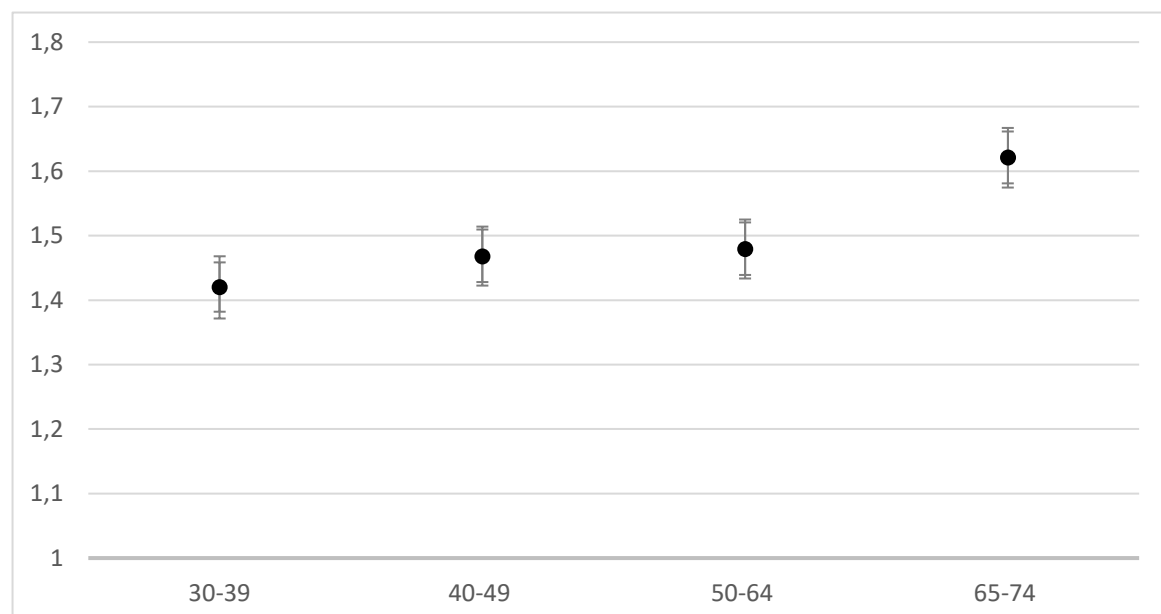
In Table 2 we can observe a slight disadvantage of males compared to females ($\beta = -0.026$), probable due to the feminization of education (Giancola & Fornari, 2009; Decataldo & Giancola, 2014). Family status has an increasing effect among statuses: individuals with higher status are potentially more likely to attain a higher level of education compared to those with lower status. The β values are 0.537 for high family status, 0.283 for medium-high, 0.169 for medium, and 0.077 for medium-low status, with all categories compared to the low family status category.

Examining the last variable, we can infer that the cohort-generation effect is strong, especially for cohort-generation X (40-49 years old) where the β value is the highest (0.163, with the reference category being the oldest 65-74 years old). We can conclude that over time, compared to the older generation, all cohort-generations have had greater educational opportunities, especially X-ers, likely due to the effects of the expansion of compulsory schooling to age 16 (1962) and the liberalization of tertiary education access (1969).

THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL BACKGROUND AND SCHOOL TRACK ON THE PROBABILITY OF ACHIEVE A TERTIARY DEGREE BY COHORT-GENERATION

In this step, we conducted a binomial logistic regression model to estimate the probability of obtaining a tertiary education degree by cohort-generation. The observed variables were gender, family status, and the upper secondary track choice (general school/liceo, technical/vocational or professional institute).

Examining gender, what was initially a disadvantage for the female gender in the probability of obtaining a tertiary degree turns into an advantage. From the cohort-generation of 50-64 and X onward, men are less likely than women to obtain a tertiary degree.



Graph 3. Effect of family background on tertiary education attainment by cohort-generation (see appendix for the full table). Source: Authors elaboration on INAPP PLUS 2018.

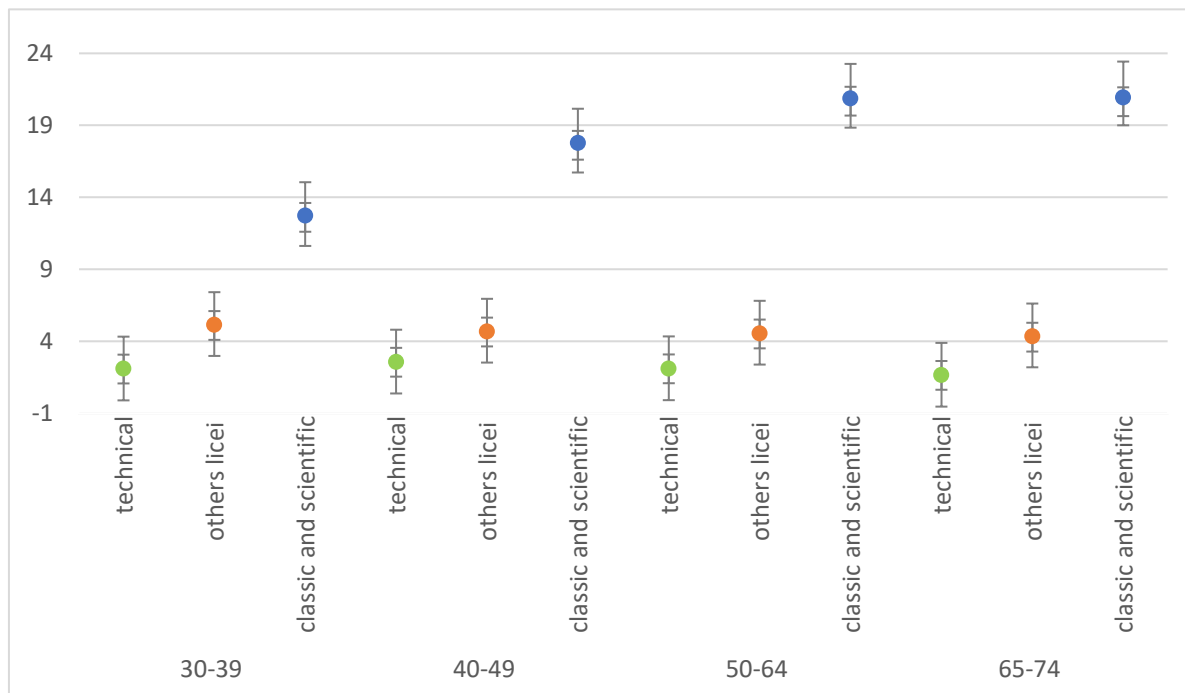
Considering family status, there are two dynamics. On the one hand, over time and due to the expansion of education, this variable remains fundamental for explaining the intergenerational reproduction of inequalities. On the other hand, the probability of obtaining a tertiary education qualification has decreased over time, from 62% for the older cohort-generation to 42% for the younger cohort-generation ($1 - \exp(\beta) * 100$).

What we can observe graphically is that the inequalities of origin are reduced but are not annulled from one cohort-generation to another, remaining marked. Although access to tertiary education has been liberalized, significant barriers still exist due to attributable factors.

The last and crucial variable considered is the track of upper secondary education chosen. This variable is the one that most influences the probability of achieving a tertiary degree (Benadusi & Giancola, 2014). The choice of the upper secondary track is one of the links of the chain effect studied by Giancola and Salmieri (2020; 2022). This choice is influenced by one's background and, in turn, affects the likelihood of reaching a tertiary education level.

It can be seen from Graph 4 that a general education diploma (classical and scientific *liceo*) has a stronger impact on the probability of graduation compared to a technical school and other *licei*, all considered with the vocational track as the reference category.

However, the effect of these *licei* diminishes over time due to the increased enrollment of students from every social class (In the past, these schools were attended primarily by the elite) (Ballarino & Panichella, 2014). While for individuals aged 65-74, the prestige of this curriculum significantly increased the probability of achieving a tertiary degree after obtaining the diploma, this is no longer the case for younger cohort-generations. What was once considered a disadvantage in obtaining a tertiary degree—namely, choosing a track other than the classical and scientific one—is still a discriminating factor today but not as pronounced as in the past.



Graph 4. Effect of school track on tertiary education attainment by cohort-generation generation (see appendix for the full table). Source: Authors elaboration on INAPP PLUS 2018.

In summary, the impact of different tracks has become more similar over time (with the vocational track as the reference category). The role of classical and scientific *liceo* has decreased, while the impact of technical and other *licei* has remained approximately relatively constant over time.

Several factors contribute to the attainment of a tertiary education degree; observing them across generations enables us to capture their trends over time. All observed variables continue to influence the probability of obtaining a tertiary degree, though less unevenly than in the past, but still significantly.

CONCLUSION

The analyses in the paper reveal a positive trend in Italy spanning over 70 years regarding the acquisition of medium-high educational credentials across generations. The post-war push and reconstruction have mainly affected the 65-74 years old in the sample. On the other hand, the 50-64 age group, the Baby boomers, has benefited not only from educational reforms but also from economic development, leading to a growing demand for increasingly skilled labor and the progressive creation of employment in the tertiary and service sectors. The 40-49 age group has experienced

mass education at both lower and upper educational levels, but with initial signs of stagnation in reducing inequalities related to obtaining the highest educational credentials. Generation X, in particular, has undergone the most significant changes compared to previous cohort-generation, as shown in Table 1. Most notably, they attain an upper secondary level of education, while the previous generation only reached a lower secondary level. Moreover, starting with Generation X, the reduction of inequalities with associated perverse effects becomes clearly evident (Graph 3 and 4). The expansion of participation in upper secondary education (and the subsequent tertiary level) demonstrates a reduction in the effect of the upper secondary track attended on the likelihood of achieving a tertiary level of education. Furthermore, as hypothesized, the influence of educational credentials acquired at the upper secondary level, overall, diminishes in its effect on the probability of attaining a tertiary level (according to Randall Collins' Credential Society thesis, 2019). This pattern is apparent at the β coefficient presented in the Table 3 in the appendix, showcasing a decline across cohort-generations, especially for the classical and scientific *liceo* (the academic track in the Italian educational system). Educational attainment differentials by social origin remain strong and stable in tertiary education, as stated by MMI. Adding to the interpretive complexity is the fact that the effect of differentiation by track at the upper secondary level has reduced the privilege associated with having attended a *liceo*. Nevertheless, at the same time, this advantage in comparison with other tracks (other *licei*, technical, and vocational) has stabilized. Overall, the upper secondary level remains strongly influenced by social background (through the choice of school track). From a diachronic perspective, the results clearly indicate that Generation X can be considered the breakthrough generation, bringing a relative advantage over previous cohorts-generations but also many contradictions, with non-linear and complex effects in the sphere of social mobility. The analysis then leaves open a question about the future: given that the last two cohorts-generations analyzed are characterized by a stabilization of educational inequality by social origin, predicting trends in inequality for future generations (Millennials, Gen Z, and so on) becomes challenging. These generations, even more than Gen-X, exist in a context of widespread educational expansion but with persistent and new forms of social inequality. Moreover, considering the highly deregulated labor market and the marketization of services and other areas of social life, the choices and expectations of young people will need careful consideration. In this sense, the field is open for new analyses and interpretations of long-term trends.

APPENDIX

Cohort-generation	B	S.E.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for		
				EXP(B)	Lower Upper	
30-39	Female (vs. Male)	0,559	0,002	1,75	1,742	1,758
	Family status	0,483	0,001	1,42	1,415	1,425
	Technical institute (vs. Vocational)	0,734	0,004	2,082	2,064	2,101
	Others Licei (vs. Vocational)	1,637	0,005	5,14	5,091	5,19
	Classic and Scientific Liceo (vs. Vocational)	2,543	0,005	12,718	12,604	12,832
	Costant	-2,637	0,004	0,072		
40-49	Female (vs. Male)	0,339	0,002	1,403	1,397	1,409
	Family status	0,384	0,001	1,468	1,466	1,471
	Technical institute (vs. Vocational)	0,94	0,004	2,559	2,537	2,582
	Others Licei (vs. Vocational)	1,544	0,005	4,683	4,638	4,729
	Classic and Scientific Liceo (vs. Vocational)	2,878	0,005	17,773	17,612	17,936
	Costant	-2,735	0,004	0,065		
50-64	Female (vs. Male)	0,035	0,002	1,036	1,031	1,04
	Family status	0,392	0,001	1,479	1,477	1,482
	Technical institute (vs. Vocational)	0,741	0,005	2,098	2,079	2,117
	Others Licei (vs. Vocational)	1,514	0,005	4,545	4,502	4,59
	Classic and Scientific Liceo (vs. Vocational)	3,038	0,005	20,863	20,676	21,052
	Costant	-2,708	0,004	0,067		
65-74	Female (vs. Male)	-0,181	0,004	0,835	0,829	0,841
	Family status	0,351	0,002	1,621	1,618	1,624
	Technical institute (vs. Vocational)	0,498	0,007	1,646	1,624	1,668
	Others Licei (vs. Vocational)	1,468	0,007	4,34	4,28	4,401
	Classic and Scientific Liceo (vs. Vocational)	3,041	0,007	20,925	20,64	21,214
	Costant	-2,2	0,006	0,111		

Table 3. Binomial logistic model on tertiary education attainment by cohort-generation.
Source: Authors elaboration on INAPP PLUS 2018

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EXPERIENCE ORIENTATION TOWARDS UNIVERSITY CHOICE. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS AND A PROPOSAL*

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Abstract This paper presents the results of research carried out in Campania as part of the Sfora research project. Through the focus groups, the researcher collected schools' orientation practices, also trying to detect the teachers' point of view. The research group tried to bring out, through the interviews, an evaluation of the effectiveness of the existing paths and any critical issues identified. Through the transversal analysis of the focus groups, the authors brought to light similarities and differences between the different schools, trying to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the paths adopted, trying to propose innovative practices that can have a functional in post-diploma choices.

ORIENT THE FUTURE

The transition stages to adult life are critical phases in a young person's growth path. When young people choose their future – a job or a university course – they're often unprepared and disoriented. The choices in the formative periods of development make every future continuation (Bandura, 2002), then orientation actions in schools and universities become essential steps for achieving students' personal and career plans and for individual counteracting future failures of the individual. and of society. For an effective orientation, it must be configured as an area of cooperation between the different actors and the different worlds that contribute to the training and education of the young people: school, university, family, work, territory, institutions, companies, an integrated system of orientation according to territorial informal structures (Caputo, 2023). From a lifelong education perspective, orientation must be a continuous process that accompanies boys and girls in the transition phases in

* The article is the result of a joint effort. Paragraphs 1,2 and 5 are attributed to Amalia Caputo and paragraphs 3 and 4 to Grazia Tatarella.

which they make important life choices. But it is not exclusively an issue that concerns the individual student. Making a conscious choice means above all acting on an individual level but in a social perspective, it means imagining a future society which, based on the requests of the European Union, combats school dropouts and university dropouts, limits the distance between school and socio-economic realities and the mismatch between training and work and, therefore, reduces the phenomenon of “Not in Education, Employment or Training” (Toffler, 1971; Bauman, 2000; Margottini, 2015). In the last 10 years, the European directives on orientation change theoretical reference models and orientation systems (Di Rienzi & Serreri, 2015) where the young person is placed at the center of the processes decision-making in all areas of life, professional, private, family and social (Domenici, 2009; Pellerey, 2016) and throughout the entire course of its existence. Even in Italy, the actions are inspired by “an orientation system centered on the person and their needs, aimed at preventing and combating youth hardship and promoting full employability, social inclusion and intercultural dialogue” (Ministry of Education and of the University – MIUR, 2014). The objective is to encourage the strengthening of the young person’s self-determination and self-regulation skills during their training. In this way, orientation becomes a self-orientation tool that the subject can use in any type of transitory situation (Scandella et al., 2002; Perucca, 2003) and gives meaning to his life plan (Margottini et al., 2017). However, in Italy the orientation, for a long time, was an extemporaneous and poorly structuring action of the educational path, where the different training agents – school and university – acted episodically, following autonomous and often parallel paths. Only recently, and more incisively following the orientation reform designed by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), has the centrality of orientation in training been underlined, as a systematic and coordinated process of interventions which places at the center the young person and his aptitudes and accompanies him in the development of his personal and professional life project. In the pre- and post-pandemic period, schools and universities were faced with a new mission, to facilitate the process of acquiring the ability to learn throughout life (Di Rienzi & Serreri, 2015). New challenges, which have resulted in the creation of orientation projects/models created with the aim of facilitating young people’s future choices. Among these experiences, of particular interest is the integrated project of orientation towards post-diploma choices S.F.Or.A. – Experiment, Form, Orienta – which, even before what was referred to by the PNRR on the subject of orientation towards university choice, created a model to support young people in choosing university studies and above all for the teachers who support

young people in this choice. According to the diachronic-educational orientation model, on which the project is based, it is above all to them that attention must be paid, with a view to intercepting those often latent elements which facilitate the understanding of the state of the art and which can contribute to the development of a conscious culture and effective practice of orientation (Domenici 1998), culture and practice of orientation.

DESCRIBE THE EXPERIMENTATION. THE S.F.OR.A. PROJECT

Conceived and implemented three years before the orientation reform contained in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), the S.F.Or.A project had as its main objective the institutionalization of orientation practices to support students at risk of dropping out of school to an informed choice of future university paths. The model was conceived and developed through training activities, co-planning with high schools and thanks to the creation of pre-university orientation courses. This is an experimental model of university orientation, therefore the choice of the type of schools to be involved in the co-planning necessarily fell on the high schools whereby vocation, the study path is aimed at university studies. If, as has been said, orientation towards future choices can and must counteract university and school dropout, thus limiting phenomena such as NEETs and youth unemployment, then it was preferred to include exclusively high schools at risk of dropout. The territorial area on which action was taken is Campania, a privileged place of observation, not only because it presents many critical issues, think of youth unemployment and school dropout rates, but because to date it retains the record of being the youngest region in 'Italy. The experimentation and development of the model initially involved only some of the high schools in Campania and subsequently all the high schools of the national territory thanks to the potential offered by the Massive Open Online Courses of the Federic@Weblearning platform of the Federico II University⁴. In this way it was possible to create open access training materials on diachronic-educational orientation that can be used by schools to create good training orientation practices that are transferable. Starting from the direct recipients who actively participated in the development of the model – 60 teachers and 800 students from high schools in Campania – the MOOC makes it possible to indirectly reach all teachers in charge of orientation and all graduating students, regardless of the territory in which it is located the school (local and/or national) and regardless of the type of high

school. From a structural point of view, S.F.Or.A. is divided into three macro-phases conceived sequentially – information, implementation and dissemination. The first involved an analysis of the context and a screening of the target of the intervention (schools, teachers and students at risk of dropping out of school) with the use of social indicators with the aim of detecting conditions of social hardship, disadvantage and risk of exclusion. and the orientation needs of the students and schools involved in the project. The data collected constituted the input for the preparation of tools and materials for the construction of the project's information base. At a second stage, the orientation needs of the students and teachers involved in the project were analyzed through individual interviews. On this basis, it was possible to start an initial design of the materials for the creation of the experimental teaching paths. The last step of the information phase involved public awareness meetings with partner schools, stakeholders, privileged witnesses, orientation experts, scholars, schools in the Campania region and pupils of the fifth grades. The implementation phase saw two different targets involved separately the teachers and students of the schools with whom the co-planning was started. It was the phase of experimentation and therefore the implementation of the training orientation paths, first with the school representatives with experimental teaching laboratory activities for permanent orientation and with focus groups and, subsequently, with the students. The aim was to test the model, focusing on the development of skills for managing the training experience in the pivotal phases. The creation of the MOOC Federic@Weblearning characterizes the third and final phase, the dissemination which, as mentioned, has the aim of presenting the good practices of the project and establishing the conditions for their transferability throughout the Campania region and beyond.

SCHOOL ORIENTATION: A QUALITATIVE SURVEY

The post-diploma choice represents for young students a fundamental stage in their education and in the construction of their life project in a context characterized by insecurities, precariousness and uncertainty for the future (Appadurai, 2014). University choice therefore is found to be of crucial importance for future plans as part of a more general construction of identity and life projects. Specifically, secondary school exit guidance pathways represent a moment of accompaniment for the young person in training towards a more complex transition, which concerns the transition from adolescence to adulthood and the construction of one's personal, professional and social identity. The young person needs guidance that can guide and support his

or her ability to aspire and imagine the future, enhancing his or her resources, vocation and talent. Starting from this premise, within the framework of the S.F.Or.A. project, focused on the exploration of outbound orientation paths in secondary schools in Campania, a qualitative survey was conducted with particular reference to the teachers' point of view. Through focus groups, the experiences of the teachers in charge of orientation and some school directors of the Campania institutions surveyed were collected with the aim of gathering teachers' experiences in students' outgoing orientation paths, trying to bring out the effectiveness of the orientation actions in relation to the different variables considered, such as the contexts of intervention (territorial, socio-cultural, educational), the needs of the student audience, the constraints and resources affecting each school and the skills and knowledge of the school audience.

In this part of the contribution we will try to illustrate the main results that emerged in relation to the dimensions considered most significant, such as the reference contexts of the schools examined, the orientation activities carried out, critical issues, good practices, the contribution of the teachers, their needs and their proposals for improvement interventions.

From the analysis of the focus groups carried out emerges among the teachers an awareness of the role of the school in the choices of the students, especially during the pandemic period, when in-person meetings were forbidden and all open days were held in hybrid mode, as one teacher tells us: "because of the covid everything was blocked so at the moment the prevailing activity is to inform the students, and the colleague takes care of it, of the proposals that are given to us, informs them through the site and also directly because the students do not go to see the site (Prof. R)". In fact, the school also has a practical function, that is, it puts in place a series of actions aimed at supporting the transition to university studies. Among the schools that participated in the qualitative survey, several exit orientation practices emerge. Some teachers, in fact, tell us that they put in place targeted actions to collect students' accessions. In one high school, for example, teachers tell us that they made a census among students in order to organize orientation meetings with universities: "My job was to collect from the offers that came in via e-mail from the various universities and the students' questions, so I did a research, a census of the students interested in that type of question and then I would collect for the appointments and organize and communicate the meets that were organized for the various universities (Prof. L)". In addition to participation in the open days offered mostly remotely

by faculties, in some contexts there also emerges the need to inform students about career paths; in this regard, professors recount that they have entered into an agreement with the Association of Chartered Accountants: “we try to take every opportunity that is offered to us. Not only open days and not only meetings with universities. We try to sensitize them, even to the world of professions with the order of accountants (Prof. DN)”. Other teachers report that they organized an orientation in the military to meet the needs that emerged from many students in the school who wanted to evaluate this path: “This year among other things we also organized with a military district, military orientation, because there are many young people who still have the desire to deal with the military career and its various stages, so from the district they came, they informed (Prof. DA)”. Focus groups also make it clear that outbound guidance practices almost always involve informational meetings with outside experts, but in some cases it seems much more functional to adopt a peer tutoring strategy, a form of peer learning that can be defined as the acquisition of knowledge and skills through the active help and support of peers or peers (Topping, 2007), effective strategies for engaging students and holding them accountable to one another, in the light of recent research that shares the idea that educational and training contexts should be places where students, teachers and all other community members work together to create and support the development of educational, participatory and person-centered opportunities that emphasize humanity and direct collective forms of learning. In light of these understandings, some faculty members recount that, prior to the pandemic, they had tried a peer tutoring approach involving former students—a practice that was interrupted by the pandemic but which, one faculty member recounts, students organized independently during Student Week, making contact with former students enrolled in college and asking them for information about the course of study.

Within the school curriculum, however, there are also activities related to the acquisition of soft skills and for orientation, i.e., PCTOs, which, according to some teachers, are an interesting opportunity for the orientation of the students, both in their course of study and professionally. The lecturers describe the activities planned in the PCTO that contemplate workshops on some specific subjects with experts in the field or activities that are part of an educational path, such as the one Prof. L tells us, in which the students learned how to be tour guides thanks to the Donna Regina association: “A few years ago when we did the PCTO Donna Regina, which the boys learned how to be a guide in the language, we learned together how it is that you...

They were taken to learn about the monument of Naples, they learned that from the monument... They did a day the language guides. They were delighted: two enrolled, one in art history and one in archaeology. They realized it was their path". However, the idea that the school plays a fundamental role in defining students' pathways emerges strongly, regardless of guidance practices, since, as Prof. M. stresses:

what I do in my daily teaching action clearly is to charge not only the disciplinary skills of the boys, but to enhance what are the talents and clearly the aptitudes of individual boys to make them aware of their potentialities, of what are the goals to be achieved in order to ensure a harmonious development of the personality of the boys so that they can put in place a satisfactory life project.

It seems clear, therefore, that the orientation practices put in place assist the daily path that teachers take in order to be able to develop students' skills, nurturing specific successful activities and pathways, even if, as we will see in the next section, despite the good practices initiated there is no shortage of critical issues.

ORIENTATION BETWEEN CRITICALITIES AND GOOD PRACTICES

Unfortunately, orientation actions still too often occupy a marginal role in the educational pathways offered by schools and universities, thus not fully responding to the need to prepare young people for the transition between different degrees of education, related expectations, and required skills. This may be due to a combination of problematic factors, such as the lack of resources available to build systematic guidance actions, the lack of expertise on the part of faculty and staff, and the plurality of (in)educational sources that can sometimes offer conflicting visions. Through the qualitative survey and the discussion among the teachers of the schools involved, it was possible to trace a number of critical issues that it is deemed necessary to highlight in order to understand what actions could be promoted to improve the orientation pathway that students need in order to make a rational and informed choice of their post-diploma pathway.

The focus groups reveal difficulties related, first and foremost, to the pandemic period, which has effectively limited in-person meetings. Some professors believe that the widespread dissemination of webinars provided by university faculties to illustrate degree programs, although functional during the period of restrictions to avoid contagions, appeared reductive and did not have the same effect as open days

organized in presence. However, even with respect to orientation courses organized in the past, some faculty members point out that they need to be structured differently, avoiding mass events and reserving each course for a small number of students. In light of these considerations, there also emerges the need, according to some lecturers, to increase the educational offerings in orientation, focusing on the content of the disciplines offered in the degree courses and on employment outlets. In the former case, in fact, teachers emphasize the curiosity of students to know the contents of examination subjects, especially of those disciplines that are not offered in secondary school curricula. In addition, there emerges the need to inform students of the employment outlets that a particular university pathway offers, because “many students have an employment urgency. The most pragmatic students have precisely the occupational urgency (...) so they really need to understand what the occupational spin-off of a faculty is, that is, what do I do materially afterwards? (Prof. M)”.

What is missing, according to most faculty members, is the presence of an orientation committee that should manage the organization of pathways, since all the work falls on a few people who often take time away from classroom work to devote themselves to organizing activities, as Prof. N says: “because that’s the problem: either I’m a professor or I’m an orientation, I’m telling you with a lot of intellectual honesty. If I have to go and do 18 hours in the classroom and then I have to do orientation and I have to tell my students sorry I didn’t do class today, then you reduce my hours even by 3 or 4 hours if I have to take care of this thing”.

The overload of work for teachers who deal with orientation clearly also affects the monitoring activity that should be carried out to understand what the children’s paths actually are and evaluate the effectiveness of the orientation practices adopted. Unfortunately, as Prof. M underlines, it is difficult to give space even to the monitoring activities considered fundamental because “without the data you have no idea of the work. We are trying to do it, but we haven’t managed to do it well but it is an aspect that needs to be improved to keep track of the work you do (Prof. M.)”.

Finally, to increase the difficulties in this sense, there is the problem of communication between universities and schools: the teachers say that they have asked the secretariats of the university faculties for information on the freshmen coming from their institute, but the privacy law prevents them from providing them with the data, so teachers often organize themselves by calling students directly, but the practical narrative is not always successful.

WHAT PROSPECTS FOR ORIENTATION?

The qualitative investigation presented in the previous pages made it possible to detect in the selected schools the presence of various conditions that affect the success or otherwise of exit orientation courses. The focus groups, in fact, reiterated the importance of the elements that affect the training and professional paths of students, such as the territorial and socio-economic context in which the schools are located, the propensity of the family of origin, as well as the attitudes of the students. In addition to the contextual variables, we must also take into consideration, as we have seen, the management of guidance practices by schools and the conditions in which teacher-guidance counselors operate.

In this regard, it is important to highlight that the majority of the institutes investigated have included visits to university faculties as their main orientation activities – in some cases based on student preferences, collected through a questionnaire (3 schools) – and in other cases by responding to University requests. However, the pandemic period has drastically reduced in-person courses, requiring them to be replaced with webinars which, according to teachers, are certainly more accessible and require less organizational effort, but do not have the same effect as an in-person visit. Even for the few orientation meetings that took place in person during the pandemic period, the teachers noted some critical issues which, as we have illustrated, require enriching the meetings at the universities with elements functional to the growth of the students, in order to encourage conscious choice of the academic or professional path: in some cases, for example, by delving into the contents of the disciplines, especially those that are not present in the curricula of secondary schools, in other cases by illustrating the organization of university departments with the aim of socializing students' academic life. Through the focus groups it was also possible to identify the presence of best practices in the schools investigated which, often autonomously, the institutes have implemented to be able to offer students a range of services useful for choosing a university path, such as for example the activation of peer tutoring, which allows students to interface directly with former students of the same institute who are attending university, or the agreement with professional associations or military districts; just as there is no shortage of interesting proposals that schools put forward with the aim of improving orientation practices. Among the testimonies collected, in fact, some interesting proposals emerge, such as this one reported below: “we had thought about activating an afternoon desk, help, consultancy, which would, let's say, be provided by a teacher, a

researcher, in short a figure borrowed from the university world precisely to be able to respond on site, here, at the school, to any doubts of students and families”. Or the proposal to set up a laboratory in collaboration with university faculties, thanks to which students can fully enjoy the experience of studying at the faculties.

Furthermore, many teachers agree on the fact that outgoing orientation should start from the third classes (and not from the fifth classes, when the majority of children already have clear ideas about the path), combining the start of the PCTOs with work on post-diploma orientation. The basic idea, in fact, is that in addition to frontal lessons, starting from the third year, children can be involved in a series of projects that coincide with a path that is, in fact, part of orientation practices. Finally, the importance of the role played across the board by the school institution and teachers, the students’ point of reference, remains: in most cases, the teachers and school managers involved in the survey reiterate that we must work to make the school always more efficient and functional in the orientation of its students, even if the various orientation projects represent only a part of the work that the school carries out with its students on a daily basis. Finally, from the qualitative analysis carried out, it clearly emerges that orientation practices upon leaving upper secondary schools have a fundamental importance in being able to guide young people in their post-diploma choices. However, it must be underlined that, where children already have a clear idea of the path to follow, orientation only has the task of giving them additional information regarding the path they intend to undertake. We have noted the presence of good practices, sometimes proposed by individual teachers, sometimes by university institutions or companies, just as the role of the social and family context on students’ post-diploma choices emerges strongly. The evidence that emerges from the focus also highlights the initiatives of individual teachers who, in relation to the needs that emerge from the group of students, prefer activities aimed at providing students with complete information for an informed and reasoned choice, both in the continuation of their studies university and in the workplace.

CONCLUSIONS

The S.F.Or.A. project represents an important contribution in the field of training orientation in difficult contexts and at risk of dropping out of school. With the contribution of the teachers who participated in the co-planning it was possible to create experimental and innovative paths following the pre-university diachronic-

educational orientation model proposed by Domenici (2009). This type of orientation facilitates the discovery and development of students' personal skills, actively involving the interested parties and allows inter-individual and intra-individual differences to be highlighted, encouraging the construction of personalized paths and experimental and innovative paths that respond to needs. student specifications. From the qualitative analysis carried out, it clearly emerges that orientation practices upon leaving upper secondary schools have a fundamental importance in being able to guide young people in their post-diploma choices. However, it must be underlined that, where children already have a clear idea of the path to follow, orientation only has the task of giving them additional information regarding the path they intend to undertake. However, it turns out that, in the case of students who are still undecided about their career or university path, orientation represents an important practice. We have noted the presence of good practices, sometimes proposed by individual teachers, sometimes by university institutions or companies, just as the role of the social and family context on students' post-diploma choices emerges strongly. The evidence that emerges from the focus also highlights the initiatives of individual teachers who, in relation to the needs that emerge from the group of students, prefer initiatives aimed at providing students with complete information for an informed and reasoned choice, both in the continuation of their studies university and in the workplace.

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ITALIAN EDUCATIONAL POVERTY IN MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE SKILLS. THE EFFECTS OF MATERIAL AND IMMATERIAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

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Abstract This study examines the determinants of mathematics and science skills among Italian students and adults, utilizing data from the Pisa 2018 survey. It explores the significant influence of parental education, cultural possessions, and home educational resources on academic performance. The findings highlight that students with highly educated parents and enriched home environments perform better in mathematics and science. Additionally, the study discusses the impact of gender and migration background on academic outcomes. The results underscore the importance of addressing educational disparities through targeted policies and interventions to enhance the overall competencies of the Italian population in these critical subjects.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary societies, fundamental competencies in mathematics and science play a pivotal role in shaping both individual opportunities and societal progress. These competencies are crucial across various aspects of social life, influencing personal well-being, labour market access, and civic engagement (Restivo, 1988; Grootenboer et al., 2015; Pouliakas & Russo, 2015). Their importance extends beyond mere academic achievement, as they underpin critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and the capacity to engage with ongoing scientific and technological requirements (Reyna, Brainerd, 2007; Stocker & Wagner, 2007). Mathematical and scientific literacy are foundational for navigating the complexities of modern life. Mathematical skills encompass a wide range of abilities, including logical reasoning, quantitative analysis, and the application of mathematical concepts to real-world situations (Lakoff & Núñez, 2000). These skills are essential for effective decision-making, from personal finance management to professional problem-solving. Similarly, scientific literacy involves understanding fundamental scientific principles, applying

scientific methods to analyse problems, and drawing evidence-based conclusions. In an era of rapid technological change, scientific literacy is critical for making informed decisions about the impact of scientific developments on society and the environment (Holbrook & Rannikmae, 2009).

Research consistently highlights the long-term benefits of developing mathematical and scientific skills early in education. These early skills are strong predictors of future academic success, career choices in STEM fields, and lifelong engagement with scientific and technological advancements (Chiu et al., 2007). Students who excel in mathematics and science during their formative years are more likely to pursue and succeed in higher education and STEM careers (Wang & Degol, 2013; Maass et al., 2019).

The distribution of these skills is not uniform across populations. In Italy, despite a gradual increase in STEM enrolments, the growth remains slow, particularly among young women. In 2022 the number of STEM graduates per 1,000 of population aged 20-29 in Italy (18,5) lagged behind other European countries like France (35,3), Spain (23.0%), and Germany (24,3) (Eurostat, 2024). Disaggregated by gender, this indicator shows that Italian women choose STEM disciplines significantly less often than men: for every 1,000 women aged 20-29, 14.3 graduate in STEM disciplines, compared to 21.0 men per 1,000 (Istat, 2024). These gaps have roots in early educational experiences, where weak mathematical and scientific competencies reduce self-efficacy and aspirations in scientific fields, reinforcing social and gender stereotypes (De Vita, Giancola, 2017; Salmieri, 2022).

Basic skills in mathematics and science are essential for adults too, serving as fundamental tools in various aspects of daily life, including work, information processing, and civic participation. These skills enable individuals to navigate a complex, technology-driven world with confidence and efficiency. In the workplace, mathematical and scientific literacy is increasingly critical (Oecd, 2016). Many professions, from healthcare to engineering, require a foundational understanding of these subjects. For instance, in the healthcare industry, professionals must interpret data, understand medical statistics, and utilize technology-based diagnostic tools (Reyna & Brainerd, 2007; Chen & Feeley, 2014). In engineering, problem-solving and quantitative analysis are essential for designing and implementing projects. Moreover, even non-technical roles often require basic mathematical skills for tasks such as budgeting, financial analysis, and logistical planning (Jonas, 2018).

Beyond professional contexts, mathematical and scientific literacy is vital for informed decision-making. Adults frequently encounter statistical information in news reports, health advisories, financial products, media coverages. The ability to critically evaluate this data prevents misinformation and enables sound personal and practical decisions. The lack of mathematical and scientific skills presents a significant challenge in understanding globally relevant phenomena that impact daily life, as evidenced during the Covid-19 pandemic (Heyd-Metzuyanim et al., 2021). Civic engagement also benefits significantly from these skills. A scientifically literate population is better equipped to engage in public debates on issues such as climate change, healthcare policy, and technological advancements. This engagement fosters a more informed electorate that can contribute to democratic processes with a clearer understanding of the scientific and mathematical underpinnings of policy decisions. Furthermore, the rapid advancement of technology in everyday life necessitates continuous learning and adaptation. Basic mathematical and scientific knowledge facilitates the use of new technologies, from smartphones to home automation systems or AI digital applications enhancing daily convenience and quality of life. Sociologically, the distribution of these skills can influence social mobility and equality. Access to quality information in mathematics and science is often linked to socioeconomic status, creating disparities in opportunities and outcomes.

Addressing these disparities is a critical challenge for educational policy. This paper explores factors contributing to these disparities, focusing on the Italian context, and examines conditions of poor mathematical and scientific literacy among diverse student and adult populations. By investigating the interplay of educational experiences, cultural factors, and policy frameworks, we aim to contribute to the debate on educational equity and effectiveness, essential for fostering small and large-scale policies addressed both to students and adults.

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE SKILLS OF ITALIAN STUDENTS

In the realm of mathematics and science education, national and international assessment surveys display a substantial stability or only slight variations over time in the performance of Italian students. According to data from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Italian primary school students (4th grade) consistently achieve scores slightly above average in mathematics and science literacy (Giancola & Salmieri, 2022). This relative consistency reflects the historically

moderate learning outcomes of the Italian educational system, particularly in primary education, which has experienced few significant changes over the years. The primary school system in Italy is characterized by a lack of curricular differentiation, a relatively standardized curriculum, and limited opportunities for families to exploit social differentiation strategies when enrolling children at local schools (Grimaldi & Serpieri, 2012).

However, as students progress through the education cycle, a decline in the quality, equity, and effectiveness of mathematical and scientific skills becomes evident. Students in the third year of lower secondary school (8th grade) consistently perform below the TIMSS average, with a slight peak only in 2011. Despite having average levels slightly lower than other Oecd countries, the influence of family background on Italian students' learning outcomes get plain as early as primary school. Students with better material resources (e.g., numerous books at home) and cognitive resources (parents' educational and cultural awareness) outperform those from disadvantaged or lower social classes. These gaps tend to widen by the 8th grade, indicating that inequalities in mathematics and science skills stratify and expand over time, consistent with the systematic distortion effect produced by the progressive accumulation of learning inequalities (Jackson, 2015; Giancola & Salmieri, 2022). The correlation between socioeconomic inequalities and disparities in school performance in mathematics and science intensifies during the transition from lower to upper secondary school, coinciding with the end of the common curriculum-based education cycle (Hanushek & Wößmann, 2006). At this point, tracking becomes a significant factor in stratification and differentiation, including the development of mathematical and scientific basic skills (Schiller et al., 2010).

To analyse the Italian students' skills in mathematics and science, we utilized data from the Pisa 2018 survey, which assesses 15-year-old students' abilities in reading, mathematics, and science. The survey provides a comprehensive overview of students' skills and highlights the role of multiple socio-economic and cultural factors in shaping educational outcomes. Similar to reading competencies, the average scores of 15-year-old Italians in mathematics and science consistently fall below the Oecd and Eu country averages. However, two contradictory trends emerge: in mathematics, Italian students show positive performance over time, particularly when comparing the two Pisa rounds where mathematics was a primary assessment topic (2003 and 2012). Conversely, in science, the trend forms a "bump" shape, with more

negative results in recent years but a slight positive trend during the rounds where scientific skills were the primary focus (2006 and 2015).

A persistent issue in Italy is the high proportion of “weak” students, or low achievers, who score below “level 2” on the mathematics and science competency scales. In mathematics, the proportion of low achievers slightly decreases with each survey but remains significant: in 2018, over one-third of 15-year-old Italian students were low achievers in mathematics. For scientific minimal literacy, the proportion of low achievers increases over time, rising from 32.8% in 2006 to 38.4% in 2015, then stabilizing at 37.3% in 2018. This trend appears linked to the low mathematical abilities of the entire Italian adult population (Oecd, 2013), limited awareness of general issues related to natural and ecological-environmental phenomena, and poor basic knowledge in physics, geography, and astronomy.

Basic mathematical and scientific abilities developed during adolescence are influenced by ascribed variables related to students’ social origins, with parental education level playing a decisive role. To corroborate the effect of intergenerational transmission of educational poverty in mathematics and science, we conducted two sets of multiple linear regression models using Oecd Pisa 2018 data. The first model estimated the effect of basic ascribed variables (Model 1) such as parental education, student gender, and native or migrant background, on the level of competencies achieved in mathematics and science at age 15. The second model (Model 2) measured the effects of variables related to “objectified cultural capital” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2013) on mathematical and scientific skills levels. The third model (mixing 1 and 2) combines the effects of Model 1 and 2 to provide a comprehensive analysis of these influences.

	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>Science</i>
<i>Reading</i>	1	,828*	,885*
<i>Mathematics</i>	,828*	1	,890*
<i>Science</i>	,885*	,890*	1

Table 1. Pearson correlation for Italian students’ results in reading, mathematics, and science. Pisa 2018. Source: authors’ elaboration based on Pisa 2018 database.

* The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Notably, the explanatory structure resulting from the regression models (Tables 2 and 3) is almost identical for mathematics and science skills. The literature suggests a fairly high correlation between the two measures (Rylands, Coady, 2009), and for

Italian students evaluated in the Oecd Pisa 2018 survey, this correlation is significantly robust, as evidenced by the β values reported in Table 1. Generally, students who demonstrate high levels in one competency domain (mathematics or science) possess high knowledge and skills in the other. Correlations between reading comprehension competency levels and mathematics and science competency levels are slightly less pronounced but still sufficiently robust to outline a framework where the three domains reinforce each other, with reading and text comprehension skills being foundational to the other two domains (Yore et al., 2007).

The results from the first multiple linear regression model, which examines the effects of ascribed variables, indicate that parental education significantly influences student outcomes in mathematics and science skills. Specifically, having at least one parent with a university degree results in an increase of 20 to 24 points in student scores compared to those without such a background (see Table 2).

	Model 1			Model 2			Model mixing 1 e 2		
	B	std. error	β	B	std. error	β	B	std. error	β
<i>(Costant)</i>	498,9	1,66		443,2	1,97		452,1	2,30	
Parents with medium education level	20,2	2,03	0,11				10,7	1,93	0,06
Parents with high education level	24,5	1,93	0,14				6,8	1,91	0,04
Female	-16,4	1,61	-0,10				-21,4	1,53	-0,13
Second generation	-23,8	3,75	-0,06				-6,9	3,58	-0,02
First generation	-40,7	4,19	-0,09				-16,9	4,02	-0,04
Average CULTPOSS				6,2	1,95	0,04	6,5	1,93	0,04
High CULTPOSS				12,9	2,22	0,07	12,5	2,21	0,07
Average HEDRES				20,5	2,13	0,11	18,7	2,11	0,10
High HEDRES				22,6	2,00	0,14	21,6	1,99	0,13
26-100 books at home				34,9	2,15	0,19	33,5	2,14	0,19
101-200 books at home				53,2	2,45	0,26	51,6	2,47	0,25
> 200 books at home				61,0	2,45	0,32	59,4	2,50	0,31
	R ² =4,1%			R ² =12,6%			R ² =14,6%		

Table 2. Determinants of Italian students' performance in mathematics. Pisa 2018. Source: authors' elaboration based on Pisa 2018 database.

The results obtained with Model 2, shown in Table 2 for mathematics and Table 3 for science, highlight the significant impact of the variable measured by the CULTPOSS indicator (Cultural Possessions at Home). This indicator relates to the presence of high culture items, educational resources, and books in students' family

environment. A high presence of cultural objects in the home is an indicator of the positive effects that a culturally dynamic and advanced domestic environment has on learning outcomes in mathematics and science. Even more significant is the effect of the presence of educational resources and tools, measured by the HEDRES (Home Educational Resources) indicator. These include having a dedicated study space, a desk, access to educational software and technical books, a personal computer, etc. However, the most determining factor is the presence of numerous books at home. This availability not only directly influences the development of mathematical and scientific skills but also serves as a very accurate proxy for the cultural stimulation provided by the family environment and social background. This, in turn, benefits students' motivation, abilities, curiosity, and depth of study. Students with access to a rich cultural environment, characterized by a high number of books and educational tools, demonstrate better performance in mathematics and science. This finding emphasizes the role of early socialization in culturally rich environments in fostering academic success. This influence has also been tested using other data sources, yielding similar and robust results (Tan, 2020).

The high availability of “objectified cultural capital” indicates a space and wealth of informal learning that likely influences formal learning and academic results. This type of capital acts as a stimulus and has a socializing effect on academic subjects, including mathematics and science. The widespread presence of “objectified cultural capital” is linked to parents' higher education and their economic, ethnic, and migratory background. Cultural capital is a complex set of factors associated in various ways with parents' education, directly and indirectly affecting students' outcomes.

These findings indicate that, to counter educational poverty, a deep socialization to cultural tools and objects (books, dictionaries, manuals, reference texts, etc.) can effectively bridge the gap between disadvantaged life contexts and school environments. These school environments are historically and pedagogically characterized by a high level of curricular formalization, codification of knowledge, and conceptualization. As students progress in their educational careers, math and science subjects become more abstract and distant from their immediate life experiences. In this process of abstraction, early socialization through a culturally rich environment appears crucial in fostering positive outcomes in standardized math and science tests. Results in these domains will impact tertiary education aspirations, choice of study

paths, and career imaginations in STEM and technical-scientific fields (Laugksch, 2000).

	Model 1			Model 2			Model mixing 1 e 2		
	B	std. error	β	B	std. error	β	B	std. error	β
<i>(Costant)</i>	475,8	1,63		429,4	1,95		435,6	2,28	
Parents with medium education level	19,2	1,90	0,11				2,7	1,90	0,02
Parents with high education level	20,4	1,99	0,13				10,8	1,92	0,06
Female	-4,1	1,59	-0,03				-8,6	1,52	-0,05
Second generation	-32,9	3,69	-0,09				-17,7	3,55	-0,05
First generation	-46,2	4,12	-0,11				-24,9	3,99	-0,06
Average CULTPOSS				5,9	1,93	0,03	5,8	1,92	0,04
High CULTPOSS				11,8	2,19	0,07	11,4	2,20	0,07
Average HEDRES				17,6	2,10	0,10	15,6	2,10	0,09
High HEDRES				17,5	1,98	0,11	16,1	1,98	0,10
26-100 books at home				32,5	2,12	0,18	30,0	2,13	0,17
101-200 books at home				46,3	2,42	0,23	43,2	2,45	0,21
> 200 books at home				60,3	2,42	0,32	57,6	2,49	0,31
	R2=3,3%			R2=11,2%			R2=13,5%		

Table 3. Determinants of Italian students' performance in science. Pisa 2018. Source: authors' elaboration based on Pisa 2018 database.

Gender-related findings align with established literature, proving that female students generally score slightly lower in mathematics and science compared to male students (Contini et al., 2017; Rinaldi & Salmieri, 2020). The most pronounced disadvantage, however, is associated with students' migratory backgrounds: first-generation immigrant students are significantly more disadvantaged than their second-generation peers, as previously highlighted by Azzolini and Barone (2013). The interplay of these three factors—parental education, gender, and native or immigrant background—illustrates the latent but significant impact of social inertia on student performance in mathematics and science skills.

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE SKILLS OF ITALIAN ADULTS

While the TIMSS and Pisa surveys reveal how educational inequalities develop through various stages of schooling, highlighting the role of cultural capital deficits (and thus relative poverty) in learning, the Oecd-PIAAC survey allows for dynamic

analyses of educational poverty in adults, specifically in mathematical skills, but not in scientific ones. The PIAAC measure, numeracy, refers to the ability to use numerical and mathematical concepts in daily life. This type of assessment mirrors the application of skills and knowledge in real-life contexts, similar to the Pisa survey which is targeted instead at 15-year-old students.

The overall literacy results for the Italian adult population are concerning: the average score is 250, below the international average of 273. In numeracy, or mathematical skills, the disparity is similar: Italian adults score an average of 247, compared to the international average of 269 (Paccagnella, 2016).

When analysing the adult population, it is important to consider cohort composition effects absent in the student population, which is uniformly around 15 years old. Mathematical skills are particularly low among older adults aged 55-65, with a progressive improvement seen in younger cohorts. This trend is attributed to both the obsolescence of skills over time and the higher average education levels of younger generations. Consequently, younger age groups demonstrate better mathematical skills. This improvement is attributed to the expansion of educational access in the Seventies and Eighties and inclusive educational policies, such as comprehensive middle schools and the liberalization of university enrolment (Checchi et al., 2013). However, these comparisons should not be too reassuring, as even young Italian adults have lower mathematical skills compared to their peers in other PIAAC countries. Additionally, the educational divide in mathematical skills among older adults has widened over time. In 2012, the gap in numeracy scores among 25–34-year-olds was 57 points. These findings debunk the media myth, supported by some scholars, that today's youth are less competent than previous generations, as displayed in the previous section.

Based on this evidence, similar to the Pisa student evaluations, we can analyse the relationship between familial cultural capital, education levels, and mathematical skills in Italian adults. We developed a set of multiple linear regression models (see Table 4).

	Model 1			Model 2			Model mixing 1 e 2		
	B	std. error	β	B	std. error	β	B	std. error	β
<i>(Costant)</i>	232,3	0,01		234,2	0,01		228,2	0,01	
25-34 years old	7,4	0,02	0,06	20,5	0,02	0,17	7,6	0,02	0,06
35-44 years old	3,9	0,02	0,04	14,1	0,02	0,13	6,1	0,02	0,06
45-54 years old	1,5	0,02	0,01	10,6	0,02	0,09	5,0	0,02	0,04
Female	-12,4	0,01	-0,13	-9,7	0,01	-0,10	-11,6	0,01	-0,12
High School Diploma	33,2	0,02	0,34				29,7	0,02	0,30
Bachelor's Degree	50,5	0,02	0,36				41,8	0,02	0,30
At least 1 parent with a High School Diploma				27,3	0,02	0,24	15,9	0,02	0,14
At least 1 parent with a Bachelor's Degree				38,9	0,03	0,20	22,6	0,03	0,12
	R ² =20,6%			R ² =12,2%			R ² =23,1%		

Table 4. Determinants of Italian adults' performance in mathematics. PIAAC 2013. Source: authors' elaboration based on PIAAC 2013 database.

In the first Model, we included dummy variables for age groups, with the oldest cohort (55+) as the reference category; gender (female vs. male); and education level, with those below high school diploma as the reference category. In the second Model, we retained age and gender but replaced individual education with parental education levels, with those having parents below a high school diploma as the reference category. In the third and final Model (mix of 1 and 2), all variables were included simultaneously to estimate expected numeracy outcomes.

Consistent with descriptive analyses, the first model's regression results display a relative advantage for younger cohorts. However, beyond age effects, gender and respondents' education level have the most significant influence. For Italian adults, mathematical competency levels vary by gender, disadvantaging women. This

difference reflects historical educational disparities between men and women, which have only narrowed in recent decades, with women surpassing men in university graduation rates since the early Nineties. Educational attainment significantly impacts numeracy scores, with a university degree increasing scores by an average of 50 points on the PIAAC scale (range 0-500).

In the second Model, excluding individual education reveals the strong impact of age cohorts and parental education, highlighting the intergenerational reproduction of educational inequalities and mathematical skills. Finally, the third Model's results show that individual education levels absorb the predictive power of parental education. This is because children's education levels are closely correlated with their parents', and thus, intergenerational transmission of educational attainment influences adult numeracy. Nevertheless, family education still has a substantial net effect. The gender gap disadvantaging women persists, reflecting traditional gendered socialization patterns in educational and career choices, which have only recently begun to erode.

CONCLUSIONS

Our analyses revealed stratified and interconnected dynamics. On one hand, Italian adults' poor mathematical skills indicate widespread educational poverty, posing a clear risk of perpetuation across generations. On the other hand, younger generations, with higher average education levels, should reduce the extent of basic educational poverty in the future. Nonetheless, the influence of social origins remains significant, especially in the form of different allocations of material and immaterial culture in extracurricular learning contexts. The gaps in material and immaterial available resources at home highlight the very limited capacity of the Italian education system to counteract the intergenerational transmission of educational poverty.

The direct and indirect impacts of social origins are evident: direct impacts stem from parental cultural capital to children's mathematical and scientific skills, while indirect impacts grow via the mediating role of children's educational attainment. Notably, significant disparities in basic skills are observed among younger cohorts of Italian adults, particularly among those who left the education system before obtaining a diploma. Formal educational poverty, such as failing to achieve a diploma, translates into low, if not poor, mathematical and scientific elementary skills.

Considering that noondays' students and young adults (aged 25-34) will soon or have recently become parents, the risk of new cycles of educational poverty transmission is very high in Italy. This finding underscores the need for continuous efforts to enhance mathematical and science literacy across all age groups. We do not wish to appear apocalyptic or bold, but we believe that Italian policymakers should seriously consider the needs and opportunities to develop educational policies, addressing not only the school system but especially adult education. A clear outline of directions emerges from our analysis:

Early Intervention and Support: Implement targeted interventions in early education to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Providing access to high-quality early childhood education and culturally rich environments can help bridge the gap in educational outcomes, especially for the early cognitive embodiment of numeracy.

Gender Equity in STEM: Promote gender equity in STEM education by addressing stereotypes and providing role models and mentorship programs for young girls. Encouraging female participation in STEM fields from an early age is crucial for reducing gender disparities. At the same time, the decreasing share of male students enrolling in universities should not be underestimated, as it contributes to slowing the growth rate of Italians graduating in STEM fields.

Adult Education Programs: Enhance adult education programs to improve numeracy and scientific literacy. Lifelong learning opportunities should be made accessible to all, with a focus on skill development for older adults to combat skill obsolescence. The notion that adult education levels are fixed and that investing in adult generations is not worthwhile is highly dangerous. These generations transmit their educational poverty to their children, regardless of the role of formal education in counteracting this mechanism.

Cultural Capital Enhancement: Increase access to cultural and educational resources for families, particularly in disadvantaged communities. Public libraries, community centres, and digital resources can play a significant role in providing these opportunities.

Policy and Research Integration: Integrate educational policies with ongoing evidence-based research to continuously monitor and address disparities in basic skills.

Evidence-based policymaking is essential for developing effective strategies to enhance mathematical and scientific literacy.

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PROPENSITIES AND EDUCATIONAL CHOICES: THE DYNAMICS OF (RE)PRODUCTION OF INEQUALITIES

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Abstract Aim of this paper is to analyse the impact of social inequalities on future expectations of upper secondary school students in Lazio (N=2.860) through a specifically designed survey. The aim is to answer three broad questions: first, estimate the impact of social origin on school choice at the first level (in terms of macro tracks). Second, we observe the differential impact that educational tracks exert on an individual’s educational experience in terms of overall performance and repetition. Lastly, analyse the influence of these variables (track, educational background, and social origin) on individual life prospect, specifically in terms of distribution and post-school choices between university and labour market. The results clearly show a chaining effect among the variables involved: social origin has a direct impact on the educational track -both the macro track chosen and the school experience- spilling over indirectly and through a cumulative effect on students’ future life choices.

INTRODUCTION: BEYOND THE INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE OF EDUCATIONAL CHOICES

Educational choices play a crucial role in shaping individuals’ lives and their impact on society. Firstly, these choices directly influence career opportunities (Johnson & Mortimer, 2002). Moreover, educational choices contribute significantly to personal development. Education goes beyond merely acquiring knowledge; it shapes individuals’ perspectives, values, and abilities (Deci et al., 1991). The subjects studied, the challenges faced, and the experiences gained all contribute to personal growth. For example, engaging with diverse viewpoints in philosophy courses can broaden one’s understanding of the world and cultivate critical thinking skills. Economic stability is another crucial aspect influenced by educational decisions. Studies consistently show a positive correlation between higher levels of education and earning potential (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2008). Individuals with advanced educational degrees or specialized skills often earned higher salaries and enjoy greater financial security.

Thus, making informed educational choices can significantly impact one's long-term economic prospects. Furthermore, education serves as a catalyst for social mobility. By pursuing higher education, individuals can transcend socio-economic barriers and access opportunities for advancement. This aspect is particularly significant in promoting equality and reducing disparities in society. Education empowers individuals to break cycles of poverty and achieve upward mobility, thereby fostering a more equitable society. Additionally, educational choices are pivotal in fostering a culture of lifelong learning. Education goes beyond achieving a degree; it involves an ongoing journey of acquiring new knowledge and skills. Choosing educational paths that promote intellectual curiosity and adaptability prepares individuals for continuous learning throughout their lives. This is especially relevant in today's rapidly changing world, where new technologies and industries emerge regularly. Moreover, educational choices influence individuals' contributions to society (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). In this sense, by pursuing fields aligned with their interests and values, individuals can make meaningful contributions to their communities. Whether through scientific research, artistic expression, or social advocacy, education equips individuals with the tools to address societal challenges and effect positive change.

AIMS OF THE STUDY

The Italian literature on educational choices has shown over time the existence of a clear chaining effect between social background, educational pathway, and post-school expectations (Azzollini & Vergolini, 2014; Barone et al., 2018; Giancola & Salmieri, 2022). Individuals from higher socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds choose general (vs technical/vocational) pathways in high school, which significantly increases the likelihood of pursuing higher education at the university level. High school pathways, more so than technical and vocational track, emphasise a generalist approach to teaching, encouraging students to pursue university degrees rather than entering the job market directly. The chosen secondary education address plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' social background, resulting in a cumulative effect that carries over into their future paths. In this way, the macro track becomes the driver of the process of (re)production of social and educational inequality (Giancola & Colarusso, 2020). Besides the selected track, the sphere of individual experience influences the shaping of expectations and aspirations. That process then

leads students to choose between education, university, and the labour market after school. In this way, future expectations are influenced by previous choices, which are affected by social origin and individual experiences. The family environment in which individuals are raised transmits a social, cultural, and economic inheritance that influences individual actions by imposing constraints on their choices. Conversely, choices may arise from a decision-making process involving cost-benefit analysis, wherein individuals assess the most advantageous alternatives in relation to their specific context. This dynamic recalls the theoretical approaches related to the theory of cultural and social reproduction of inequalities (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970) and the cost/benefit evaluation of the rational choice approach (Boudon, 1974; Mare, 1980; Breen & Goldthorpe, 1997). Therefore, it is essential to focus on the underlying factors in the decision-making process that lead students to make a choice at the end of the educational pathway. Our study shows the social dynamics underlying educational choices at the end of upper secondary education and reveals the chaining effects among the variables considered. The aim is to identify the specific factors that affect these prospects, including individual and contextual variables, to determine the influences that prompt students to pursue further studies or immediately access to labour market. Our hypothesis states that the social background of individuals has a direct and significant effect on the educational pathway, and this effect also directly impacts their postgraduate choices (Fig.1). These relations suggest that the choice of secondary school significantly reduces the impact of social background, serving as a crucial factor in (re)producing social and educational inequalities: it acts as a mediator between socio-economic and cultural factors and future opportunities (Giancola & Colarusso, 2020).

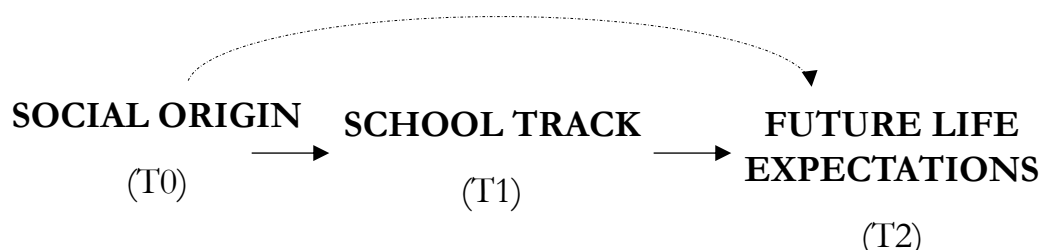


Figure 1. Chain effect model. Authors elaboration.

DATA AND METHODS

We used original survey data collected between March and May 2023 in the Lazio region (N=2860). Data were collected using a stratified typological sampling method in which we stratified the population based on gender, type of school attended, and geographical area (specifically, the provinces of Lazio). From each layer, we extracted a random sample. Last, we combined the samples from individual strata to get the final sample. The questionnaire, designed through an informatics technology infrastructure¹, can be on the one hand a useful tool for students to reflect on future choices and as a useful way of orientation in relation to various post-school choices. It comprises a shared area for all respondents and a central section related to post-graduation choices, filtered based on respondents' answers. The common areas investigate the demographic information of the interviewee (covering aspects like age, gender, place of birth, residence, etc.) and propose some probing questions aimed at identifying perceptions regarding the school experience and aspirations/expectations for the future. Future expectations are captured through a filtering question in which respondents choose between continuing studies at the university level, seeking a job, both choices, and attending a vocational training course. The section related to university choices explore, through the "mapping" technique (Giancola et al., 2023), the fields of study that the interviewee declares as a primary choice, considered, or directly excluded. We used two methods for the questionnaire administration. The first technique of filling out the questionnaire was direct, face-to-face, through the CAPI method. With the presence of a researcher, the compilation took place in a mutually agreed space, and they explained the purpose and instructions for filling out the questionnaire. The second technique entailed the direct distribution of the survey link to schools, granting students the autonomy to self-administer it. We used the SPSS data analysis program to process the data. The analysis involved three steps:

In a first step, we observe the impact of social origin on the type of chosen school track, in terms of pathways (macro track), net of individual variables such as gender, and migratory background. The aim is to understand the relations between the variables and construct a multinomial logistic regression model that can accurately predict the factors influencing the choice of secondary study direction.

¹ The reference infrastructure is based on the open-source solution Limesurvey.

Second, we examine the trend of overall educational achievements, in terms of self-assessment, in relation to social origin and the individual variables previously considered. The goal is to estimate the impact that low or high school achievements exerts on the educational path. Next, we run the same analysis for the school repetitions to observe any variations because of non-linear paths.

Last, by employing multinomial logistic regression, we estimate the factors that contribute to individual future choices and their distribution, while verify for individual (social origin, age, gender, migratory background) and pathway-related variables (macro track, repetitions, and educational achievements).

The variable related to the social origin of the interviewees was constructed based on the parents' educational attainment and occupation. On one hand, we develop a typological index with three categories ("low" 35.4%, "medium" 33.5%, "high" 31.1%), primarily used for descriptive analyses. Through Multiple Correspondence Analysis, we generated a metric variable that synthesizes education and parental occupation, used in estimation models. Using parental educational level and occupation reflects the family's capital of resources (financial, social, and cultural) that students consider in their educational and life paths, recalling Bourdieu's theoretical framework (1970). The social origin variable allows us to identify the interviewee's position in social stratification, differentiated based on access to or control of wealth, prestige, and power (Willms and Tramonte, 2015; Giancola & Salmieri, 2022). To investigate the impact of individual and ascriptive variables on academic pathways and observe how these influence post-school life choices, we asked respondents to identify the type of secondary school chosen among general, technical, and vocational track schools. The choice falls to 56.5% for general paths, while 29.3% enrol in technical institutes, and the residual part, 14.2%, opts for vocational schools. This distribution reflects the differentiation and trends of educational pathways in Italy. We examine post-school choices through a question asking respondents to place their expectations for the future among the following options: continuing studies at the university level (46.6%), choosing a vocational training course (5.7%), seeking employment (26%), and continuing studies while working simultaneously (21.7%). To balance the categories, we combined the "work and vocational training" option into a single category (31.7%) for multilevel analyses. Besides the analysis, we considered additional control variables, such as gender, originally split into 49.9% males and 50.1% females. The gender variable was dummy coded for multivariate analysis models, where 1 represents females and 0 males. The migratory background, divided into "native"

(97%), “born in a non-EU country” (1.7%), and “born in an EU country” (1.3%), was made dichotomous for technical and response imbalance reasons by combining non-natives into a single category (3%). Last, we investigated the individual school experience of the student by asking respondents to self-assess their educational achievements on the one hand and to show if they have experienced any failures on the other. The “school achievements” variable, originally divided into “Italian”, “Mathematics”, and “Overall”, asked respondents to place themselves on a scale from 1 (insufficient) to 10 (excellent). We merged these three components into a single dimension using an additive index and divided into five categories: “low” (18.8%); “low-medium” (22.2%); “medium” (28.7%); “medium-high” (18.2%); “high” (12%). The “repetitions” variable, divided into “No, never” (86.4%); “Yes, once” (11.4%); “Yes, more than once” (2.2%), was made dichotomous by contrasting regular students with those who have experienced one or more repetitions (13.6%).

RESULTS

Based on the preliminary results (Tab.1), there are clear associations between the chosen track of secondary education, social background, and gender. The results related to migratory background are less clear, with only slight differences compared to the educational paths of students. In terms of school enrolment, there is a higher percentage of women (67%) in general paths compared to men (45%). Conversely, men focus more on technical paths, with 38% compared to 20% for women. The secondary school track chosen is significantly influenced by social background. Respondents with high levels of social origin enrol in general programs (75%), whereas only 41% of those with low social origin choose the general path. The distribution of this respondent category is split between technical institutes and, to a lesser extent, vocational ones. Only a small percentage (6%) of those from higher social backgrounds choose to pursue vocational careers. This finding supports previous literature showing that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to choose these kinds of courses over general ones. While social background has a significant impact on school type selection, migratory background has a lesser influence, particularly when comparing natives and non-natives, especially in terms of general and technical institutes. The described relation is further supported by the low contingency coefficient.

		Gender		Total	Social Origin			Total	Migratory Back-ground		Total
		Male	Female		Low	Middle	High		Not native	Native	
School Track	General	45.4%	67.3%	56.4%	41.0%	56.3%	74.5%	56.5%	49.2%	58.0%	56.8%
	Technical	38.6%	20.2%	29.4%	39.9%	27.5%	19.1%	29.3%	38.7%	27.7%	29.2%
	Vocational	15.9%	12.5%	14.2%	19.2%	16.2%	6.4%	14.2%	12.0%	14.3%	14.0%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 1. Cross table Track *Gender: Valid cases: 1600; Contingency coeff.: 0.251; Chi square: 107.701; df 4; sign.000. Cross table Track*Social Origin; Valid cases: 1616; Contingency coeff.: 0.313; Chi square 173.213; df 8; sign.000. Cross table Track* Migratory Background. Valid cases: 1585; Contingency coeff.:0.132; Chi square 28.189; df 4; sign.000. Source: authors' elaboration.

School Track		B	Std. Error	Sign.	Exp(B)	95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
General	Intercept	0.826	0.194	0.000			
	Social Origin	0.743	0.061	0.000	2.102	1.864	2.372
	Female	0.692	0.118	0.000	1.997	1.584	2.519
	Migratory Background	0.282	0.158	0.073	1.326	0.974	1.805
Technical	Intercept	0.373	0.196	0.058			
	Social Origin	0.128	0.064	0.044	1.137	1.004	1.288
	Female	-0.431	0.127	0.001	0.650	0.507	0.833
	Migratory Background	0.507	0.158	0.001	1.660	1.218	2.264

a. The reference category is: Vocational. b. The variable social origin is metric

Table 2. Determinants of School Track. Multinomial Logistic Regression model; [Number of valid cases 2767; Overall percentage predicted correctly: 60.7; Log likelihood 3582.678; Cox and Snell.142; Nagelkerke.167; Chi square: 425.164; df: 6; sign.:000]. Source: authors' elaboration.

The estimates shown in Table 2 support the previous description. The influence of social background on the choice of secondary education track persists, albeit with distinct effects on the social composition of various educational tracks. Students from high social backgrounds are twice as likely to choose general paths, while migration background has the greatest impact on technical institutes choice. This result underscores various factors that affect educational choices, which were not identified through the described bivariate analyses. Regarding gender, women are more likely to pursue general paths instead of technical or vocational, which are mostly dominated by males (with a slightly smaller gap in vocational paths).

The cross-tables on overall performance reveal that women consistently report higher results than men, as confirmed by the Oecd (2018). Specifically, 16% of women report better performance, while only 8% of male participants make the same claim. Likewise, the rate of low performance is much higher among men (26%) than women (11%). The differences in performance increase in relation to social origin, which once again proves to be the most impactful factor among the variables considered. As individuals move from lower social backgrounds to higher categories of social origin, there is a significant increase in reported performance, highlighting a strong association between these two dimensions.

		<i>Gender</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Social Origin</i>			<i>Total</i>
		<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>		<i>Low</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High</i>	
<i>Overall achievement</i>	<i>Low</i>	25.8%	11.8%	18.8%	20.7%	18.9%	16.4%	18.8%
	<i>Middle low</i>	22.5%	22.1%	22.3%	23.6%	23.8%	19.0%	22.2%
	<i>Middle</i>	28.7%	28.8%	28.8%	32.2%	28.3%	25.4%	28.8%
	<i>Middle high</i>	14.8%	21.4%	18.1%	15.3%	17.1%	22.7%	18.2%
	<i>High</i>	8.2%	15.9%	12.1%	8.2%	11.9%	16.5%	12.0%
<i>Total</i>		100,0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 3. Cross table Overall achievement* Gender: Valid cases: 2837; Contingency coeff.: 0.207; Chi square: 126.410; df 4; sign.000. Cross table Overall achievement *Social Origin; Valid cases: 2861; Contingency coeff.: 0.145; Chi square 61.041; df 8; sign.000. Source: authors' elaboration.

Individuals born in Italy show higher performance percentages compared to those who are not native, with only slight variations. At lower levels of performance, the disparities between non-native speakers and Italian respondents become more pronounced, with the former reporting higher percentages. The impact of students' chosen educational track on their reported performance is confirmed. General path

respondents showed moderately high performance, while their counterparts in technical or vocational paths reported lower performance. As performance reaches higher levels, the distinction between technical and vocational paths becomes less significant, giving general students an advantage.

		<i>Migratory Background</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>School Track</i>			<i>Total</i>
		<i>Non-Native</i>	<i>Native</i>		<i>General</i>	<i>Technical</i>	<i>Vocational</i>	
<i>Overall achievement</i>	<i>Low</i>	25.1%	17.9%	18.9%	12.8%	25.8%	28.1%	18.8%
	<i>Middle low</i>	17.0%	22.7%	21.9%	20.0%	23.1%	29.6%	22.2%
	<i>Middle</i>	29.8%	28.8%	28.9%	29.4%	28.0%	27.6%	28.7%
	<i>Middle high</i>	17.8%	18.1%	18.0%	21.7%	16.5%	7.9%	18.2%
	<i>High</i>	10.2%	12.6%	12.3%	16.1%	6.7%	6.9%	12.0%
<i>Total</i>		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4. Cross table Overall achievement* Migratory Background: Valid cases: 2790; Contingency coeff.: 0.075; Chi square: 15.793; df 4; sign.003. Cross table Overall achievement *School track; Valid cases: 2860; Contingency coeff. 0.239; Chi square 172.650; df 8; sign.000. Source: authors' elaboration.

	<i>Gender</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Social Origin</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>		<i>Low</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High</i>	
<i>One and more repetition</i>	18.1%	9.1%	13.6%	20.3%	11.4%	8.2%	13.6%
<i>Regular</i>	81.9%	90.9%	86.4%	79.7%	88.6%	91.8%	86.4%
<i>Total</i>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 5. Cross table: Grade Repetition* Gender: Valid cases: 2837; Contingency coeff.: 0.130; Chi square: 48.783; df 1; sign.000. Cross table: Grade Repetition *Social Origin; Valid cases: 2861; Contingency coeff.: 0.149; Chi square 65.358; df 2; sign.000. Source: authors' elaboration.

Including repetitions, as highlighted in Table 5, allows us to identify factual variables that shape the individual pathways of students. Men have fewer regular paths compared to women, with 18% of them reported experiencing academic failures, while only 9% of women reported the same. Social background still exerts a strong influence on the educational path. The likelihood of experiencing nonlinear school pathways is significantly lower among individuals from higher social classes, with only

8.2% reporting such experiences, compared to 20% of respondents from lower social classes who have faced one or more failures.

Table 6 reveals that migratory background has a more significant influence on repetitions rather than on the self-reported performance of the interviewees. When compared to their international counterparts, Italians displayed more regular career paths. The higher percentage of those who have experienced one or more failures in their educational career falls within the category of non-natives (22.5% vs. 11.7%). Last, attending a vocational or technical institute implies fewer regular paths compared to those who have followed a general path. According to Miur's² report in 2022, the percentage of repeating students in Italy confirms the trend, with vocational (10.3%) and technical (8.9%) institutes having the highest share of non-promoted students. Among general students, 91% choose linear paths, instead of technical or vocational institute respondents, where the percentages are approximately 82% and 76% respectively.

	<i>Migratory Background</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>School Track</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>non native</i>	<i>native</i>		<i>General</i>	<i>Technical</i>	<i>Vocational</i>	
<i>Grade repetition (one and more)</i>	22.5%	11.7%	13.2%	9.0%	17.7%	23.6%	13.6%
<i>Regular</i>	77.5%	88.3%	86.8%	91.0%	82.3%	76.4%	86.4%
<i>Total</i>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 6. Cross table: Grade Repetition* Migratory Background: Valid cases: 2791; Contingency coeff.: 0.109; Chi square: 33.641; df 1; sign.000. Cross table: Grade Repetition *School track; Valid cases: 2862; Contingency coeff.: 0.161; Chi square 75.884; df 2; sign.000. Source: authors elaboration.

Regarding future expectations, women are more likely than men to express a preference for pursuing university studies, while men are more willing to access the labour market and continue their studies at the same time. According to the table 7, the percentage of women directly entering the labour market is only 15%, compared to 37.5% for men. The role of social background as a discriminating factor is clear, as students from higher social origin choose university education over immediate

² MIUR is the acronym related to the Ministry of Education and Merit present in Italy (<https://www.miur.gov.it/>)

employment or professional training. Despite the link between social background and post school choices, a significant share of respondents from disadvantaged backgrounds choose to pursue tertiary education, highlighting their strong motivation and social payback.

	<i>Gender</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Social Origin</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>		<i>Low</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High</i>	
<i>Looking for a job</i>	37.5%	15.0%	26.2%	35.6%	27.3%	13.7%	26.0%
<i>Professional training</i>	6.0%	5.5%	5.7%	7.1%	5.1%	4.7%	5.7%
<i>Looking for a job and continuing education (at the tertiary level)</i>	18.0%	24.6%	21.3%	21.9%	22.3%	20.7%	21.7%
<i>Continuing education (at the tertiary level)</i>	38.5%	54.9%	46.7%	35.3%	45.4%	60.9%	46.6%
<i>Total</i>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 7. Cross table: Future life expectations* Gender: Valid cases: 2836; Contingency coeff.: 0.252; Chi square: 192.489; df 3; sign.000. Cross table: Future life expectations *Social Origin; Valid cases: 2859; Contingency coeff.: 0.231; Chi square 160.890; df 6; sign.000. Source: authors' elaboration.

The clearest disparities related to migratory background can be seen in the preference for further studies, particularly among native students. Tertiary education is chosen by 48% of Italians, while only 36% of non-natives opt for the same pathway. The chosen educational track proves to be a strong predictor of post-school choice. Among those pursuing tertiary education, 60% come from general backgrounds, with only 14% coming from vocational institutes. Students enrolled in technical or vocational paths mostly choose to seek employment immediately, showing the impact of the educational path on their future choices. The impact of the chosen track on post-school life expectations is confirmed by a high association coefficient, as observed in Table 7, where the influence of social background is already established.

	<i>Migratory Back-ground</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>School Track</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Non-native</i>	<i>native</i>		<i>General</i>	<i>Technical</i>	<i>Vocational</i>	
<i>Looking for a job</i>	30.0%	25.5%	26.1%	7.7%	45.8%	58.2%	26.0%
<i>Professional training</i>	5.5%	5.6%	5.6%	3.5%	7.3%	11.5%	5.7%
<i>Looking for a job and continuing education (at the tertiary level)</i>	28.2%	20.7%	21.7%	25.9%	16.2%	15.7%	21.6%
<i>Continuing education (at the tertiary level)</i>	36.3%	48.2%	46.6%	63.0%	30.7%	14.5%	46.6%
<i>Total</i>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 8. Cross table: Future life expectations * Migratory Background: Valid cases: 2791; Contingency coeff.: 0.087; Chi square: 21.344; df 3; sign.000. Cross table: Future life expectations * School Track: Valid cases: 2861; Contingency coeff.: 0.467; Chi square: 798.829; df 6; sign.000. Source: author's elaboration

	<i>Grade Repetition</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Overall Achievement</i>					<i>Total</i>
	<i>Repetition (one and more)</i>	<i>Regular</i>		<i>Low</i>	<i>Mid-dle-low</i>	<i>Mid-dle</i>	<i>Mid-dle-high</i>	<i>High</i>	
<i>Looking for a job</i>	45.4%	23.0%	26.0 %	50.7%	33.3%	22.1%	10.0%	7.6%	26.0%
<i>Professional training</i>	14.2%	4.4%	5.7%	10.8%	7.4%	3.4%	3.1%	4.1%	5.7%
<i>Looking for a job and continuing education (at the tertiary level)</i>	15.5%	22.6%	21.6 %	14.6%	22.3%	23.8%	23.8%	23.3%	21.7%
<i>Continuing education (at the tertiary level)</i>	25.0%	50.0%	46.6 %	23.9%	36.9%	50.6%	63.2%	65.1%	46.6%
<i>Total</i>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 9. Cross table: Future life expectations * Grade Repetition: Valid cases: 2861; Contingency coeff.: 0.239; Chi square: 173.421; df 3; sign.000. Cross table: Future life expectations * Overall Achievement: Valid cases: 2860; Contingency coeff.: 0.362 Chi square: 431.046; df 12; sign.000. Source: authors' elaboration.

Future expectations are shaped by the student's school experience, including educational achievements and repetitions. Those who have experienced failures and therefore non-linear paths are more inclined to enter the workforce (45%) rather than continue their studies (25%). The choice to enrol higher education is widely observed among students who have reported linear school pathways, characterised by no

repetition (50%), and have achieved high school performance (65%). There is a positive association between self-reported student performance and the likelihood of pursuing tertiary education. Only 7% of those who have reported high overall school achievements choose to enter the labour market, compared to 50% who declare lower performance.

	Grade Repetition		Total	Overall Achievement					Total
	Repetition (one and more)	Regular		Low	Mid-low	Mid	Mid-high	High	
Looking for a job	45.4%	23.0%	26.0%	50.7%	33.3%	22.1%	10.0%	7.6%	26.0%
Professional training	14.2%	4.4%	5.7%	10.8%	7.4%	3.4%	3.1%	4.1%	5.7%
Looking for a job and continuing education (at the tertiary level)	15.5%	22.6%	21.6%	14.6%	22.3%	23.8%	23.8%	23.3%	21.7%
Continuing education (at the tertiary level)	25.0%	50.0%	46.6%	23.9%	36.9%	50.6%	63.2%	65.1%	46.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 9. Cross table: Future life expectations * Grade Repetition: Valid cases: 2861; Contingency coeff.: 0.239; Chi square: 173.421; df 3; sign.000. Cross table: Future life expectations * Overall Achievement: Valid cases: 2860; Contingency coeff.: 0.362 Chi square: 431.046; df 12; sign.000. Source: authors' elaboration.

In the last model, we focus on the impact of individual and pathway variables on the decisions made by respondents after completing education. The estimates got from our analysis provide additional support for the findings discovered in previous sections. The student's track choices and their school experience exert the greatest impact on the dependent variable. Social origin influences the chosen school track, which in turn plays a crucial role in determining post-school choices, especially in terms of tertiary education. General track significantly increases the chances of enrolling in a tertiary education by at least 17 points, in contrast to technical institutes, which have a smaller impact on continuing education. The impact of academic performance and repetitions, on which the influence of social origin and chosen school track is known, is widely recognised and equally significant. Having experienced linear educational paths, with no repetitions, increases the likelihood of pursuing tertiary education, as does reporting on overall school achievements. The component of "performance" in terms of school achievements proves to be a key factor in explaining variations in post-school choices, especially when results are high. The effect of

<i>Future expectations</i>		<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Er- ror</i>	<i>Sign.</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>95% Confidence In- terval for Exp(B)</i>	
						<i>Lower Bound</i>	<i>Upper Bound</i>
<i>University and work</i>	<i>Intercept</i>	-2.839	0.275	0.000			
	<i>Social Origin (metric)</i>	0.174	0.064	0.007	1.190	1.050	1.349
	<i>Female</i>	0.666	0.125	0.000	1.947	1.522	2.489
	<i>Grade repetition (re- gular)</i>	0.791	0.184	0.000	2.207	1.539	3.163
	<i>Migratory Back- ground</i>	-0.431	0.168	0.010	0.650	0.468	0.903
	<i>Overall achievement - middle low</i>	0.647	0.184	0.000	1.910	1.332	2.740
	<i>Overall achievement- middle</i>	1.235	0.180	0.000	3.439	2.417	4.893
	<i>Overall achievement- middle high</i>	1.667	0.218	0.000	5.296	3.456	8.117
	<i>Overall achievement- high</i>	1.588	0.255	0.000	4.892	2.970	8.060
	<i>General track</i>	2.116	0.180	0.000	8.295	5.834	11.794
	<i>Technical track</i>	0.294	0.184	0.109	1.342	0.937	1.923
<i>University</i>	<i>Intercept</i>	-3.413	0.266	0.000			
	<i>Social Origin (metric)</i>	0.378	0.059	0.000	1.459	1.301	1.637
	<i>Female</i>	0.706	0.115	0.000	2.027	1.619	2.537
	<i>Grade repetition (re- gular)</i>	0.746	0.162	0.000	2.109	1.536	2.897
	<i>Migratory Back- ground</i>	0.087	0.164	0.594	1.091	0.792	1.504
	<i>Overall achievement - middle low</i>	0.633	0.165	0.000	1.883	1.362	2.603
	<i>Overall achievement- middle</i>	1.524	0.161	0.000	4.588	3.345	6.294
	<i>Overall achievement- middle high</i>	2.054	0.197	0.000	7.796	5.295	11.477
	<i>Overall achievement- high</i>	2.013	0.233	0.000	7.487	4.743	11.819
	<i>General track</i>	2.877	0.177	0.000	17.755	12.540	25.139
	<i>Technical track</i>	0.912	0.177	0.000	2.489	1.759	3.522
a. The reference category is: work and professional training							

Table 10. Determinants of School Track. Multinomial Logistic Regression model; [Number of valid cases 2767; Overall percentage predicted correctly: 63.1; Log likelihood 4384.266; Cox and Snell.350; Nagelkerke.398; Chi square: 1190.529; df: 20; sign:.000]. Source: authors' elaboration.

social background is absorbed by both performance and the chosen track. Social background loses some of its influence and becomes less significant for the choice of immediately entering the labour market and simultaneously enrolling in a university field of study. Demographic variables show that females have an advantage in pursuing further studies for both categories in the dependent variable, as observed empirically. The influence of migratory background on pursuing higher education and seeking employment simultaneously becomes less important when considering only the tertiary level.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The analysis presented in this local survey strongly supports the existing literature on how social background influences educational decisions. Additionally, the analysis underscores the non-neutral nature of the educational system's structure (length of common core and system of tracks; Benadusi & Giancola, 2014) in facilitating individual and family choices. Opposed, the evidence shows that the form of the educational system shapes the degrees of freedom of students' (and their families') choices, which, however, the socio-economic and cultural status of the families themselves strongly conditions (Giancola & Colarusso, 2020). The analyses conducted allow us to highlight a significant effect of social origin on educational careers, in terms of track choices between general, technical, and vocational. In terms of self-perceived performance and repetitions, the relation between the chosen track and academic results shows a second effect. Students' future choices seem to be significantly influenced by their individual school experiences, including track choice, school achievements, and repetitions, which can (re)producing social inequalities. We can observe a clear chain effect, where social origin directly shapes choices made at the beginning of the educational pathway and indirectly affects subsequent choices, school achievements, and repetitions. The choice between tertiary education and entering the labour market immediately is influenced by a series of factors that start with one's social background. These effects have an impact at different level of the educational pathway, thus shaping future expectations. As set out at the beginning of this contribution, educational choices have not individual but collective effects. In this sense, it is important to acknowledge that systematic inequalities, like the ones mentioned, have considerable effects on both individuals and communities.

This underscores the need for policy interventions that are meaningful, urgent, and rooted in research data, as outlined in this paper.

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MEASURING SATISFACTION WITH THE GENDER ROLE AS A PREDICTOR OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE. AN OPERATIONAL PROPOSAL

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Abstract Gender-based violence is the consequence of numerous causes and predisposing factors. Among these, dissatisfaction with the gender role, both of one's own and of the partner, can play a role. Dissatisfaction has been related to violence especially with respect to the distribution of power within the relationship (Kaura, 2001). In this regard, the role of primary socialization and the transmission of traditional values relating to the asymmetry of power in the relationship has also been highlighted (Avakame, 1998). Dissatisfaction is believed to arise from the incomplete matching between expectations and perceptions (Oliveri, 1980). Expectations arise from family experiences, cultural models transmitted through education, and gender stereotypes. Perceptions depend on how subjects feel their experience of current or potential partners. Based on these considerations, this paper reviews the techniques and scales currently used for measuring dissatisfaction. A new method, called the "4Q model", is also proposed for measuring the phenomenon.

DISSATISFACTION WITH THE RELATIONSHIP AND GENDER VIOLENCE

In the past, several studies have investigated the relation between dissatisfaction with the relationship and gender violence.

Ronfeldt et al. (1998) discussed how satisfaction with relationship power correlates with physical violence of men against their dating partners. Inconsistency of the predictive role of the absolute amount of power possessed by partners or the distribution of absolute power over gender violence emerged, along with the idea that satisfaction with the amount of relationship power may be a better predictor of relationship violence.

Coleman and Straus (1986) found that, irrespective of the distribution of power in a relationship, when consensus about the distribution of marital power increased,

marital conflict decreased, and when marital conflict decreased, so did marital violence.

Several measurement instruments were introduced to measure relationship violence: the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979) consists of 18-item, and is a self-report scale developed to measure the behaviors that people may engage during a conflict.

In order to measure power perceptions and power satisfaction, the Power Satisfaction Scale has been introduced (Ronfeldt et al., 1998), which consists of 11 self-report items. Power perceptions is assessed with six items that ask participants to indicate which partner has greater influence in certain situations. After the participants indicate who has more power for each situation, they rate how satisfied they are with this arrangement or outcome. These six satisfaction items are used to index power satisfaction.

The Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory (Tolman, 1989) consists of 58 self-report items which reflect an individual’s attempt to isolate, dominate, humiliate, and threaten his or her partner.

In 2001, Kaura studied the relation between dissatisfaction with relationship power and dating violence perpetration by men and women. Her piece of research was carried out on a sample of 352 male and 296 female undergraduate college students and showed that relationship power dissatisfaction is associated with the use of violence in dating relationships by both men and women. An interesting result of this study was that women have the potential to perpetrate various forms of violence and with the same frequency as it is for men. The satisfaction one has with the amount of power they hold in a relationship was assessed using the items reported in Table 1.

Items	Answer categories			
45. Who do you think should have more say in your relationship, your partner or you?	a. partner should have much more say	b. partner should have somewhat more say	c. I should have somewhat more say	d. I should have much more say
46. Who do you think generally decides what you and your partner do together?	a. my partner has much more say	b. my partner has somewhat more say	c. I have somewhat more say	d. I have much more say
47. In general, how satisfied are you about who has the say?	a. very satisfied	b. somewhat satisfied	c. somewhat dissatisfied	d. very dissatisfied

48. Who has more say about how much time the two of you spend with each other?	a. my partner has much more say	b. my partner has somewhat more say	c. I have somewhat more say	d. I have much more say
49. In general how satisfied are you about who has the say?	a. very satisfied	b. somewhat satisfied	c. somewhat dissatisfied	d. very dissatisfied
50. Who has more say in deciding how much time the two of you spend with other people?	a. my partner has much more say	b. my partner has somewhat more say	c. I have somewhat more say	d. I have much more say
51. In general, how satisfied are you about who has the say?	a. very satisfied	b. somewhat satisfied	c. somewhat dissatisfied	d. very dissatisfied
52. Whose viewpoint do you feel should prevail most of the time when you and your partner argue?	a. mine	b. my partner's		
53. If you and your partner wanted to see different movies, which movie would you be most likely to see?	a. my choice	b. my partner's choice		
54. In general, how satisfied are you with this outcome?	a. very satisfied	b. somewhat satisfied	c. somewhat dissatisfied	d. very dissatisfied
55. When you and your partner argue, who usually gets their way, despite the objections of the other person?	a. me	b. my partner		
56. In general how satisfied are you with this outcome?	a. very satisfied	b. somewhat satisfied	c. somewhat dissatisfied	d. very dissatisfied
57. If you and your partner could go out one evening with your friends or your partner's friends, which group of friends would you likely go out with?	a. my friends	b. my partner's friends		
58. In general, how satisfied are you with this outcome?	a. very satisfied	b. somewhat satisfied	c. somewhat dissatisfied	d. very dissatisfied

59. Who generally decides how money is spent?	a. me	b. my partner	c. finances are completely independent	
60. In general how satisfied are you with this arrangement?	a. very satisfied	b. somewhat satisfied	c. somewhat dissatisfied	d. very dissatisfied

Table 1. Measurement of satisfaction with the amount of power. Source: Kaura (2001).

Reitzel-Jaffe & Wolfe (2001) examined the relationship between violence perpetration and gender role beliefs in men. This piece of research was made over a sample of 585 men at a Canadian university. The survey contained the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence et al., 1973), and the Conflicts in Relationships Inventory (Wolfe et al., 2001). This study showed that men who held traditional gender role beliefs and negative beliefs about gender perpetrated significantly higher levels of violence than those who did not hold these beliefs.

DeKeseredy et al. (1997) studied gender roles over a sample of 1,835 college women as a possible reason for women's use of violence. It was found that the majority of the women who reported perpetrating dating violence reported self-defense as the motivation. Those women who generated violence without a motive of self-defense reported that they did not accept the traditional role of men as the aggressor and women as the victim. These women reported motivations that closely matched those that had previously been associated with men.

Based on the previously described research results, it can be hypothesized that dissatisfaction with the gender role might be a predictor of violence perpetration.

All the above suggests some interesting educational implications. It is acknowledged that gender roles are socially constructed, mainly through primary socialization (Piccone Stella & Saraceno, 1996; Biemmi, 2010). On the other hand, in western societies the complexity of value systems and social roles affects the formation of gender identity. Therefore children are exposed to a lot of coexisting models of gender roles and expectations, even restricting the analysis to heterosexual relationships. As we are going to discuss, expectations are at the very basis of the formation of satisfaction/dissatisfaction. Special attention should be paid, from the educators' side, to educating and training children in understanding and managing the complexity and multiplicity of gender roles (Gamberi et al., 2010). It may be dangerous to aim at replicating or approximating the ONE model of ideal man or woman (Buss, 1989) with their traditional sets of values, beliefs, expectations over themselves and over

the partner. As adults, people who are rigid in interpreting the partner's and their own gender roles may find difficult to relate with partners who show personality traits and play gender roles which are not fully predictable. Under these circumstances, people may experience and generate dissatisfaction with the relationship, which may well result in violence.

CONCEPTUALIZING AND MEASURING SATISFACTION AND/OR DISSATISFACTION WITH GENDER ROLES

Gender role has been given more than one operational definition: let us think for example of Bem's Sex-Role Inventory (1974), or Kachel et al.'s Traditional Masculinity-Femininity scale (2016). A major challenge might be constituted by measuring satisfaction/dissatisfaction with gender roles, as a predictor of gender violence.

Satisfaction is often viewed as a one-dimensional concept that can vary along a continuum from extreme dissatisfaction to extreme satisfaction, with neutrality or indifference at the midpoint.

According to this perspective, a specific attribute of couple relationships can lead to either satisfaction or dissatisfaction. For instance, extreme dissatisfaction or extreme satisfaction might occur when self-esteem is "very bad" or "very good," respectively. Under the one-dimensional approach, satisfaction has often been assessed using symmetrical ordinal scales (Chi & Qu, 2008).

An alternate approach to understanding and evaluating satisfaction proposes viewing satisfaction and dissatisfaction as distinct mental aspects (Oliver, 1993; Tribe & Snaith 1998). According to Herzberg's "Motivator and Hygiene Factor Theory" (1966) and Kano et al.'s "Theory of Attractive Quality" (1984), satisfaction and dissatisfaction should be considered separately. Certain factors, such as Herzberg's "motivating factors" and Kano's "attractive quality factors," can only create satisfaction when present, but their absence typically does not lead to dissatisfaction (e.g., unexpected gestures of appreciation from a partner).

In contrast, the lack of further aspects such as Herzberg's "hygienic factors" and Kano's "must-be" factors can only lead to dissatisfaction as their presence does not create satisfaction. These factors are always anticipated and their presence is considered a given by individuals (e.g. honesty).

Single-item scales are commonly employed to measure overall satisfaction in research studies (Gao et al., 2017; González et al., 2007; Prayag & Ryan, 2012). This is especially accurate when situational limitations are present, such as when investigating satisfaction in research aimed at subjects other than satisfaction. Multi-item measures are frequently used when the research goal is to measure the various components of satisfaction. These scales can be constructed with a limited number of items focusing on the core aspects of satisfaction such as affective, cognitive, and fulfilment, as proposed by Del Bosque and San Martín (2008), or with a larger number of items as suggested by Tribe and Snaith (1998), Truong et al. (2017), and Wu (2016).

Items are typically combined into composite indicators or incorporated into intricate models, like structural equation models (SEM: Chi & Qu, 2008), as observable variables to assess latent components. Using numerous items in a model is supported by the enhanced reliability of the scales, despite the possibility of some redundancy, particularly when items are chosen without careful consideration, solely relying on data-driven methods like exploratory factor analysis.

The decision to use a limited or large number of items is influenced by the selection of an approach for measuring latent variables, which might be reflecting or formative. Reflective measurement presupposes the presence of a latent variable, which affects the fluctuations in the indicators. Formative measurement posits that the latent variable is not inherently present but is instead a combination of selected formative indicators used for its measurement (Bagozzi, 2011).

Gender role satisfaction should be assessed using composite indicators rather than factorial models, as in this case indicators refer to different aspects of satisfaction and could even be independent of each other like formative indicators are (Jarvis et al., 2003).

MEASURING SATISFACTION: THE 4Q METHODOLOGY

A methodology called 4Q (four questions) has been recently introduced by Oliveri et al. (2019) to assess satisfaction and dissatisfaction. This methodology could be very beneficial in adverse circumstances as it involves asking only four questions to participants. The 4Q technique comprises four distinct steps in practice.

STEP 1 – A list of good and negative attributes is created, containing only those that are pertinent to the research goals. An examination of the positive characteristics may stem from solid theoretical foundations or other regularly employed methodologies like pilot surveys and focus groups. Likewise, a compilation of unfavorable characteristics should be created. Various attributes can be found in both lists as the subject of either positive or negative expectations (e.g., self-esteem), while some attributes are unique to one list (e.g., economic independence is generally seen as positive, while psychological weakness is always considered negative).

STEP 2 – Trained interviewers ask respondents four open-ended questions to uncover positive and negative expectations and perceptions related to their gender roles. The questions aim to reveal what positive and negative aspects were associated with their gender roles before and during their relationships.

STEP 3 – The interviewer marks the appropriate answer categories in the checklist based on the good or negative attributes outlined in the questionnaire from step 1. Even though the questions are open-ended, interviewers record the answers as binary variables (attributes reported or not reported by interviewees) as if the questions were asked in a closed-ended style. Interviewers might ask interviewees to explain the positive or bad qualities they mention if needed. If there is uncertainty, interviewers transcribe all of the interviewees’ responses to improve the accuracy of the checklist completion.

STEP 4 – Involves identifying satisfaction or discontent for each attribute by comparing expectations and perceptions. This is done using the classification methods provided in Tables 2 and 3 for positive and negative attributes.

EXPECTED PRESENCE OF POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES	PERCEIVED PRESENCE OF POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES			
	YES		NO	
	Generation of satisfaction	Generation of dissatisfaction	Generation of satisfaction	Generation of dissatisfaction
YES	Yes	No	No	Yes
NO	Yes	No	No	No

Table 2. Outcomes based on a comparison between expectations and perceptions of positive attributes. Source: Oliveri et al. (2019).

EXPECTED PRESENCE OF NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES	PERCEIVED PRESENCE OF NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES			
	YES		NO	
	Generation of satisfaction	Generation of dissatisfaction	Generation of satisfaction	Generation of dissatisfaction
YES	No	Yes	Yes	No
NO	No	Yes	No	No

Table 3. Outcomes based on a comparison between expectations and perceptions of negative attributes. Source: Oliveri et al. (2019)

For example, let us consider a fictitious individual to demonstrate how the aforementioned tables can be utilized. Let us imagine that this individual responds to the question “What negative aspects did you associate with your gender role as a man/woman before starting your relationship?”, stating that (s)he anticipated a loss of autonomy. Following the 4Q technique, individuals is then asked: “What negative aspects related to your gender role have you experienced in your relationship?” The respondent’s answer may indicate that (s)he has truly lost her/his sense of independence based on actual experience. Here, a pessimistic outlook aligns with a pessimistic viewpoint. According to Table 3, this scenario is expected to result in dissatisfaction. If the individual had experienced autonomy, her/his negative anticipation would not align with a negative perception, potentially leading to satisfaction.

In other instances, it may happen that the individual had no anticipation of any positive attribute. However, in these cases the absence of satisfaction does not automatically indicate dissatisfaction, as neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction occurs.

INDICATORS OF SATISFACTION AND DISSATISFACTION

Following the four steps described above, the 4Q methodology produces S binary satisfaction indicator variables (I_{js}) and D binary dissatisfaction indicator variables (I_{jd}), which can be aggregated into two composite Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction indicators, using equation 1 and equation 2.

$$TS_i = \frac{\sum_{s=1}^S \sum_{j_s=1}^2 W_{j_s} I_{i,j_s}}{S} \quad (1)$$

$$TD_i = \frac{\sum_{d=1}^D \sum_{j_d=1}^2 U_{j_d} I_{i,j_d}}{n} \quad (2)$$

Multiple correspondence analysis could be performed to obtain estimates of the W and U weights.

The two composite indicators TS and TD assign two scores to each respondent which can be finally related to violence perpetration, which is a variable external to the 4Q model.

CONCLUSIONS

The 4Q methodology might be seen as dual because the absence of satisfaction does not always result in dissatisfaction, as there are instances where neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction are present.

All potential scenarios are considered: few missing data could be attributed only to hesitant respondents, untrustworthy respondents, or memory lapses (Biemer et al., 1991; Biemer & Lyberg, 2003).

Expectations and perceptions are gathered from respondents' unprompted utterances, as individuals are not required to react to a certain set of items.

This method can forecast results for attributes that respondents have reported nor expectations nor perceptions on. Under these circumstances, unreported information from respondents is considered insignificant in influencing satisfaction or dissatisfaction, resulting in the inability to measure either satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

This methodology is especially beneficial under adverse settings as it involves administering only four questions to respondents without any substantial loss of

information, and is of special value in gender violence prevention if, as it seems, dissatisfaction with gender roles can be in some cases considered a predictor of violence.

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INCLUSION SCOLAIRE EN SUISSE ROMANDE : DES ENSEIGNANTES EN QUÊTE DE JUSTICE ?

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Abstract " A quelle occasion et en quoi la mouvance de l'inclusion scolaire m'a posé question, en termes d'identité professionnelle ? °. C'est l'une des questions qui ont été posées à un groupe d'une dizaine d'enseignant·e·s suisses-romand·e·s, réuni·e·s autour d'analyses collectives de récits d'expériences professionnelles, à l'occasion d'un programme de formation postgrade. Les récits élicités relèvent d'une part de fortes tensions professionnelles, aggravées par une conception majoritairement biomédicale, individualisante et déficitaire de la réponse pédagogique à la différence. Ils relèvent, d'autre part, une oscillation récurrente entre deux types de réponses à l'injustice : la redistribution et la reconnaissance. Comment accompagner les élèves en répondant à la fois à leur besoin d'être ou de faire " comme tout le monde ° et à leurs besoins éducatifs particuliers ?

INTRODUCTION ET CONTEXTE

Ce que certain·e·s appellent, dans le canton de Vaud, le "chantier" de l'école inclusive s'inscrit en réponse à de nombreuses problématiques, en soulève de nouvelles et reconfigure les conditions et prescriptions à l'égard du travail enseignant. Les autorités conçoivent ce chantier au moyen du *Concept cantonal de mise en oeuvre et de coordination des mesures spécifiques en faveur des élèves des établissements ordinaires de la scolarité obligatoire* (Concept 360°) (DFJC, DGEO, SESAF et SPJ, 2019)¹, impliquant la promotion d'offres de formation continue et postgrade destinées aux directions d'écoles et au corps enseignant en exercice. La recherche présentée dans cette contribution se déroule dans le cadre d'une formation postgrade² destinée à des enseignant·e·s de tous les degrés de la scolarité souhaitant développer des connaissances

¹ Disponible sur <https://www.vd.ch/themes/formation/enseignement-obligatoire-et-pedagogie-specialisee/concept-360>.

² Certificat d'études avancées (CAS, 12-15 crédits ECTS) " Différenciation et gestion de classe : enseigner pour et avec la diversité ". Haute école pédagogique du canton de Vaud.

pour mieux “enseigner pour et avec la diversité”. Le dispositif a été pensé comme un laboratoire de formation par la recherche collaborative et de production de connaissances sociales et pédagogiques, dans lequel les expériences vécues et problématisées par les participant·e·s rencontrent les conceptualisations théoriques d’expert·e·s.

À partir d’une question ouverte – à quelle occasion et en quoi la mouvance de l’inclusion m’a posé question en termes d’identité professionnelle ?– un groupe d’une dizaine d’enseignantes ont produit des propositions de récits d’expérience, selon la méthode d’analyse en groupe. Inventée par Michel Mercier et formalisée par Van Campenhoudt, Franssen et Cantelli (2009), cette méthode génère des données directement ancrées dans les expériences professionnelles des participant·e·s et problématisées collectivement. Cette contribution présente une analyse des thématiques qui émergent de la comparaison des dix propositions entre elles. Celles-ci évoquent des situations emblématiques de tournants dans la carrière et l’identité professionnelle de ce public.

DISPOSITIF

Le programme comprend douze séances, inaugurées par une analyse de pratique professionnelle fondée sur des récits d’expérience. Les participantes proposent tour à tour un récit “portant sur une situation ou une expérience directement vécue qui lui semble significative du problème” (Van Campenhoudt et al., 2009, p. 5).

Chaque question d’amorce initiant les récits d’expérience a été négociée en amont avec les formateurs ou formatrices expert·e·s invité·e·s pour la nourrir leur thématique³. Celle dont il s’agit ici est : à quelle occasion et en quoi la mouvance de l’inclusion scolaire m’a posé question, en termes d’identité professionnelle ? Son but est de solliciter directement ce qui a été vécu comme “relevant de l’inclusion” : y a-t-il eu un “avant” et un “après”, en quoi et à quel point la posture professionnelle en a-t-elle été affectée ? Elle manifeste la volonté de ne pas considérer l’inclusion comme un acquis et privilégier un regard pragmatique et enraciné dans les processus se déployant au nom de l’inclusion.

³ Ici “ un espace de réflexion partagée sur les fondements historiques, conceptuels et éthiques de l’inclusion ”.

Du côté du formateur et des formatrices impliqué.e-s, ce bloc thématique réunissait des membres de trois équipes distinctes de la HEP-Vaud (dont les deux co-auteur.e-s de ce texte). Le programme était dès le départ structuré de façon à établir un dialogue articulant des expertises disciplinaires variées, autour de l'inclusion. Créer un "espace de réflexion partagée" ne constituait donc pas un défi uniquement pour les participantes, mais également pour nous-mêmes en tant que chercheur.e-s.

RESULTATS

Le tableau ci-dessous présente sommairement les propositions de récits des participantes. Chaque titre destiné à cibler le problème est choisi pendant l'analyse et par le groupe, au terme de chaque proposition de récit. Les récits ne sont pas présentés dans l'ordre de leur énonciation, mais suivant un regroupement opéré en fonction des deux axes d'analyse qui ont émergé d'eux : l'individualisation de la réponse pédagogique et le thème de la justice.

Situation	Description de la situation
1. Dans sa bulle...	Alba ⁴ décrit un questionnement intense, provoqué par l'arrivée d'une élève dont les comportements entravent la socialisation dans le groupe-classe. Elle ne trouve pas un terrain d'entente avec la mère (pour qui " tout va bien °) et semble regretter le manque d'arbitrage que la démarche diagnostique préalable d'une tierce personne aurait permis. Elle se dit prête à accueillir cette enfant pour autant qu'elle puisse obtenir de l'aide (" les outils °).
2. Impuissance...	Léïa accueille une petite fille avec un retard scolaire important, en raison de multiples problèmes de santé. La situation est constatée précocement et jugée suffisamment problématique pour qu'elle en parle à son doyen. Cette enfant nécessite un accompagnement constant, mais les demandes d'aide auprès du doyen n'aboutissent pas. L'enseignante se sent perdue : elle ne sait pas comment faire et n'a pas assez d'outils.
3. Tout va bien se passer	Olivia accueille un élève sénégalais après son passage en classe d'accueil. Jamais scolarisé auparavant et ne maîtrisant que partiellement le français, l'élève accumule un retard excessif pour évoluer dans une classe de 7 ^e . Cet accueil implique la collaboration avec un enseignant (non spécialisé). Elle constate un écart entre les encouragements de son collègue à son égard et ses propres compétences qu'elle estime insuffisantes pour accompagner cet élève en classe. Ce sentiment prend le dessus, jusqu'à envisager l'arrêt de travail.

⁴ Tous les prénoms sont fictifs et ont été choisis par les participantes.

4. Un enrichissement inattendu	Clara décrit une expérience positive de l'inclusion à travers l'accueil d'un enfant trisomique. Cette expérience idéalisée de prime abord, rencontre une réalité concrète qui contrarie les bénéfices prévus mais s'ouvre à des bénéfices imprévus.
5. Face à la violence	Claire convoque un souvenir assez ancien. Devant accueillir un élève violent envers lui-même et envers les autres, dans une classe surchargée, elle perd tous ses repères et moyens. Sans ressources, elle se demande si elle doit se "former pour ° ou si sa tolérance personnelle est trop basse.
6. Gestion impossible...	Marion relate une situation lors d'un remplacement d'une matinée, auprès de jeunes élèves du 1 ^{er} cycle primaire. Elle se retrouve exposée à la violence d'une élève décrite comme "en inclusion ° et voulant "mettre à sac la classe °. Même avertie, l'enseignante est sidérée par l'aspect incontrôlable de la situation qui rend la gestion de classe et l'enseignement impossibles. Ce court instant suffit pour la "vider °, la "déstabiliser ° et la questionner en profondeur.
7. Maltraitance ?	Lia évoque d'abord l'hétérogénéité croissante des classes, occasionnant un questionnement depuis 4 ans et la nécessité de "trouver autre chose en classe °. Réorientée vers la circonscription d'un récit, elle choisit le cas d'une élève qui réintègre une classe ordinaire, selon le souhait insistant de ses parents, après avoir été scolarisée dans une classe d'enseignement spécialisé. Sous la pression de sa mère, l'élève manque les tests de façon à connaître leur teneur pour les apprendre par cœur. Lia décèle de la maltraitance dans l'acharnement des parents et se sent très mal à l'aise face à l'obligation de réussite scolaire que cette élève ne pourra satisfaire et qui, prise dans un cercle vicieux, est mise et se met à l'écart ; Lia la sent malheureuse.
8. Différencier sans diagnostic	Dominique intervient à l'École de la transition, sans maîtrise de classe. Régulièrement confrontée à la détresse psychologique et à la démotivation de ses élèves, elle souhaite acquérir des outils pour mettre en place de la différenciation pédagogique. Quand bien même, elle se dit démunie dans ses tentatives, faute d'informations sur ses élèves, retenues par le maître de classe et la médiatrice, car jugées trop "confidentielles ° ou "intrusives ° pour être divulguées.
9. Surenchère	Norah décrit les mesures prises dans un établissement pour rentabiliser les heures d'enseignement spécialisé et favoriser le co-enseignement en concentrant les élèves en difficulté dans deux classes et la négociation qu'elle mène avec la direction de l'établissement au moment de constituer sa classe. Elle se voit peu à peu attribuer des élèves supplémentaires et accepte les nouvelles conditions tout en demandant confirmation des aides promises. Mais les arrangements ne sont finalement pas tenus, sous prétexte qu'il ne reste plus de ressources à attribuer à sa classe. Norah se retrouve, seule et sans le soutien promis, titulaire d'une classe qui réunit pourtant des élèves nécessitant de l'aide (et y ayant droit). Elle se sent trahie.

10. L'inclusion qui exclut	Lea mime avec ironie ses interactions de début d'année avec une enseignante spécialisée, une enseignante d'appui puis des parents d'élèves, lorsqu'ils lui présentent à tour de rôle les horaires durant lesquels ses élèves seront sorti-e-s alternativement de la classe, pour bénéficier d'aides ou de consultations extrascolaires (logothérapie, psychomotricité). Elle s'interroge : " quand est-ce que j'enseigne à ma classe ?! ". Elle constate ainsi que les mesures prises au nom de l'inclusion ont pour effet d'exclure les élèves du groupe-classe.
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BESOINS SPECIFIQUES, REPONSES INDIVIDUELLES

La première caractéristique (8/10 propositions) est la réduction d'une problématique, censée relever de la visée inclusive, à des situations individuelles d'élèves, convoquées pour représenter de manière emblématique les difficultés liées à la "mouvance de l'inclusion".

Cela suggère une conception de réponse pédagogique à la différence relevant du paradigme de l'intégration scolaire, plutôt que de la visée inclusive (Vienneau, 2002). Émergeant dans les années 1990, cette conception biomédicale, individualisante et déficitaire de la différence est omniprésente. Plaisance (2013) considère cette conception de l'intégration comme une réforme partielle, dans la continuité du spécialisé et affirme "les enfants accueillis auraient uniquement eu un statut de "visiteurs" et non celui de membres à part entière de l'institution. Ils restaient en quelque sorte sur le seuil, dans un entre deux" (p. 21). Il préconise pour l'inclusion "la formation de groupes hétérogènes d'enfants", "la flexibilité des structures" (p. 23) dans "un travail en équipe qui est aux antipodes de l'action isolée d'un éducateur" (p. 24).

La centration sur l'individu-problème engage une tension dans le métier : peut-on réellement faire progresser une classe à un rythme donné pour tou-te-s, tout en se préoccupant du besoin de chacun-e ?

Les propositions centrées sur un-e élève ont toutes en commun de mentionner un fort sentiment d'impuissance⁵ : cette centration interroge la compétence de l'enseignant-e ordinaire, puisqu'elle renvoie à des lacunes pouvant être compensées tantôt par une montée en compétence, tantôt par des apports externes. Certains facteurs systémiques et contextuels émergent ainsi des propositions, qui semblent,

⁵ Seule exception, la proposition de Clara qui qualifie de " joli défi " l'accueil d'un " élève trisomique ".

pour le sentiment d'efficacité personnelle (Bandura, 2003) constituer soit une protection, soit une menace :

- une protection : leviers hors de contrôle liés à la famille (Alba, Lia), ressources dues ou promises, mais qui n'arrivent pas (Léïa, Norah), "manque d'outils" ou de compétences (Alba, Léïa, Claire, Marion, Lia, Dominique) et manque d'informations (Dominique);
- une menace : pression sélective dans les degrés d'orientation à la fin de l'école primaire (Léïa, Olivia, Lia), présence de troubles graves du comportement chez un enfant (Claire et Marion).

Chez Alba et Léïa, l'évocation de leviers externes à la situation de d'enseignement-apprentissage en classe (parents/gestion des ressources) vient probablement protéger le sentiment d'efficacité personnelle (SEP), car leur impuissance déclarée est associée à l'évocation récurrente d'un "manque d'outils". Ce manque permettrait de situer le problème hors du domaine de leurs compétences professionnelles. Couplé à ces facteurs externes, "hors de portée" et entravant leurs décisions (parents réfractaires, aide promise non honorée), il aurait un effet déculpabilisant malgré l'impuissance ressentie.

Tout comme dans les propositions de Léïa et Lia, Olivia se trouve confrontée aux contradictions de la sélection à la fin de la 8^e année primaire⁶ et de l'injonction inclusive. Elle devrait faire rattraper plusieurs années de retard scolaire à l'un de ses élèves, tout en assurant simultanément les progressions de l'ensemble de la classe et garantissant une orientation avantageuse. L'insistance du collègue à la rassurer amène pourtant Olivia à assimiler l'impossibilité de faire progresser l'élève en classe à sa propre incompétence.

Claire et Marion renvoient essentiellement à un sentiment d'impuissance intense et se centrent chacune également sur une seule élève, dont les difficultés de comportement provoque un questionnement en termes d'identité et de compétence professionnelle. Claire affirme manquer de ce "quelque chose" qui aurait rendu la situation plus supportable et conclut en relevant un manque *indéfini* : "je ne sais pas

⁶ Dans le canton de Vaud, la transition de l'école primaire à l'école secondaire s'opère à la fin de la 8^e année : les élèves sont orienté·e·s, sur la base de leurs résultats scolaires en fin de 8P, vers des filières différenciées, conditionnant leur accès futur aux formations et aux carrières professionnelles. L'enseignement dans les degrés 7-8P est fortement marqué par ce processus de sélection.

comment réagir avec des enfants violents. Pour moi c'est quelque chose de très difficile où je trouve qu'*il me manque vraiment des...* enfin, on n'est pas formé pour... ou bien... enfin voilà, peut être que ça fait résonner quelque chose chez moi". La proposition de Marion est très similaire et aboutit au même type d'interrogation : "je sais pas gérer ça. Je sais pas... je sais pas... enseigner...".

Dominique et Lia partagent le fait d'évoquer une accumulation de situations amenant une évolution de leur questionnement sur plusieurs années et identifient toutes deux le problème à des lacunes précises justifiant l'envie et le besoin de se former pour faire face aux défis de l'inclusion.

La situation de Dominique est abordée d'emblée sous l'angle de la différenciation pédagogique envisagée comme une solution pour motiver ses élèves et les faire gagner en autonomie. Le cas de Lia se déroule, comme ceux de Léïa et d'Olivia, dans un contexte de pression à la fin de l'école primaire, où le retard de l'élève semble d'autant plus ingérable qu'il intervient dans ces années si sélectives. Lia convoque le rôle que jouent les parents, dans la présence de cette élève qui n'" avait pas sa place mais les parents voulaient absolument qu'elle re-rentre dans le cursus ordinaire".

Les propositions de Lia et Dominique partent toutes deux d'un commentaire général sur le groupe classe et sont réorientées par l'animatrice de la MAG vers une expérience vécue et située. Le choix d'opter, par défaut, pour des situations individuelles est révélateur de leur façon de problématiser. En déclarant "ne pas avoir des outils spécifiques pour essayer (...) de faire de la différenciation (...) pour pouvoir aussi aller cibler les élèves qui sont plus à problèmes", on comprend que la différenciation est envisagée comme une intervention individuelle ponctuelle. Ces deux propositions sont d'ailleurs les seules qui font explicitement état de "diagnostics" (connaître les déficiences de chaque élève pour répondre au cas par cas), ce qui suggère un point de vue individualiste de la réponse pédagogique face aux différences entre les élèves. Si Lia et Dominique ne ménagent pas leurs efforts pour que chacun-e de leurs élèves s'en sorte, elles n'entrevoient pas d'autres solution qu'individualiser, face à une classe qui ne se présente plus comme un groupe, mais comme une somme d'individus.

Si la plupart des propositions ont privilégié l'entrée individuelle pour exprimer la remise en question de l'identité professionnelle, celles proposées par Norah et Lea s'en distinguent. Peut-on comprendre pourquoi l'une d'entre elles a été choisie pour être analysée par le groupe, malgré son caractère "marginal" ?

Norah évoque une forme de fatalité par rapport à un système qui fonctionne “pour lui-même” et qui aboutit à des situations paradoxales. Sa proposition est, en effet, ponctuée de “ok”, “pas de soucis”, dont le ton ironique laisse deviner une surenchère et une chute dramatique. Face aux engagements que sa trop bonne disposition à rendre service lui a fait prendre, elle se retrouve seule et, à l’instar d’Olivia et Leïa, trahie.

Dans la proposition de Lea, on découvre la contradiction qui réside dans la multiplication des mesures d’aides programmées pour les élèves jugé.e.s en difficulté. La ventilation des élèves dans des activités hors-classe avec d’autres intervenant.e.s éprouve les limites organisationnelles de l’enseignante et rend difficile le maintien d’un groupe classe pérenne. Lea se sent dépouillée de sa relation aux élèves et se demande “quand est-ce que j’enseigne à ma classe !?”

Norah et Lea ancrent directement leur réflexion dans une remise en question générale sur l’organisation des ressources. Rien de ce qu’elles avancent ne semble remettre en question leurs compétences : elles ne se servent pas d’éléments systémiques externes pour protéger leur SEP mais pointent une mauvaise organisation, dans leurs établissements.

UNE JUSTICE OSCILLANT ENTRE RECONNAISSANCE ET REDISTRIBUTION

Ce qui frappe en second lieu, dans, c’est la teinte généralement négative des récits proposés par les participantes, qui laisse entrevoir une aporie relevant d’un débat éthique plus vaste : celui qui interroge la justice sociale en termes universaliste et/ou relativiste (Dupertuis et Gottraux, 1990, repris par Rougemont, 2014, p. 58). Faut-il revendiquer le caractère universel des droits humains⁷ ou développer des attentions adaptées de cas en cas, quitte à assumer certaines “inégalités de traitement” *en apparence*, au nom de l’irréductibilité des diversités et de l’impossibilité d’établir des conventions universelles?

Comment accompagner les élèves en répondant à la fois à leur besoin d’être ou de faire “comme tout le monde” et à leurs besoins éducatifs particuliers?

⁷ A commencer par le premier article de leur Déclaration universelle : “ Tous les êtres humains naissent libres et égaux en dignité *et en droits* ”.

L'aporie a été traitée par Fraser (1998) à partir de la question suivante : qui compte comme sujet de justice? Dans les conflits sociaux, quelles sont les personnes dont les intérêts et les besoins méritent la considération? Fraser prend le contre-pied de la thèse selon laquelle la reconnaissance est un besoin fondamental universel, qui passe par le regard d'autrui. Pour elle, ce postulat reviendrait à dire que la reconnaissance doit s'appliquer à tout le monde, en tout temps (tout le monde aurait toujours besoin d'être reconnu). Cette universalité serait moralement et politiquement intenable : toutes les différences ne génèrent effectivement pas de prétentions à la reconnaissance et il est impossible d'établir une liste des types de reconnaissance dont tout le monde aurait tout le temps et partout besoin. Bien souvent, les groupes et les individus munis des codes et marqueurs socialement et culturellement valorisés sont déjà, d'une certaine manière, reconnus : ils constituent même une norme "à suivre" et par rapport à laquelle sont mesurées les différences des autres groupes ou personnes, en termes d'écart. Par conséquent, la reconnaissance doit être pensée non pas comme un besoin humain en soi, mais comme un remède à l'injustice et, donc, constituer une réponse concrète à des torts subis.

Fraser (1998) constate que les mouvements militants orientés vers la justice sociale se distinguent (et se divisent) avant tout en fonction des éléments suivants :

- Ils se basent sur des conceptions distinctes de l'injustice : pour les premiers, celle-ci provient d'une distribution inégale des ressources socio-économiques (par exemple exploitation, inégalités salariales, moindre accessibilité à certains lieux et services); pour les seconds, l'injustice agit par les représentations qui reproduisent la domination culturelle, le mépris et le déni de reconnaissance;
- par conséquent, ils envisagent différentes façons de remédier à l'injustice : la redistribution (restructuration économique) ou la reconnaissance (changements de type symbolique, dans les représentations).

Le "pilier normatif"⁸ qui articule redistribution et reconnaissance est la parité de participation. Celle-ci requiert, pour se concrétiser et dans chaque situation rencontrée, de se poser les questions suivantes : est-ce que la personne considérée est empêchée de rechercher l'estime sociale dans des conditions équitables? Est-ce qu'elle peut participer de façon égale à la fabrication de ses conditions d'existence?

⁸ Guide et fil conducteur de cette philosophie morale, qui constitue un repère permettant de prendre des décisions politiques dans des situations diverses.

De cas en cas et pour ce faire, elle aura besoin que l'on améliore ses conditions objectives, par la redistribution, ou alors que l'on améliore ses conditions subjectives, par la reconnaissance c'est-à-dire en promouvant des modèles institutionnels exprimant un égal respect pour elle ou pour ses proches. Il s'agit par ailleurs de se demander, toujours de cas en cas, si cette personne a besoin :

- qu'on la considère comme semblable à n'importe qui?
- que l'on reconnaisse ses spécificités?

Là où le mépris se présente comme un déni du droit à être semblable de certaines personnes, la reconnaissance universelle se présente comme un antidote valable; là où, au contraire, c'est la spécificité identitaire de quelqu'un qui est dénigrée, c'est la reconnaissance de la différence qui devrait s'activer.

La question de la justice est posée par les enseignantes. Elle se traduit dans leur propositions par ces observations qui peuvent s'articuler entre elles :

- Accepter le principe qu'il est nécessairement positif qu'un-e élève soit enclassé-e dans une classe ordinaire au plus proche de son groupe d'âge comporte le risque de mettre l'élève en difficulté. Si les besoins spécifiques de l'élève ne sont pas identifiés et pris en charge de façon précoce, son retard scolaire risque de s'accroître irrémédiablement. On compromet ainsi sa scolarité et, potentiellement, ses chances futures d'accéder à une situation socio-économique avantageuse ou, pire, les chances de l'ensemble des élèves, dans les dernières années sélectives.

C'est probablement ce qui pousse Alba, Leïa et Olivia à chercher des réponses dans une meilleure redistribution des ressources, à leur bénéfice. Cette stratégie est accentuée par le Concept 360° qui segmente l'ensemble des prestations possibles par niveaux d'intervention, en tenant compte "de l'intensité du besoin auquel il s'agit de répondre et donc corollairement du type de collaboration à mettre en œuvre (souple/étroite, peu formalisée/formalisée)" (DFJC et al., 2019, p. 3). L'aide est ici directement conditionnée par l'identification d'un besoin, ce qui peut parfois inciter les enseignant.e.s à accentuer ce besoin. Dans les trois cas, les besoins des élèves entrent donc en résonance avec ceux des enseignantes, en termes de redistribution.

- En voulant, en outre, éviter l'étiquetage (ou une dégradation de l'estime de soi de l'élève) produit par un enclassement dans un degré inférieur, on réduit sa participation aux tâches du groupe, nourrissant ce même mépris duquel nous souhaitons le ou la protéger.

Le récit envisagé par Léïa interroge l'accueil d'un-e élève dans sa classe d'âge, lorsque le "retard" est jugé trop important. Accueil voulu pourtant inconditionnel par certain-e-s initiateurs et initiatrices de l'école inclusive qui, comme Forest (1988), posent la nécessité que "que tous les enfants fréquentent l'école de leur quartier et participent aux activités d'une classe d'élèves du même âge" (p. 271). Le système scolaire actuel (même âge et même rythme) induit cette valorisation de l'enclassement de tou-te-s les élèves avec des camarades de leur âge. Un placement dans un degré inférieur participerait, en effet, de l'étiquetage de cette élève, jugée "en retard dans sa scolarité" (problème de reconnaissance). Mais si l'école (inclusive ou pas) vise en priorité le progrès des élèves dans leurs apprentissages, un enclassement dans un degré inférieur permettrait à cette élève d'avancer en parallèle des autres élèves. Ce faisant, il ne lui serait pas dénié son statut de "partenaire à part entière" (Fraser, 2004, p. 158), puisqu'elle pourrait participer aux tâches et interactions collectives. Lia questionne les dommages qu'encourt la participation de son élève : "je la sentais complètement rejetée et mise à l'écart, donc "inclusion" oui mais... elle se mettait elle-même à l'écart des autres, aussi. C'est l'envie des parents qu'elle soit là, mais en même temps c'était maltraitant, je trouvais. Je la voyais malheureuse".

- "Donner plus" d'attention (et/ou de soutien) à certain-e-s élèves, soustrait cette attention (et/ou ce soutien) à celles et ceux qui "vont bien". Il nous semble ici pertinent de relever que l'adjectif "particulier" est un adjectif qualifiant, par défaut, un besoin éducatif qui n'est pas commun, pas standard, pas partagé et donc propre à un-e élève en *particulier*. On peut ainsi considérer qu'une tension au moins définitionnelle se crée, à des degrés divers, entre le(s) besoin(s) *d'une* personne et le(s) besoin(s) "de toute le monde". Pire encore, lorsque l'on parle d'un-e "élève à besoins éducatifs particuliers" : de là à désigner cette personne tout entière comme celle dont la particularité des besoins prive durablement les autres de la satisfaction des leurs, il n'y a qu'un pas.

Claire et Marion ont en commun d'exprimer une préoccupation pour les autres élèves agressé·e·s et pour elles-mêmes. Toutes deux associent à la mouvance de l'inclusion et selon une chronologie parfois reconstruite, une demande de reconnaissance universelle pour elles-mêmes et pour les autres élèves (quel est ce "nouveau" métier, dans lequel nous n'avons pas le droit d'être protégé·e·s comme le devrait être n'importe qui ?).

- L'individualisation excessive des programmes met en péril le groupe classe.

La limite soulevée par Norah est, comme dans les propositions de Lia et Dominique, liée à la quantité et à l'accumulation de besoins spécifiques variés chez les élèves. Elle s'en distingue cependant en ce qu'elle explore la possibilité de rentabiliser les ressources ou de sortir de la logique "un besoin dûment prouvé (ou diagnostiqué) équivaut à une aide". Cette exploration se heurte à une limite : le risque avéré de recréer des espaces séparatifs (non-reconnaissance d'une commune humanité).

La proposition de Lea, "l'inclusion qui exclut", est similaire : elle met en avant la contradiction qui réside dans les interventions et les programmes individualisés. Si la majorité des propositions s'organisent autour d'une mauvaise distribution des ressources pour palier une ou plusieurs situation(s) individuelle(s), c'est paradoxalement celle qui met l'accent sur un "trop" qui sera choisie pour l'analyse en groupe. Lea questionne les contraintes que fait peser l'organisation des mesures d'aide sur ses possibilités à garantir leur appartenance à un groupe (reconnaissance universelle). Peut-on réellement parler "d'exclusion" dans une situation où le collectif se désagrège, ou est-il ici plutôt question d'un degré extrême d'individualisation ?

Les propositions de Lea et Norah se rapprochent de celles d'Alba et de Marion en ce qu'elles questionnent une redistribution défavorable. Leurs revendications de justice ne sont cependant pas orientées vers un gain en leur propre faveur, mais en celle de leurs élèves, dont la parité de participation est menacée.

Les propositions de Lia et Dominique partagent une préoccupation pour la reconnaissance des différences, mais sans que nous puissions être certain·e·s que cela corresponde à un réel besoin des élèves. Elles font en outre clairement état d'une préoccupation pour une reconnaissance de type

universel, à propos de leurs élèves. Leur action se trouve questionnée par une oscillation entre reconnaissance des spécificités et de la commune humanité.

SYNTHESE ET CONCLUSION

Des six premières situations, émerge une thématique qui sous-tend l'ensemble des propositions et se renforce au fur et à mesure de la problématisation : celle de la centration sur l'élève et ses difficultés. Nous pourrions nous attendre à ce que cette centration induise une préoccupation pour la prise en compte de besoins supposés différents chez certain·e·s élèves, engageant une réflexion en termes de reconnaissance de la différence. Pourtant, au lieu d'engager une réflexion, avec les élèves, sur la façon dont ils ou elles souhaiteraient voir traitées leurs différences, il semble que la focalisation sur des "individus-problèmes" plutôt que des "situations-problèmes" augmente le sentiment d'impuissance de l'enseignant·e, de façon proportionnelle à l'écart à la norme décrit dans chaque situation (par exemple troubles de comportement ou violence). Les dimensions sociales et structurelles sont mobilisées comme des entraves plutôt que comme des possibilités et associées à des explications ne pouvant qu'engager la responsabilité individuelle des élèves (éventuellement de leurs parents) et des enseignant·e·s. Pour protéger leur SEP de l'impuissance ressentie, les enseignantes concernées dénoncent une inégalité d'ordre redistributif (les moyens consacrés aux besoins hors norme des élèves sont insuffisants et cela prêterait notre travail).

Au niveau des apprentissages, nous voyons que les mesures obligent souvent les enseignant·e·s à individualiser les programmes pour chaque élève, puisqu'ils et elles ne parviennent à réunir leur groupe classe qu'à de rares moments. Si les moments où la classe est réunie font exception, le reste du temps est dévolu à des tâches individualisées qui contribuent à accroître les écarts entre les élèves, à partir de leur capacité initiale à s'autoréguler⁹ (Laveault, 2007). Cela va à l'encontre de la promotion de la différenciation pédagogique – pensée pour la classe et *a priori* (Kahn, 2010).

Lia et Dominique font état d'une diversité de besoins plus ou moins identifiés, en même temps qu'une préoccupation pour la fabrication d'un groupe, uni non pas sur

⁹ Considérée comme l'un des principaux leviers de la réussite scolaire, l'autorégulation désigne l'aptitude des élèves à se fixer des objectifs personnels, à contrôler leur progression, à comprendre et utiliser les rétroactions et à ajuster leur action vers les objectifs visés.

un socle objectif (comment gagner en compétence pour faire avancer tout le monde dans les apprentissages), mais intersubjectif (je dois trouver un moyen pour rassembler ce groupe autour de quelque chose qui fait sens). Dans ces deux récits, la reconnaissance des différences entre en tension avec la reconnaissance d'une commune humanité. Le questionnement de Norah introduit, quant à lui, une tension entre redistribution et commune humanité.

Lea se situe dans un ailleurs, lié au fait d'avoir proposé une situation où les ressources (redistribution) ne manquent pas. Elle s'inquiète d'un déplacement des sujets de l'injustice depuis les élèves pointé.e.s comme "à besoins", vis-à-vis de celles et ceux "qui n'ont pas de besoin". Elle regrette de ne pas les "encourager", ce qui situe son propos au croisement entre reconnaissance et redistribution. Savoir si ces élèves ressentent cela comme une injustice, ou pas, permettrait d'affiner les hypothèses.

Lea dira cependant, des enjeux de son récit : "comment garder sa place de maitresse de classe, tout en accueillant les ressources à disposition ?". Nous observons donc que, dans ce contexte, même lorsque les enseignantes adoptent une définition plus complète de la justice sociale (redistribution et reconnaissance), ils et elles se retrouvent bloquées dans des tensions. Lorsqu'elles ne font pas défaut, les "ressources" représentent une entrave à la "place" du maître ou de la maîtresse de classe. Elles engagent une reconfiguration importante du métier et donc de l'identité professionnelle.

Dans toutes les propositions, les spécificités des élèves sont ciblées. On ne peut cependant pas parler de "reconnaissance des différences", même si l'on constate une volonté de les définir tout en suspendant le jugement. Pour analyser cela en termes de reconnaissance, il manque le point de vue des élèves (ont-ils ou elles besoin qu'on les considère comme n'importe qui, ou que l'on accepte, valorise ou considère leur différence ?).

Ce qui frappe véritablement, dans cette analyse, c'est que ces enseignantes, toutes expérimentées et acquises à la cause égalitaire, déclarent presque d'une voix manquer d'outils, de moyens, voire de compétences pour exercer leur métier ! Ne disent-elles pas autre chose ? Que la source du problème, c'est-à-dire la rigidité de l'enseignement, n'a cessé de croître, malgré l'hétérogénéisation du public scolaire, au point d'ouvrir la classe à des enfants pour qui se soumettre aux progressions rigidifiées établies par les programmes est tout simplement impossible; qu'elles sont sans cesse et simultanément soumises à deux tâches incompatibles : organiser des

situations d'apprentissage pour une classe d'élèves et s'occuper des besoins particuliers, y compris lorsque ces besoins ne relèvent pas des apprentissages scolaires; qu'elles sont par conséquent confrontées à des activités contrariées, empêchées, voire à des contre-activités (Clot, 2001).

Pour faire face aux difficultés induites par la mouvance inclusive, les enseignant-e-s réclament de l'aide. Leur en donner consisterait, comme pour les élèves, à leur offrir une mesure en plus, une de ces procédures qui sont la cause, ou le contexte causal de leur difficulté (Ogilvie, 2010). Réclamer cette aide et la recevoir, ne revient-il pas à accroître d'une part leur sentiment d'incompétence, leur impuissance et d'autre part les effets pervers d'une école qui exclut en prétendant inclure ?

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EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY IN EUROPEAN NATIONAL STANDARDISED ASSESSMENT: A CONTEXT ANALYSIS

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Abstract Large-scale standardised assessments can exclude certain groups of students at various stages, from the test's design to the analysis of its results. Students with disabilities, for example, may find it challenging to access the test due to the design or technological barriers, leading to their exclusion (Hickey, 2015). Additionally, biased or stereotyped analyses, such as the belief that girls are inherently worse at math, can exclude certain students (Villani & Carbone, 2020). The impact of these exclusion mechanisms can have significant implications for students' learning paths and the entire school system. Over the past twenty years, there have been efforts to make large-scale standardised assessments more inclusive (Cawthon & Shyyan, 2022; Hickey, 2015). According to Cawthon and Shyyan (2022), strategies for addressing assessment accessibility aim to balance equity in testing experiences while maintaining standardised test designs. However, this balance raises questions about what is measured and the various methods available to demonstrate an understanding of that construct.

INTRODUCTION

Advocates of global educational policy trends have been telling national policymakers that national systems need to be accountable to be more effective and efficient, and the best way to do so is by implementing large-scale standardised assessments (Verger et al., 2019). Generally, large-scale standardised assessments have been used for selection, comparison and accountability. The primary justification for using such assessments is that they produce objective data that can be used to design educational policies (Williamson & Piattoeva, 2019). However, critical scholars in education have shown that large-scale assessment is a normative (Mons, 2009) tool that increases competition between schools and pupils, generates forms of control, contributes to exclusion among pupils and consequently undermines equity (Emler et al., 2019).

Exclusion mechanisms in large-scale standardised assessments can happen in different stages of assessment production, from the design to the analysis of results. For

instance, pupils belonging to discriminated groups (i.e. pupils with learning or physical disabilities) have difficulties in access (Hickey, 2015) (i.e. due to the design of the test and technological barrier). It is also possible to identify exclusion mechanisms in biased or stereotyped analyses (i.e. girls are innately less skilled in mathematics' (Villani & Carbone, 2020). The impact of exclusion mechanisms has significant implications for pupils' learning pathways. Furthermore, exclusion mechanisms influence the entire school system.

Several attempts have been made to improve accessibility for pupils with special needs in the design of standardised assessments (i.e. granting more time to pupils with educational needs during the test, alternative tests), but epistemological and technical barriers persist (Cawthon & Shyyan, 2022). The challenge for institutions in charge of assessment is to balance equity in the testing experience for all students while trying to preserve standardisation in test design and implementation. For the institutions responsible for designing assessments, the capacity to achieve this balance is significantly impacted by the policy context in which it is situated.

This chapter presents an exploratory analysis of four standardised national assessments carried out in Italy, France, Germany and Finland to identify the elements of inclusion or exclusion that characterise these evaluation programmes.

In this analysis, the production cycle of large-scale standardised data is socially, economically, and politically embedded (Villani, 2018).

THE POLICY CONTEXT OF LARGE-SCALE STANDARDISED ASSESSMENT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Neo-liberalism, mainly through the lens of New Public Management (NPM), has served as the overarching policy framework underpinning the growth of national assessment programs across Europe in recent decades. These National Large-Scale Standardized Assessments are crafted to generate comprehensive data on educational systems, encompassing student performance, teacher effectiveness, and other relevant metrics (Chudowsky & Pellegrino, 2003). Their primary purpose is to inform and shape policy formulation and decision-making processes (Head, 2008). Over the years, large-scale assessments have evolved into pivotal tools for evidence-based policymaking.

Davis and colleagues (Davies et al., 1999) define *evidence-based policy* as a tool that helps people make well-informed decisions about policies, programs and projects by putting the best available evidence at the heart of policy development and implementation. The use of evidence-based policies became necessary to implement and realise the accountability process (Strassheim & Kettunen, 2014). According to some policy scholars, the role of statistics in policy design is crucial due to its *objective* nature (Scott, 2005). However, the relationship between the production of statistical data and policymaking is less linear than one imagines. Authors inspired by the work of Foucault (Foucault et al., 2004) on the relationship between power, policymaking and technical tools have shown that in the last thirty years, statistics became one of the “technologies of power” (Lascoumes, 2004). According to this point of view, the quantification process of social phenomena also revolves around performance indicators, accountability, and other tools established by NPM (Desrosières, 2014). The use of statistics shaped by the NPM framework produces a discontinuity with the old way these tools were used by governments. Desrosières (Desrosières & Didier, 2014) has shown that statistical indicators influence the behaviour of policy actors in retroactive ways (Lascoumes & Le Gales, 2007). NLSA’s become a public policy instrumentation. Lascoumes and Le Galés (2007) define policy instrumentation as a device that is both technical and social: it engenders its own effects, it elucidates a (reasonably explicit) theorisation of the relationship between the governing body and those being governed, and it is crafted with the intent of fostering innovation.

Morgan (Morgan, 2011) asserts that within the NPM framework, education plays an instrumental role in mitigating unemployment rates by nurturing the requisite skills and competencies in students for the demands of the workforce. Consequently, large-scale standardised assessment programmes are often driven by economic interests. In this context, it becomes fundamental to transform the knowledge and competencies acquired by pupils into metrics as a tool for an evidence-based policy approach.

The policy context, both at the national and supranational levels, significantly shapes the priorities of the institution responsible for the National Large-Scale Assessment (NLSA) program in determining what aspects are deemed valuable to assess. Supranational organisations, such as the Oecd or consortia like the IEA, exert soft power through their large-scale international assessment programs, influencing national assessment programs and indicators (Villani & Oliveira, 2018).

In Germany (Prenzel et al., 2015) and Italy (Arzarello et al., 2015), scholars have highlighted the influential factors of international large-scale standardised assessments on the development and design of national assessment programs. These efforts aim to facilitate the comparison of national pupil performance results with international standards.

In the last twenty years, several efforts have been made in the design of large-scale standardised assessments in order to be more inclusive (Cawthon & Shyyan, 2022; Hickey, 2015). Cawthon and Shyyan (2022) claim that strategies for addressing assessment accessibility seek to balance equity in testing experiences for all students as well as maintain the standardisation of the test designs. This balancing act consistently raises questions about the construct being measured and the various methods available to demonstrate or provide evidence of understanding that construct.

THE ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS STUDIED

This paper presents an exploratory analysis of four standardised national assessments on large-scale national assessments carried out in Italy, France, Germany, and Finland to identify the elements of inclusion or exclusion that characterise these evaluation programmes. This context study is performed through the analysis of the official documents and the official websites of the programmes considered. The programs analysed vary among them, but the aim of the paper is to highlight the different policies implemented in the countries under consideration.

In Italy, the INVALSI test is administered by the National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education and Training System (INVALSI)¹. This assessment program is conducted annually and is census-based. It is administered to students in the sixth, eighth, and tenth grades, as well as the final year of high school.

In France, the Cycle of Disciplinary Assessments Conducted on Samples (Le cycle des évaluations disciplinaires réalisées sur échantillon, CEDRE) is conducted by the Direction de l'évaluation, de la prospective et de la performance (DEEP)². This assessment is administered annually to students in the sixth and seventh grades.

¹ https://www.invalsi.it/invalsi/rn/sid.php?page=sid_it_00.

² <https://www.education.gouv.fr/cycle-des-evaluations-disciplinaires-realisees-sur-echantillon-cedre-en-fin-d-ecole-et-fin-de-2870>.

In Germany, the National Educational Panel Study (NEPS)³ provides longitudinal data on educational processes and competence development. It is the most significant long-term educational study in Germany. NEPS follows seven starting cohorts; it focuses on the development of competencies and the educational trajectories of pupils from early childhood to old age.

The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC)⁴ carry out the Learning Outcomes Evaluation on national official languages (Finnish and Swedish), mathematics, and English. In autumn 2018, the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) arranged an assessment of learning outcomes among first-grade pupils in basic education for the first time. The assessment was called the starting level measurement.

DIFFERENT KIND OF EXCLUSIONS

There are different forms of exclusion that can arise during the design and implementation of large-scale standardised assessments. Hickey (2015) asserts that recognising diversity factors within the school context during the design and administration of large-scale standardised assessments goes beyond solely addressing the needs of students who qualify for an individual program plan due to learning, sensory, physical, or emotional disabilities. In order to make fair and accessible large-scale standardised tests, we need to consider the native language of pupils (that can differ from the national language in which the test is designed), socio-economic origin, culture, religion, and family composition (Hickey, 2015). Research literature shows that not all students can fully master learning and perform at their potential in an environment that predominantly relies on text as the medium for acquiring and demonstrating knowledge (Edyburn, 2011; Thurlow et al., 2008).

When analysing exclusion mechanisms in large-scale standardised assessments, it is crucial to examine this phenomenon through the lens of social justice (Klenowski, 2014).

In the last ten years, large-scale standardised tests have shifted from paper-based tests to computer-based tests (Villani, 2019). Digitalisation's ability to improve equity and inclusivity in large-scale standardised assessment has been the subject of intense debate. On the one hand, some scholars consider the use of digital tools an

³ <https://www.neps-data.de/Mainpage>.

⁴ <https://www.karvi.fi/en/evaluations/pre-primary-and-basic-education>.

asset to improve the usability of the test device and increase inclusivity (Cawthon & Shyyan, 2022; Hickey, 2015); on the other hand, education scholars argue that the apparent objectivity offered by digitalisation in fact continues to render large-scale standardised assessment intrinsically unequal and exclusionary (Williamson & Piattoeva, 2019).

According to Cawthon and Shyyan (2022), there are various approaches that assessment designers can take to minimise student exclusion from assessment programs. The first approach consists of ensuring the provision of access features that cater to all participating students. These features include resources embedded within assessments, accessible to all students regardless of disability or non-native language status. Importantly, these resources are intended not to alter the construct of the test items.

The second approach involves access features designated for specific students based on decisions made by informed educators. These resources are integrated within assessments and can be activated for students based on their individual needs, which may stem from their official national language proficiency or disability status. It is crucial to note that these resources are intended not to alter the construct of the test item.

The third approach involves accommodations, which are resources available to students with Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Special Education Need (SEN) status. These resources aim to ensure fairness in testing experiences for students with disabilities without altering the construct of the test item.

In the assessment design testing accommodations are intended “to remove construct irrelevant barriers that otherwise would interfere with examinees’ ability to demonstrate their standing on the target constructs” (American Educational Research Association, 2011; Lee et al., 2021)

The fourth approach involves modification of the content of the assessment test or the way the assessment is administered with the aim of increasing the level of accessibility. The test results are analysed separately from the unmodified assessment. Determining whether a specific accessibility strategy qualifies as an accommodation or a modification depends, in part, on the nature of the construct being tested.

Cawthon and Shyyan (2022) warn researchers to focus on more than just the exclusion mechanisms of the test but to consider all the social, economic, and linguistic factors that can produce exclusion.

THE EXCLUSION MECHANISM IN THE NATIONAL LARGE-SCALE ASSESSMENT PRODUCTION CYCLE

This part of the chapter presents the analysis of the different approaches applied in the four large-scale assessment programmes considered.

Miller and Yan (Miller & Yan, 2023) claim that two main factors increase the level of exclusion rate in large-scale standardised assessments: exclusion guidelines and exclusion of students with disabilities. Large-scale assessments (LSA) with vague exclusion guidelines, coupled with inadequate monitoring of their implementation, have resulted in significant variation in the exclusion rates of students, especially those with disabilities (Ysseldyke & Thurlow, 1994). Miller and Yan (2023) argue that ambiguous exclusion guidelines have made it challenging for administrators to accurately identify which students should be assessed and which should not.

The sample design produces the exclusion of pupils with special education needs (SEN). For instance, NLSAs like CEDRE programs may not incorporate any accommodations or modifications in the assessment test. As a result, the CEDRE program excludes students with disabilities from participating in the assessment.

In contemporary performance-driven societies, the academic debate has shifted to focus on gifted students with learning disabilities who excel in standardised assessments (Lovett & Sparks, 2013). On the one hand, this focus has urged researchers and assessment designers to refrain from excluding all students with learning disabilities (Miller & Yan, 2023). However, on the other hand, it risks perpetuating ableism by adhering to a medical approach to disabilities, neglecting the advantages of a multifactorial approach (Shakespeare, 2014).

Upon analysing the official document of the NLSAs, a combination of design approaches has emerged. In Italy, Germany, and Finland, the assessment programs offer an alternative test for students with disabilities and provide the possibility for pupils to have additional time to complete the test.

Whether or not this more broadly defined group of children receives additional support is again related to how far schools adapt their organisation, teaching and curriculum, including the assessment of pupils through national testing (European Commission, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency & Eurydice, 2009).

Several attempts have been made to improve accessibility for pupils with special needs in the design of standardised assessments:

<i>Country</i>	<i>Granting more time to pupils with SEN During the test</i>	<i>Alternative tests based on the disability's characteristics</i>	<i>Collect demographic and family information through a survey</i>	<i>Collects biographies and relevant context factors with family and teachers' interview</i>	<i>Mandatory of the test</i>
Italy	X	X	X		X
France	X	X	X		
Germany	X	X	X	X	
Finland	X		X		

Tab. 1. Features of the national large-scale assessment programs studied

NLSAs typically gather demographic and socio-economic information about pupils and families through a survey tool. It is crucial to design items that collect personal data in a way that is easily understandable, particularly for pupils with low literacy competencies or Special Educational Needs (SEN), to minimise exclusion rates. For instance, when collecting information on parents' professions, simplifying the language and format can enhance accessibility for all students (Villani, 2019). Furthermore, this issue impact not only on the level of inclusion of pupils but also on the quality of the data gathered. Moreover, this issue not only affects the level of inclusion of pupils but also impacts the quality of the gathered data.

In the countries considered, we assisted in the digitalisation process of the national large-scale assessment.

As previously mentioned, the digitalisation of large-scale assessments can significantly enhance the accessibility of tests for students with disabilities (Lee et al., 2021). However, when examining the inclusion of all students through a social justice lens, it is crucial to consider the digital divide, which persists in some areas. Currently, we identify three levels of the digital divide; the first level of the digital divide represents the inequality of access to digital tools and infrastructures (Van Dijk, 2005). The second level of the digital divide is based on the disparities in computer and Internet use. Skills, competence and abilities to use the Internet have become more important than ever. Not only is material access to the Internet taken into consideration, but also the different uses of it (Ragnedda & Muschert, 2015). The third level of the digital divide (Ragnedda, 2017) represents the social and cultural benefits derived from accessing and using the Internet. Analyses the offline returns of accessing and using digital technologies, attempting to understand who gains the most advantage from the Internet (Van Deursen & Helsper, 2015).

Scholars (Pagani et al., 2016) have shown the influence of digital literacy on pupils' performances (Villani, 2019). This raises a significant concern regarding the barrier created by the transition from paper-based to computer-based tests.

As our societies become increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse, the standardised norms applied in tests can inadvertently lead to exclusion. Furthermore, it is crucial to identify any additional barriers that may arise during the implementation and administration phases of NLSAs, as social issues can emerge within these contexts (Sireci, 2020).

For instance, in Finland, the test is administered in Finnish and Swedish, ensuring accessibility to standardised assessments for linguistic minorities who receive education in these languages. Generally, students who are not proficient in the national language in which the test is administered are excluded from the assessment. In contemporary society, with the increasing importance of migration due to climate changes and global conflicts, a portion of the school population risks being overlooked and not considered part of the system. The phenomenon of exclusion rates applies to both national and international standardised assessments (Atasever et al., 2023).

The variables imposed by the standards in the assessment often do not take into account the social context in which the test is administered (Villani, 2019). The social dimensions of assessment exclusion play a critical role, particularly when the test is administered in marginalised contexts. For example, in Italy, the Invalsi test is mandatory and census-based. Non-participation in the test leads to exclusion from the national final exam at the end of middle school. In marginalised areas, this non-participation increases the risk of drop-out (Villani, 2019).

Not considering inclusivity aspects in the assessment design produces normative metrics and subsequent analyses that conceal the enduring problems, especially those related to gender and ableist barriers. Considering only one factor of inequality at a time provides only a partial representation of the inequality produced. In the analyses produced by the four assessment programs considered, the overlap between the categories of sex and gender is used interchangeably. Generally, the analysis considers the habit of interpreting gender gaps in student performance without analysing contextual factors, social background and cultural specificities but highlighting the differences between boys and girls (Villani & Carbone, 2020).

CONCLUSION

As state accountability systems evolve and assessment results become increasingly integral to policy and programming decisions, it is imperative that assessment systems prioritise inclusivity (Hickey, 2015; Liu et al., 2017).

In order to begin to address these limitations in the design of large-scale standardised assessments, we need to solve the problem of large-scale standardised assessment tools not being epistemologically inclusive.

A potential approach involves shifting the policy focus of large-scale standardised assessments from accountability, selection, and comparison to equity and inclusivity. This shift could pave the way for a new paradigm in designing, collecting, and utilising standardised data.

Another approach involves utilising an intersectionality framework to analyse factors contributing to inequalities. Intersectionality relies on the idea that social categories, such as gender, race, ethnicity, physical and learning disabilities, neurodivergent conditions, and social background, are interwoven and have consequences on inclusion. Despite the extensive use of intersectionality theory in qualitative education studies, minimal research has applied it to quantitative or standardised educational assessment studies. Previous research in relation to equity and standardised assessment shows that not considering inclusivity aspects in the assessment design produces normative metrics and subsequent analyses that conceal enduring problems, especially related to gender and ableist barriers (Mons, 2009).

From this contextual analysis, different aspects emerge that we need to increase the level of inclusion in NLSA programs.

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THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF BLACK WOMEN IN EUROPE. CHALLENGES FOR A SOCIALLY JUST EDUCATION MODEL

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Abstract In Europe, a continent with a long history of immigration, where the right to education and school inclusion is quite widespread, inequalities remain for racialized youth. This constitutes the problem underlying this paper, which aims therefore to highlight the active role of racialized women in helping to make the educational systems in Europe more just and inclusive, through their biographical experiences. In particular, this contribution wants to answer three research questions: What kind of educational experiences do the black women narrate? How does the migratory status intersect with gender, race, socio-economic status and other aspects of their biographical paths? How, in the transition to adulthood, does their role within specific education systems in Europe contribute to reducing inequality? To answer these questions, I use the biographical interviews, collected during my PhD research, of 30 black women with a background from the Horn of Africa, living in Italy and Finland. These qualitative documents allow to analyze diachronically the educational experiences of the interviewees, highlighting the problems in the Italian and Finnish systems, as well as their paths of transition, in some cases, from female black students, to black teachers or researchers. This is a fairly novel perspective, which makes the interviewees protagonists of their own educational paths, emphasizing their ability to transform their structural constraints, inherent in the intersectionality that characterizes them, into resources to make the education systems more just.

INTRODUCTION

Considering the paradox whereby the spread of education in Europe does not counteract the persistence of inequalities, especially towards ethnic minorities, the subject of this research is the contradictions in the European education systems (both Southern and Northern Europe), as well as the role of seemingly marginalized actors who develop the resources and find the conditions to produce a significant change in the system, towards greater social justice. Among these marginalized subjects, young black women are further disadvantaged, because they suffer, in many cases, both sexism and racism. However, through the approach of intersectionality it is

possible to analyse how, in black girls and women, the structural factors of gender, race, migration background and in some cases religion are not exclusively a disadvantage. Indeed, these individuals manage to turn them into resources through their agency, and to transform the educational spaces they live in. Thus, on the one hand their educational experiences and intersectional discriminations in their biographical paths are investigated, and, on the other hand, how their roles within the educational systems of Italy and Finland contribute to reducing inequalities.

RACIAL AND ETHNIC INEQUALITIES IN ITALIAN AND FINNISH EDUCATION SYSTEMS: SOME SIMILARITIES

Italy and Finland are two countries with very different education systems and social environments. It is useful to compare these seemingly opposite systems because they refer to two totally different welfare states, belonging to Northern and Southern Europe, and have distinct immigration histories. Despite this, it is possible to identify some similarities between them. To provide a brief overview, Italy has a population of 58 983 000 millions (Istat, 2022); while Finland has a population of 5 554 960 millions (Statistics Finland, 2022). Considering the different population density of the two countries, in Italy the population with citizenship of an African state is 22.4% of the Italian population (Istat, 2022); while in Finland it is 65 007, that is 1,17% of Finnish population (Statistics Finland, 2022).

According to Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020, Finland ranks second in Europe for the inclusiveness of its education system, which is considered favourable to the needs of immigrants' children. Italy, on the other hand, is in a worse situation than Finland, ranking 22nd and having an education system that is considered unfavourable for immigrants' children (MIPEX, 2020). Some research (Paba & Bertozzi, 2017; Bozzetti, 2018) has shown that, in the Italian education system, different school choices of students with a migrant background, especially in the transition to higher education, are influenced by both external and internal factors. Ethno-racial discrimination especially occurs in the access and in the transition between different educational levels, where racial minorities are concentrated in less demanding tracks; a kind of educational segregation takes place (Santagati & Bertozzi, 2023). However, there are also positive experiences of children with migrant backgrounds, who manage to embark on a successful educational path (Santagati, 2021). Overall, the educational situation of migrant children is not positive in Italy: 47.2 % of them do not have

a secondary school diploma; and the rate of early school leavers regarding students of immigrant origin is three times higher than that of students of Italian origin (Istat, 2021).

In Finland, instead, the equality of the education system is more extended to the children of immigrants, and their educational access seems to be not influenced by the family socio-economic status (McMullin et al., 2021). Despite this, recent research has revealed an increasing relationship between residential location and school segregation, especially in Helsinki (Bernelius & Vaattovaara, 2016). Moreover, foreign school drop-outs at the end of compulsory education outnumber those who continue school. In particular, the risk of dropping out is higher among students with a migrant background, who have lower school scores. The high drop-out rate is also often related to language tests, which those classified as foreign language-speakers must pass to enter higher education (Kilpi-Jakonen, 2011). These are interesting aspects that undermine Finland's image as an almost perfect education system.

Among individuals with a migrant origin, black students suffer more racist educational practices, as shown by research in Finland (Mustonen, 2021), and in Italy (Zanga & De Gioannis, 2023). In this regard, intersectional discrimination (Crenshaw, 1991), as well as the educational successful paths of black female students have been studied mainly in the United States, but not in Europe (Stevens & Dworkin, 2019). The latter may in fact encounter greater difficulties, as they embody the intersection of two structural factors (gender and race), which may constitute a greater obstacle for them in patriarchal countries such as Italy and Finland. Blackness should not be a factor of discrimination, as well as gender, but in fact it is.

THE RESEARCH METHOD

To better understand the educational systems of these two countries, I decided to start from the biographical experiences of people with migrant backgrounds. Subjects are at the core of the processes of inclusion or exclusion in education, and of eventual solutions. Little attention has been paid by studies to the education of black women among the population with African citizenship, emphasizing their agency and avoiding a one-sided and victimistic interpretation. In this research, it was therefore decided to focus on women from the Ethiopian, Eritrean and Somali diasporas due to their historical presence in Italy (since 1960) and Finland (since 1980). These two countries are emblematic of the relationship between Northern and Southern

Europe, and investigating the experiences of black women in these two states provides insight into two different educational systems, but with some points of contact. The aim of the study is therefore highlighting the school experiences lived, in the Italian and Finnish education systems, by black women from the Horn of Africa who are active in various forms of engagement – political, social, cultural, intellectual – for the improvement of their societies. This study is part of a broader research, i.e. doctoral research. The participants are adult women, who tell their educational experience between the present and the past. Table 1 presents data regarding the presence of people with Somali, Ethiopian and Eritrean citizenship, respectively in Italy and Finland.

ITALY	<i>Citizenship</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Total</i>
	Somalia	5525	2104	7629
	Ethiopia	2797	4120	6917
	Eritrea	3555	3357	6912
FINLAND	<i>Citizenship</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Total</i>
	Somalia	11 741	11 053	22 794
	Ethiopia	1640	1327	2967
	Eritrea	806	482	1288

Table 1. Population of Somali, Ethiopian, Eritrean Citizenship in Italy and Finland at 31 December 2020. Source: Elaboration by the author on data of Istat (demo.istat.it) and of Statistics Finland.

As can be seen from the data, women make up a conspicuous number, although they are always fewer than men, with the exception of Ethiopian women in Italy. The total of black women in Italy from these three diasporas are 9581; while the total of the same black women in Finland are 12862, of which as many as 11053 are Somali women. From these numbers, it is curious to observe how women from these three

diasporas are more numerous in Finland, despite Italian colonialism in the Horn of Africa.

To achieve the goal and describe the education experiences of these women, the research questions are as follows:

- What kind of educational experiences do the black women narrate?
- How does the migratory status intersect with gender, race, socio-economic status and other aspects of their biographical paths?
- How, in the transition to adulthood, does their role within specific education systems in Europe contribute to reducing inequality?

The epistemological view to answer these questions is a constructivist approach to knowledge, which is focused on the epistemological category of agency (Rockmore, 2005; Miceli, 2019). In constructivism, knowledge is produced from the experiences of subjects; and the epistemological challenge of this research is to bring the perspective of agency and the intersectionality theory into dialogue with each other. These approaches are seemingly opposites, but the findings will show how these perspectives can be in dialogue with each other. This epistemological premise finds correspondence in a qualitative methodology, in particular 30 biographical interviews (Kontos, 2008; Lahire, 2016) of the type “racconti di vita” (Bichi, 2002) were conducted, 16 in Italy and 14 in Finland. The research was conducted in Italy during 2021 and 2022, mainly in the city of Milan; while in Finland it was conducted in Helsinki from September to December 2022. The selection criterion of the interviewees concerned the co-presence of two aspects: the link with the Ethiopian, Eritrean or Somali diaspora; and the participation in one or more forms of engagement. These women are therefore active in the societies in which they live, possessing a certain level of experience and awareness whereby their educational experiences provide a relevant, and personal, insight into the system. The selection did not follow generational criteria, but the interviewees belong to different generations of the three diasporas. To find participants, first key experts on the topic were consulted; second, the so-called *snowball technique* was used, according to which the first respondents indicated the names of the other potential respondents.

This methodology allowed me to reconstruct not only the educational experiences of racialized women, but also their educational engagement for social change. This shed light on the perspective of those directly involved in the processes, who deconstruct

existing knowledge on the topic and produce a direct knowledge. I, as a researcher, also took part in this process of deconstruction, as I had to undertake a process of “active reflexivity”, i.e. of continually questioning my positioning as a researcher and a white woman, as well as of humility and attention to the ways in which I interact (Soerdigo, Glas, 2020). The participants in the research were thus considered protagonists in the co-construction of knowledge.

SOME FINDINGS. FROM BLACK STUDENTS TO BLACK TEACHERS, CONTRASTING DISCRIMINATION

The following biographical analysis for this paper is focused on the individual narratives of the interviewees and their crucial life passages, which was intertwined with a thematic analysis aimed at bringing out the themes of the research questions. The results below concern the following themes, in relation to the three research questions: (1) the biographical educational experiences of the interviewees; (2) the intersection in their experiences of the structural factors of gender, race, migratory and social status; (3) the role of the interviewees in promoting equality in the Italian and Finnish educational systems.

Table 2 below summarizes the characteristics of the interviewees and their educational level, as revealed by the interviews.

<i>Interviewed Women (Country and Codes)</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Educational Qualification</i>
Italy – IT-16	Eritrean	PhD
Italy – IT-4	Somali	PhD Student
Italy – IT-10	Eritrean	PhD Student
Italy – IT-1	Eritrean	University Degree
Italy – IT-7	Italo-Ethiopian	University Degree
Italy – IT-8	Somali	University Degree
Italy – IT-9	Eritrean	University Degree

Italy – IT-11	Ethiopian	University Degree
Italy – IT-12	Somali	University Degree
Italy – IT-13	Somali	University Degree
Italy – IT-14	Italo-Ethiopian	University Degree
Italy – IT-15	Italo-Eritrean	University Degree
Italy – IT-5	Ethiopian	High School (University student)
Italy – IT-2	Eritrean	High School
Italy – IT-3	Ethiopian	High School
Italy IT-6	Somali	High School
Finland – FIN-12	Ethiopian	PhD Student
Finland – FIN-1	Somali	University Degree
Finland – FIN-2	Somali	University Degree
Finland – FIN-4	Ethiopian	University Degree
Finland – FIN-5	Somali	University Degree
Finland – FIN-6	Somali	University Degree
Finland – FIN-8	Somali	University Degree
Finland – FIN-10	Eritrean	University Degree
Finland – FIN-13	Ethiopian	University Degree
Finland – FIN-14	Ethiopian	University Degree
Finland – FIN-9	Somali	High School
Finland – FIN-7	Eritrean	VET qualification

Finland – FIN-11	Eritrean	VET qualification
Finland – FIN-3	Somali	VET student

Table 2. Black Women interviewed in Italy and Finland by origin and educational qualification. Source: elaboration by the author (cfr. Visioli, 2023).

The biographical analysis, i.e. starting from the narratives of the interviewees, makes it possible to identify the above-mentioned themes and to generate a reflexive knowledge resulting from a process of reflection, by each interviewee, on her own biographical and educational experience. In particular, the analysis and answers to the research questions can be summarized as follows.

With regard to the first research question, namely what kind of educational experiences do the interviewed women narrate, table 2 shows different educational levels. In Italy the interviewees have higher educational qualifications than Finland, as in Italy three women have or are doing a PhD, while in Finland only one. In addition, in Italy and Finland the number of interviewees who earned a university degree is quite balanced. Finally, in Finland few women earned a vocational school degree, which indicates the conclusion of a vocational school aimed to prepare students for a specific profession. This difference between the levels of education is curious, and is probably linked to a need for activism more felt in Italy, where in the current historical phase there is a moment of change in which Afro-descendant people, especially women, try to affirm their presence in all areas, including education, as much as possible.

Moreover, the interviewees' educational experiences can change during the different phases of their lives, taking on different characteristics and meanings. Overall, they reveal both positive and discriminatory episodes in the education systems of Italy and Finland, from an internal and personal perspective. It is also interesting to see how the interviewees' coping strategies with educational difficulties change with age.

C'erano quelle ragazzine che magari mi etichettavano come straniera, nera, eccetera. (...) Poi insomma le superiori ancora di più, perché era stato un periodo bruttissimo per me. C'era una professoressa in particolare che mi dava sempre lo stesso voto basso e secondo me aveva un pregiudizio contro di me. (IT-6)

Mi sono spostata da Roma a Milano per proseguire gli studi in architettura e pianificazione urbana, con un'idea insomma dell'urbanistica molto sociale. Al Politecnico mi sarei dovuta iscrivere al terzo anno: sono stata obbligata dalla riforma Moratti a iscrivermi con il vecchio ordinamento, quindi al primo anno. (...) Ho stretto relazioni di collaborazione soprattutto con i professori, che con i colleghi di corso. (IT-1)

In 2009 I went to study Healthcare at university in Helsinki, to work in public healthcare as a nurse. (...) Then I decided to start training people, and later to fund a company, with the aim of fighting discrimination against migrants and especially black Muslim women. (FIN-5)

Three different educational experiences related to different biographical temporalities emerge from these interview quotes. In the first, an experience of difficulty and discrimination during middle school and then high school is recounted. Alongside discrimination by peers, it is often white teachers who have veiled discriminatory attitudes towards students with a migrant background. In the second quote, the time of university education is reported, characterized by the possibility of support and collaboration with professors, so an overall positive experience. Finally, in the third quotation the interviewee speaks about her education in Finland, and the presence of discriminations against black people (and especially Muslim women as she is), not only in education but also in the transition to work, to which she develops a strategy to react. This reflexivity linking biographical and educational levels is an interesting aspect, and also relates to the experience of marginality that these women have experienced.

This aspect can be linked to the second research question. From the quotations below, it is interesting to analyze how the interviewees, while retaining their intersectional status of female, black and low or middle-class subjects, are sometimes perceived by others, and even treated, differently according to their positioning within the education system.

In Finland, access to high school is regulated by scores. There is discrimination because often a different advice is given by teachers, depending on the origin of the students. Although many students with migrant backgrounds have high scores, they are discouraged in a veiled way from pursuing a difficult higher education. (...) I choose high school, not vocational school. (...) When you are a black person you have to do a lot more than other people. I have to prove myself more, just so that other people can trust me. (FIN-3)

Perché quando non ero dentro ***, ma ero dentro semplicemente all'Università di Torino nessuno sapeva chi ero? Adesso che lavoro dentro all'Università, mi arrivano le mail di richiesta del dibattito. Perché adesso ti rendi conto? Sono la prima italiana nera dentro all'****, prima! **** esiste da più di 30 anni. Possibile che prima di me non ci sia stato nessuno? (IT-5)

Nel 2016 ho deciso di iniziare il dottorato. (...) Abbiamo stretto reti in tutta Italia con attiviste razzializzate, con attiviste anti-razziste e ho fatto anche progetti che avevano a che fare con questi temi. Ho fatto laboratori, creato gruppi di afrodiscendenti che, insomma, fanno un lavoro teorico e politico sui territori. (IT-10)

These quotations underline two interesting aspects related to the embodiment of intersectional factors. In the first one, being black, woman, Muslim and middle or low status student(s) leads to a kind of often veiled discrimination on the part of teachers. This consists in suggesting less prestigious educational paths to students with a migrant background, as they are considered less capable than others and must therefore prove more than the others. This is a discriminatory aspect common to the education systems of Italy and Finland. In the second one, instead, the interviewee refers to the transition from invisibility when she was a young student, to visibility when she became a university researcher. It emerges how some interviewees, in the transition from “receivers” to providers of education, are regarded with greater respect. The third quote shows how the interviewee, once she became a researcher, was able to use her intersectional positioning to work on projects on racism and anti-racism, working on issues that concerned her personally.

The aspect of black positionality is present both in Italy and Finland, but in Italy it is felt and thematised more, even because in Italy these women have higher educational levels. By positioning themselves at different levels within the education system, while retaining their intersectional character, discrimination against them changes. In some cases, as in the first quotation, the condition of intersectionality is even seen as an advantage, so that the invisibility of these women as students, now turns into a high visibility and they are asked to speak about certain issues they have experienced directly. It should be pointed out that not all the interviewees became researchers, teachers or educators, but a good number did, specifically six in Italy and four in Finland. It should also be noted that these numbers are linked only to the group of activists selected in the context of the wider doctoral research.

Finally, to answer the last research question, which relates to this discourse, many interviewees in the biographical transition into adulthood develop a reflexivity

regarding their experiences and the system of which they are a part, becoming agents of change. Among them, some went from being students to being racialized teachers or researchers, trying to reduce inequalities. At an interpretative level, it is interesting to see how the transition to adulthood allows for the development of a reflexivity that identifies the problems of the system, and leads to teachers and/or researchers with a greater awareness of these, having experienced them as children.

Nei libri di scuola è tutto molto sintetico, senza nessuna considerazione della storia, della cultura dei paesi che sono stati appunto colonizzati. Quindi il mio impegno è legato più a un racconto di persona proveniente da questo paese. E spesso però mi sono ritrovata a fare dei confronti molto duri, perché dall'altra parte non c'era questa comprensione e consapevolezza di ciò che davvero vuol dire colonizzare un territorio (...) E includere vuol dire secondo me prima di tutto accogliere l'altro, conoscersi reciprocamente. Perché se non ci conosciamo, se, parlo da docente, io insegnante non imparo a conoscere il bambino che ho davanti a me, come faccio a includere? (IT-6)

I now work where I used to be a university student, I am the only one in my Department of African origin. There are a lot of issues with university teaching and access, a lot of issues with exclusion and discrimination, but foreign parents are scared to report these issues. (...) I am currently working on a network project for education with many people from different African states, with a high educational level. I want to convey a positive image of black women in Western societies. (FIN-12)

I am satisfied with the Finnish education system, however there are some aspects to improve. For example, children of Finnish origin study a Finnish language at school, that is of a higher level than that of children born in Finland from immigrant parents. This is subtle discrimination characterized by differential treatment towards those children who know Finnish at the same level as "native children", because they speak it in their families from an early age, although their parents are not native Finns. (FIN-1)

As is evident from the quotations, the interviewees play an active role in the educational spaces in which they operate, which they seek to transform through what can be termed educational engagement. This is an engagement aimed at improving the educational system from within, making a difference first and foremost through their own behavior, and educating students to different narratives. The interviewees in question work in different educational fields: the first one teaches in a public, Italian primary school, the second one is a university researcher in Finland, and the third one is a teacher in a Finnish primary school. The three teachers are united by a perspective of change: the first one focuses on the self-reflection and questioning

procedure that teachers have to carry out, addressing especially the issue of colonialism; the second one wants to increase the high-level educational participation of racialized people, specifically of black women; finally, the third one identifies aspects to be improved regarding the education of children with a migrant background in Finland. Moreover, the interviews in Finland focus more on systemic discrimination at the educational level than in Italy; an aspect that is also themed in Italy, but linked more to the political and social environment. In summary, therefore, these as well as other interviewees who are active in the educational sphere, trace, by also rereading their youthful experience, the way forward to improve the educational systems in Italy and Finland from the perspective of individuals who have first experienced these systems, but who can also produce collective changes.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this paper did not systematically compare the education systems of Italy and Finland, but analyzed the biographical experiences of racialized women, emphasizing their active role within education. With their different educational qualifications and through their educational experiences (answer to first research question), in some cases positive while in others characterized by intersectional discriminations, they developed self-reflexivity. The positionality of the interviewees at the intersection of several structural constraints influences their educational and biographical experiences in that it places them in a disadvantaged position, compared to other subjects. However, the interviewees through their agency manage to make their characteristics of “marginality” an advantage, in the sense that they become an asset in carrying out their professions and in general their engagement.

Through their personal experiences of discrimination, in some cases also experienced by their children, the interviewees highlight the main aspects to be improved in the Italian and Finnish education systems, which in many cases coincide. In particular, the problems to address are: the discrimination in primary and especially secondary school by teachers who consider students with a migrant background less good than others; discriminations by classmates; and the a priori belief that children of non-Finnish origin know the Finnish language less well than others, despite being born in Finland (answer to second research question). Therefore, the women interviewed, as they directly experienced these discriminations, need to be seen as resources and guides for change, evocating the role of black women for the progress of

all the oppressed people, a theme evoked in the struggles of black Americans since the beginning of the last century (Cooper, 1892), and arrived with much delay in Southern Europe and the Black Mediterranean. Indeed, the interviewees try to make their structural factors a plus and not a minus, as well as the core of a kind of educational engagement (answer to third research question). This engagement includes primary and secondary schools black teachers, as well as black researchers in university, bringing change through their work: equality in education, in fact, needs to be co-constructed with the subjects involved. This is a strand of studies little studied in Europe, and especially in Italy, on which we will have to do research and reflect in the future. Indeed, the role of racialized teachers or of immigrant origin is fundamental in the contrast to ethnic-racial discrimination in school systems.

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Section 4

HIGHER EDUCATION

DALLA CULLA ALL'UNIVERSITÀ: L'ACCIDENTATO PERCORSO EDUCATIVO DEI GIOVANI CON BACKGROUND MIGRATORIO

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Abstract Il capitolo, a partire da alcune attività di ricerca condotte nel corso degli ultimi anni, si propone di mettere in luce i percorsi, spesso accidentati, che studenti e studentesse con background migratorio si trovano a vivere nel corso della loro vita. Le scelte educative – sia quelle genitoriali che quelle, in un secondo momento, individuali – rischiano di essere indirizzate, anche istituzionalmente, verso percorsi prestabiliti che rischiano di non conferire all'educazione quel valore di bene pubblico necessario alla costruzione di una società pienamente democratica.

INTRODUZIONE

L'anno scolastico 2021/2022 ha visto la presenza di 872.360 studenti e studentesse con cittadinanza straniera all'intero degli istituti scolastici italiani (il 10,6% dell'intera popolazione studentesca), in aumento di circa 7.000 unità rispetto all'anno precedente e di circa 100.000 unità nel corso dell'ultimo decennio: oltre due terzi (67,5%) potevano essere considerati di seconda generazione¹ in senso stretto, in quanto nati in Italia. Di questi, il 17,7% (154.426) frequentava la scuola dell'infanzia; il 35,8% (312.713) la scuola primaria; il 21,6% (188.234) la scuola secondaria di primo grado; il 24,9% (216.987) la scuola secondaria di secondo grado. A tale popolazione bisogna poi aggiungere chi, pur avendo un background migratorio, ha acquisito la cittadinanza italiana: così facendo, il numero totale di studenti e studentesse di origine straniera iscritti/e nelle scuole italiane aveva superato il milione già a partire dall'anno scolastico 2019/2020 (Istat, 2022). Ancora più complicato risulta avere stime precise

¹ Pur ritenendo la definizione *Nuove Generazioni Italiane* maggiormente in grado di identificare la complessa realtà rappresentata, all'interno del capitolo viene utilizzato il termine, ampiamente utilizzato, di *seconda generazione* con riferimento ai profili di quei giovani caratterizzati da background migratorio, a prescindere dal loro specifico collocarsi all'intero del continuum concettualizzato da Rumbaut (1997).

riguardo ai giovani di origine straniera all'università, non potendo contare su dati ministeriali utili a individuare chi, con background migratorio, è in possesso di cittadinanza italiana: a partire dalla distinzione che l'Oecd (2023) opera tra *international* e *foreign students*, e concentrandoci su questi ultimi – che sono nati o risiedono da anni nel Paese in cui studiano, pur non essendovi nati –, era possibile notare come degli oltre 90.000 iscritti con cittadinanza straniera all'interno degli Atenei italiani nel 2019, 36.467 fossero in possesso di un titolo di diploma acquisito in Italia, approssimandosi quindi al profilo di giovani di seconda generazione (Bozzetti, 2021).

Prestare attenzione alla traiettoria educativa permette di godere di un osservatorio privilegiato su una molteplicità di barriere ed ostacoli che possono caratterizzare i percorsi considerati: l'esperienza migratoria – esperita individualmente o dai genitori – e l'eventuale età in cui questa è avvenuta, le questioni familiari connesse, il capitale umano – personale e familiare –, sociale ed economico a disposizione (con i relativi vincoli e le conseguenti aspettative), gli aspetti linguistici, il possesso o meno della cittadinanza italiana, la dimensione della segregazione abitativa e le scelte scolastiche che ne derivano, i valori e i pregiudizi della società ricevente (Lagomarsino e Ravecca, 2014).

Capire il ruolo giocato dal percorso educativo intrapreso può essere utile per comprendere se, in seguito alla diffusione dell'istruzione superiore, tale contesto educativo di massa celi comunque al suo interno una disparità in termini di possibilità offerte: differenze sicuramente meno rigide e brutali rispetto al vecchio sistema ma, in quanto tali, più facilmente accettate (Bourdieu, 1979)

Obiettivo dell'approfondimento è quello di provare ad illustrare, sinteticamente, alcuni dei principali bivi che studenti e studentesse di origine straniera vivono nel corso del loro percorso educativo, transitando da un ciclo scolastico all'altro, e i rischi di ghettizzazione che ne derivano. Per farlo, ci si basa su tre diversi percorsi di ricerca, condotti nel corso dell'ultimo decennio, che hanno permesso di approfondire le loro biografie educative, dalla scuola dell'infanzia fino agli studi universitari.

Più nel dettaglio, le attività di ricerca che hanno fornito il materiale empirico utilizzato all'interno del capitolo sono le seguenti:

- *R1²: Arts Together*. Progetto di ricerca europeo, condotto tra il 2017 e il 2018 e volto ad effettuare una ricognizione dei bisogni di giovanissimi – under 14 – di origine straniera, tramite la somministrazione di questionari e interviste a famiglie (15) e testimoni privilegiati appartenenti al mondo scolastico o associativo (33), con l’obiettivo di sistematizzare alcune *best practices* diffuse a livello nazionale e internazionale;
- *R2: Osservatorio Nuove Generazioni e Coesione Sociale*. Attività di ricerca concretizzatasi nella realizzazione di 13 focus group che hanno coinvolto 20 giovani, di età compresa tra i 17 e i 26 anni, e 33 adulti, volti ad approfondire alcune delle sfide che caratterizzano la quotidianità, sollevate dai più giovani entro un confronto con il mondo adulto. Nel dettaglio, tramite la realizzazione di quattro “Laboratori di manutenzione di cittadinanza”, sono state sondate quattro diverse dimensioni: scuola e formazione, lavoro, vita quotidiana e partecipazione, migrazioni (Bozzetti et al., 2019);
- *R3: Seconde generazioni e istruzione universitaria: opportunità e sfide*. Attività volta a problematizzare le traiettorie educative dei giovani con background migratorio iscritti all’università: a partire da uno specifico studio di caso, quello dell’Università di Bologna, e tramite la raccolta di 537 questionari e la realizzazione di 30 interviste semi-strutturate, sono stati indagati i percorsi educativi che hanno portato gli studenti di seconda generazione ad accedere agli studi universitari, i risultati ottenuti e i progetti a breve e lungo periodo (Bozzetti, 2021).

L'INIZIO DEL PERCORSO: LA SCUOLA DELL'INFANZIA

Per analizzare le carriere educative dei giovani di origine straniera si vuole partire dalla più tenera età riprendendo in particolare del materiale empirico accessorio, “grigio” potremmo dire, raccolto in occasione della ricerca *Arts Together*. Ci si riferisce in particolare a una lettera, scritta dalla madre di un bambino, italiano, e indirizzata all’Ufficio Scolastico.

² La sigla *Rn* verrà riportata al termine degli stralci di intervista presentati all’interno del capitolo, andando a completare alcune caratteristiche attribuibili all’autore/ricce della citazione, così da ricondurre il materiale empirico alla relativa attività di ricerca.

Vengo a comunicare il ritiro dalla scuola dell'infanzia di mio figlio, perché mi è stato comunicato che a settembre la sezione dei 3 anni sarebbe stata composta da 21 stranieri e 4 italiani, mio figlio compreso. Sappiamo tutti che è giusto e doveroso imparare a integrarsi (...) Ma con 21 bimbi stranieri su 25, si crea una situazione quasi ghetizzante. Pretendo che la scuola offra quanto di meglio possa dare. Desidereremmo laboratori teatrali, di scacchi, di musica, di inglese, desidereremmo che venga parlato in sezione un linguaggio fluido, un lessico ricco e stimolante (...) Desidereremmo che il nostro bimbo facesse delle amicizie, e che le coltivi anche fuori dalla scuola, e desidereremmo noi stessi conoscere e frequentare i genitori dei suoi amici, come è normale che sia. E questo sappiamo, e sapete bene anche Voi, che è non impossibile, ma certamente alquanto difficile da ottenere in una situazione quale presentate. Mi è stato detto che, comunque, i bambini sono, tecnicamente e giuridicamente, cittadini italiani (...) Sapete bene che se i bimbi possono essere cittadini italiani, i loro genitori ancora no, almeno non culturalmente, non psicologicamente, non mentalmente. Non vogliamo sentirci penalizzati solo perché abitiamo in centro storico, solo perché tutti gli stranieri o quasi vengono convogliati in un'unica scuola.

Tale stralcio di lettera permette di mettere in luce fin da subito alcune dinamiche che caratterizzano le traiettorie educative dei giovani (o meglio, giovanissimi) di origine straniera, in particolar modo se comparate con quelle dei coetanei italiani. Il primo aspetto che emerge, con tutta la sua forza, è la creazione di quelle che vengono comunemente chiamate *classi-ghetto*: pur nella consapevolezza che l'eterogeneità culturale costituisca un arricchimento di vitale importanza, sono intervenute nel corso del tempo alcune disposizioni ministeriali, in parte derogabili, per evitare un'eccessiva concentrazione di alunni con background migratorio in determinate scuole o classi, che hanno fissato nel 30% degli iscritti il numero di alunni con cittadinanza non italiana presenti in ciascuna classe e scuola (Miur, 2023). A prescindere dalla possibile richiesta di deroga avanzate dai singoli istituti, il tema risulta sicuramente centrale.

Per nessuna delle nostre classi chiediamo la deroga (..) È poi evidente che alcune questioni emergono con molti bimbi stranieri...

Diceva però che siete comunque al di sotto del 30%...

Sì, però... Cioè... Non chiediamo la deroga perché magari sono nati qui. Ma le famiglie sono comunque di origine straniera: le questioni culturali, della lingua... Ma stiamo parlando della cittadinanza o dell'origine? (R1: F, Italia, Insegnante di scuola dell'infanzia)

È difficile scardinare questa cosa: secondo me si dovrebbe agire sui genitori, lavorare sui genitori, perché moltissimi non pensano più "vado in quella scuola perché ci sono delle brave maestre", ma "vado in quella scuola perché non ci sono

stranieri”. È proprio una cultura sbagliata! E noi dovremmo lavorare per far capire che lo straniero è veramente una risorsa e, che le scuole che hanno gli stranieri sono le migliori in assoluto perché gli insegnanti sono quelli che si mettono in gioco, sono quelli che studiano le strategie di lavoro migliori per motivare tutti gli alunni, dallo straniero all’italiano. (R2: F, Italia, Insegnante di scuola elementare)

Se per agire sulle, legittime, preoccupazioni genitoriali appare quindi necessario intervenire sul piano culturale, è altrettanto vero che i processi messi in atto dalle famiglie stesse nella scelta delle scuole rischiano di dar vita a un circolo vizioso che si auto-alimenta e che, a partire dalle dinamiche abitative presenti sui singoli territori, rischia di portare alla chiusura di alcuni plessi. Alcune attività di ricerca, condotte su cicli di istruzione successivi (Mantovani et al., 2022) hanno messo in luce, da un lato, che gli autoctoni hanno maggiori probabilità di frequentare scuole più lontane da casa, evidenziando quindi una maggiore mobilità sul territorio, e che, dall’altro, le istituzioni scolastiche che “attragono” gli studenti provenienti da famiglie culturalmente avvantaggiate (e/o che allontanano gli studenti provenienti da famiglie svantaggiate) tendono ad avere una quota molto bassa di iscritti di origine immigrata, offrendo così una sorta di rifugio agli autoctoni di classe superiore che desiderano “fuggire” da scuole percepite negativamente.

Lo stralcio di lettera presentata permette di richiamare sinteticamente altri due punti: il primo è costituito dalla minore partecipazione delle famiglie straniere alla quotidianità educativa dei propri figli, perlopiù legata, secondo la letteratura, a ragioni di stampo linguistico e culturale (Huntsinger e Jose 2009).

Il secondo è legato alle attività che la scuola è in grado di proporre. Se già la citazione sopra-riportata mette in luce come gli insegnanti che lavorano in classi eterogenee sono quelli che *studiano le strategie di lavoro migliori per motivare tutti gli alunni*, e l’arte può essere uno strumento chiave, è altrettanto importante non rischiare di mettere in atto delle “stereotipizzazioni forzate”:

L’arte è il medium ideale per superare la barriera principale, quella linguistica. Con la pittura, con il disegno, con la musica, con il teatro si parla un unico linguaggio, i bambini possono esprimere la loro personalità senza necessariamente usare le parole, e permette di coinvolgere anche le famiglie. (R1: F, Italia, Insegnante scuola primaria)

Ci sono insegnanti davvero molto motivate, molto attente a tutta una serie di aspetti. Ma i metodi, i modi non mi convincono (...) La cosa della scoperta dei cibi, dei piatti tipici delle diverse culture va molto con i bambini: viene fatta in quasi tutte

le scuole dell'infanzia, e anche alle primarie. Si chiede ai bambini marocchini, per esempio, di cucinare il cous cous: ma loro magari non lo sanno neanche fare. Sono nati in Italia, al massimo vorrebbero fare la piada (...) Mi sembra davvero che si ragioni e si mettano in atto metodi e strumenti troppo vecchi: non sono primi migranti che ti devono far scoprire un mondo, sono bambini nati in Italia. (R1: F, Italia, Volontaria associazione)

Sulle rilevanti aspettative che i genitori ripongono sul percorso scolastico dei propri figli, in questo caso autoctoni, si avrà comunque modo di tornare a breve, analizzando come tali desiderata trovino una sponda istituzionale in determinate pratiche, ormai consolidate.

TRA SCUOLA PRIMARIA E SECONDARIA DI I GRADO: LA COMPLESSITÀ DELL'INSERIMENTO

Se le dinamiche prima descritte in merito alla scelta della scuola si ripetono anche al momento dell'iscrizione negli istituti primari e secondari, pare utile affrontare un'altra questione che, nei cicli scolastici qui considerati, emerge in modo rilevante: il frequente inserimento dei nuovi arrivati in classi inferiori rispetto all'età posseduta, uno dei fattori che incide sul ritardo scolastico. Nell'anno scolastico 2021/2022 (Miur, 2023) la percentuale di studenti con cittadinanza non italiana in ritardo era pari al 25,4% (a fronte dell'8,1% tra gli studenti italiani). I dati sul ritardo accumulato dagli alunni stranieri possono almeno in parte essere interpretati alla luce di una logica di produzione istituzionalizzata del ritardo (Perrone, 2011), secondo cui gli alunni stranieri, più che accumulare ritardo, partirebbero semplicemente più tardi degli altri: questa dinamica comporterebbe anche una degradazione simbolica dello studente (Queirolo Palmas e Torre, 2005).

È stato un problema psicologico, per il fatto che io ho dovuto ricominciare da capo il liceo quindi a 15 anni andavo in classe con dei ragazzini di 12 anni. Nel periodo dell'adolescenza si vede la differenza... (R3: F, Argentina, Studentessa LCU)

Ed è solitamente alle esperienze vissute alle scuole elementari e medie che vengono fatti risalire i primi episodi di discriminazione subita, sia da parte dei compagni che parte degli insegnanti, che rimangono impressi nei racconti dei giovani con background migratorio.

Magari mi guardavano e mi dicevano: “Tu non sei tunisina, sei italiana”. Anche d’aspetto... “Tu non sei come quelli”. È bruttissimo, perché quelli... Io faccio parte di quelli. (R3: F, Tunisia, Studentessa LT)

Io non mi scorderò mai una maestra che non mi chiamava per nome ma mi chiamava “albanese”: mai per nome... (R3: F, Albania, Studentessa LM)

Una parola chiave sembra emergere nell’analisi di questi cicli scolastici: complessità. Una complessità che caratterizza i vissuti di studenti e studentesse di origine straniera; una complessità che le istituzioni scolastiche si trovano a dover fronteggiare dovendo cercare soluzioni a situazioni estremamente peculiari.

Quest’anno abbiamo avuto per la prima volta delle alunne profughe di origine pakistana, con alle spalle una situazione indescrivibile: la madre è stata ripudiata dal marito e ha iniziato a girare per l’Europa. Sono tutte acculturatissime, e con una tempra di un certo tipo, ma non parlano una parola di italiano (...) La piccolina soffre della sindrome di down, ed è questo il motivo per cui è stata ripudiata... Una bambina down che non sa ancora che cosa sia una cura: i tipici problemi di respirazione li sta curando con un banale Ventolin. La ragazzina “mezzana”, invece, è nella scuola secondaria. È stata un’inclusione complicata: la ragazzina parla un inglese perfetto. Quando ha capito che l’avrei inserita in seconda e non in terza, perché per via della lingua non avrebbe potuto sostenere in un determinato modo l’esame, non voleva entrare in classe. Adesso la ragazzina si trova bene. L’unico problema adesso è della docente: lei dovrebbe parlare in italiano, ma anche nell’intervallo ci sono tutti i suoi compagni che le parlano in inglese. La mamma l’ho incontrata l’altro giorno: aveva un sorriso raggianti, continua a ringraziarci, e la vedo molto serena. Inizialmente si era pensato di mandare la figlia più grande al Cpia, all’istruzione per adulti, e la mamma si è opposta: mi ha detto che lei sarebbe andata al CPIA, mentre sua figlia avrebbe fatto il liceo. (R1: F, Italia, Dirigente scolastico)

VERSO LE SUPERIORI: I RISCHI DI INDIRIZZAMENTO ISTITUZIONALE

Un altro bivio cruciale nelle carriere educative di studenti e studentesse, con background migratorio ma non solo, è costituito dal passaggio alla scuola secondaria di secondo grado (Ambrosini e Pozzi, 2018). Due attori giocano un ruolo-chiave: la famiglia, a cui si accennerà all’interno del prossimo paragrafo, e la scuola. In particolare, il supporto degli insegnanti si rivela fondamentale: quando questo è mancato o si è rivolto a percorsi educativi altri rispetto a quelli desiderati, viene guardato, a posteriori, con occhio critico. Tale orientamento, perlopiù rivolto a percorsi formativi meno qualificanti, non deve essere letto in assoluto come una forma di insuccesso:

come sostenuto da Lagomarsino e Ravecca (2014), può talvolta essere considerato una valida alternativa in vista di una qualche forma di progressione sociale pur conducendo, di norma, verso le posizioni più basse all'interno del mercato del lavoro.

La mia Prof di Matematica era per un professionale (...) Un po' questo pregiudizio, anche involontario. E mi sono detta "Caspita, anche la mia Prof di Matematica non è proprio da meno". Cioè, lei mi diceva "Ti vedrei per questa cosa. Non perché... Però, sai..." Niente, invece alla fine ho scelto di fare il Linguistico. (R3: F, Romania, Studentessa LT)

I processi selettivi possono talvolta anche basarsi su meccanismi istituzionali di riproduzione dello status quo: emblematico è il caso dei due Rapporti di Autovalutazione (Rav) riportati, pubblicati da due istituti secondari di secondo grado nel corso del 2018. I Rav, istituiti con il DPR. n. 80/2013 e successivamente modificati dalla legge 107/2005, sono documenti liberamente consultabili a partire dall'anno scolastico 2014/2015: redatti da tutte le istituzioni scolastiche, siano esse statali o paritarie, vengono aggiornati periodicamente, con l'obiettivo di presentare il contesto scolastico, gli esiti, i processi (intesi come pratiche educative, didattiche, gestionali e organizzative), individuando le priorità e, in linea più generale, fornendo tutte quelle informazioni utili ad orientare le scelte educative familiari.

L'essere il Liceo classico più antico di Roma conferisce alla scuola fama e prestigio consolidato (...) Le famiglie che scelgono il liceo sono di estrazione medio-alto borghese, per lo più residenti in centro (...) Tutti, tranne un paio, gli studenti sono di nazionalità italiana e nessuno è diversamente abile. La percentuale di alunni svantaggiati per condizione familiare è pressoché inesistente. (Liceo E. Q. V., Statale, Roma)

Gli studenti del nostro istituto appartengono prevalentemente alla medio-alta borghesia romana. La spiccata omogeneità socio-economica e territoriale dell'utenza facilita l'interazione sociale (...) Non sono presenti né studenti nomadi né provenienti da zone particolarmente svantaggiate (...) Negli anni sono stati iscritti figli di portieri e/o custodi di edifici del quartiere ma, data la prevalenza quasi esclusiva di studenti provenienti da famiglie benestanti, la presenza seppur minima di alunni provenienti da famiglie di portieri o di custodi comporta difficoltà di convivenza dati gli stili di vita molto diversi (Liceo F., Paritario, Roma)

I due stralci qui presentati esplicitano in modo piuttosto evidente come l'omogeneità di background socioeconomico e familiare della popolazione studentesca venga considerata una risorsa da promuovere. Al di là dei due casi specifici, tuttavia, che hanno

potuto contare su una compilazione particolarmente “ispirata” da parte degli incaricati alla stesura del rapporto – solitamente il Dirigente Scolastico e/o Nucleo Interno di Valutazione –, ciò che induce a una riflessione ancora più accurata è l'impostazione di tali documenti a partire dalle loro domande guida, utile *stimolo per riflettere sui risultati raggiunti dalla scuola in quello specifico settore* (Miur e Invalsi 2017, 4)³. Ponendo in particolar modo l'attenzione sulla sezione “Contesto e Risorse”, a cui si ha immediato accesso consultando i rapporti online, la prima area per cui viene richiesta una descrizione è quella relativa alla “Popolazione scolastica”, con l'indicazione di dettagliare la provenienza socioeconomica e culturale degli studenti e, più in generale, le caratteristiche della popolazione scolastica. Più nel dettaglio, le domande proposte sono le seguenti (ibidem):

- qual è il contesto socioeconomico di provenienza degli studenti?
- Qual è l'incidenza degli studenti provenienti da famiglie svantaggiate?
- Quali caratteristiche presenta la popolazione studentesca (situazioni di disabilità, disturbi evolutivi, ecc.)?
- Ci sono studenti con cittadinanza non italiana?
- Ci sono gruppi di studenti che presentano caratteristiche particolari dal punto di vista della provenienza socioeconomica e culturale (es. studenti nomadi, studenti provenienti da zone particolarmente svantaggiate, ecc.)?

Detto che altre aree dei rapporti meriterebbero ulteriori approfondimenti (si pensi all'area “Ambiente di apprendimento”, con particolare riferimento alla sua sub-area “Dimensione relazionale”, e alle aree “Inclusione e differenziazione” e “Integrazione con il territorio e rapporti con le famiglie”), e che un monitoraggio della popolazione studentesca è ovviamente richiesto e necessario, anche per evidenziare ed intervenire su eventuali dimensioni problematiche, resta da chiedersi se rendere pubblica in questo modo l'informazione raccolta sia una strategia corretta. Non si tratta neppure di interrogarsi sulla veridicità di quanto inserito all'interno dei rapporti – veridicità peraltro non rilevata neppure dallo stesso Ministero -, ma sulla struttura e sull'utilizzo del rapporto stesso, su cui vanno poi ad innestarsi le maggiori o minori sensibilità dei singoli istituti, impegnati a dare la migliore immagine di sé all'esterno. Se il Rapporto di Autovalutazione viene utilizzato come un dispositivo istituzionale utile ad attirare una *clientela* selezionata – mettendo in evidenza l'assenza di studenti

³ Cfr. https://www.invalsi.it/snv/docs/0220/Guida%20autovalutazione_2017.pdf.

e studentesse provenienti da determinati gruppi sociali –, e non come uno strumento avente come obiettivo quello di valutare internamente l'efficacia delle attività svolte e, al limite, di far conoscere le proposte educative dell'Istituto all'esterno, emerge il rischio che tale strumento funzioni come dispositivo di selezione sociale.

Le dinamiche appena accennate contribuiscono almeno in parte a determinare scelte educative profondamente differenti tra giovani “autoctoni” e giovani di origine straniera: se i primi scelgono un percorso liceale nel 53,1% dei casi, un percorso tecnico nel 30,9% dei casi e un percorso professionale nel 19,0% dei casi, i giovani con cittadinanza non italiana si iscrivono nel 32,1% dei casi ad un liceo, nel 38,9% ad un istituto tecnico, nel 29,1% dei casi ad un istituto professionale (Miur 2023). Traiettorie che impattano anche l'ultimo passaggio che verrà qui analizzato, quello relativo al passaggio agli studi universitari.

ALL'UNIVERSITÀ

I giovani con background migratorio all'interno dell'università costituiscono una popolazione ancora poco indagata: in parte perché gli approfondimenti sui percorsi educativi hanno seguito la maturazione demografica delle seconde generazioni (Santagati, 2012), in parte perché risulta piuttosto diffusa l'idea dell'università come un terreno neutro in cui viene dato per scontato che chi vi arriva abbia già superato eventuali difficoltà. Analizzando alcune caratteristiche sociodemografiche dei giovani “di seconda generazione” all'università (intendendo con questa etichetta, a causa della limitata disponibilità di dati, gli studenti in possesso di cittadinanza straniera e diploma italiano), e comparandole con quelle dei compagni italiani, tre tendenze emergono in tutta la loro rilevanza.

Innanzitutto, una più marcata differenza di genere rispetto a quella che si riscontra tra studenti e studentesse italiane, con una ancor più netta prevalenza femminile nell'a.a. 2018/2019 (27,4 punti percentuali di differenza tra studenti e studentesse di seconda generazione; 10,6 punti percentuali tra compagni/e italiani/e). Al contempo, per meglio comprendere queste dinamiche, perlopiù familiari, e come evidenziato dallo stralcio di intervista sotto riportato, indagare i differenti processi di socializzazione e le intersezioni tra aree geografiche di appartenenza e modelli di genere assunti nelle diverse tradizioni risulta di grande interesse (Colombo, 2003).

Mio padre era contro per un fatto culturale, perché la donna non può passare le notti fuori casa (...) Ma a me non interessava: io volevo fare l'infermiera, non mi interessava. Ho assecondato le sue scelte fino alle Superiori (...) Mi sto per laureare, e inviterò mio padre alla laurea: per ripicca proprio. (R3: F, Marocco, Studentessa LT)

I miei hanno fatto il passo di emigrare in un altro Paese principalmente per me e mia sorella. E lo studio, far studiare i propri figli in buone Università, è sicuramente uno dei motivi per cui uno prende un gommone, rischiando la vita. E quindi il minimo che io devo loro è continuare a studiare dando qualche soddisfazione. Anche se i miei non hanno ancora capito cosa studio, mi appoggiano. (R3: F, Albania, Studentessa LM)

Una seconda caratteristica che emerge con forza è l'età con cui gli studenti con background migratorio si affacciano agli studi universitari: nell'a.a. 2018/2019 il 79,2% degli studenti con cittadinanza italiana risulta immatricolato entro il compimento del ventesimo anno d'età, evidenziando un precedente percorso di studi lineare, privo di ritardi e interruzioni; tale percentuale diminuisce sensibilmente tra gli studenti in possesso di cittadinanza straniera e diploma italiano (46,2%). Quel ritardo accumulato nei precedenti cicli di istruzione si ripercuote quindi, per forza di cose al momento dell'accesso agli studi universitari.

A causa del lavoro e anche per motivi psicologici, io l'anno scorso non ho potuto frequentare l'università. Non ho voluto. Perché vedere i miei compagni di corso già più avanti di me, mi metteva molto a disagio... (R3: M, Pakistan, Studente LCU)

Anche il precedente percorso educativo, infine, mostra sensibili differenze: tra studenti e studentesse con cittadinanza italiana la percentuale di chi è in possesso di una maturità liceale è pari al 70,5%; tra gli studenti di seconda generazione iscritti in un Ateneo italiano nell'a.a. 2018/2019 avevano frequentato un percorso liceale "solo" nel 45,9% dei casi. Un percorso educativo sviluppato in un determinato contesto rischia di non preparare adeguatamente gli studenti in vista della prosecuzione degli studi, creando in essi un certo disorientamento, oltre che l'ottenimento di risultati inferiori rispetto a quelli attesi.

Sono contenta della scuola professionale, perché è stato un bel percorso, non ci sono stati problemi. Però se tornassi indietro farei un'altra scuola, farei il Liceo Scientifico, perché l'inizio dell'Università è stato duro, veramente duro, perché io non avevo le basi. (R3: F, Marocco, Studentessa LT)

RIFLESSIONI CONCLUSIVE

Obiettivo del capitolo era quello di analizzare alcuni dei bivi che i giovani di origine straniera si trovano a vivere nel corso del loro percorso educativo, mettendo in risalto le disparità nelle opportunità offerte rispetto ai loro coetanei italiani: alla luce di esse, le concettualizzazioni di Bourdieu (1979), che vedrebbero una maggiore accettazione di tali differenze, in quanto meno rigide rispetto al passato data la diffusione di massa dell'istruzione superiore, rischiano di non risultare ancora, del tutto, superate. Indagare le dinamiche che guidano le scelte compiute dalle famiglie (italiane e non), le modalità di inserimento di studenti e studentesse, le politiche di inclusione e le attività di orientamento messe in atto dagli insegnanti e, più in generale, dall'istituzione "scuola" risulta fondamentale per conferire all'educazione quel valore di bene pubblico, imprescindibile per la costruzione di una società pienamente democratica.

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LA REALTÀ AUMENTATA PER LA TRASFORMAZIONE DIGITALE: NUOVI SCENARI PER UNA DIDATTICA INNOVATIVA ALL'UNIVERSITÀ*

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Abstract Le tecnologie immersive stanno apportando enormi cambiamenti nel modo in cui le esperienze possono essere vissute e condivise, con un impatto significativo nel campo dell'istruzione. Questa trasformazione si manifesta mediante l'impiego di dispositivi avanzati e di soluzioni innovative che rivoluzionano l'approccio tradizionale all'insegnamento-apprendimento. Una tra le tecnologie immersive emergenti è la Realtà Aumentata (AR). Attraverso l'utilizzo di dispositivi in AR – come i visori – gli studenti possono sperimentare ambienti di apprendimento interattivi e coinvolgenti. L'implementazione della realtà aumentata nel panorama educativo offre nuove prospettive e opportunità per il miglioramento del processo di insegnamento-apprendimento. Il presente contributo esplora l'adozione della realtà aumentata nell'istruzione universitaria, al fine di indagare le percezioni degli studenti. Per verificare l'efficacia dell'utilizzo della AR in Università è stata condotta una ricerca che ha coinvolto un campione di 50 studenti del secondo anno del Corso di Laurea in Scienze della Formazione Primaria dell'Università degli Studi di Palermo, nell'anno accademico 2022/2023. La didattica immersiva è stata sperimentata tramite l'utilizzo dei visori HoloLens e del software Hevo Collaboration. A conclusione del percorso formativo è stato somministrato un questionario per analizzare le percezioni post esperienza.

INTRODUZIONE

Nuovi scenari digitali pervadono la nostra quotidianità, offrendo l'opportunità di interagire in maniera innovativa con lo spazio che ci circonda e la possibilità di avere

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nuove risorse da sfruttare in diversi ambiti. In questo contesto, la Realtà Aumentata (Augmented Reality - AR), una tra le nuove tecnologie emergenti, si posiziona come un forte catalizzatore del cambiamento nel panorama educativo, introducendo nuove prospettive e opportunità per migliorare il processo di insegnamento-apprendimento. La possibilità di integrare i percorsi educativi tradizionali con metodologie che si avvalgono della realtà aumentata, è oggi al centro del dibattito, anche grazie al fatto che la produzione di dispositivi specifici per l'AR, come visori e occhiali intelligenti, ne ha aumentato e diffuso il suo utilizzo. Diversi sono gli studi che hanno esplorato i vantaggi che l'AR offre per l'insegnamento-apprendimento, mettendo in evidenza quanto quest'ultima promuova l'immaginazione, la motivazione, la creatività e l'interesse in generale per lo studio. Emergono, altresì, risultati positivi circa l'aumento dell'autoefficacia degli studenti, nonché il livello di soddisfazione e di elaborazione dei concetti solitamente ritenuti complessi. Tuttavia, l'introduzione di nuove tecnologie, rispetto alle quali gli studenti non sono ancora abituati, deve tenere in considerazione alcuni fattori che potrebbero avere un impatto significativo negli stessi, tra cui quelli cognitivi, motivazionali ed emotivi. Oggi si tende a dare per scontato il fatto che la tecnologia ha sempre un'influenza positiva sugli studenti delle nuove generazioni. Pertanto, affinché l'adozione di metodologie didattiche in AR risulti efficace, uno dei fattori chiave è proprio quello di conoscere la soddisfazione degli studenti in seguito all'utilizzo della realtà aumentata. Anche in ambito accademico è stata avvertita l'esigenza di innovare l'approccio educativo, mediante l'implementazione di una didattica che si avvale della realtà aumentata, al fine di venire incontro alle nuove sfide socio-educative della nostra epoca e di sfruttare tutte le potenzialità offerte da questa nuova tecnologia. Il fine ultimo è quello di avviare metodi attivi di insegnamento. Per progettare percorsi educativi innovativi, è fondamentale, da un lato, fornire agli insegnanti le competenze necessarie per implementarli e per adattare le strategie didattiche ai vari bisogni degli studenti. Dall'altro, coinvolgere attivamente gli studenti, così da incoraggiarne la partecipazione attiva per co-costruire una nuova conoscenza attraverso le nuove esperienze interattive. Lo studio preliminare di alcuni fattori consentirà di creare esperienze aumentate e differenziate che permettono di ottenere un elevato livello di interazione con gli studenti, come per esempio con i visori di ultima generazione, quali gli HoloLens Microsoft.

QUADRO TEORICO

La realtà aumentata è una tecnologia che consente l’inserimento di elementi virtuali all’interno di un ambiente reale, mediante l’ausilio di appositi software, così da aumentarne l’esperienza sensoriale e consentire agli utenti di interagire in tempo reale con gli oggetti sovrapposti al contesto reale (Di Martino & Longo, 2019). Come evidenziato da Pancioli & Macaudo (2018, p. 48), “La realtà aumentata può incorporare contenuti informativi negli oggetti che, se inquadrati, restituiscono in risposta un testo, un’immagine o un video (...): nella realtà fisica l’oggetto è fermo e silenzioso, mentre sullo schermo del dispositivo mobile si anima e si arricchisce di elementi che ne favoriscono la comprensione”. Mediante la realtà aumentata, secondo Zhang e colleghi (2022), si può fare esperienza del Metaverso¹ e permettere agli studenti di fruire di esperienze di apprendimento autentiche e incarnate. Rossi e colleghi (2023, p. 171), riguardo all’entrata del metaverso nel mondo dell’istruzione, affermano:

Il metaverso nel mondo dell’istruzione, secondo Zhang e colleghi (2022), si può intendere come un ambiente educativo arricchito dalle tecnologie e, nello specifico, da strumentazioni di AR e VR. Con il supporto di strumentazioni VR e AR, gli studenti possono “mobilitare” i loro corpi per prendere parte a diverse attività di apprendimento esplorativo e collaborativo, al fine di promuovere processi di socializzazione; attraverso gli ambienti immersivi, gli studenti hanno la possibilità di avere stimoli multisensoriali e ottenere feedback in tempo reale. Il metaverso, quindi, può fornire agli studenti esperienze di apprendimento autentiche e incarnate.

In questo nuovo contesto immersivo, cambia anche l’approccio metodologico, poiché diventa *student-centred*, ovvero basato sullo studente, il quale ha un ruolo attivo nel suo processo di apprendimento, divenendo fruitore e creatore di contenuti (Rossi et al., 2023). A questo proposito, Liu (2009, p. 173) sottolinea come la realtà aumentata “migliori la capacità di esplorare, assorbire nuove conoscenze e risolvere problemi”,

¹ Metaverso – dall’inglese *metaverse* – è un termine che risale al 1992, nato dalla crisi tra il prefisso di origine greca “meta”, che veicola un significato di trascendenza, e il termine “universo”. A coniarlo fu Neal Stephenson, autore di fantascienza. Non esiste attualmente una definizione scientifica univoca di metaverso (Park & Kim, 2022): negli anni è stato concepito come un mondo virtuale in grado di rappresentare gli oggetti fisici e la geografia del mondo reale (Schroeder, Huxor & Smith, 2001), oppure come un mondo progettato per essere sotto il diretto controllo degli utenti e permettere loro di crearne le caratteristiche (Papagiannidis & Bourlakis, 2010), o, ancora, come uno spazio creato dalla fusione tra AR e VR (Choi & Kim, 2017).

con un conseguente impatto anche a livello emotivo. Infatti, molte delle esperienze prese in esame creano un coinvolgimento emotivo-affettivo che affievolisce “il timore reverenziale” o la “prevenzione dello studente” (Gugliemi, 2017, p. 46). Le attività in realtà aumentata promuovono sia l’autonomia del singolo studente, attraverso l’elaborazione individuale dei contenuti, che l’apprendimento cooperativo, poiché facilitano il confronto e la condivisione (Di Martino & Longo, 2019). Gli apprendenti, interagendo con i loro coetanei, mettono in atto strategie di apprendimento cooperativo supportate dalla tecnologia AR e si immergono profondamente nel processo di ricerca (Chen et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2014; Marín-Marín et al., 2023). L’AR però non si limita soltanto a favorire la collaborazione tra studenti, ma incentiva anche la cooperazione tra studenti e docenti. Pancioli & Macauda (2018) riprendono un concetto spesso discusso in letteratura, ovvero il fatto che le potenzialità della realtà aumentata si manifestano significativamente in relazione all’apprendimento situato. In questa prospettiva, gli studenti stabiliscono connessioni tra ciò che stanno studiando e la loro vita quotidiana, mediante questa innovativa modalità di apprendimento (Johnson et al., 2011). L’apprendimento esperienziale e situazionale non solo consentono agli studenti di ottenere esperienze autentiche e coinvolgenti, ma sono utili per sviluppare la loro creatività, il processo decisionale, la risoluzione dei problemi, l’autonomia e l’indipendenza (Wu & Gao, 2022). È stato dimostrato da diversi studi che l’AR supporta, altresì, l’apprendimento cinestetico, l’immaginazione visiva e quella spaziale (Alzahrani, 2020; Dunleavy et al., 2009), nonché la motivazione e l’interesse degli studenti verso lo studio (Wyss et al., 2022). Per quanto concerne l’influenza della Realtà Aumentata sulla motivazione degli studenti ad apprendere, è interessante notare quanto affermato da Campos-Mesa e colleghi (2022), i quali sostengono che il processo di insegnamento-apprendimento, svolto all’interno di un’aula virtuale, presenta il vantaggio di sviluppare delle competenze metacognitive negli studenti. In questo modo, si registra un aumento della fiducia in sé stessi e della responsabilità del proprio processo di apprendimento. L’utilizzo dell’AR all’interno dei processi educativi ha dei risvolti positivi in termini di atteggiamenti e di soddisfazione. Infatti, la motivazione all’apprendimento aumenta proprio grazie all’implementazione dell’AR, la quale viene considerata una risorsa altamente motivante, poiché incentiva gli studenti nel compiere esplorazioni del mondo reale, grazie all’effetto sorpresa di cui è dotata (Campos-Mesa et al., 2022).

L’apprendimento con realtà aumentata, inoltre, viene percepito dagli studenti come più coinvolgente, oltre al fatto che è in grado di migliorare il pensiero critico, la

risoluzione dei problemi, l'elaborazione delle informazioni e le capacità di comunicazione (Wyss et al., 2022; Garzon et al., 2020). L'esperienza di apprendimento immersiva permette agli studenti di immergersi in un ambiente virtuale e di toccare oggetti e sperimentare teorie anche complesse, nonché di compiere esperimenti in totale sicurezza senza preoccuparsi dei rischi e/o delle conseguenze che questi ultimi avrebbero nella vita reale (Rossi et al., 2023, p. 172). Dal momento che agevola la memorizzazione, alcuni studi dimostrano come la realtà aumentata venga utilizzata per aumentare la conservazione delle conoscenze da parte degli studenti (Huang et al., 2019). Alcuni autori, infatti, hanno riferito che, attraverso l'uso dell'AR, "gli studenti attribuiscono maggiore rilevanza alle attività di apprendimento, acquisiscono maggiore sicurezza nell'impegnarsi nelle attività di apprendimento, prestano maggiore attenzione e sperimentano più soddisfazione e divertimento" (Akçayır & Akçayır, 2017; Radu, 2014; Chiang et al., 2014; Bacca Acosta et al., 2014; in Wyss et al., 2022, p. 3).

Lo spazio immersivo, inoltre, offre delle ottime opportunità in termini di inclusione, come messo in rilievo da diversi autori (Cheung et al., 2022; Seigneur & Choukou, 2022; Zallio & Clarkson, 2022; Zhang et al., 2022). Grazie alle realtà aumentata possono essere valorizzate, infatti, le diversità di ogni studente. Gli insegnanti stessi hanno la possibilità di personalizzare i materiali, al fine di adattarli alle esigenze dei discenti che presentano o dei Bisogni Educativi Speciali (BES) e/o, più in generale, una disabilità. Inoltre, può essere un valido supporto per gli studenti con disabilità sensoriale, grazie all'utilizzo di varie strumentazioni tecnologiche, in grado di fornire un'esperienza multisensoriale, stimolando, quindi, i sensi vicari.

Le potenzialità e i benefici dell'AR influenzano anche il ruolo dell'insegnante. Liou e colleghi (2016) evidenziano la possibilità per gli insegnanti di poter trasmettere più facilmente e rapidamente i concetti agli studenti, grazie all'interazione con la tecnologia in AR. Gli insegnanti possono anche personalizzare l'esperienza didattica tenendo conto delle esigenze di ciascun studente, adattando le istruzioni in base alle caratteristiche individuali. Cuccurullo (2019) sottolinea, inoltre, come la centralità della tecnologia permetta di trasformare l'approccio didattico tradizionale, in cui il docente occupava una posizione centrale, ad uno in cui l'accento è posto sull'importanza dell'alunno e sui suoi processi di apprendimento.

OBIETTIVI E METODOLOGIA DI RICERCA

La ricerca, che si colloca nel quadro teorico sopra delineato, nasce dal desiderio di aprire nuove strade nei processi di insegnamento-apprendimento nel contesto universitario, permettendo così di costruire esperienze innovative mediante l'utilizzo della realtà aumentata.

Si è inteso rilevare le percezioni degli studenti, nonché la sensazione di agenzia e presenza all'interno dell'ambiente immersivo, il livello di interattività e di coinvolgimento, per comprendere quali elementi potrebbero favorire e quali ostacolare l'adozione della realtà aumentata in ambito didattico.

La didattica immersiva è stata implementata tramite l'utilizzo dei visori di ultima generazione *Hololens Microsoft* e del software *Hevo Collaboration*, grazie al quale sono stati inseriti oggetti tridimensionali all'interno di una stanza virtuale, sperimentati dagli studenti mediante i visori.

Dal punto di vista metodologico, la ricerca, di natura esplorativa, ha previsto la somministrazione di un questionario post-esperienza mediante l'applicativo Google Moduli. Lo strumento somministrato è ispirato al Presence Questionnaire (Witmer & Singer, 1998), vs. 3.01, rivisto dal Cyberpsychology Lab dell'Université du Québec (Robillard et al, 2003) ed è stato progettato per rilevare il grado di coinvolgimento e di immersione dei soggetti coinvolti. In esso vengono indagate tre grandi dimensioni correlate all'esperienza senso-motoria: l'ambiente sperimentato, la percezione dei suoni, l'immersione degli studenti, per un totale di 24 item, su scala Likert a 7 punti. Nella sezione iniziale, il questionario è volto a rilevare i dati di contesto (età, genere, titolo di studio, esperienze pregresse con la realtà aumentata). È stata aggiunta una sezione atta ad esplorare le valutazioni dell'esperienza immersiva, attraverso domande aperte. Questa sezione consente un'analisi più dettagliata delle percezioni e delle considerazioni degli studenti post-esperienza.

DESCRIZIONE DEL CAMPIONE

L'indagine ha coinvolto un campione di 50 studenti, in prevalenza di sesso femminile (96.6%), frequentanti il secondo anno del Corso di Laurea in Scienze della Formazione Primaria dell'Università degli Studi di Palermo, nell'anno accademico 2022/2023. Il campione ha un'età media di 21,72 anni (DS 4,45). Il 62,1% di essi afferma di non aver

mai utilizzato visori né per la realtà aumentata né per quella virtuale. Mentre, la restante parte, ovvero il 37,9%, sostiene di aver sperimentato la realtà aumentata durante: lezioni e attività accademiche (19%); mostre d'arte e musei (9%); svago e giochi (8%), altre occasioni (2%).

ANALISI DEI DATI

In questo paragrafo presenteremo i risultati dell'analisi qualitativa riguardante la sezione della valutazione dell'esperienza, condotta con il software MAXQDA, mediante il quale sono state categorizzate le risposte in codici esemplificativi. L'analisi ha seguito un approccio tematico, identificando gli argomenti principali e valutando la frequenza nelle risposte.

È stato chiesto agli studenti di riflettere sugli eventuali vantaggi nell'utilizzo in ambito educativo della realtà aumentata. Le risposte sono state organizzate in cinque macrocategorie, che mettono in luce gli aspetti positivi evidenziati dagli studenti.

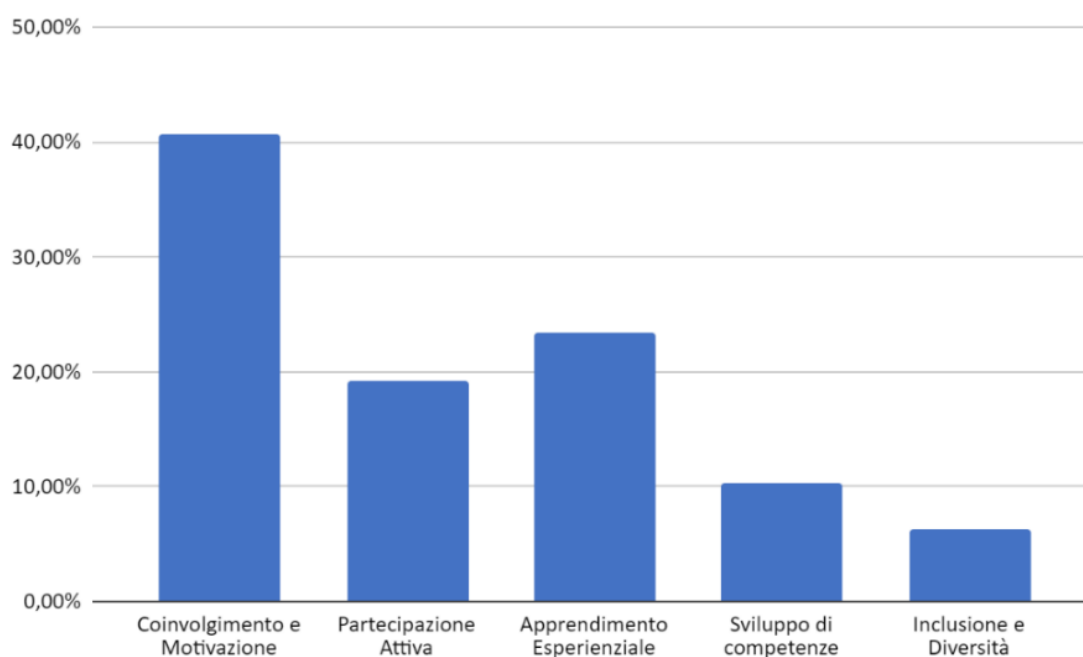


Fig. 1. Vantaggi nell'utilizzo della realtà aumentata.

Una frequenza alta è stata riscontrata per la categoria “Coinvolgimento e Motivazione” (40,74%), all’interno della quale sono state raggruppate tutte le risposte che sottolineano un coinvolgimento emotivo e motivazionale dello studente grazie all’esperienza immersiva con la realtà aumentata; si nota anche un riscontro positivo circa l’interattività della lezione in AR, indubbiamente diversa dalla tipica lezione frontale. In questa categoria rientrano, inoltre, i giudizi favorevoli sulla stimolazione sensoriale atta ad aumentare il coinvolgimento.

Le risposte inserite nella categoria “Partecipazione Attiva” (19,23%) dimostrano il fatto che l’utilizzo della realtà aumentata porta ad una partecipazione attiva nell’apprendimento, peraltro percepita dagli studenti. Inoltre, viene sottolineato come questa partecipazione incentivi anche il coinvolgimento. Questo suggerisce che gli studenti valutano positivamente il fatto di poter interagire in prima persona con i contenuti dell’apprendimento, tramite la manipolazione.

Una percentuale piuttosto significativa è stata riscontrata nella categoria “Apprendimento Esperienziale” (23,43%). Gli studenti riconoscono nell’utilizzo della realtà aumentata un modo efficace per approfondire la comprensione, attraverso proprio le esperienze pratiche e coinvolgenti. Inoltre, il fatto di aver menzionato, nelle risposte, l’utilizzo di applicazioni in AR per lo studio di materie come le Scienze o la Storia, suggerisce il fatto che un apprendimento di tipo esperienziale è molto vantaggioso in relazione allo studio di argomenti abbastanza complessi o teorici. Il fare esperienza viene visto come un elemento chiave nell’acquisizione di conoscenze.

La categoria “Sviluppo di Competenze” (10,23%) suggerisce il fatto che gli studenti riconoscono l’enorme potenziale della realtà aumentata per poter acquisire e sviluppare competenze trasversali, da poter impiegare sia nei contesti educativi che al di fuori di essi.

Infine, l’ultima categoria, “Inclusione e Diversità”, seppur con una percentuale inferiore rispetto alle altre (6,25%), mostra come venga attribuita una certa importanza all’utilizzo dell’AR come risorsa per promuovere un apprendimento inclusivo, accessibile a tutti, in grado di adeguare i processi didattici alle varie esigenze degli apprendenti.

Si è voluto indagare, inoltre, come gli studenti, proiettandosi nel ruolo di futuri docenti, integrerebbero la realtà aumentata all’interno di una progettazione didattica.

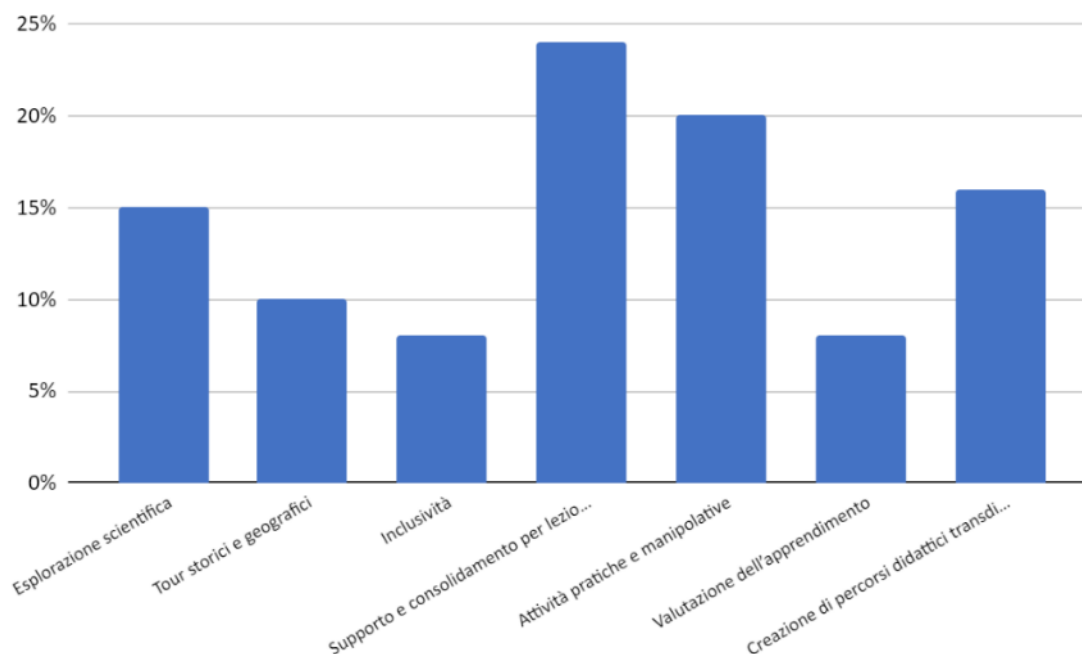


Fig. 2. Come integrare la realtà aumentata nelle progettazioni didattiche.

Come si evince dalla Fig. 2, gli studenti per il 15% utilizzerebbero la tecnologia in realtà aumentata per esplorare e studiare argomenti di tipo scientifico, come per esempio la simulazione di esperimenti laboratoriali o per lo studio approfondito della biologia; il 24% delle risposte, invece, verte sull'uso dell'AR come supporto e consolidamento per le lezioni teoriche complesse o per comprendere concetti astratti, di non facile interpretazione. Seguono le progettazioni che mirano a creare attività pratiche e manipolative (20%), ritenute importanti per l'apprendimento e la ritenzione dei contenuti appresi. Una buona percentuale si riscontra sulla possibile creazione di percorsi didattici transdisciplinari (16%), considerati essenziali per stabilire connessioni trasversali tra le varie discipline. Infine, la realtà aumentata viene proposta per la creazione di percorsi inclusivi e personalizzati (8%) e per la progettazione di attività aventi uno scopo valutativo (8%), sfruttando la capacità della tecnologia di fornire feedback immediati.

CONCLUSIONI E PROSPETTIVE FUTURE

L'analisi delle percezioni degli studenti sull'utilizzo della realtà aumentata, nell'ambito dell'insegnamento universitario, ha rivelato un quadro positivo e ricco di

potenzialità. L'avvento delle tecnologie digitali sta avendo un impatto significativo nei processi di apprendimento, offrendo agli studenti la possibilità di una dimensione di partecipazione attiva, in grado di stimolare processi creativi e motivazionali. La capacità di osservare, manipolare, interagire con il contenuto e il confronto con compagni e docenti, grazie ai continui feedback immediati, si identifica come un cambiamento significativo nel percorso accademico degli studenti. La nuova sfida, pertanto, è quella di riuscire a trovare una perfetta sinergia tra le forme di insegnamento tradizionali e quelle innovative, per far fronte alle nuove esigenze della didattica. La realtà aumentata, dunque, si rivela essere una preziosa opportunità, sia per gli studenti, poiché permette loro di acquisire nuove competenze e conoscenze, ma anche per innovare i processi di insegnamento-apprendimento. I risultati, sopra evidenziati, confermano questa prospettiva. In essi si evince come la realtà aumentata possa effettivamente rappresentare un valore aggiunto nell'ambito dell'insegnamento universitario. Tuttavia, è fondamentale considerare i bisogni effettivi degli studenti, nonché fornire un'adeguata formazione agli insegnanti per massimizzare l'efficacia di questa tecnologia. La poca esperienza pratica con l'AR in contesti scolastici e accademici mette in luce l'importanza di conoscere gli atteggiamenti degli studenti dopo un primo approccio con la realtà aumentata, al fine di progettare un intervento didattico. L'impiego del visore – come avvenuto in questa sperimentazione – fornisce un contributo significativo per l'implementazione efficace di una didattica in AR. Analizzare le percezioni degli studenti – in termini di soddisfazione – e valutare gli effetti dell'apprendimento a breve e a lungo termine è il punto di partenza per i futuri sviluppi della ricerca. Tra le prospettive future, inoltre, c'è quella di prendere in considerazione gli effetti su un periodo di tempo più lungo, per poterne esplorare i risultati ad ampio raggio.

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UNIVERSITIES NEED TO LISTEN: THE HIGHER EDUCATION (FREEDOM OF SPEECH) BILL

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Abstract The approval of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill in the United Kingdom emphasizes the political and educational role that freedom of speech should play within and beyond academic environments. The Bill features certain relevant functional and communicative innovations introduced by the processes of digitalization, platformization and hyper-connectivity. The approval of the Higher Education Bill affords the opportunity to reflect on the risks lurking in universities for students, researchers and professors, especially considering the globalized dimension of such an educational strategy. In this perspective, the research carried out by King's College London, *The State of Free Speech in UK Universities: What Students and the Public Think*, provides some useful information on the communicative dynamics going on within the academic environment, at a time of new, hidden relational risks. Hence follows the opportunity to focus on the normative and functional innovations introduced by the Bill to make universities much more open, inclusive, and transparent, despite the concealed drawbacks stemming from the complexity of our mediascapes.

INTRODUCTION. UNIVERSITIES AND COMMUNICATIVE PLATFORMIZATION

Worldwide Universities have deeply changed their social and educational endeavour in line with the profound technological and economic developments of the last two decades which have produced a rapid functional shift in the activities of professors and researchers (Willets, 2019). The challenge of modernization is reinforced by the need for evaluation and accreditation, in tune with the globalized competition among universities and in compliance with the proliferation of rankings aimed at creating a taxonomic comparison of higher education institutions. It is not only a cognitive and administrative challenge, but also a communicative outcome, at a time of the frenzied yet convenient platformization of academic life (Rivas, 2023; Unesco, 2021).

The construction of wider connected communities comes from a deeper sense of social responsibility and belonging, on the wave of the long-expected full democratization of academic life. Raewyn Connell underlines this in *The Good University*, while wondering what universities actually do and why it is time for radical change:

“Hence the importance of a democratic culture in the knowledge formation. Working in a truthful way requires that distorted thinking, privileges, exclusions and outright lies should be contested. Truth is a critical concept. That is essential to keep in mind, because significant pressures against truth now come from universities themselves” (Connell, 2019, p. 36).

The idea of universities as elite structures sheds light on some major drawbacks still undermining the free circulation of ideas, knowledge and information among students and workers. Academic actors are daily engaged in the qualitative improvement of their own relational webs in accordance with the tenets of freedom of speech and transparency of thought. These are theoretical tenets connected to academic strategies implying a thorough management of information and an attentive analysis of informative flows, in tune with the definition of those suitable “forms of talk” probed by Goffman in his latest work, *Forms of Talk* (1981). Within this relationship, platformization is one of the meaningful features of our hyperconnected society, in conjunction with the symbolic shifts produced by such a communicative and relational drift (Boccia Artieri, 2012). Networked communications concern both public and private sectors conforming to the iconic simplification ruling the public sphere: “We want online education to be fair and nondiscriminatory, we want personalized health apps to contribute to equality in treatment, and we may expect from online news sites that they not only deliver accurate reports but also support democratic openness” (Van Dijck et al., p. 3).

In such a hyperconnected scenario, universities cope with the complexity of increasingly personalized and synchronic communicative dynamics, at a time of new political and civil demands that universities have to evaluate and deal with. Freedom of speech is the one academic endeavour left unresolved, as the parliamentary and public debate on the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill approved on 11 May 2023 shows, thus emphasizing the importance that communication and autonomy of thought must have in educational environments. This is explained in the report by King’s College London, *The state of free speech in UK universities: what students and the public think* (2022). The report aims to provide reliable data on students’ perceptions of their communicative freedom and safety within the academic experience. The approval of the Bill confirms that it is time to understand “what campuses can and can’t do”, as Erwin Chemerinsky and Howard Gillman admit in *Free Speech on Campus* (2017); their analysis is focused on the US policies of communicative control in academic communities: “Campuses must be open to all ideas and views, no matter

how controversial or even offensive, and outside of the educational context they cannot mandate the creation of a balanced or impartial program” (Chemerinsky and Gillman, 2017, p. 132).

The priority is to prevent, censor or punish any form of harassment, insult and discrimination, especially when gestures and speech undermine psychological and physical safety. On this wave, the Higher Education Bill approved in the UK can be interpreted as a controversial but interesting attempt to build academic environments inspired by freedom of speech and thought in an era of old and new conflicts in the debate on the future of our globalized lives after the pandemic emergency (Agasisti, Soncin 2021; Unesco, 2022). The good university described by Raewyn Connell requires a different approach to management and teaching, in tune with the need to remove social, cultural and economic limitations within and beyond universities. Communication is a fundamental factor to be pursued in accordance with the endeavour of making freedom of speech a possible academic outcome (Flynn, 2019).

FREEDOM OF SPEECH IN UK UNIVERSITIES: A STATISTICAL FRAMEWORK

The approval of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill in the United Kingdom is a crucial breakthrough not only for students and academic operators, but also for scholars observing and analysing the evolution of academic environments in the era of globalized communications and hyperconnected relationships (Uskor et al., 2018). The journalistic debate on this normative action, supported by the Conservative Party, has highlighted the complexity of such a strategic topic concerning the perception of freedom of thought and speech within universities along with the new forms of censorship of highly-sensitive topics, as in the case of politics, wars, racism, sexual orientation, food consumption. The approval of the bill did not gain high media coverage outside the United Kingdom, nor did the major European academic institutions stimulate public debate on a normative initiative that buttresses the Office for Students and the other normative innovations introduced by the Higher Education and Research Act 2017.

Recent research published by King’s College London and reported by “The Guardian” (Adams, 2022a), reveals students’ perceptions of free speech in their own universities, through the sharing of new data showing that universities are seen to protect freedom of speech and that growing minorities are concerned. “There is strong agreement among students that free speech, robust debate and academic freedom

are protected in their universities” (The Policy Institute, 2022, p. 9). Some statistic evidence is particularly significant. Firstly, 65% of students say that free speech and robust debate are well protected at their institution (15% disagree with this view). 73% of students point out that debates and discussions in their university are civil and respect the rights and dignity of others (10% disagree). These figures are essentially unchanged from 2019.

Secondly, 80% of students feel free to express their views at their university (88% said the same three years ago). This figure is still higher than the 70% of the general public who say they feel free to express their views in UK society. The proportion of students who think that academics are free to express their views at their university has slightly diminished, at 70% in 2022 compared with 77% in 2019, but it still represents a solid majority (14% of students disagree). Finally, 75% of students say they are free from discrimination, harm or hatred – virtually the same as in 2019 (78%).

These data help us better understand the perception of individual and collective safety within the academic environment, with particular reference to the communicative networking supported by social media and mobile phone communities. In this view, the right to protest has gained a specific social and cultural relevance, even from the perspective of freedom of speech: “Universities are also seen to be doing (increasingly) well in handling protests: 55% of students say their university manages student protests fairly – up from 48% in 2019. And only 12% now disagree with this view, while 32% say they don’t know” (King’s College London, 2022).

The frequency of protests and public demonstrations by university students highlights the particular social activism within and outside universities not only in the case of national issues and domestic affairs, but also in the presence of international conflicts, especially when minorities or frail populations are attacked or besieged, as has happened during the Russian-Ukraine war and the conflict between Israel and Palestine. These events represent real cultural traumas, as narrated and described by the media to show the degree of suffering and pain of the people involved (Alexander, 2012). Academic life is full of visible and invisible traumas, both relational, hierarchical, and cognitive, especially when the attendance of academic environments may reveal our everyday communicative complexity.

The decision of some universities to forbid the reading of Russian novelists and the students’ protests against the Israeli invasion of the Gaza Strip highlight the emotional impact that socio-political traumas may have on university communities,

along with the need to claim freedom of speech and expression as an ontological right and collective experience (Lasson, 1999). We might dwell on the invitations extended to controversial speakers, as in the case of Charles Murray in March 2017 at Middlebury College (VT), which required some appropriate strategies aimed at understanding “how to handle controversial speakers on campus”. In this view, the data provided by King’s College London reveal that – in some cases – students prefer not to express their own opinions in public or in digital communities, as they feel threatened or insecure inside their university. Indeed, “growing minorities of students feel freedoms are under threat in their institutions”. As Geoffrey Hughes (2011) emphasizes, political correctness risks becoming a cultural factor destined to bridle freedom of speech and expression, especially when minority or unsuitable opinions are publicly shared.

This is why the figures elaborated by King’s College London cannot be underestimated. Some further data may shed light on this strategic educational issue. “34% of students say free speech is very or fairly threatened in their university – up from 23% in 2019. Similarly, 32% of students now feel academic freedom is threatened at their institution, compared with 20% who felt this way three years ago” (Malcom et al., 2023, p. 7). Despite these significant increases, a majority of students still feel these liberties are not at risk. For instance, 59% still think free speech is either not very threatened or not threatened at all. Nonetheless, students are more likely to think free speech is under threat in UK society as a whole (53%) than in their own university (34%). Large proportions of students also report that some people are prevented from speaking freely at their university because others may take offence. More specifically, 51% of students think the academic climate prevents some people from saying things they believe because others might find them offensive (30% disagree); 80% of the UK public overall think that the social climate in the UK inhibits some people from speaking their minds (17% disagree).

In conclusion, the King’s College London report highlights the fear of disagreeing with dominant or current opinions upon a considerable number of topics, especially in the light of the improvement of communicative devices and digitalized relational opportunities: “43% of students also report feeling unable to express their views in their university because they’re scared of disagreeing with their peers – an increase from 25% in 2019. Yet this is felt to the same extent among the general public, 43% of the public of whom say they’ve felt constrained from voicing their opinions in UK society more generally, for fear of disagreement with others” (King’s College London,

2022). These data highlight the evolution of the concept of freedom of speech among the younger generations and academic students, thus recalling Cristopher Lasch's insightful reference to "confession and anticonfession" (Lasch, 1979, p. 16) that seems to inspire our self-referential society.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH AS A NORMATIVE (AND SOCIAL) CHALLENGE: THE OFFICE FOR STUDENTS

The Government's Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill became law on May 11 2023. It is considered a significant normative step forward in supporting and protecting freedom of speech and academic freedom on university campuses. This is what the Government claimed (and still claims) to legitimate the approval of a law aiming to prevent limitations to freedom of speech. The risk is to foster the sense of authoritarianism from a political point of view. There is no question that some topics are highly sensitive in the public debate and, in particular, in universities: "The introduction of a Director of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom may cause concern for what is perceived as free speech in its legal boundaries", as pointed out in the Report by the Royal Holloway University of London, *Examining the Higher Education (HE) Freedom of Speech Bill and its Implications for UK Universities* (2021). Furthermore, the law may have significant implications on gender politics, hate speech, body shaming, digital crimes, student union activities and state interference in higher education institutions. It may also affect the reputation of universities, and have repercussions on the effects of Brexit and the increase in university fees and taxes. "It is evident that freedom of speech in UK universities remains a contentious issue" (The Royal Holloway University of London, 2021, p. 10). as the media debate in the UK clearly showed, with specific reference to the journalistic campaign by "The Guardian" (Adams 2022a, 2022b, 2023).

The registration of the Office for Students is one of the most innovative aspects of the Bill, in compliance with the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (section 2, subsection 1). According to section 5 of the Higher Education Bill, *Functions of the Office for Students*, in universities the Offices for Students (OfS) must "promote the importance of – (a) freedom of speech within the law, and (b) academic freedom for academic staff of registered higher education providers and their constituent institutions" (section 5, number 1), and may – "(a) identify good practice relating to how to support freedom of speech and academic freedom, and (b) give advice about such

practice to registered higher education providers and their constituent institutions” (section 5, number 2).

As the UK Department of Education (2021) set out, the legislative innovations concern the need to provide the Office for Students with a new registration condition on freedom of speech and academic freedom, also with the power to impose sanctions for breaches. The Director for Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom within the Office for Students has a remit to support freedom of speech and academic freedom on campus. The Bill introduces a duty for Higher Education policies to support lawful freedom of speech and academic freedom in higher education. Furthermore, the norm extends freedom of speech duties to apply directly to Students’ Unions at approved (fee cap) providers. It introduces the remit of the Office for Students to monitor Students’ Unions upon their freedom of speech duties. The Director for Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom also has a remit for investigations of infringements of freedom of speech duties in higher education which may result in sanctions or individual redress via a new complaints scheme. Universities and student unions which violate the requirements set out in the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill will face potential consequences including monetary fines imposed by the Office for Students (Department for Education, 2021).

In addition, speakers who have had their invitation rescinded by students and/or student unions will be allowed compensation by law. “Universities are concerned with an impending toxic culture that may arise from the prospect of legal action to be taken against them (Universities UK, 2021)”. As such, universities’ priorities may shift if they become embroiled in legal proceedings, thus having to deal with financial implications and damage to their reputation.

The normative impact of the bill concerns both limitations to communicative misconduct and prevarications and the safeguard of freedom of speech as it unfolds within social media and through brand applications. What specific and contingent remits would the Office for Students contemplate in terms of communicative control and interactional management? The creation of such an academic option also deals with the principle of meritocracy that should reward appropriate behaviour and expression, in line with the meritocratic expectations inspiring universities and other higher education institutions (Carson, 2018). This is an aspect accurately investigated by Michael Sandel in reference to the technocratic mindset negatively influencing the public debate on the drawbacks of meritocratic anxiety:

Our technocratic version of meritocracy severs the link between merit and moral judgement. In the domain of the economy, it simply assumes that the common good is defined by GDP, and that the value of people's contributions consists in the market value of the goods or services they sell. In the domain of government, it assumes that merit means technocratic expertise (Sandel, 2021, p. 28).

Despite technocracy, the cult of merit afflicting worldwide universities seems to achieve transparency and ethical pertinence that does not spare communication and behaviour, and seems to prevent the negative effects of toxic digital misconduct within and outside educational institutions perceived as safe places. This aspect is insightfully probed by Frank Furedi in *How Fear Works*: the “quest for safety in a dangerous world” might also refer to the hyperconnected sphere in which educational and teaching practices take digital form, assuming that “safety is conspicuous by its absence” (Furedi, 2018, p. 215). Behind all this is the increase in hate speech connected to racial, sexual, cultural, social and religious spheres. Therefore, it is important to understand “what campuses can and can't do” to prevent the diffusion of threats and fears among students. There is also the presumption of trust among the different academic actors, as Furedi illustrates by referring to a notice regarding the presence of chaperones in his local pharmacy to ensure the safety of both patients and the pharmacist:

The presumption that both patient and the pharmacist would benefit from accessing a chaperone to ‘safeguard’ them conveys the message that this encounter is potentially unsafe. By implication, it also calls into question the presumption of trust that underpins the professional relationship between a pharmacist and customer, a doctor and patient, or an academic and a student (Furedi, 2018, p. 214).

The principle of individual and collective safeguard is the real cornerstone of our hyperconnected society which features an array of visible and invisible risks, especially if we consider the unfathomable complexity of our synchronic relationships on digital platforms. In this sense, the support of freedom of speech within the higher education institutions implies safeguard from any form of discrimination, along with the need to contrast the worse forms of prevarication and segregation. The duties of speakers, sanctions for breaches, monetary fines, normative remits: these are some of the keywords emphasizing the main aim of the Freedom of Speech Bill from the perspective of the “good university” that Connell depicts, starting from the compulsory reform actions improving university efficiency and transparency, with specific reference to the interactions among academic actors. In this view, the legal

dimension of such a functional endeavour deals with the confrontation of abuse and misconduct feeding new forms of ambiguity and deceit lurking in the digital environment. The King's College report emphasizes the sense of uncertainty that students sometimes feel with regard to the free expression of their own opinions without risking disrespectful reaction and contestation.

The task of the Office for Students concerns the support of proper behaviour and expression, at the time of the effects of the secondary modernization that Beck has referred to as our “communicative landscapes”. In fact, the Higher Education Bill should prevent any communicative breaches undermining individual and collective safety within academic environments. As Malcom, Duffy and Woollen (2023, p. 36) point out,

we need to develop a clear theory of change, drawing on existing research and experiments, and implement a programme of testing to understand how each action contributes (or doesn't) to supporting free speech in universities. This would be particularly effective if the Free Speech Director and Office for Students have a core objective to not just regulate compliance with the legislation or achieve 'minimum standards' but positively support universities through a programme of intervention design, testing and evaluation of 'what works' in encouraging freedom of expression.

The authors properly remark that the Office for Students is a regulator complying with regulatory frameworks in Higher Education. The OfS should also define and support best practices, starting from “their role in establishing and initially funding an independent charity”. This is the case of the Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO), focused on eliminating equality gaps in higher education and improving lives through evidence-informed practice in higher education. Such actions of evidence-driven testing, recommendations and support would allegedly be a positive step in improving and maintaining freedom of expression in UK and foreign universities projected towards the construction of the European Higher Education Area.

CONCLUSION. UNIVERSITIES NEED TO LISTEN

The case of the presidents of Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who were called on by the US House of Representatives to resign over campus antisemitism, shows the risks lurking in the academic environment in

relationship to freedom of speech and new forms of censorship. Such risks may involve not only students and professors, but also senior positions. Certain innovations introduced by the Higher Education Bill ought to confront some of the communicative shortcomings produced by the hyperconnectivity in which every single actor is deeply immersed, the younger ones especially. In this view, new forms of communicative misconduct and inappropriate language, along with the tendency to censor minorities and controversial speakers (Bradford, 2023), would seem to advise the introduction of adequate forms of control by universities, even though, as Chemerinsky and Gillman (2017, p. 46) point out, “more speech” seems to be the best way to contrast hate speech. Many attempts have been made to regulate freedom of speech in universities, especially in the United States, where limitations to freedom of expression sometimes combine with the complacency towards weapons and violence. By the early 1990s, over 350 colleges and universities had adopted free speech codes: some codes were challenged in court, and all were declared unconstitutional.

The most recent normative actions introduced by the Higher Education Bill in the UK show that “support for freedom of speech is synonymous with a genuine commitment to democracy, diversity, and change” (Chemerinsky & Gillman, 2017, p. 27). This should be a cornerstone of our digitalized universities, despite new forms of authoritarian behaviour that sometimes undermine the construction of a really free and inclusive values. Shane O’Neill and Nicholas H. Smith (2022, p. 16) recently dealt with “social freedom as the Purpose of the Modern University”, thus emphasizing the central role played by higher education within the wider cultural framework shaped by globalization and platformization: “In the global context, universities can also serve to promote social freedom by helping to ensure that ongoing processes of globalization are driven not exclusively by the imperatives of a global capitalist order but more positively (in terms of social freedom) by the development of difference-sensitive, shared understandings across cultures”. In the era of multiculturalism and synchronic relationships, the safeguard of social freedom and freedom of speech within higher education institutions can be considered as a fundamental endeavour in spite of the treacherous forms of censorship, prevarication and discrimination taking form within the internet and social media that can only with difficulty be opposed or penalized. As Kenan Malik pointed out in “The Guardian” soon after the approval of the Higher Education Bill, “for too many people today, on both the left and the anti-woke right, what matters about free speech depends upon which side of the culture

wars they stand. It is an issue too important to be treated with such casual disdain” (Malik, 2023).

According to a UK government-backed survey that confronts claims of widespread “cancel culture” on campuses and takes into account a new question added to the Office for Students national student survey, nearly nine out of ten students (86%) in England feel free to express their opinions and beliefs. In this perspective, Koen Lamberts, vice-chancellor of the University of Sheffield, points out: “We really value feedback from our students as it provides important insights into how we can improve” (Adams, 2023).

The first director for freedom of speech, Prof. Arif Ahmed, is required to safeguard political impartiality and promote and protect free expression on campus. Offices for Students should be “in listening mode” and gather individual and collective complaints. Political impartiality is his top priority, of that there is “no question whatever”, whereas no regulation “has got anything to do with culture”. Free speech regulation was “not going to work unless it both is and is seen to be completely impartial” (Upton, 2023). Professor Ahmed joined the regulator from the University of Cambridge. His own free speech credentials were confirmed when he helped to overturn the university’s “vague, subjective and restrictive” free speech policy in May 2021. He said the Office for Students was “in listening mode” as it interpreted the free speech role handed to it by the May Government’s Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act, which has been criticised as a “badly drafted and pretty vague” law (Upton, 2023).

The free speech on campus challenge has been just launched in order to accomplish the main goals of the “new university” depicted by James Coe with particular reference to the targets of inclusion and transparency: “Universities must show their places that they are on their communities’ side, and not just tell them that they are. University needs to listen. Covid-19 has shown that they can, if they so choose. In times of emergency, universities have made symbolic but also crucially effective community interventions” (Coe, 2021, p. 70).

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COSTRUIRE LA DEMOCRAZIA NELLE UNIVERSITÀ. CONDIZIONI ISTITUZIONALI E SFIDE PROFESSIONALI IN UN CONTESTO ACCADEMICO TELEMATICO

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Abstract Con la sperimentazione in diversi corsi universitari di ambienti di apprendimento virtuale (Ramella, Rostan 2020), la recente pandemia invita a ripensare il rapporto tra Università e democrazia (Cappa et al. 2021). Approfondendo le dimensioni istituzionali presenti nella sociologia critica e valorizzando le dimensioni relazionali e cognitive ricorrenti nella tradizione pragmatista (Lave, Wenger 2006), questo studio propone un'analisi delle condizioni politiche e delle pratiche professionali che - in uno specifico contesto universitario come quello telematico - rendono intelligibile il rapporto tra università e democrazia. In particolare, grazie ad una ricerca qualitativa che ha coinvolto studenti e professori che frequentano e lavorano in un'Università telematica, questo contributo presenta le rappresentazioni collettive dell'agire democratico condivise da docenti e studenti e indica i meccanismi professionali che, all'interno dell'università, potrebbero attivare tali rappresentazioni.

INTRODUZIONE

Con la sperimentazione in diversi corsi universitari di ambienti di apprendimento virtuale (Ramella & Rostan, 2020), la recente pandemia invita a ripensare il rapporto tra Università e democrazia (Cappa et al., 2021).

Tradizionalmente, la sociologia critica ha indagato come l'istruzione superiore sia coinvolta in processi più ampi di riproduzione sociale dei sistemi politici e ha delineato le condizioni istituzionali che, all'interno delle università, contribuiscono maggiormente ai meccanismi di riproduzione sociale (Veblen, 1918). Tuttavia, da una parte l'ampliamento progressivo del numero degli studenti che dal secondo dopo guerra ha avuto accesso all'università e, dall'altra, la peculiarità corporativa dei processi di trasmissione del potere che tradizionalmente innervano i sistemi universitari, spesso hanno scoraggiato analisi istituzionali approfondite interne ai diversi atenei. L'impressione è che la "meccanica della democratizzazione" delle università

abbia trascurato soprattutto il livello meso-istituzionale dell'analisi e le sue costitutive dimensioni cognitive e normative.

Approfondendo le dimensioni istituzionali presenti nella sociologia critica e valorizzando le dimensioni relazionali e cognitive ricorrenti nella tradizione pragmatista (Lave & Wenger, 2006), questo studio propone un'analisi delle condizioni politiche e delle pratiche professionali che – in uno specifico contesto universitario come quello telematico – rendono intelligibile il rapporto tra università e democrazia.

In particolare, grazie ad una ricerca qualitativa che ha coinvolto studenti e professori che frequentano e lavorano in un'Università telematica, questo contributo presenta le rappresentazioni collettive dell'agire democratico condivise da docenti e studenti e indica i meccanismi professionali che, all'interno dell'università, potrebbero attivare tali rappresentazioni.

Il contributo è diviso in tre sezioni. La prima illustra le motivazioni e gli obiettivi della ricerca, la seconda il framework teorico e la metodologia, e infine la terza, i principali risultati.

MOTIVAZIONI E OBIETTIVI DELLA RICERCA

Questa ricerca nasce dalla scoperta dell'importanza di un livello meso-istituzionale di analisi e da un'istanza epistemologica diffusa tra i sociologi critici che si rifanno alle scienze sociali emancipative (Massari & Pellegrino, 2021). Insegnando in un'università telematica e riprendendo un tema che già Bourdieu aveva avanzato a metà degli anni '80 del Novecento (Bourdieu, 1984), con alcuni colleghi abbiamo condiviso l'esigenza di “conoscere sociologicamente” quello che avveniva nel contesto universitario che abitavamo quotidianamente. In particolare, da sociologi politici ci si è chiesti quale contributo un'Università telematica, potesse offrire ai processi di democratizzazione della società e attraverso quali condizioni istituzionali e, fatto non secondario, com'era possibile condurre una simile ricerca da docenti in servizio presso quell'università.

In realtà, introducendo l'idea dei contesti universitari come contesti basati su relazioni asimmetriche di potere e fondamentalmente inclini a riprodurle, la sociologia critica, sin dalle sue origini, ha connesso i sistemi universitari alle morfologie democratiche delle società. Uno degli elementi più interessanti presenti in questa tradizione di ricerca riguarda la dimensione cognitiva e normativa del meccanismo di

riproduzione del potere. La valorizzazione sia della dimensione cognitiva che di quella normativa porta a scoprire che i contesti universitari sono abitati da uomini e donne impegnate in specifici percorsi professionali, trasforma i contesti universitari in ambienti di apprendimento multi-agents, modellati da culture e da pratiche professionali condivise. In una simile prospettiva di analisi ciò che attrae il sociologo politico è la comparsa di uno spazio di analisi meso-istituzionale dotato di specifiche risorse finanziarie, professionali e tecnologiche e basato su specifiche logiche organizzative. Questo spazio è più di un mero meccanismo di trasmissione e distribuzione del potere; come insegnano i pedagogisti, esso è innanzitutto un ambiente di apprendimento e come tale si configura come uno “spazio poietico” (Cappa, 2023). Come compreso da Dewey, gli ambienti di apprendimento sono modellati soprattutto da pratiche professionali, da modi condivisi di interpretare e di praticare la disciplina (Dewey, 1938). Riprendendo le dimensioni cognitive e normative presenti nella sociologia critica e, conferendo ad esse una specifica impronta pragmatica, questa ricerca presenta l’ambiente didattico come un “ambiente vivo” nel quale vengono legittimati collettivamente modi di pensare e di comportarsi che, dal punto di vista politico, non appaiono neutrali, ma che sono portatori di visioni democratiche del mondo e, in ultima istanza, di forme e gradi di accettazione collettiva delle diseguaglianze sociali (Wieviorka, 2008). In particolare, obiettivo della ricerca è comprendere quali rappresentazioni collettive della democrazia strutturano le relazioni educative tra insegnanti e tra insegnanti e studenti e attraverso quali pratiche didattiche esse vengono realizzate. L’ipotesi che guida la ricerca è quindi quella dell’esistenza di un agire didattico democratico, di idee e pratiche della democrazia condivise tra i docenti e tra i docenti e gli studenti che, lontano dall’essere neutrali e dall’esaurire i loro effetti all’interno delle aule universitarie, contribuiscono a costituire sguardi e immaginari democratici del mondo.

FRAMEWORK TEORICO E METODOLOGIA

La sociologia dell’azione pubblica offre il framework fondamentale nel quale la ricerca si situa. In particolare, questa tradizione appare particolarmente idonea rispetto agli obiettivi della ricerca poiché consente di valorizzare la dimensione meso-istituzionale dell’analisi. Come evidenziano Lascoumes e Le Galès (2018), nel quadro dell’analisi delle politiche pubbliche, la sociologia dell’azione pubblica deve il suo potenziale innovativo all’attenzione che dedica ai processi attuativi delle politiche, agli

ambienti istituzionali che condizionano le interpretazioni sia giuridiche che sociali delle politiche e che sfociano in specifici assetti e logiche organizzative.

Nella fattispecie di questa ricerca, la sociologia dell'azione pubblica aiuta a identificare, innanzitutto, le strutture organizzative responsabili della progettazione dell'agire didattico e mette in luce le loro funzioni nel promuovere o nel frenare, per esempio, la diffusione di specifiche pratiche professionali. Come evidenzia Moini (2013), questa tradizione rivela, però, anche una specifica valenza sociologico-politica. Innanzitutto, essa lega le possibilità di azione di singoli attori o gruppi di attori a specifici campi di forze, a crediti sociali che gli attori guadagnano o che possono far valere e che consentono loro di negoziare con successo specifiche innovazioni. Gli ambienti organizzativi sono quindi anche e sempre arene politiche, in questo genere di analisi il potere cessa di essere un'entità a sè stante per mostrare il suo aspetto relazionale (Chazel 1992), per rivelarsi weberianamente nelle possibilità di alcuni attori, per esempio di alcuni coordinatori di riuscire a persuadere il consiglio di amministrazione dell'opportunità di specifici investimenti o, per esempio, nelle possibilità di alcuni docenti di riuscire a creare gruppi e centri di ricerca. Infine, la valenza pubblica dell'azione collettiva appare particolarmente idonea rispetto a una ricerca che si prefigge di studiare le conseguenze democratiche delle relazioni educative. Questa tradizione di ricerca valorizza un implicito che riteniamo valido anche per la nostra analisi, la sociologia dell'azione pubblica, nell'interpretazione che qui condividiamo, nasce dalla consapevolezza che la qualità pubblica dell'azione collettiva non deriva unicamente dall'autorità di governo che realizza l'azione ma sia connessa anche ai fini dell'azione. Da questo punto di vista, la sociologia dell'azione pubblica appare particolarmente idonea ad analizzare le conseguenze democratiche delle relazioni educative che si instaurano in un determinato ambiente universitario perché l'ambiente universitario si configura teleologicamente come un "ambiente pubblico", ossia un ambiente i cui fini sociali si configurano come beni pubblici, ossia beni finalizzati, come sosteneva Durkheim, allo sviluppo armonioso dell'intera umanità (Durkheim, 1893).

Muovendo da questo quadro teorico, al fine di esplorare le rappresentazioni collettive della democrazia che, in questo specifico contesto universitario, sono maggiormente diffuse tra i docenti e gli studenti e al fine di comprendere quali pratiche didattiche le promuovano, è stata realizzata una ricerca-azione, ossia una ricerca nella quale i ricercatori svolgono il duplice ruolo di ricercatori e di docenti (Mortari, 2008). Questa

metodologia è stata scelta per il suo intrinseco potenziale riflessivo, essa infatti consente, per un verso, di portare alla luce il sapere tacito dei docenti, le impressioni e gli orientamenti professionali che guidano le loro relazioni professionali e le loro pratiche didattiche, dall'altro, permette una conoscenza critica di questo sapere, facendo emergere la sua specificità contestuale.

La ricerca è stata condotta presso l'Università telematica eCampus nel corso dell'anno accademico 2022-2023 ed è stata realizzata attraverso due distinte fasi, la prima qualitativa è stata centrata sull'attuazione di focus group che hanno coinvolto distintamente sia un gruppo di docenti che un gruppo di studenti. La seconda, quantitativa, è stata invece realizzata attraverso la somministrazione di un questionario on line a studenti frequentanti il corso di scienze dell'educazione e della formazione. I docenti e gli studenti coinvolti nei focus group sono stati complessivamente quaranta (venti docenti e venti studenti), mentre nei questionari on line, complessivamente sono stati coinvolti venti docenti e ottanta studenti. La fase qualitativa, quella dei focus group, è stata completata dall'analisi dei principali nuclei semantici emergenti dai lavori di gruppo e dall'elaborazione delle domande del questionario. Questa fase che potremmo definire intermedia tra quella qualitativa e quella quantitativa della ricerca, è stata condotta dal gruppo di ricercatori-docenti direttamente impegnati nella realizzazione della ricerca.

I focus group hanno avuto il fine di esplorare le idee e le rappresentazioni della democrazia maggiormente diffuse sia tra i docenti che tra gli studenti, la fase intermedia della ricerca quella dell'analisi dei risultati dei focus group e dell'elaborazione delle domande del questionario ha avuto la funzione di connettere le definizioni della democrazia con le azioni più idonee a rivelare queste rappresentazioni e, in particolare, di situare le rappresentazioni collettive della democrazia, contestualmente più diffuse, all'istituzione di specifiche pratiche didattiche. In particolare, nell'elaborazione delle domande dei questionari il gruppo guida ha cercato di restare aderente alle esemplificazioni che erano emerse nei focus group e ha cercato di formulare le domande in modo che conservassero sempre riferimenti alle esperienze personali sia dei docenti che degli studenti. I questionari sono stati organizzati in sedici domande a risposta chiusa e in due domande a risposta aperta.

DALLA DEMOCRAZIA ALLE QUALITÀ DEMOCRATICHE DELLA DIDATTICA

Il primo elemento che emerge dall'analisi dei focus group è la somiglianza dei temi e delle argomentazioni che ricorrono sia nei focus group realizzati tra i docenti che in quelli realizzati tra gli studenti. La somiglianza pone immediatamente il tema della “centralità del contesto” e dell'influenza che esso assume nelle interpretazioni dei soggetti coinvolti nella ricerca. L'esplorazione delle analogie dei temi e delle argomentazioni emergenti nei diversi focus group mette in evidenza un primo risultato: le definizioni della democrazia, nel contesto universitario oggetto di analisi, si addensano intorno alla didattica e ruotano intorno alla problematizzazione delle sue qualità. La democrazia si rivela, sia per i docenti che per gli studenti, attraverso le pratiche didattiche, si presenta come forma e come fine dell'attività didattica. Il carattere emergente di questo risultato indica come le interpretazioni dei soggetti siano influenzate dai contesti professionali che abitano, dai loro mondi vitali, e conseguentemente, configura, innanzitutto, il contesto universitario telematico come un contesto fortemente curvato sull'attività didattica. Questo elemento che potrebbe accomunare in maniera generale molti contesti universitari telematici, indica però, se messo in relazione alle storie professionali e alle situazioni personali condivise nei focus group, l'attenzione che l'ateneo, negli ultimi anni ha dedicato all'innovazione della didattica. La formazione dei docenti su specifiche attività di e-learning, la promozione di pratiche didattiche sperimentali, la costituzione di progetti pilota con diverse categorie di studenti sono tutte prassi istituzionali che suscitano specifici frames cognitivi, modi di pensare la democrazia nutriti dal senso condiviso che abitare uno specifico contesto istituzionale trasmette. Più nello specifico, da quanto emerge dai focus group, le idee della democrazia appaiono particolarmente condizionate dalle innovazioni istituzionali, da nuove procedure, nuovi sistemi di valutazione, nuovi software e, soprattutto, dal significato trans-soggettivo che il coordinamento dei corsi, le direzioni didattiche e i docenti trasmettono. Il nesso tra democrazia e innovazione istituzionale fa immediatamente apparire un secondo nucleo tematico. Se le idee della democrazia si addensano intorno alle qualità democratiche della didattica, tra i fattori che possono condizionare positivamente queste qualità figura l'innovazione tecnologica. A riprova dell'importanza del contesto professionale nell'influenzare le concezioni democratiche dell'agire, le qualità democratiche della didattica si connettono, innanzitutto, all'apprendimento a distanza e alla digitalizzazione della didattica. La democrazia si presenta come pratica didattica finalizzata a moltiplicare

le chances di apprendimento per studenti impossibilitati a frequentare i corsi, per studenti che hanno disturbi dell'apprendimento, per studenti che hanno dovuto precocemente interrompere pregresse carriere accademiche. La connessione tra digitalizzazione e qualità democratica della didattica assume, però, nei focus group, molto velocemente, una tonalità critica. Se l'innovazione digitale appare un tratto necessario della didattica democratica, esso non si configura come un tratto sufficiente. In particolare, i risultati emergenti dai focus group, anche qui, in maniera straordinariamente convergente, sia quelli emergenti nei focus realizzati tra i docenti che quelli emergenti nei focus realizzati tra gli studenti, concordano nel ritenere che la digitalizzazione delle pratiche didattiche contribuisce in maniera determinante a creare una didattica democratica soprattutto in presenza di specifiche qualità tecniche dell'apprendimento a distanza. Una buona connessione, buoni livelli di accessibilità e facilità nell'uso delle piattaforme di e-learning, sono caratteristiche che condizionano la possibilità della didattica on line di trasformarsi in una didattica democratica. Gli studenti e i docenti insistono molto sull'efficienza dei *virtual learning environment* nel consentire la progettazione dei contenuti dei corsi, la loro fruizione, modalità di comunicazione con i docenti e con gli studenti tempestive ed inclusive. L'esplorazione delle qualità tecnologiche della didattica digitale riserva però sorprese. Lontano dal fermarsi sul livello tecnologico dell'innovazione e, conseguentemente, su una visione tecno-centrica delle qualità della didattica, sia i docenti che gli studenti, dopo aver molto discusso sui requisiti tecnici delle piattaforme di apprendimento, intersecano il tema delle relazioni interpersonali tra docenti e studenti. La didattica democratica è una didattica nutrita di relazioni attenzionali, di relazioni personali. Le possibilità per gli studenti di contattare velocemente il docente e di ricevere i suoi consigli e per i docenti di confrontarsi con i colleghi su specifici problemi derivanti dalle innovazioni istituzionali introdotte, per entrambe le categorie, si configurano come elementi che definiscono e, al tempo stesso, rivelano le qualità e i significati democratici della didattica.

LE RADICI ISTITUZIONALI DELLE QUALITÀ DEMOCRATICHE DELLA DIDATTICA

Intorno alle analogie tematiche e ai nuclei semantici emersi dai focus group, il gruppo guida della ricerca ha elaborato le domande inserite nei questionari somministrati ai docenti e agli studenti.

Scoperto che la democrazia nel contesto universitario oggetto di analisi è percepita come agire didattico, il questionario ha avuto il fine di indagare la “dinamica sociale della didattica democratica”: la sua genesi, il suo sviluppo e le sue conseguenze sociali. Le domande inserite nei questionari hanno conseguentemente investigato le percezioni individuali suscitate da specifiche pratiche didattiche: risposte dei docenti alle richieste degli studenti, ricevimenti degli studenti, video-lezioni, lezioni co-gestite con gli studenti, laboratori e seminari sia online che in presenza, esperienze di co-progettazione dei corsi e di co-ricerca realizzate con gli studenti. In riferimento a queste pratiche didattiche, attraverso le domande inserite nei questionari, sono state indagate soprattutto le ragioni per le quali vengono considerate, dai soggetti coinvolti nella ricerca, democratiche.

Il primo elemento emerso dai dati raccolti è la grande consapevolezza degli intervistati rispetto alla condizione professionale e di vita che vivono. Le risposte “non saprei” o “non so rispondere”, previste nelle risposte a tutte le domande, sono infatti state contrassegnate da una percentuale molto bassa di intervistati (meno del 3%). Questo dato, ricorrente anche in altre ricerche condotte in università tradizionali (Vinci 2017), dimostra innanzitutto l’interesse suscitato dal tema della ricerca e come esso sia avvertito dai partecipanti come un tema che li riguarda personalmente.

Il secondo elemento mette in luce la continuità emergente tra i dati rilevati dai questionari somministrati ai docenti e quelli somministrati agli studenti. Come se, indipendentemente dal differente ruolo professionale, e con alcune differenze su cui si ritornerà più avanti, la condivisione di un medesimo contesto istituzionale suscitasse, sia nei docenti che negli studenti, significati relativi alle qualità democratiche delle pratiche didattiche molto simili e condivisi.

Passando all’analisi dei dati emergenti dai questionari, come già emerso nei focus group, anche i questionari rilevano innanzitutto una percentuale molto elevata sia di studenti (85%) che di docenti (70%) che considerano la modalità on line dell’insegnamento un fattore idoneo a garantire l’avvio di processi di democratizzazione dell’università ma in sé non sufficiente a determinare la loro qualità democratica. La maggior parte degli studenti (65%) riconosce che l’Università telematica costituisce una chance di frequenza di un corso universitario che altrimenti non avrebbe avuto, ma allo stesso tempo, quasi la stessa percentuale (61%) riconosce che l’e-learning non esaurisce in sé il potenziale democratizzante delle Università. Parimenti, anche i docenti intervistati, riconoscono che l’e-learning rappresenta, se rapportato alla

condizione di residenza e di vita di molti studenti, una formidabile chance democratica, ma al tempo stesso, molti di loro (63%) affermano che il potenziale democratico delle Università frequentemente, nelle pratiche didattiche a distanza, resta latente e inespresso.

Le risposte relative alle pratiche didattiche più idonee a far emergere le qualità democratiche della didattica gettano molta luce sulle trame istituzionali e, in particolare, relazionali della democrazia. Quest'ultima non è tanto concepita come chance di partecipazione alla vita universitaria, né immediatamente come opportunità di successo professionale, quanto come possibilità di *trovare ascolto*. La democrazia nelle risposte fornite dagli studenti emerge dai gesti significanti dei docenti, gesti che trasmettono innanzitutto accoglienza, inter-esse, desiderio di conoscere l'unicità dello studente, di stupirsi di fronte ad essa e di costituirlo come valore dinnanzi ai propri occhi di docente e a quelli dello stesso studente. In una simile concezione la democrazia si configura come pratica emancipativa generata da una didattica intrisa di comunicazione significativa, di una comunicazione non formale o standardizzata ma il più possibile personale, attenta alle storie individuali degli studenti, alle loro motivazioni, ai loro desideri di conoscenza. Le pratiche didattiche che ad avviso degli studenti sono maggiormente democratiche sono quelle che presentano non tanto una didattica *à la carte*, ossia modellata sulle esigenze variabili dei singoli studenti, quanto quelle basate su una didattica *engagé*, ossia fondata su tecniche che trasmettono la disponibilità del docente, la sua comprensione, la sua fiducia nelle capacità dello studente di esperire da solo e con successo futuri possibili. Questa possibilità nasce fondamentalmente dalla fiducia, la didattica impegnata che gli studenti indicano come vivaio democratico è basata su relazioni interpersonali dense di fiducia, sia personale che interpersonale ed istituzionale. Essa è un modo di intendere ma soprattutto di praticare la professione; come scrive un intervistato in risposta a una domanda aperta "la didattica democratica è un modo di insegnare attento e giusto" e come scrive un altro studente "è un modo di essere che sei portato a replicare nella tua vita di tutti i giorni perché lo reputi giusto". La giustizia a cui fanno riferimento gli studenti, nasce soprattutto, come emerge dalle risposte ad altre domande, "dalla comprensione che i docenti mostrano verso gli studenti". Essa è disposizione all'accoglienza e, al tempo stesso, gesto concreto, nasce arenariamente dalla consapevolezza di vivere una stessa condizione umana, nasce quindi non da uno status ontologico di uguaglianza, ma da una tensione teleologica, da una condizione sociale nuova da scoprire e da co-costruire insieme.

Straordinaria è la corrispondenza tra le rappresentazioni collettive degli studenti e quelle dei docenti. Anche per i docenti la democrazia nasce dalla possibilità di essere ascoltati, in particolare, essa si forma nell'ambito di innovazioni organizzative che istituiscono comunicazioni costanti e sincere tra i docenti, i coordinatori dei corsi di studio e la direzione. I docenti, rispetto agli studenti, rivelano però rappresentazioni più critiche, reclamano innovazioni istituzionali maggiormente incisive. Per loro la comunicazione con i coordinatori e con la direzione deve nascere da pre-accordi sui fini dell'istruzione universitaria e deve essere finalizzata a contemperare il più possibile le attività di ricerca con le attività didattiche. Le leve della democrazia sono per i docenti, in modo ancora più chiaro che per gli studenti, istituzionali, nascono dalle possibilità che il contesto istituzionale susciti "prassi democratiche", non solo modi di concepire l'insegnamento universitario ma condizioni di vita democratiche. Come scrive un docente in risposta a una domanda aperta "la disponibilità verso gli studenti nasce da una serenità interiore che non hai se pensi che fra un mese ti scade il contratto" e come scrive un altro docente "l'attenzione per gli studenti nasce soprattutto da una risorsa intangibile, il tempo, per essere attenti ed educare all'attenzione devi avere tempo, non puoi pensare già a un secondo corso mentre ancora stai svolgendo il primo".

I dati che emergono dai questionari centrano l'attenzione e il rispetto come leve professionali generative di una didattica che ambisce a delineare futuri mondi democratici. Se questo elemento ricorre sia nelle percezioni dei docenti che in quelle degli studenti, le rappresentazioni dei docenti mettono maggiormente a fuoco l'importanza del contesto universitario nel creare occasioni e opportunità per generare esperienze didattiche democratiche.

OSSERVAZIONI CONCLUSIVE

Dal secondo dopo guerra ad oggi, i sistemi universitari in Europa sono stati analizzati indagando la loro capacità di attrarre un numero crescente di studenti. La democratizzazione dell'Università è a lungo coincisa con la formazione dell'Università di massa. Questo paradigma di analisi, fondamentalmente quantitativo, non sembra subire modifiche con la svolta neo-liberista degli anni '80 e '90 del Novecento. Ma l'Università non ha anche una possibilità democratizzante che eccede la sua capacità di

attrarre un numero crescente di studenti? E come si configura questa possibilità in un contesto universitario telematico?

Questo contributo presenta i risultati di una ricerca-azione condotta nell'anno accademico 2022-2023 presso l'Università telematica eCampus. La ricerca ha avuto il fine di comprendere le rappresentazioni collettive della democrazia condivise in questo ambiente di apprendimento e quello di comprendere la loro dinamica sociale, le esperienze professionali che le generano e le loro possibili conseguenze sociali. Dalla ricerca, strutturata in focus group e in questionari, sono emersi alcuni elementi maggiormente prevedibili e altri meno attesi. Tra quelli maggiormente prevedibili, figura l'importanza del contesto istituzionale nel modellare le rappresentazioni collettive della democrazia dei docenti e degli studenti che lavorano e frequentano questo ambiente accademico. In particolare, le rappresentazioni collettive della democrazia ruotano intorno alla didattica, confermando da una parte la curvatura didattica delle università telematiche, dall'altra l'attenzione che l'ateneo negli ultimi anni ha dedicato alle innovazioni della didattica. Ancora tra gli elementi più prevedibili, figurano le funzioni del *virtual learning environment* e, in particolare, la sua efficienza tecnica nel generare una didattica inclusiva. Tra gli elementi meno prevedibili figurano invece le trame relazionali e le basi istituzionali della didattica democratica. In riferimento alle prime, la didattica democratica si configura, sia per gli studenti che per i docenti coinvolti nella ricerca, come un modo di relazionarsi all'Altro modellato dall'attenzione, dal rispetto, dalla comprensione. In merito alle basi istituzionali, sia gli studenti che i docenti, incollano le possibilità di una didattica democratica a specifiche esperienze e prassi didattiche, esperienze e pratiche che coinvolgono direttamente gli studenti ma soprattutto che trasmettono loro sentimenti di accoglienza e di fiducia. La didattica democratica nasce da esperienze didattiche che si accorgono degli altri, delle loro storie e condizioni di vita e che liberano capacità di vita buona, esse nascono, in ultima istanza, da forme ed esigenze di giustizia sociale interiorizzate e agite attraverso i comportamenti didattici. I docenti, rispetto agli studenti, riconoscono però in maniera più esplicita le condizioni istituzionali che maggiormente frenano la formazione di una didattica democratica. In particolare, la sua diffusione appare frenata dal notevole carico didattico, dal ridotto sviluppo delle attività di ricerca, dallo scarso interesse dei docenti a realizzare attività didattiche sperimentali che non incidano direttamente sulla loro carriera.

Al di là delle specificità del contesto analizzato, questi fattori potrebbero costituire percorsi di ricerca utili a ripensare oggi il ruolo delle università nell'educare alla democrazia.

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LA RESPONSABILITÀ SOCIALE NEL CONTESTO DELL'ISTRUZIONE SUPERIORE: TRA DEMOCRATIZZAZIONE DEL SAPERE E COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract Il presente contributo analizza la dimensione pedagogica delle funzioni sociali cui assolvono gli istituti universitari enfatizzandone le urgenze storicamente situate della nostra società e cogliendone i densi richiami alla responsabilità morale e politica della nostra epoca storica. Rileggendo il rapporto tra insegnamento, ricerca e terza missione in chiave storico-critica, saranno messi in evidenza come i processi del capitalismo universitario e della globalizzazione egemonica abbiano trasformato l'istituzione università, rimarcando l'esigenza di un ripensamento del valore della conoscenza e dell'apprendimento come processi dal valore pubblico invendibile. In tal senso, i contributi del sociologo Boaventura de Sousa Santos aprono a possibili scenari di mutamento della pedagogia universitaria nella direzione della democratizzazione del sapere, ripensando l'ordine del rapporto tra ricerca, insegnamento e terza missione che pone la responsabilità sociale al centro dell'istituzione universitaria.

INTRODUZIONE

Al di là della trasmissione di conoscenze per la formazione di specifici gruppi professionali, l'istruzione superiore assume un ruolo cruciale nella costruzione della giustizia cognitiva e sociale, incidendo profondamente sulla trama della società e contribuendo a formare cittadini responsabili, critici e orientati al benessere collettivo. Tuttavia, la sempre più incisiva crisi climatica, le conseguenze economiche e sociali della pandemia nonché le crescenti crisi belliche internazionali mettono a dura prova ogni aspetto della vita collettiva e individuale, facendo emergere in modo più marcato le contraddizioni e i disagi sociali del nostro tempo. Rispetto a questa vasta condizione sociale, politica ed economica, l'analisi e la comprensione delle emergenze educative contemporanee costituiscono alcuni dei principali interessi della pedagogia (Uliveri, 2018), la quale osserva le urgenze storicamente situate della nostra società (Bruner, 1974) cogliendone i densi richiami alla responsabilità morale e politica del nostro presente (Habermas, 1984). Nel caso dell'istituzione universitaria, non si tratta soltanto

di guardare il rapporto tra insegnamento, ricerca e terza missione, ma di ragionare in sintonia con quella crescente reazione alla neoliberalizzazione dell'università, poiché la conoscenza e l'apprendimento costituiscono processi dal valore pubblico invendibile (Mayo 2019) che pone al centro i rapporti tra istituzione e società (McLean, 2006; de Sousa Santos, 2017). La letteratura sociologica ha già ampiamente messo in luce le condizioni in cui versa l'istituzione formativa superiore descrivendole in termini negativi (Borrelli et al., 2019). Esponendo sinteticamente la crisi attuale delle istituzioni formative superiori (de Sousa Santos, 2017; 2019; 2023), si adopererà un'analisi socio-pedagogica delle funzioni cui assolvono le università, e in particolare la responsabilità sociale nel contesto dell'istruzione superiore, concentrandosi su due aspetti centrali: la democratizzazione del sapere e l'engagement tra università e comunità. La democratizzazione del sapere rappresenta un cardine fondamentale, in quanto mira a garantire che l'accesso all'istruzione superiore e alla ricerca non siano un privilegio ristretto, bensì un diritto universale che mette in questione le molteplicità epistemologiche dei saperi (de Sousa Santos, 2014). Parallelamente, il Community-University Engagement emerge come un meccanismo catalizzatore per tradurre la conoscenza accademica in azioni concrete, contribuendo attivamente alla giustizia e al miglioramento sociale.

FUNZIONI E CRISI DELL'ISTITUZIONE UNIVERSITARIA

L'istituzione universitaria, inizialmente vista come un pilastro della costruzione delle nazioni e della diffusione culturale, ha subito trasformazioni radicali nel corso del tempo, spesso legate ai contesti socio-economici e politici (Delanty, 2001). Dalla sua nascita come centro di diffusione della conoscenza alle sue attuali crisi istituzionali, di legittimità ed egemonia (de Sousa Santos, 2018), l'università ha attraversato varie fasi, reagendo alle pressioni del mercato, alle politiche governative e alle sfide della globalizzazione (Mayo, 2019). Lo stretto legame strutturale che intercorre tra istituzione, conoscenza e società caratterizza le funzioni dell'università nella società entro cui si sviluppa (Delanty, 2001). Nel corso del tempo i valori e le funzioni dell'istituzione universitaria sono stati più volte rinegoziati (Habermas, 1984; Delanty, 2001; McLean, 2006); in particolar modo, nel contesto della società democratica contemporanea, il nesso pedagogico dell'istituzione universitaria sta nel rapporto formativo con la cittadinanza (McLean, 2006) che, secondo Delanty (2001), può assumere carattere *culturale* (preservando le tradizioni culturali dell'intera società e, al

contempo, favorendo azioni trasformatrice socialmente responsabili); e *tecnico* (potenziando la fornitura di servizi dello Stato e del mercato, contribuendo alle esigenze del sistema occupazionale e all'estensione delle pari opportunità).

Tenendo l'interpretazione di Habermas, Delanty (2001) ripercorre l'evoluzione delle università evidenziando tre periodi di università moderna (*classica, liberale e organizzata*), differenziandola dalle università medievali per la correlazione ai processi di industrializzazione. La fase della *modernità organizzata* vede le università adattarsi a un contesto fortemente urbanizzato e industrializzato, contribuendo a soddisfare le esigenze economiche, di prestigio e sviluppo tecnologico considerati centrali per il raggiungimento di obiettivi sociali, economici e politici degli Stati che ne preservano l'autonomia (Delanty, 2001; McLean, 2006). I più recenti sistemi di qualità ai quali sono sottoposte le università di oggi costituiscono la conseguenza della colonizzazione dell'università da parte del paradigma economico neoliberale (Habermas, 1984) attraverso l'applicazione dei principi del *new public management* (McLean, 2006), ideologia che porta con sé promesse di efficienza, efficacia, eccellenza e benessere di utenti e professionisti (Clarke & Newman, 1997). Tuttavia, il managerialismo maschera la natura etico-politica dei problemi del servizio pubblico presentandoli come suscettibili di soluzioni dipendenti dalla gestione all'interno delle stesse istituzioni (McLean, 2006; Lynch et al., 2012). Queste trasformazioni neoliberali sono interconnesse a quello che il sociologo maltese Peter Mayo (2019) definisce come modello di globalizzazione egemonico, quest'ultimo caratterizzato da:

- riduzione della spesa pubblica sull'istruzione incentivando la ricerca di nuove fonti di finanziamento e favorendo la privatizzazione delle istituzioni di ricerca;
- transizione dall'istruzione come servizio pubblici a servizio di consumo, sfumando le distinzioni tra pubblico e privato nell'istruzione superiore.
- focus sullo sviluppo delle risorse umane, spesso utilizzata nel discorso politico sull'istruzione superiore a scopo economico per facilitare investimenti e mobilità.
- professionalizzazione di vari settori dell'apprendimento permanente.
- enfasi sul confronto internazionali della qualità dell'istruzione superiore attraverso standardizzazione, classifiche, equivalenze e armonizzazione dei

percorsi attraverso l'uso di indicatori di qualità proposti da UE, OCSE e UNESCO, con particolare enfasi data alle discipline STEM e alle TIC.

Il carattere egemonico di questa struttura enfatizza è determinato dal fatto che i paesi del Nord globale assumono un ruolo dominante nel plasmare e influenzare i processi economici connessi alla definizione delle agende di ricerca e dei curricula d'insegnamento; inoltre, accrescono e accentuano le diseguaglianze locali determinando istituzioni più o meno prestigiose sullo stesso territorio nazionale. Naturalmente, non sono mancati i tentativi di controtendenza volti a contrastare questo declino istituzionale. La Conferenza mondiale dell'istruzione superiore dell'UNESCO (WCHE) nel 2009 ha dichiarato "l'istruzione superiore come un bene pubblico" (p. 1), rimarcandone la responsabilità collettiva sia a livello sociale e comunitaria che istituzionale e governativo. L'idea dell'università come bene pubblico, tuttavia, è stata progressivamente erosa a favore dell'imprenditorialità nell'organizzazione universitaria (Giroux & Searls, 2004; Ball, 2007; Giroux, 2007, 2014): studenti e docenti sono visti rispettivamente come "clienti" e "fornitori di servizi" piuttosto che membri di una comunità di ricercatori impegnati nella co-indagine di specifici oggetti di studio (Mayo, 2019).

La riflessione del sociologo portoghese Boaventura de Sousa Santos consente di adottare una visione più articolata sulle considerazioni appena introdotte, evidenziando le contraddizioni interne ed esterne a cui è soggetta l'università d'oggi. Un primo movimento *bottom-up*, costituito dalle lotte per l'affermazione del diritto allo studio universitario, ha aperto l'accesso dell'università alla cittadinanza, favorendo maggiore eterogeneità culturale e sociale nel corpo studentesco senza però apportare significativi cambiamenti nei sillabi e nei curricula dei corsi di studio. Le trasformazioni che ne sono susseguite non hanno condotto alla democratizzazione dell'università, bensì a una sua "massificazione" (Scott, 1995; de Sousa Santos, 2017; Tight, 2019), incentivando il logoramento della sua legittimità istituzionale. La *crisi di legittimità* conduce così a un accrescimento della segmentazione tra i titoli con conseguente loro svalutazione (de Sousa Santos, 2017, 2019). Un secondo movimento, di tipo *top-down*, riguarda le crescenti pressioni globali volte a adottare i criteri del capitalismo egemonico globale che accrescono la segmentazione istituzionale: "La disuguaglianza e la segmentazione sono chiaramente evidenti non solo se si confrontano università di paesi diversi, ma anche all'interno dello stesso paese" (de Sousa Santos, 2018: 394). Diversamente dalla posizione di Habermas, per il sociologo

portoghese il capitalismo universitario non è correlato ai processi di riproduzione della società (Habermas, 1984; McLean, 2006), bensì all'applicazione dei principi economici ed aziendalistici tipici del *new public management* all'accademia, supportato dalle due idee sociopolitiche di società ed economia della conoscenza (de Sousa Santos, 2017): l'istituzione si trasforma così in un'impresa commerciale produttrice di beni d'informazione il cui valore economico deriva dalla loro capacità di creare ulteriore valore di mercato (de Sousa Santos, 2017, 2018, 2019). Secondo l'autore, se il capitalismo universitario s'inserisce dentro un percorso di continuità storica nel Nord globale, al contrario, per le università di rango inferiore appartenenti al così detto Sud globale, il nuovo capitalismo universitario rappresenta una rottura significativa con il passato (de Sousa Santos, 2018: 394-395). Le difficili condizioni finanziarie sembrano esacerbare questo processo, incrementando la *crisi egemonica* dell'università, intesa come perdita di quella specificità sociale delle funzioni ricoperte dall'istituzione causata dalla destrutturazione del paradigma culturale elitario e l'adeguamento dell'università a standard culturali fondati sull'utilità e il profitto (de Sousa Santos, 2017) che fanno proliferare ulteriori istituzioni produttrici di conoscenza con valore di mercato (de Sousa Santos, 2019). Lo Stato, attraverso riforme a carattere neoliberista centrati sulla competitività (Ball, 2007), crea e sostiene un mercato privatizzato dell'istruzione superiore, riducendo spesso i finanziamenti assegnati al settore dell'istruzione pubblica (Mayo, 2019). La conseguente *crisi istituzionale* è perciò connessa alla crescente domanda di autonomia nella definizione dei valori di ricerca, intrecciata a obiettivi di crescita socioeconomica. Questi processi mettono in rilievo il colonialismo universitario che caratterizza i rapporti di potere tra università: le università dei paesi occidentali detengono una posizione di predominanza influenzando la definizione della "conoscenza legittima" e imponendo i propri criteri epistemici come standard globali, configurando così forme di "colonizzazione intellettuale" nella quale le prospettive e le epistemologie provenienti dai contesti non occidentali vengono sistematicamente marginalizzate (de Sousa Santos, 2018).

Infine, non va trascurato l'impatto della crisi pandemica e bellica che hanno fatto emergere le fragilità delle strutture sociali occidentali, evidenziandone contraddizioni e costrutti ideologici che perpetuano forti diseguaglianze sociali (Varigiu, 2023; de Sousa Santos, 2023). Infatti, nonostante ancora oggi l'istruzione superiore e l'educazione degli adulti in generale risente dell'impronta elitaria Humboldtiana, il potere di certificazione degli istituti di istruzione superiore oggi non garantisce un vantaggio in termini di capitale umano rispetto agli anni Settanta (Brown et al., 2010) e, di

conseguenza, le credenziali da parte della giusta istituzione diventano centrali poiché ottenere un posto di lavoro sicuro e dignitoso è diventato sempre più problematico (Sennet, 2006).

DEMOCRAZIA DELLA CONOSCENZA E COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT PER UNA NUOVA PEDAGOGIA DELL'UNIVERSITÀ

La democratizzazione del sapere può costituire una valida alternativa al quadro fin qui esposto e riguarda prevalentemente l'equo rapporto tra l'accesso aperto alla condivisione dei saperi e il controllo della conoscenza da parte della comunità locale (Hall & Tandon, 2017). La democrazia della conoscenza consiste nel collegare intenzionalmente i valori di equità, giustizia, correttezza e azione al processo di comprensione, creazione e utilizzo della conoscenza (Visvanathan, 2009; Hall & Tandon, 2017). Per l'università si tratta di coinvolgere le ecologie delle conoscenze nel processo di interazione con la società (de Sousa Santos, 2014, 2018) sia sul piano della ricerca che sul piano didattico-valutativo, invertendo i rapporti gerarchici nella produzione del sapere tra istituzione e società nel segno di un'apertura al dialogo sia tra sapere scientifico e sapere umanistico all'interno dell'accademia sia tra sapere scientifico e sapere laico e popolare in contesti urbani e rurali (de Sousa Santos, 2019). Le istituzioni universitarie, considerando l'unica forma di sapere legittimo la conoscenza scientifica e costruendo le proprie domande di ricerca dall'interno delle discipline stesse, hanno attivamente contribuito a sminuire altre preziose forme di conoscenza, favorendo indirettamente non soltanto alla marginalizzazione di gruppi sociali che vi facevano affidamento, ma anche un più generale impoverimento dell'esperienza umana e della diversità culturale (de Sousa Santos, 2017). Il legame tra giustizia sociale e giustizia cognitiva più volte richiamato dal sociologo portoghese (de Sousa Santos, 2014, 2018) sensibilizza rispetto alla pluralità delle forme del conoscere e alla varietà di criteri con cui un sapere è giudicabile valido in un dato contesto sociale. La molteplicità strutturale delle ecologie dei saperi che ne consegue (de Sousa Santos, 2014, 2017, 2018) consente di accogliere le idee di complessità e di condivisione di potere fondata su valori di ospitalità, comunità, non violenza e umiltà in cui il cittadino visualizza e crea una nuova forma di autoriflessività democratica attorno a reali comunità di pratiche (Visvanathan, 2009). Secondo Hall e Tandon (2017), questa democrazia della conoscenza fa riferimento a fenomeni tra loro strettamente correlati:

- si fonda sul riconoscimento di molteplici epistemologie o modalità di conoscere, come i sistemi organici e *land-based*, i cui riferimenti derivano dai movimenti sociali e dalla conoscenza dei gruppi sociali esclusi, emarginati o subalterni.
- concepisce il sapere come rappresentabile in molteplici forme (testi, immagini, storie, musica, teatro, poesia, cerimonie, ecc.).
- la conoscenza è concepita come *empowerment*, strumento d'azione sia per individui sia per gruppi nella direzione di una maggiore equità e giustizia sociale.

I temi della responsabilità sociale dell'educazione superiore e della democrazia della conoscenza implicano un rinnovato interesse per il *community-university engagement*, un ventaglio di modalità e strategie con cui gli istituti di ricerca interagiscono e coinvolgono cittadini e non specialisti nell'indagine e divulgazione scientifica. Negli ultimi anni l'interesse per il *public engagement* è cresciuto anche a livello sia di politica accademica internazionale che di ricerca scientifica (GUNi 2014; Stoker 2018), evidenziandone questioni di natura sociale, culturale, ecologica, economica e politica (Fransman 2018). Esistono approcci, strategie e strumenti istituzionali molto diversi tra loro che esprimono variegate forme di engagement. Lo strumento del *service learning*, ad esempio, costituisce una proposta pedagogica che unisce apprendimento e servizio rivolto alla comunità affinché gli allievi possano sviluppare le proprie conoscenze e competenze attraverso il fare servizio solidale alle comunità, strutturando una diversa configurazione del rapporto tra scienza e società. Tuttavia, anche nell'applicazione di questo strumento, è possibile tracciare alcune linee di indirizzo per un'università socialmente responsabile, attenta sia alle persone che alle comunità (Hall, Tandon, 2021):

- *inclusività sociale e promozione della diversità*, superando del modello sociale di università come "formatrice" di élite riproduttrici di disuguaglianze sociali;
- *orientamento al benessere collettivo*, superando la centralità del mercato a favore di una maggiore centralità della persona come soggetto agente dentro uno spazio aperto ai bisogni e al benessere della comunità. L'università si configurerebbe così come spazio civico;

- *riconoscimento e mobilitazione di diversi sistemi di conoscenza e di epistemologie multiple*, valorizzando la diversità delle esperienze, dei saperi, delle epistemologie e delle culture della conoscenza;
- *rispondenza al contesto, radicamento nelle comunità e pluralità linguistica*, quale capacità di rispondere al contesto accogliendo la pluralità, mobilitando il dialogo e la traduzione interculturale, nonché l'impegno per lo sviluppo, promuovendo l'agentività, l'autonomia e la capacità di attivare innovazione sociale;
- *allineamento politico e strategico per promuovere responsabilità e autonomia*, come collegamento tra autonomia e responsabilità;
- *valutazione e promozione oltre la retorica della competizione e delle classifiche*, andando oltre la retorica dell'eccellenza e della competizione come forze trainanti di una presunta buona scienza in quanto potenzialmente dannose per le componenti più vulnerabili della società;
- *dialogo interdisciplinare e sapere olistico*, superando la frammentazione del sapere e l'elitismo esperto e promuovendo, a tal fine, un approccio riflessivo e critico alla divisione tra ambiti della conoscenza capace di elaborare approcci olistici e pragmatici e in grado di sollecitare il dialogo, lo scambio e la contaminazione tra discipline.

A questo modello di istituzione educativa superiore e di ricerca inclusiva, socialmente responsabile e quindi aperta alla pluriversità (de Sousa Santos, 2017), corrisponderà un modello di ricerca fondato sulla ricerca *community-based* (Strand et al., 2003). Questa modalità di indagine, riallacciandosi alla tradizione della pedagogia critica (Mayo & Vittoria, 2017) con l'esperienza brasiliana di Paulo Freire (1970, 1992) o quella siciliana di Danilo Dolci (Longo, 2020) come modelli di riferimento socioeducativi e di ricerca non *su* persone e comunità ma *con* persone e comunità, si configura come una partnership in cui studenti, docenti e membri della comunità collaborano nella ricerca allo scopo di risolvere un problema urgente della comunità ed effettuare cambiamenti sociali. In questo contesto, il termine *comunità* include istituzioni educative, organizzazioni comunitarie, agenzie sociali e sociosanitarie locali, o gruppi di persone che potrebbero non condividere un'associazione geografica ma condividono un interesse culturale, questioni sociali, politiche, sanitarie o economiche (Strand et al., 2003). In tal senso, nel modello classico di ricerca la comunità è

composta da persone oppresse, impotenti, economicamente deprivate o prive di diritti, secondo il già citato paradigma dei due popoli. Tuttavia, in linea con le ecologie dei saperi e la pluriversità epistemologica dell'esperienza umana (de Sousa Santos, 2017), questa modalità di ricerca può incentivare il lavoro per la giustizia cognitiva, sociale ed economica anche in senso decolonizzante e non egemonico (Park, 1992; Hall, 1992). La tabella 1 sintetizza le differenze, anche di potere, tra la modalità di ricerca tradizionale e la ricerca *community-based*.

	<i>Ricerca tradizionale</i>	<i>Ricerca Community-Based</i>
<i>Obiettivo</i>	Avanzamento del sapere disciplinare	Miglioramento e cambiamento comunitario e sociale
<i>Fonte della domanda di ricerca</i>	Lavoro teorico/empirico disciplinare	Problema comunitario
<i>Conduttore della ricerca</i>	Ricercatore qualificato	Ricercatori formati, studenti e membri della comunità
<i>Ruolo del ricercatore</i>	Esperto esterno	Collaboratore, partner e studente
<i>Ruolo della comunità</i>	Oggetto di studio, "laboratorio" o nessun ruolo	Collaboratore, partner e studente
<i>Ruolo degli studenti</i>	Assistenti di ricerca o nessuno	Collaboratore, partner e studente
<i>Relazione ricercatore e partecipanti</i>	Distaccata, orientata all'obiettivo e a breve termine	Connesso, sfaccettato e a lungo termine
<i>Misura del valore</i>	Accettazione dalla comunità scientifica e pubblicazioni	Utilità per la comunità e contributo al cambiamento sociale
<i>Criteri e metodi di selezione e raccolta dati</i>	Conformità a standard di rigore, obiettività, controllo; preferenza per approcci quantitativi	Utilità per la comunità delle informazioni, sensibilità all'esperienza, conformità a standard di rigore e accessibilità; apertura ad approcci misti
<i>Beneficiari</i>	Ricercatore accademico	Ricercatore accademico, studenti, comunità
<i>Proprietà dei dati</i>	Ricercatore accademico	Comunità
<i>Modalità di presentazione</i>	Relazione scritta	Può assumere forme multiple e creative (video, narrativa, scritta, teatrale, ecc.)
<i>Mezzi di diffusione</i>	Presentazione in conferenza accademica e pubblicazione su rivista	Forum su cui i risultati possono avere un impatto: media, incontri pubblici, contesti informali di comunità, organi legislativi, ecc.

Tab. 1. Comparazione tra ricerca tradizionale e ricerca Community-Based. Fonte: Strand et al., 2003, p. 9).

CONSIDERAZIONI CONCLUSIVE

L'analisi delle funzioni e delle crisi che attraversano l'istituzione universitaria (per quanto breve e non esaustiva) mostra un quadro complesso e storicamente dinamico, le cui sfaccettature sono permeate da cambiamenti politici, sociali ed economici. Il paradigma capitalistico ha introdotto disuguaglianze e segmentazioni, accentuando la crisi istituzionale e la perdita di legittimità, determinando la marginalizzazione di altre preziose forme di sapere, evidente nei processi di colonizzazione universitaria, in cui il paradigma economico neoliberale ha portato a una mercificazione del sapere e a una retorica dell'eccellenza a scapito della democratizzazione del sapere. Tuttavia, in questa complessa dinamica, emergono prospettive e alternative che potrebbero ridefinire il ruolo e la missione dell'università in linea con principi e valori pedagogicamente orientati. L'idea della democrazia della conoscenza e l'engagement tra università e comunità possono rappresentare un fondamentale approccio centrato sull'equità, sulla giustizia e sulla valorizzazione di molteplici forme di sapere. L'adozione di pratiche di ricerca community-based e l'orientamento a una ricerca socialmente responsabile potrebbero costituire i pilastri di un nuovo modello di istituzione educativa superiore ispirata a figure pedagogiche come quelle di Paulo Freire e Danilo Dolci, le cui esperienze di educazione e ricerca non *su* persone e comunità ma *con* persone e comunità erano trainate dalla vocazione sociale del loro operato. Questo approccio mira a superare le disuguaglianze, a promuovere la diversità epistemologica e a coinvolgere attivamente le comunità nella costruzione e nell'uso della conoscenza.

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Section 5

TECHNOLOGIES, COMMUNICATION, AND EDUCATION

DIGITAL COMMONING, MEDIA EDUCATION E SENSO CIVICO: IL FOTOBLOG DELLA COMUNITÀ DI SMOOTH*

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Abstract In questo capitolo si descrivono le pratiche comunitarie sottese alla co-creazione e alla co-gestione di un foto-blog, nato all'interno di una "comunità educante", un micro contesto studiato nel corso di una sperimentazione prevista nell'ambito del progetto europeo SMOOTH. Il presente contributo parte dal concetto di digital commons e delle comunità legate al FLOSS (Free, Libre and Open Source Software) soffermandosi sulle caratteristiche della "cultura partecipativa" dei prosumers del web 2.0 (Jenkins, 2009). Infine, attraverso la descrizione del processo di co-creazione dei post all'interno del blog sviluppa una riflessione sulla possibilità di declinare gli educational commons nell'ottica della media education e della sua finalità di sviluppo del civic engagement dei giovani.

INTRODUZIONE

In questo capitolo si descrivono le pratiche comunitarie sottese alla co-creazione e alla co-gestione di un foto-blog, nato all'interno di una "comunità educante", un micro contesto studiato nel corso di una sperimentazione prevista nell'ambito del progetto europeo SMOOTH¹.

Il progetto *Horizon 2020 SMOOTH - Educational Common Spaces. Passing through enclosures and reversing inequalities* (<https://smooth-ecs.eu/>), iniziato nel mese di marzo del 2021 e conclusosi nel mese di febbraio del 2024, aveva l'obiettivo generale di comprendere le dinamiche attraverso le quali l'educazione può contrastare le disuguaglianze, innescare un cambiamento e sostenerlo nel tempo, al fine di creare contesti più inclusivi nei quali i giovani, soprattutto quelli più vulnerabili, siano liberi di esprimere al meglio le loro potenzialità.

* Il presente contributo è stato ideato contestualmente dalle due autrici. La stesura dei paragrafi 1 e 3 è attribuibile a Marianna Siino, mentre i paragrafi 2 e 4 sono attribuibili a Gianna Cappello. L'introduzione è stata scritta dalle due autrici.

¹ Per una descrizione approfondita del progetto vedi Cappello e Siino, 2022 e 2024.

Esso ha coinvolto un partenariato composto da 12 enti (11 Università e 1 Museo) dislocati in 8 Paesi europei: Belgio, Estonia, Germania, Grecia, Italia, Portogallo, Spagna e Svezia. Ogni partner ha coinvolto nella fase di sperimentazione sul campo enti esterni al partenariato (scuole, associazioni di terzo settore, enti locali), tutti micro-contesti locali nei quali si è esplorata empiricamente la nozione di *educational commons*, come sistema alternativo di valori e di azioni, improntato sull'uguaglianza, la condivisione, la partecipazione e la cura.

La sperimentazione sul campo dei casi studio, in Italia e negli altri Paesi coinvolti nel progetto, è nata dunque dalla necessità di ripensare l'educazione come bene comune e di riflettere sull'importanza di esperire, monitorare, valutare e narrare le pratiche co-creative che sono alla base della partecipazione attiva e del *civic engagement* dei giovani.

I casi di studio italiani hanno coinvolto giovani di 12 e 16 anni e sono stati entrambi realizzati in contesti educativi non formali. Entrambi i contesti sono club giovanili che mirano a promuovere iniziative con un approccio *bottom-up*. Un caso studio si è svolto presso il Centro Tau (<http://mediatau.it/centrotau/>), situato nel quartiere La Zisa, una delle aree più a rischio della città metropolitana di Palermo, caratterizzata da alti tassi di precarietà e disoccupazione, abbandono scolastico, lavoro minorile e delinquenza. L'altro caso di studio si è svolto ad Agrigento, in un circolo giovanile gestito dalla Fondazione MondoAltro (<https://www.caritasagrigeno.it/fondazione-mondoaltro/>), un'organizzazione cattolica che risponde ai bisogni delle persone svantaggiate della comunità locale attraverso iniziative sociali ed educative innovative. È questa la "comunità educante" che ha creato e gestito il fotoblog durante il Progetto.

Il presente contributo parte dal concetto di *digital commons* e delle comunità legate al FLOSS (Free, Libre and Open Source Software) soffermandosi sulle caratteristiche della "cultura partecipativa" dei *prosumers* del web 2.0 (Jenkins, 2009). Infine, attraverso la descrizione del processo di co-creazione dei post all'interno del blog, sviluppa una riflessione sulla possibilità di declinare i *commons* dell'educazione nell'ottica della *media education* e della sua finalità di sviluppo del *civic engagement* dei giovani.

1. IL DIGITAL COMMONING: CONDIVISIONE DI UN BENE COMUNE E PARTECIPAZIONE ATTIVA

Il concetto di *digital commons* chiama in causa quello più generale di *commons* (al plurale) che sono, seguendo Ostrom, beni e risorse (materiali e/o immateriali) co-gestiti in comune, ma anche quello di *common* (al singolare), inteso come principio organizzativo della società in base al quale soggetti, gruppi, comunità e risorse disponibili entrano in contatto attraverso una base che non è la proprietà ma l'accesso, l'appartenenza comune e la reciprocità (Cappello e Siino, 2022). Sul concetto di *common* vedi anche Donati e Solci, 2011; Arena e Iaone, 2011; Dardot e Laval, 2019).

I *digital commons* hanno in comune con i *commons* "naturali" (gli orti urbani, le foreste o i pascoli) la non escludibilità, ovvero l'impossibilità di impedirne l'uso/consumo, se non a costi alti, ma diversamente dai *commons* tradizionali rimangono sempre a disposizione della comunità, ossia non si corre il rischio che l'uso o il consumo eccessivo danneggi gli altri. Potenzialmente tutti possono accedere e godere del bene, e anche se lo fanno più persone, questo non comporta una diminuzione o un decadimento del bene stesso. Inoltre, a differenza dei *commons* tradizionali, i *digital commons* hanno una portata su scala globale e non sono legati a una risorsa naturale o urbana più o meno circoscritta.

Nel corso degli anni nei tanti progetti legati al FLOSS (Free, Libre and Open Source Software)² le risorse della rete, in termini di software ma anche di socialità, conoscenza e cultura, sono state co-gestite come *commons* nel senso studiato da Ostrom.

L'avvento del Web 2.0 ha amplificato in modo esponenziale il potenziale dei beni comuni digitali, consentendo a chiunque di produrre contenuti e promuovendo nuove forme di creatività de-istituzionalizzata. Le comunità open source, i blog di *citizen journalism*, i fandom online e i gruppi di videogiochi si sono moltiplicati, sviluppando una sorta di comunità decentralizzate e autogestite di "intelligenza collettiva" (Lévy,

² Il movimento del software libero (FLOSS - Free, Libre and Open Source Software), avviato nei primi anni Ottanta dall'attivista e programmatore Richard Stallman, in opposizione alla filosofia della nascente industria del software proprietario (Microsoft ed Apple), può essere considerato un antecedente dei *digital commons*. Il FLOSS consentiva lo studio, l'uso e la modifica personale e quindi la redistribuzione secondo le quattro "leggi" individuate da Stallman. Queste libertà, su cui si fonderà poi anche la nozione di *copyleft* (alternativa al copyright) e il sistema di licenza dei *creative commons*, sono: 1) libertà di eseguire il programma per qualsiasi scopo; 2) libertà di studiarlo e modificarlo; 3) libertà di ridistribuire copie di esso; 4) libertà di migliorarlo e di distribuirne pubblicamente i miglioramenti in modo tale che tutta la comunità ne tragga beneficio (<https://www.gnu.org/philosophy/free-sw.html>, consultato nel mese di maggio 2024).

1994) in cui la libertà individuale è abbinata a meccanismi e processi decisionali co-gestiti, aperti e orizzontali. Una chiave di lettura interessante per comprendere questa nozione più culturalista di beni comuni digitali è il concetto di “cultura partecipativa” di Henry Jenkins (2009), ovvero una cultura all’interno della quale i soggetti sono connessi tra loro, producono e condividono le creazioni con gli altri, con la consapevolezza dell’unicità del proprio contributo.

La cultura partecipativa possiede quattro caratteristiche che la rendono assimilabile ai *digital commons*:

- l’appartenenza mediale: la socialità in rete caratterizzata dall’immaterialità suscita, soprattutto nei giovani, un senso di appartenenza così come la socialità offline. All’interno della rete “la comunicazione non è semplicemente un fattore di mediazione ma diventa un ambiente di interazione, un luogo. [...] [u]n luogo dove inscrivere i propri vissuti” (Boccia Artieri, 2008, p. 11);
- l’espressività mediale, ovvero la possibilità che gli utenti della rete, soprattutto i più giovani e le comunità della fan culture, hanno di raccontare e raccontarsi o anche semplicemente commentare o condividere gli UGC (*user-generated content*) più diversi, appoggiandosi in maniera più o meno creativa e sofisticata a strumenti per lo più gratuiti e sempre più user-friendly;
- il *problem-solving* collaborativo, ovvero il lavorare in gruppo per eseguire compiti, sviluppare progetti, generare conoscenza condivisa (per esempio di Wikipedia);
- la condivisione di flusso, ovvero la “diffusa capacità di condividere e partecipare al flusso mediale: le pratiche legate al podcasting, al file sharing “liquido” e ai feed RSS lo esplicitano chiaramente” (Boccia Artieri, 2008, p. 14).

Alcuni studiosi (Carpentier, 2012) hanno sottolineato la necessità di declinare il concetto di partecipazione e di distinguere tra il semplice accesso alla rete, un’attività interattiva più articolata nella quale gli utenti si scambiano contenuti (autoprodotti o meno) e la partecipazione vera e propria nella quale gli utenti sono coinvolti in progetti di produzione collettiva di contenuti (come avviene ad esempio con Wikipedia). Solo in quest’ultimo caso è possibile parlare di modelli di collaborazione e autogoverno che ricalcano il principio di base dei *commons*, ovvero quello di co-creazione, co-gestione e condivisione sociale.

Affinché ciò accada sono essenziali alcune condizioni di base (Hyde et al., 2012):

- l'intenzionalità: i partecipanti dovrebbero condividere gli obiettivi e le fasi di sviluppo di un progetto;
- il controllo delle modalità: i partecipanti dovrebbero avere la possibilità di mettere in discussione le regole della partecipazione;
- la proprietà: ciò che si produce dovrebbe essere di tutti;
- l'accessibilità: tutti dovrebbero poter partecipare senza vincoli di tempo;
- l'uguaglianza: tutti i partecipanti dovrebbero avere lo stesso peso nelle decisioni e l'assegnazione di ruoli e funzioni dovrebbe essere frutto di una decisione collettiva passibile di cambiamenti.

Lo stesso Jenkins nel 2009 poneva tre questioni critiche, ancora da ritenersi attuali, che potrebbero ostacolare la diffusione della cultura partecipativa e che potrebbero mettere a rischio, soprattutto nei più giovani, un coinvolgimento responsabile e consapevole:

- l'accesso ineguale alle opportunità della rete;
- il problema della trasparenza, ovvero il riconoscimento del modo in cui i media influenzano (sia pure non in maniera deterministica) le percezioni della realtà;
- la sfida etica, ovvero il fatto che i giovani “siano socializzati rispetto agli standard etici emergenti che dovrebbero dare forma alle loro pratiche di produttori mediali e partecipanti alle comunità online” (p. 59).

Jenkins evidenzia anche problemi di ordine più strutturale, legati al processo di privatizzazione e mercificazione del web 2.0. L'economia del dono che in origine era alla base della cultura partecipativa, sta progressivamente perdendo campo rispetto all'economia del business. Jenkins, insomma, ha ben chiaro (anche se non ne fa mai un suo oggetto specifico di studio) che l'avvento del web 2.0 e l'evoluzione social della rete, se da un lato potenziano oltremodo le possibilità di commoning in rete, dall'altro implicano nuovi processi di enclosure e una crescente mercificazione e sfruttamento della creatività dei prosumers per effetto dell'affermarsi dell'oligopolio dei GAFAM (Google/Alphabet, Apple, Facebook/Meta, Amazon, Microsoft) e dei loro rivali cinesi, i BATX (Baidu, Alibaba, Tencent, Xiaomi) (Terranova, 2000; Fuchs, 2017; van Dijck, 2013; van Dijck et al., 2018). Implicano, altresì, usi inquinati e inquinanti, come le

fake news, i discorsi di odio, la radicalizzazione politica, la sorveglianza digitale, il cyberbullismo ecc.

2. (RI)AFFERMARE L'INTENZIONALITÀ CIVICA DELLA MEDIA EDUCATION

L'impianto teorico-concettuale dei casi di studio italiani inseriti nel progetto SMOOTH attinge da un lato alle pratiche della cultura partecipativa e dei *digital commons* e dall'altro al campo della *media education*.

Attraverso la sperimentazione dei casi studio italiani si è cercato di dare concretezza alla tesi secondo la quale la *media education* può essere utilizzata per sviluppare il pensiero critico e per costruire una cittadinanza attiva. La domanda conoscitiva che ha orientato la progettazione dell'intervento è stata: come questa tesi dovrebbe tradursi in impegno civico nella vita quotidiana (Banaji e Buckingham, 2013; Mihailidis, 2018, 2019).

Harry Boyte (2014) a questo proposito evidenzia un *civic gap* tra l'acquisizione di competenze di analisi critica che porta all'individuazione di un problema e la capacità di agire prevenirlo e/o contrastarlo nella propria quotidianità. Quindi la sfida della *media education* è quella di (ri)affermare la sua intenzionalità civica (Mihailidis, 2019) e dimostrare che grazie ad essa i giovani possono imparare °a portare avanti un dialogo positivo nella loro comunità, dando un senso al loro stare nel mondo con gli altri verso il bene comune° (Gordon e Mihailidis, 2016, p. 2).

(Ri)affermare l'intenzionalità civica della *media education* significa innanzitutto mettere in discussione la priorità data nella attività di *media education* (soprattutto in ambito scolastico) all'analisi critica dei contenuti mediali.

La preferenza dei *media educator* per l'analisi critica fa fatica a riconoscere il valore dei vissuti mediali degli studenti risultando così poco significativa ai loro occhi (Cappello, 2012, p. 155). Dare priorità assoluta all'analisi critica diventa insomma un mero esercizio accademico di applicazione di skills del tutto estraneo alla *lived experience* dei ragazzi.

L'analisi critica dovrebbe innanzitutto essere integrata con la produzione creativa in un rapporto ciclico di riflessione-azione-riflessione. Ciò potrebbe colmare il *civic gap* di cui si è detto sopra e restituire alla *media education* un'intenzionalità civica. Come scrive Cappello (2012), "i momenti più interessanti sono quelli in cui il discorso critico viene, per così dire, interrotto dall'irrompere della dimensione personale, del

vissuto quotidiano (degli alunni e degli insegnanti). Sono i momenti in cui ciascuno abbandona il ruolo assegnatogli dal “gioco delle parti” e comincia a parlare come pubblico, come fan (e non solo come critico) dei media, ad esplorare il proprio consumo mediale in tutta la sua complessità e contraddittorietà° (p. 156).

All’integrazione tra analisi critica e produzione creativa, Mihailidis (2019) aggiunge la capacità di agire, ovvero la capacità di applicare le competenze acquisite per contribuire alla risoluzione di un problema o alla realizzazione di un progetto insieme ad altri, l’azione in comune nella comunità, un passaggio che ci riporta pienamente alla nozione di *commons* come modello alternativo di azione sociale e politica.

Mihailidis (2018, 2019) propone che le tradizionali competenze di analisi critica e produzione espressivo-creativa vengano collocate all’interno di un più generale framework di competenze civiche fondate sui valori di *agency*, cura, coscienza critica, immaginazione, persistenza ed emancipazione.

All’interno della sperimentazione di SMOOTH, il nostro obiettivo è stato proprio quello di costruire e/o rafforzare la *civic intentionality* dei giovani. Attraverso tale *intentionality* i giovani sono messi nelle condizioni di costruire un dialogo positivo con la loro comunità e di sviluppare un “sense of being in the world with others toward common good° (Gordon & Mihailidis 2016: 2).

Nei casi studio italiani di SMOOTH abbiamo declinato e operazionalizzato in modo dettagliato le competenze da sviluppare facendo riferimento prevalentemente al modello teorizzato da Paul Mihailidis e Benjamin Thevenin (2013) che ci permette di rilevare meglio quella dimensione di *civic engagement* di cui si è detto finora (vedi fig. 1). Per cominciare a colmare il *civic gap* e (ri)costruire l’intenzionalità civica della *media education*, le competenze tipiche di analisi critica e produzione creativa devono quindi essere collocate nel quadro più generale della sfera civica.

L’*engaged citizen* per Mihailidis e Thevenin deve possedere: la competenza espressiva, grazie alla quale ogni giovane cittadino crea e condivide individualmente, ma è consapevole che la sua azione può avere un impatto sociale allargato come parte di un “dialogo civico più ampio°; la competenza critica, grazie alla quale l’*engaged citizen* è in grado di analizzare e valutare criticamente i messaggi dei media che lo circondano, riflettendo sulle loro eventuali implicazioni ideologiche e commerciali. Oltre a queste due competenze che operano al livello micro della “coscientizzazione” del soggetto e del suo rapporto con l’esterno, devono anche essere sviluppate anche la competenza partecipativa e quella collaborativa, che riguardano il macro-livello

socio-relazionale della civic intentionality. Esse sono strettamente connesse al concetto di cultura partecipativa di Jenkins (Jenkins et al. 2009) succitato, basilare nelle comunità online dove i significati sono co-prodotti.

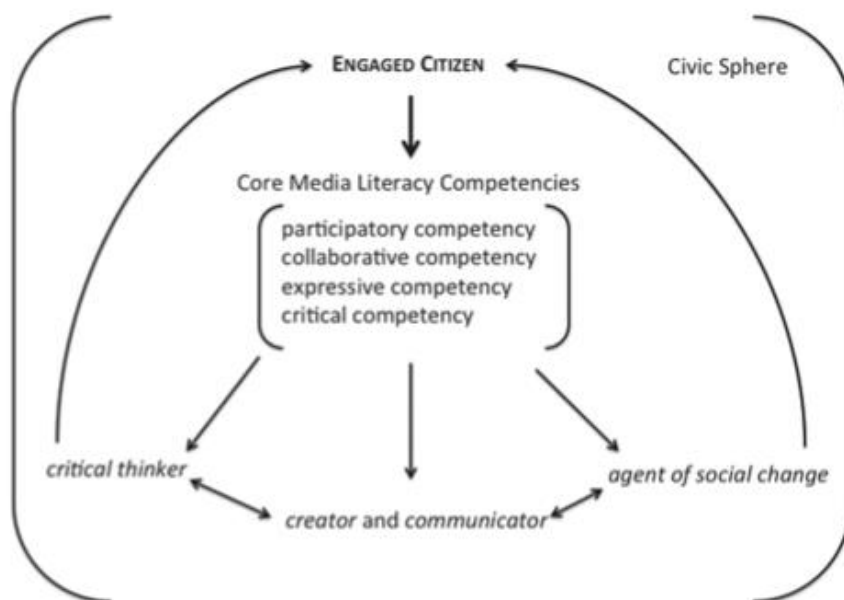


Fig. 1 – La *media literacy* come competenza fondamentale per l'*engaged citizen*.
Fonte: Mihailidis e Thevenin (2013, p. 1617)

Lo sforzo innovativo del modello di Mihailidis e Thevenin è di ribadire la necessità di una maggiore attenzione al modo in cui nel concreto le competenze espressive e critiche possono essere collocate dentro la cornice di un impegno civico e di un'azione politica che va oltre il livello micro e meso e che coinvolge il macrocontesto sociale. Tale necessità è legittimata dall'attuale contesto caratterizzato da un lato dalle forme più disparate di *digital commons*, e dall'altro dal consolidamento di un processo di *enclosing* oligopolistico da parte delle grandi multinazionali high-tech. In rete troviamo casi concreti di azione sociale che potrebbero fare da modello per la sperimentazione di sistemi alternativi di governance e di costruzione della socialità più egualitari e inclusivi. Il foto-blog del progetto SMOOTH è stato co-costruito proprio con questa finalità.

3. IL FOTO-BLOG: PRATICHE COMUNITARIE IN UNO SPAZIO COMUNE

Durante la sperimentazione dei casi studio la comunità educante di SMOOTH (composta dai giovani coinvolti ma anche dagli educatori dei centri aggregativi, dai

ricercatori e dai genitori) ha co-creato e co-gestito un foto-blog informativo (<https://smoothitaly.wordpress.com/>), uno spazio virtuale comune ai due centri in cui i giovani hanno pubblicato, commentato e condiviso una serie di contenuti co-prodotti durante gli incontri (vedi homepage e feed nelle figure 1 e 2).



Fig. 2 – Homepage del foto-blog di SMOOTH

Attraverso i post i ragazzi hanno rappresentato la realtà che li circonda, con il fine di far conoscere alla comunità agrigentina e palermitana esterna ai centri, ma anche al grande pubblico di internet, i loro punti di vista e le loro opinioni su varie questioni riguardanti la loro vita personale, le attività all'interno del centro, la comunità locale in cui vivono. Si precisa che le attività proposte prevedevano l'utilizzo semplicemente dei telefoni cellulari per scattare le foto da inserire nei post. Questa scelta è stata dettata dalla volontà di coinvolgere i giovani con strumenti e pratiche mediatiche con cui avessero già familiarità e di sottolineare che la finalità principale della sperimentazione non era quella di sviluppare competenze prettamente tecniche.

L'esperienza del foto-blog ha rappresentato un esempio di spazio comune che va oltre il confine della comunità e della città di appartenenza, e di spazio in cui è possibile sperimentare pratiche comunitarie.

Ciao Mondo!

Questo è il nostro primo post! In questo web journal troverete le storie, le esperienze, le attività, il territorio, raccontate...

In visita a Palermo

Oggi noi ragazzi della Fondazione Mondoaltro siamo andati a Palermo per un'attività svolta con i ragazzi del Centro TAU. Nel...

Mi piace e non mi piace

Il territorio Zisa - Danisinni è un posto dove le persone si sentono parte di qualcosa che li lega nella...

#CentroTAU, #Danisinni, #Palermo, #Zisa

Kebab Day

Oggi siamo andati al doposcuola dove ci siamo incontrati e successivamente ci siamo recati da Sulemani kebab, un kebabbaro pakistano...

Palermo tra storia e contaminazione culturale

Il tema di cui andremo a parlare è la "Contaminazione cultura nella cucina". Nel corso della storia la Sicilia venne...

Festival "La tribù del gioco"

Il festival "La tribù del gioco" si è svolto nel quartiere Danisinni giovedì 24 maggio ed è durato fino al...

La natura e la città

Oggi abbiamo fatto un giro in città osservando con attenzione la natura. Ci siamo resi conto che così com'è, non...

Oggi noi ragazzi della Fondazione Mondoaltro siamo andati a Palermo per un'attività svolta con i ragazzi del Centro TAU. Nel...

La nostra estate

Questa estate molti di noi sono stati in vacanza all'estero, nei paesi di origine nostri e dei nostri genitori. Alcuni...

San Calò e il Grand Magal

San Calogero San Calogero è il santo più amato di Agrigento. Ogni estate la città lo celebra portando a sua...

Lettura creativa

"Lettura creativa" è un laboratorio che svolgiamo ogni venerdì, al Centro Tau, insieme a Sonia Santini e Silvia Pittaà. L'attività...

Giovanni e Paolo, simboli dell'antimafia

Sono passati molti e molti anni dalla scomparsa di Giovanni e Paolo, ma la loro presenza è ancora viva e...

#Borsellino, #Falcone, #Falcone e Borsellino, #murales, #street art, #street art Palermo

Il tema di cui andremo a parlare è la "Contaminazione cultura nella cucina". Nel corso della storia la Sicilia venne...

Il mondo in arte

di Mavelos Da anni, fin dall'antichità, l'essere umano ha utilizzato l'arte per descrivere ciò accadde attorno a lui come ...

La Cattedrale e la "Santuzza"

La cattedrale di Palermo, è uno dei monumenti più importanti della città. Esso è caratterizzato da un'architettura particolare, in quanto...

#Cattedrale, #festino, #Palermo, #santa rosalia, #Santuzza

Il cibo del futuro

Spiedini di grilli, risotto alle blatte, formiche tostate e sformato di verdure con larve. Questi potrebbero essere i piatti sulle...

#cibo del futuro, #insetti cibo

Fig. 3 – Feed del foto-blog di SMOOTH

Le attività implementate hanno rinsaldato i legami all'interno della comunità del centro, hanno cercato di innescare un'apertura verso l'altro, verso il diverso da sé e verso l'esterno, e di sensibilizzare i giovani rispetto a un impatto macro delle loro azioni. Il blog rappresenta proprio uno spazio in cui le azioni in un micro contesto come il centro aggregativo possono avere una visibilità "infinita" e una ricaduta in un contesto macro, proprio nell'ottica del *civic engagement*.

Tutti i post sono stati realizzati dai ragazzi durante gli incontri e sono esemplificativi delle dinamiche di co-creazione, delle modalità di scelta dei contenuti, delle riflessioni a latere, ossia di tutto ciò che è accaduto "oltre" il post. I post possono anche essere considerati una base empirica utilizzabile per valutare l'acquisizione delle competenze mediaeducative di cui si è detto sopra.

Contestualmente alla formazione, i giovani coinvolti durante gli incontri eseguivano degli esercizi applicativi relativi alla parte più teorica affrontata in aula, partecipavano a passeggiate esplorative del contesto locale esterno al centro e raccoglievano materiale visuale. Dopo aver effettuato tutte le attività programmate e le consegne relative agli esercizi proposti, si avviava un percorso riflessivo a ritroso, finalizzato a individuare innanzitutto gli argomenti tra quelli trattati che avessero riscosso maggiore attenzione, e le foto correlate che meglio esprimessero e sintetizzassero il punto di vista del gruppo di giovani *creator* rispetto a tali argomenti.

La ri-osservazione delle cose già viste con nuovi occhi attivava una riflessione critica, filtrata da ciò che provavano. Ognuno esprimeva il proprio punto di vista che talvolta rimaneva unico e isolato, altre volte ispirava gli altri, suggerendo ulteriori riflessioni al gruppo, in una produzione e riproduzione continua di senso di ciò che si guarda, e in un processo che mischiava in modo creativo gli immaginari differenti fino ad arrivare alla formulazione di un messaggio, di cui poi il post sarebbe stato portatore. L'obiettivo di ogni incontro e di ogni co-produzione era sempre quello di riflettere insieme per poi elaborare un piccolo testo (la *caption* del post) sul tema scelto e inserirlo nel blog insieme alle foto selezionate. Nessun punto di vista valeva più di un altro o era più "giusto" di un altro. Il dialogo, lo scambio tra le differenti prospettive e il rispetto per l'altrui visione sono stati costantemente il fulcro della cooperazione tra i ragazzi. I giovani hanno sperimentato così la possibilità di trovare punti di convergenza tra elementi delle diverse culture, creare forme di dialogo costruttivo, mantenendo la libertà di esprimere se stessi all'interno del gruppo. All'inizio del percorso non erano consapevoli che ciò che co-producevano era di tutti! Facevano le cose insieme, dividevano gli strumenti e l'esperienza, ma non avevano la consapevolezza

che un'azione condivisa potesse avere una finalità condivisa e dar vita a un'esperienza co-creata. Questa consapevolezza è emersa durante gli ultimi incontri del primo round di sperimentazione ed è stata consolidata ulteriormente nel secondo round.

La co-creazione di questo ambiente digitale ha permesso dunque ai giovani coinvolti di scoprire e sviluppare le proprie potenzialità e una *civic intentionality* alla base dei processi di inclusione attiva.

4. EDUCARE AL *CIVIC ENGAGEMENT* CON I MEDIA

Nel caso specifico dei casi di studio italiani abbiamo visto che gli ambienti digitali possono diventare bacino fertile per incrementare ulteriormente pratiche partecipative che pongano al centro la libertà individuale, ma anche la valorizzazione delle specificità individuali all'interno di processi collettivi che sono alimentati dalla "potenza" (intendiamo in termini di potenzialità del contributo specifico di ciascuno) della co-produzione.

I giovani coinvolti nella sperimentazione si sono concentrati sulla creazione, diffusione e ricezione della propria espressione individuale riflettendo "sul contenuto della loro voce, ma anche sul potere che acquisiscono quando fanno parte di un più ampio dialogo civico" (come scrivono Mihalidis e Thevenin, 2013) p. 1618). Infine, attraverso l'acquisizione di competenze critiche, essi hanno imparato a prendere una distanza critica dai messaggi mediatici che li circondano riflettendo sulle loro implicazioni ideologiche e commerciali.

Per quanto riguarda più nel dettaglio l'efficacia della sperimentazione nei microcontesti di SMOOTH rispetto alle competenze su cui si sono concentrati i cinque moduli formativi (alfabetizzazione al linguaggio visivo, selezione dello scatto fotografico, interpretazione delle immagini, racconto per immagini, creazione di un foto-blog informativo) si rileva che gli obiettivi dei moduli sono stati raggiunti nella maggior parte dei casi. Per quanto riguarda i primi quattro moduli, i giovani hanno dimostrato di aver compreso la complessità di uno scatto fotografico e l'importanza di prestare attenzione a tutti gli aspetti tecnici della fotografia, essenziali per rendere efficace la comunicazione visiva. Le discussioni sugli scatti fotografici realizzati durante le passeggiate sono state fondamentali, in quanto hanno permesso loro di comprendere appieno cosa significhi scattare una foto dalla propria prospettiva: lo stesso oggetto

(strada, monumento, persona, ecc.), attraverso la fotografia, può essere colto nei suoi diversi aspetti e messo in relazione con il messaggio che l'autore intende trasmettere. Questo li ha aiutati anche a capire che tutti i punti di vista sono validi in quanto portatori di un messaggio unico e originale. Infine, i giovani hanno anche compreso l'importanza di poter comunicare le proprie emozioni o il proprio punto di vista su temi di attualità attraverso le foto. Ma soprattutto hanno aperto lo sguardo verso tutto ciò che va oltre la loro individualità, verso la dimensione sociale.

Alla fine del percorso effettuato durante la sperimentazione dei casi studio i giovani coinvolti hanno maturato competenze più tecniche, ossia quelle relative all'uso dei media utilizzati come dispositivi tecnologici, all'utilizzo e selezione delle immagini, alla produzione di contenuti e alla gestione di un foto-blog; competenze cognitive, ossia quelle relative alla conoscenza e alla comprensione critica, ossia al rapporto tra il soggetto e il contenuto o il messaggio dei media; ma soprattutto competenze sociali trasversali, ossia le cosiddette skills comunicative e partecipative (quali la collaborazione e la cooperazione, la creatività, la capacità argomentativa e di dibattito, la ricerca e la selezione, la riflessione e la valutazione, la fiducia e l'autostima), relative proprio al rapporto tra i soggetti stabilito attraverso la comunicazione mediata.

La progressiva acquisizione di capacità espressive e comunicative è rilevabile nel modo in cui durante il percorso hanno affinato il loro modo di tradurre i messaggi visivi, racchiudendo elementi soggettivi e oggettivi allo stesso tempo e nel processo di co-produzione dei post. I giovani hanno dimostrato buone capacità analitiche, critiche e riflessive, hanno preso in considerazione diversi punti di vista e hanno stabilito un collegamento tra immagini e testo utile a veicolare il messaggio che volevano trasmettere al pubblico. Inoltre, hanno dimostrato di aver compreso il potenziale dell'impegno attivo per il raggiungimento di un obiettivo comune, denunciando qualcosa che non funziona nel loro contesto di vita e sensibilizzando su determinate questioni e hanno progressivamente sviluppato la consapevolezza che la loro piccola azione può avere un valore e che anche loro possono contribuire a cambiare la società in cui vivono.

All'inizio del percorso i giovani partivano dalla convinzione che il valore del proprio impegno nella società civile non fosse realizzabile e che la loro sfera di azione fosse relegata al quotidiano e al loro piccolo contesto di vita. Progressivamente sono diventati sempre più consapevoli di poter contribuire alle attività di gruppo in maniera attiva e responsabile. In uno dei post creati dai ragazzi agrigentini la didascalia è

esplicativa di questa consapevolezza: “Speriamo che scrivere qui i nostri pensieri possa contribuire a rendere la nostra città più bella e vivibile per le piante”.

Per quanto non si possa definire a priori cosa significhi essere cittadini impegnati e come ci si arrivi e per quanto il raggiungimento di queste competenze dipende in buona misura dalle condizioni create dagli attori (sia individuali che istituzionali) che operano nei contesti locali (scuole, famiglie, ONG, istituzioni culturali, enti locali e policymaker, ecc.), in un mondo sempre più mediato le competenze indicate da Mihailidis e Thevenin appaiono indispensabili per “contribuire a rafforzare le voci civiche per il futuro di una democrazia sostenibile, tollerante e partecipativa nell’era digitale” (2013, p. 1619).

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THE USE OF TIKTOK IN HIGHER EDUCATION*

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Abstract Con la continua evoluzione della tecnologia, una serie di software ha annunciato l'era dei video brevi. Tra queste applicazioni, TikTok è stata scelta soprattutto dai giovani fin dalla sua creazione, con un chiaro posizionamento del pubblico e strategie di comunicazione uniche. Questo studio si focalizza sulla percezione degli studenti universitari sull'uso di TikTok per l'apprendimento e cerca di rispondere alle seguenti domande: 1) Dal punto di vista degli studenti, quali sono i vantaggi e gli svantaggi dell'integrazione di TikTok con l'insegnamento in classe? 2) Quali sono le prospettive degli studenti sull'uso di TikTok per imparare al di là della classe? La ricerca ha coinvolto gli studenti del secondo anno del Corso di Laurea Magistrale in Scienze della Formazione Primaria dell'Università di Palermo nell'anno accademico 2022/2023. I risultati indicano che per gli studenti l'utilizzo di TikTok sia un approccio innovativo all'apprendimento in quanto favorisce la comprensione e l'apprendimento attivo della materia, migliorando la comprensione in modo stimolante e motivante.

INTRODUZIONE

I Social Media svolgono un ruolo sempre più rilevante nella vita di giovani e adulti.

Un docente universitario non può non tenere in conto e, di conseguenza, integrare nella pratica didattica l'utilizzo dei social media, uno dei fenomeni più rilevanti e in perenne sviluppo nell'ambito delle tecnologie didattiche.

Nel contesto delle tecnologie digitali, vengono esaminati gli impatti, sia positivi che negativi, della tecnologia futura. Ciò che è innegabile è la crescente presenza massiccia di giovani utenti che affidano la propria vita ai media digitali, generando una serie di rischi e sfide etiche a cui non possiamo sottrarci.

* Questo contributo è il risultato del lavoro congiunto dei tre autori. In particolare, A. La Marca ha scritto i paragrafi 1 e 4; E. Gulbay ha scritto il paragrafo 3; G. R. De Franches ha scritto il paragrafo 2.

I Social Media (SM) si fondano sulle tecnologie digitali. Dal momento che la tecnologia sta progredendo a un ritmo sempre più veloce, integrarla nell'ambito dell'istruzione risulta essere sfidante.

Pertanto, le istituzioni di istruzione superiore dovrebbero essere consapevoli delle opportunità che la tecnologia offre e favorire nuovi contesti di apprendimento che siano più diversificati, accattivanti e stimolanti.

In questo contesto si iscrive, in uno scenario orientato allo sviluppo della tecnologia e alla innovazione didattica, il tema che verrà affrontato in questo articolo.

Ci soffermeremo infatti, sull'utilizzo formativo dei social media, con particolare enfasi su TikTok, evidenziando come tali piattaforme possano fungere da prezioso strumento di supporto sia per l'evoluzione delle metodologie didattiche rivolte agli studenti, sia per favorire la crescita professionale dei docenti.

TikTok si distingue per la sua capacità di comunicare in modo rapido ed efficace attraverso video brevi. Questa caratteristica si presta bene alla creazione di contenuti didattici accattivanti. Docenti e studenti utilizzano TikTok per presentare concetti complessi in modo chiaro e coinvolgente, rendendo l'apprendimento più accessibile e divertente.

La funzione di editing di TikTok offre strumenti che vanno oltre la semplice condivisione di informazioni. Gli utenti possono integrare testi, suoni e effetti visivi per creare contenuti didattici interattivi. Questa dinamicità favorisce un apprendimento attivo, incoraggiando gli studenti a partecipare attivamente alla creazione e condivisione di materiali didattici.

I video TikTok possono essere caricati su qualsiasi dispositivo elettronico con una connessione internet, consente anche agli utenti che non hanno uno smartphone di partecipare all'applicazione. L'accesso a TikTok tramite dispositivi mobili rende il contenuto immediatamente fruibile. Questa accessibilità contribuisce a eliminare barriere geografiche e socioeconomiche, promuovendo l'inclusività e garantendo che l'educazione sia alla portata di tutti.

Indubbiamente, infatti, uno dei principali vantaggi nell'uso di TikTok è che il contenuto creato può essere facilmente condiviso su numerose applicazioni e su altre piattaforme di social media.

Analizzando attentamente le risposte fornite dagli studenti alle domande di ricerca, abbiamo avuto l'opportunità non solo identificare i vantaggi dell'utilizzo di TikTok,

come il potenziamento dell'interattività e l'innovazione nell'apprendimento, ma anche comprendere quali sono le sfide emergenti.

L'analisi dei risultati fornisce informazioni utili dell'impatto di TikTok sull'esperienza accademica e dello sviluppo di strategie didattiche.

TIKTOK E FORMAZIONE UNIVERSITARIA

La comunicazione online si è sviluppata come uno dei modi più rapidi per connetterci gli uni agli altri ed è diventata anche una pratica culturale della nostra società, poiché le persone la utilizzano per la maggior parte del tempo (Edwards, 2021).

L'apprendimento, come noto, è influenzato da molteplici fattori in grado di produrre consistenti cambiamenti a livello ambientale, sociale e culturale. Ad oggi, pertanto, non possiamo non considerare anche le tecnologie come importante veicolo di ulteriori trasformazioni.

La volontà di intrecciare occasioni di apprendimento di tipo informale, come quelle fornite dai servizi di rete sociale, con contesti formali, conduce ad interrogarsi sulle potenzialità pedagogiche di questi strumenti al fine di stimolare un ripensamento dell'offerta formativa che caratterizza le istituzioni educative tradizionali (Grion & Bianco, 2016).

Possedere competenze digitali avanzate è ormai imprescindibile per partecipare attivamente nella società contemporanea, caratterizzata da un continuo mutamento e da confini geografici sempre più sottili, se non addirittura inesistenti in molti casi.

Da oltre quindici anni, l'Unione Europea promuove programmi e iniziative mirate al potenziamento delle abilità e competenze digitali dei cittadini, sia per l'ambito lavorativo che per la vita in generale.

I social media possono svolgere pertanto un ruolo cruciale nell'ambito dell'innovazione didattica con gli studenti e nel facilitare l'accesso alla formazione continua e all'aggiornamento professionale dei docenti.

Come afferma Westera (2012) la tecnologia migliora l'apprendimento, rendendolo più gestibile grazie alla possibilità di personalizzare l'esperienza di apprendimento e offrendo maggiore flessibilità in termini di tempo, ritmo e luogo

Gli studenti non solo hanno abbracciato i social media nel contesto dell'istruzione superiore, ma che questi offrono anche possibilità significative per accademici e

amministratori universitari (Komljenovic, 2019). Gli accademici utilizzano le piattaforme di social media principalmente per pubblicizzare le loro ricerche, costruire la propria reputazione come ricercatori e ottenere facile accesso a fonti in vari campi accademici (Kjellberg et al., 2016; Manca, 2018). D'altra parte, l'amministrazione universitaria utilizza i social media per etichettare e marchiare il nome della propria istituzione. Questo potrebbe essere uno dei processi utilizzati per aumentare l'attrattiva dell'istituzione nei confronti del pubblico in generale (Rutter et al., 2016).

Secondo Alguacil et al. (2021), l'istruzione sta evolvendo e i social media stanno rivoluzionando i contesti educativi, con una crescente popolarità dell'istruzione online o ibrida.

La sfida a cui sono chiamate le università oggi è quella di essere in grado di promuovere la crescita e migliorare l'esperienza didattica, con ricadute sui risultati di apprendimento. Le istituzioni formative stanno cercando di rispondere a tali esigenze organizzando una serie di attività, nell'ambito dei programmi e delle azioni di faculty development, volte a coinvolgere attivamente i docenti perché possano acquisire le competenze necessarie e disporre di strumenti efficaci per una didattica di qualità (Dipace & Scarinci, 2021).

Considerando il contesto universitario, diversi autori (Brown & Adler, 2008), soprattutto nei primi anni 2000, in cui tutto ciò che proveniva dai nuovi luoghi digitali era accolto sempre con entusiasmo, hanno evidenziato come l'adozione di questi dispositivi produca o richieda un radicale cambio di paradigma pedagogico con conseguenze "rivoluzionarie" per le istituzioni accademiche.

I social media consentono agli utenti di creare autonomamente contenuti digitali e pubblicarli online, generando così una vasta risorsa di contenuti di cui studenti e docenti possono beneficiare insieme, incoraggiando approcci più attivi e proattivi all'apprendimento. Collegano gli studenti tra loro e con i loro docenti, consentendo loro di condividere le proprie conoscenze e, contemporaneamente, di accedere a conoscenze specifiche e mirate in una determinata area di interesse (Handayani, 2015).

L'implementazione di spazi virtuali per la condivisione dei processi, come dimostrato dalla ricerca sull'ambiente misto (Gaggioli et al., 2013), si collega in modo sinergico all'attuale panorama evolutivo della condivisione e produzione di contenuti.

In questo contesto, emerge l'importanza delle piattaforme di video brevi come popolari strumenti di social media per le nuove generazioni. Questi due approcci riflettono una tendenza più ampia verso modalità di apprendimento e condivisione che

incorporano la facilità di creare, modificare e condividere contenuti in modo rapido, sottolineando allo stesso tempo l'aspetto sociale di queste esperienze (Qiyang & Jung, 2019).

Una di queste piattaforme è TikTok, un'applicazione mobile disponibile su dispositivi Android e iOS per il download gratuito che permette ai "creatori" di realizzare brevi video utilizzando strumenti ed effetti creativi. TikTok, ad oggi, è tra i social network più utilizzati dalle nuove generazioni e per questo motivo si rivela particolarmente adatto alla sperimentazione didattica.

TikTok è una piattaforma di videomaking e videosharing nata dall'acquisizione della già popolarissima Musical.ly, che in poco più di due anni è riuscita a superare social ben più conosciuti come LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest e Snapchat¹.

TikTok, infatti, può essere utilizzata come strumento didattico perché i brevi video non creano stress o difficoltà nel processo di apprendimento per gli studenti (Hayes et al., 2020).

Sebbene TikTok venga principalmente utilizzato da gruppi più giovani e adolescenti per creare video divertenti, visivamente interessanti, creativi e spesso divertenti online, esiste anche la possibilità di creare contenuti di apprendimento informativi, divertenti e visivamente interessanti (Hayes et al., 2020).

Secondo Medina Serrano et al (2020), TikTok è un sito di social networking nel senso che i suoi utenti hanno una rete sociale di seguaci. Inoltre, secondo Bahiyah e Wang (2020), TikTok è anche una piattaforma coinvolgente e che fornisce costantemente materiale divertente. In modo inequivocabile, si può affermare che TikTok ha esercitato un impatto rilevante sulla cultura attuale.

Si tratta quindi di un'applicazione che può consentire ai docenti e agli studenti di creare brevi video della durata di 15 o 60 secondi fino ad un massimo di 10 minuti, alternati da musiche e grafiche coordinate. La piattaforma inoltre è disponibile in più di 150 paesi e in più di 75 lingue diverse.

Molto popolare tra la generazione Z e i millennial, in ragione del fatto che è accessibile a partire dai tredici anni di età, TikTok è un'applicazione che attrae un pubblico di studenti universitari che diventano al tempo stesso produttori di materiale audiovisivo, grazie ad un comune smartphone e all'ampio repertorio di strumenti per

¹ Cfr. www.cremi.it/cremittiktok-come-perche-e-per-chi/ (ultima visita: 28/01/2024).

comporre le proprie produzioni (editor, filtri, effetti, inserimento di testo, emoji, audio, timer, ecc.).

TikTok non ha creato una cesura con il passato, ma è il risultato di un'evoluzione lineare che vede la fruizione e la produzione di prodotti audiovisivi creativi e iperpersonalizzati, diventare un'abitudine. Questo social, infatti, permette di dare sfogo all'immaginazione, alla creatività e permette, persino, la creazione di una comunità – i tiktokker – che condivide un linguaggio universale (Andronico et al., 2023).

I video TikTok vengono creati su un telefono cellulare, utilizzando la fotocamera del telefono e le funzioni dell'applicazione per aggiungere effetti audio e visivi. Questa applicazione consente pertanto agli studenti universitari, non solo di esprimere la propria creatività, ma anche di interagire con altri utenti della piattaforma.

Sebbene molti studi abbiano riportato l'uso dei social media da parte dei giovani come un'esperienza ampiamente positiva (Greenhow & Askari, 2017; Stewart, 2015; Zachos et al., 2018), le implicazioni che derivano dall'adozione di piattaforme social tra gli studenti universitari, ma non solo, per la promozione di metodologie didattiche innovative ed efficaci rimangono ancora largamente inesplorate.

Più in generale, numerosi studi hanno analizzato a fondo l'impatto sull'apprendimento degli studenti quando l'uso di dispositivi mobili è integrato nell'insegnamento e nell'apprendimento tradizionale, e oggi il mobile learning è un campo ben consolidato e consolidato (Sung et al. 2016). Tuttavia, l'avvento di nuove piattaforme sociali, come TikTok, aggiunge una dimensione aggiuntiva all'evoluzione del mobile learning, portando con sé nuove sfide e opportunità.

Recentemente, inoltre, TikTok ha subito un'evoluzione ampliando e diversificando i suoi contenuti con video a scopo educativo e didattico, affiancandoli a quelli di intrattenimento. Questa trasformazione è risultato della continua condivisione e diffusione di conoscenze, che ha registrato un notevole aumento, particolarmente nell'ultimo periodo.

In risposta a ciò, ha infatti preso vita il programma #ImparaConTikTok, che mira a diffondere video didattici che spaziano dalla letteratura allo sport, dalla musica al lifestyle, dalla cucina ai viaggi, affrontando anche tematiche sociali.

I contenuti condivisi dai creator che coprono una vasta gamma di categorie sono innumerevoli, tanto che il tag ufficiale conta già oltre 225 milioni di visualizzazioni ed è tra gli hashtag più popolari su TikTok in Italia dell'ultimo periodo.

Anche Rich Waterworth, TikTok General Manager EU ha affermato:

Vorremmo che le persone arrivassero su TikTok non solo per il divertimento, ma per imparare, acquisire una nuova abilità o semplicemente essere ispirati a fare qualcosa che non avevano mai fatto prima. Ci sono persone che lo stanno già facendo ed è una tendenza che vogliamo sostenere e accelerare. Che tu sia un genitore che lavora, una persona in cerca di lavoro o semplicemente una mente curiosa, crediamo che quello dei video brevi sia il formato perfetto per continuare a imparare, con una modalità che si adatta allo stile di vita frenetico che molti di noi conducono².

Creare contenuti attraverso TikTok può sembrare, agli occhi dei giovanissimi, un'attività semplice e immediata, ma il processo di creazione e fruizione del social network non solo richiede abilità narrative, ma facilita anche l'acquisizione di competenze metacognitive significative, nell'ottica di una migliore comprensione, la capacità di selezionare le fonti e un'accresciuta curiosità per l'argomento trattato e, cosa alquanto fondamentale, lo sviluppo del pensiero critico (Andronico et al., 2023)

Il sistema di formazione e in particolar modo l'università, in virtù dell'importanza che essa riveste nello sviluppo della società, possono trovare nelle nuove tecnologie, metodi, soluzioni ed alternative atti a rendere il percorso culturale formativo di ciascun individuo più efficace, fruibile, accessibile (Cocorullo, 2015).

L'esperienza di TikTok diventa, pertanto, un vero e proprio laboratorio di sperimentazione di atti creativi. Le ricerche condotte da Masanet, Guerrero-Pica e Esablés (2019) confermano che gli studenti che vengono coinvolti in determinate pratiche mediali finiscono per acquisire delle competenze specifiche in relazione principalmente alle loro motivazioni, interessi e bisogni. Si tratta di competenze che gli studenti acquisiscono prevalentemente in solitudine, poiché i media diventano una fonte primaria di informazioni e apprendimento. I ragazzi risolvono autonomamente i loro dubbi utilizzando e consumando i contenuti dei social media, spesso senza necessità di intervento da parte degli adulti. Tuttavia, ciò comporta inevitabilmente dei rischi, poiché i giovani sviluppano abilità in modo indipendente, talvolta senza possedere gli strumenti critici necessari per discernere.

² Cfr. <https://newsroom.tiktok.com/it-it/imparacontiktok-il-divertimento-si-unisce-allapprendimento> (ultima visita: 29/12/2023).

L'INDAGINE

Questo studio mira a esplorare la percezione degli studenti universitari sull'utilizzo di TikTok come strumento didattico e di apprendimento. Ci siamo proposti di rispondere alle seguenti domande di ricerca:

- quali sono i vantaggi e gli svantaggi che derivano dall'integrazione di TikTok con l'insegnamento in un'aula universitaria?
- Quali sono le opinioni degli studenti sull'utilizzo di TikTok per l'apprendimento anche al di fuori dell'ambiente tradizionale dell'aula universitaria?

L'indagine mira a conoscere le caratteristiche dell'impatto di TikTok sull'esperienza di apprendimento degli studenti universitari, identificandone sia i benefici che le sfide focalizzando l'attenzione sull'esplorazione delle percezioni degli studenti riguardo all'utilizzo di TikTok come strumento didattico.

Abbiamo coinvolto 173 studenti di età compresa tra i 18 e i 21 anni che frequentavano il secondo anno del Corso di Laurea Magistrale in Scienze della Formazione Primaria dell'Università degli Studi di Palermo nell'anno accademico 2022/2023. Il 79% dei partecipanti è di genere femminile.

Per svolgere l'indagine abbiamo utilizzato un questionario appositamente costruito, somministrato tramite l'applicativo Google Moduli, composto complessivamente da 17 item (2 domande sulle informazioni generali e 15 domande su scala Likert a 5 livelli che raccolgono le opinioni degli studenti universitari riguardo all'utilizzo di TikTok come strumento di apprendimento).

RISULTATI

Si riportano di seguito i risultati delle risposte dei 173 partecipanti a ciascuna delle 15 domande sull'utilizzo di TikTok come strumento di apprendimento (Tab. 1).

<i>Domande</i>	<i>Risposte</i>	<i>Percentuale</i>
<i>1. L'utilizzo di TikTok nella didattica migliora la comprensione dei contenuti</i>	Per niente d'accordo	5,2%
	Non d'accordo	20,8%
	<i>Neutrale</i>	41,1%
	D'accordo	28,9%
	Pienamente d'accordo	4%
	Per niente d'accordo	2,9%
	Non d'accordo	18,5%

2. TikTok è uno strumento che favorisce la collaborazione tra gli studenti	Neutrale	35,2%
	D'accordo	35,3%
	Pienamente d'accordo	8,1%
3. Creare contenuti didattici con TikTok semplifica la memorizzazione dei concetti chiave di un argomento	Per niente d'accordo	1,7%
	Non d'accordo	12,7%
	Neutrale	37%
	D'accordo	40,5%
	Pienamente d'accordo	8,1%
4. I docenti dovrebbero ricevere una formazione specifica sull'utilizzo di TikTok nella didattica	Per niente d'accordo	4,6%
	Non d'accordo	13,3%
	Neutrale	23,7%
	D'accordo	39,9%
	Pienamente d'accordo	18,5%
5. TikTok rende i contenuti didattici accessibili a tutti	Per niente d'accordo	1,7%
	Non d'accordo	12,1%
	Neutrale	38,2%
	D'accordo	41,6%
	Pienamente d'accordo	6,4%
6. L'utilizzo di TikTok favorisce la partecipazione attiva degli studenti	Per niente d'accordo	1,2%
	Non d'accordo	11%
	Neutrale	28,9%
	D'accordo	46,8%
	Pienamente d'accordo	12,1%
7. TikTok rende le lezioni più coinvolgenti	Per niente d'accordo	1,7%
	Non d'accordo	13,3%
	Neutrale	37,6%
	D'accordo	35,8%
	Pienamente d'accordo	11,6%
8. Ritengo che l'utilizzo di TikTok nella didattica faciliti la revisione degli argomenti studiati	Per niente d'accordo	1,7%
	Non d'accordo	14,5%
	Neutrale	39,2%
	D'accordo	39,4%
	Pienamente d'accordo	5,2%
9. Preferirei delle lezioni che integrano l'utilizzo di TikTok	Per niente d'accordo	5,8%
	Non d'accordo	22,5%
	Neutrale	42,2%
	D'accordo	24,3%
	Pienamente d'accordo	5,2%
10. L'uso di TikTok nella didattica migliora la motivazione degli studenti	Per niente d'accordo	1,7%
	Non d'accordo	14,5%
	Neutrale	33,6%
	D'accordo	41%
	Pienamente d'accordo	9,2%
11. L'adozione di TikTok nella didattica risponde alla richiesta di studenti con competenze digitali specifiche	Per niente d'accordo	2,2%
	Non d'accordo	22%
	Neutrale	42,8%
	D'accordo	26,6%
	Pienamente d'accordo	6,4%
12. TikTok rende più efficace la trasmissione dei contenuti	Per niente d'accordo	1,7%
	Non d'accordo	14,5%

	Neutrale	32,9%
	<i>D'accordo</i>	44%
	Pienamente d'accordo	6,9%
13. Ritengo che l'utilizzo di TikTok possa creare un ambiente di apprendimento più dinamico	Per niente d'accordo	2,3%
	Non d'accordo	13,3%
	Neutrale	31,2%
	<i>D'accordo</i>	44,5%
	Pienamente d'accordo	8,7%
14. TikTok favorisce un apprendimento informale	Per niente d'accordo	1,2%
	Non d'accordo	9,2%
	Neutrale	35,8%
	<i>D'accordo</i>	46,3%
	Pienamente d'accordo	7,5%
15. I docenti dovrebbero fornire agli studenti linee guida sull'utilizzo critico di TikTok	Per niente d'accordo	2,2%
	Non d'accordo	5,8%
	Neutrale	18,5%
	<i>D'accordo</i>	25,3%
	<i>Pienamente d'accordo</i>	48,2%

Tab. 1. Distribuzione delle risposte alle domande del questionario.

Dall'analisi dei dati emerge chiaramente che gli studenti sono favorevoli all'utilizzo didattico di TikTok. In particolare, il 48, 2% dei partecipanti è pienamente d'accordo sulla possibilità che gli insegnanti possano fornire agli studenti linee guide sull'utilizzo critico di TikTok (15).

Il 47% è d'accordo sull'uso di TikTok nella didattica per favorire la partecipazione attiva degli studenti (3); e un apprendimento informale (4); il 44% ritiene TikTok può rendere più efficace la trasmissione dei contenuti (12). Il 40% si dichiara d'accordo sulla necessità di ricevere una formazione specifica sull'utilizzo di TikTok nella didattica e sull'uso di TikTok nella didattica per migliorare la motivazione degli studenti e il 35% sull'utilizzo di TikTok come strumento utile a favorire la collaborazione tra gli studenti (2).

Circa il 40% degli studenti ha mantenuto una posizione neutrale riguardo all'utilizzo di TikTok nella didattica per migliorare la comprensione dei contenuti (1), per rendere le lezioni più coinvolgenti (7), riguardo alla preferenza di lezioni che integrino l'utilizzo di TikTok (9) e l'adozione di TikTok nella didattica per rispondere alla richiesta di studenti con competenze digitali specifiche (11).

CONCLUSIONI

In conclusione, l'utilizzo di TikTok all'Università si configura come una risorsa innovativa che va oltre l'intrattenimento, trasformando la piattaforma in uno strumento di apprendimento dinamico e coinvolgente.

La natura creativa di TikTok offre agli studenti la possibilità di esprimere le proprie idee in modi unici. Progetti artistici, presentazioni innovative e riflessioni personali trovano spazio su questa piattaforma, promuovendo un apprendimento che va oltre la mera acquisizione di nozioni.

TikTok ha catalizzato la formazione di comunità virtuali di apprendimento, in cui studenti e docenti condividono conoscenze, esperienze e sfide accademiche.

La popolarità delle sfide su TikTok si è estesa all'ambito universitario. Docenti propongono sfide didattiche, incoraggiando gli studenti a partecipare in modo attivo e creativo. Queste sfide diventano trend, diffondendosi nella community universitaria e alimentando un apprendimento collaborativo. Attraverso hashtag dedicati, è possibile accedere a una vasta gamma di contenuti educativi, creando un ambiente collaborativo e stimolante.

L'utilizzo di TikTok nella didattica presenta, però, sia vantaggi che svantaggi che richiedono una valutazione attenta.

Tra i vantaggi si evidenzia la capacità di TikTok di catturare l'attenzione degli studenti attraverso video brevi e creativi, favorendo un apprendimento più coinvolgente. La piattaforma, inoltre, offre uno spazio per la creatività degli studenti, incoraggiandoli a esprimere concetti complessi in modo accessibile e visivamente stimolante. Inoltre, può essere un efficace strumento per sviluppare abilità di comunicazione, storytelling e alfabetizzazione digitale.

Tuttavia, l'utilizzo di TikTok nella didattica comporta anche alcuni svantaggi. La brevità dei video potrebbe limitare la profondità della trattazione di argomenti complessi, mentre la natura informale della piattaforma potrebbe non essere adatta a tutti i contesti accademici.

La presenza di contenuti non accurati o inappropriati su TikTok solleva preoccupazioni sulla qualità e affidabilità delle informazioni presentate agli studenti. La necessità di un utilizzo critico della piattaforma è cruciale per mitigare questi rischi.

Pertanto, l'integrazione di TikTok nella didattica può offrire opportunità innovative, ma è essenziale bilanciare i vantaggi con una consapevole valutazione degli

svantaggi, garantendo che l'uso della piattaforma sia mirato, responsabile e allineato agli obiettivi educativi.

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DIGITAL STORYTELLING IN INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

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Abstract Aims and relevance: Within an increasingly interconnected society, the Internet and digital technologies are configured as fundamental social resources which can play an important role in fostering critical thinking and active citizenship. This, the conscious participation of citizens in these environments is essential for democracies to be viable, sustainable and functioning. Digital citizenship courses represent the most adopted solutions to educate people in the critical and responsible use of the Internet. The main objective of a digital citizenship education is making people autonomous in the use of the Internet in order to promote individual as well as collective happiness, well-being and prosperity. Methods: In line with what has been described, a digital storytelling activity was undertaken in the 2022/2023 academic year with the aim of conveying the themes of digital citizenship by creating interesting, exemplary stories with a social message to explain ethics computer technology. More specifically, this contribution will first describe the collaborative writing and digital storytelling activity which involved 201 future teachers attending the Master's Degree Course in Primary Education Sciences. Subsequently, the results of the evaluation of digital stories conducted through the Digital Story Assessment Scale (Ozcan et al., 2016) will be presented. Creating and sharing stories about informatics ethics and how individuals should act in virtual environments will be beneficial in terms of learning, adopting and applying these behaviors. Results: The results of an online focus group session carried out at the end of the activity are reported. The participants highlighted how through collaborative writing and Digital Storytelling they had the opportunity to develop useful skills for their professional future, so as to conjugate technical and pedagogical aspects to ethical and civic ones in the use of media.

1. QUADRO TEORICO

All'interno di una società sempre più interconnessa, Internet e le tecnologie digitali si configurano come risorse sociali fondamentali che possono svolgere un ruolo importante nel favorire il pensiero critico e la cittadinanza attiva (Polizzi, 2020; Black et al., 2022).

La partecipazione consapevole dei cittadini a questi ambienti è essenziale affinché le democrazie siano vitali, sostenibili e funzionanti (La Marca et al., 2017). I corsi di cittadinanza digitale rappresentano le soluzioni più adottate per educare le persone all'uso critico e responsabile di Internet.

Se pensiamo che i giovani studenti oggi sono inclini alla tecnologia e si adattano facilmente ad essa (Cetin, 2021), si comprende come si renda necessario promuovere sempre di più iniziative di alfabetizzazione digitale (Barge & Parkhi, 2022).

Il fine di questi percorsi è educare all'uso critico e responsabile di internet. L'enfasi sul "cittadino digitale" è importante perché questo concetto, che porta il tradizionale concetto di alfabetizzazione a un livello avanzato, indica la necessità di acquisire competenze digitali. L'obiettivo principale di un'educazione alla cittadinanza digitale è rendere le persone autonome nell'uso di Internet al fine di promuovere la felicità, il benessere e la prosperità individuale e collettiva. Creare e condividere storie su come le persone dovrebbero agire in ambienti virtuali risulterebbe utile in termini di apprendimento, adozione e applicazione di questi comportamenti.

Le storie digitali in campo educativo risultano un efficace strumento didattico e di apprendimento; per tale motivo, fornire una formazione sulla creazione di storie digitali ai futuri insegnanti contribuirà allo sviluppo delle loro competenze di alfabetizzazione digitale, poiché questo processo richiede lo sviluppo delle competenze di scrittura, la raccolta di informazioni, l'utilizzo di strumenti tecnologici e l'utilizzo di capacità di sintesi (Pettiroso et al., 2006).

La crescente complessità a livello globale e locale rende infatti emergente una riflessione sui modelli e sui percorsi capaci di dotare i professionisti della formazione ed in particolare i futuri insegnanti di competenze diffuse e trasversali, *life e professional skills*, per rispondere alle sfide e ai cambiamenti continui che viviamo nell'attuale periodo storico-culturale (De Marco & Colazzo, 2018).

La letteratura di riferimento (De Marco & Colazzo, 2018; Kearney, 2009; Longo & Di Carlo, 2021) sottolinea come all'interno dei percorsi di formazione per i docenti si è negli ultimi anni provato a sperimentare modalità didattiche per ricreare i setting formativi reali propri del mondo scolastico e, proprio tra queste modalità, il *digital storytelling* ha avuto una grande diffusione. Il *digital storytelling*, "facilitatore" di pratiche riflessive proprie della funzione docente, rappresenta un valido strumento per potenziare la capacità critica degli attori della relazione apprendimento/insegnamento attraverso l'uso di tecnologie. Le competenze (*skills*) più di frequente associate

al *digital storytelling* sono: alfabetizzazione (*literacy*), scrittura e lettura critica (*critical writing, critical reading*), *problem solving*, pensiero critico (*critical thinking*) (De Marco, 2018).

Lo *storytelling*, ovvero la narrazione, il più delle volte è caratterizzata da forti contenuti emotivi ed è realizzata attraverso strumenti digitali quali video, immagini, musica. Creare uno *storytelling* comporta in primo luogo, la scelta accurata dei materiali ed in secondo luogo, l'organizzazione dei contenuti selezionati dal web in un sistema coerente, retto da una struttura narrativa, in modo da ottenere un racconto costituito da molteplici elementi di vario formato come video, audio, immagini, mappe e testi. Quasi tutte le storie digitali non sono altro che un intreccio armonico di testo, grafica digitale, narrazione-audio registrati, video e musica per presentare le informazioni su un argomento specifico (Longo & Di Carlo, 2021). Come la narrazione tradizionale, anche le storie digitali ruotano attorno a un argomento, libero o consigliato dal docente, e partono sempre da un punto di vista soggettivo (Banzato, 2014). La valenza dello *storytelling* in ambito formativo è rappresentata dal carattere fortemente gratificante e motivante per l'insegnante in formazione (Coutinho, 2010; Heo, 2011; Skouge & Rao, 2009; Robin, 2008); il fatto che esso offra un accesso più semplice a concetti astratti e complessi; la capacità propria del meccanismo narrativo, supportato da elementi multimediali, di generare correlazioni concettuali significative (Petrucchio, 2009); la facilità di lasciare traccia della propria esperienza (Longo & Di Carlo, 2021). Negli ultimi anni si è visto come, a partire dallo *storytelling* digitale, sia stato possibile suscitare curiosità ed interesse da parte di insegnanti e studenti e si sia affermato come strumento in grado di favorire le inclinazioni al lavoro cooperativo (Di Blas et al., 2012), di stimolare una forte creatività (Koukourikos et al., 2014) e di veicolare temi della cittadinanza digitale. Infatti, lo *storytelling* digitale può rappresentare un valido contributo in campo educativo se si considera che esso rende possibile la condivisione delle reazioni emotive e dei pensieri personali tra gli studenti. A partire da quanto sopra esposto, nell'anno accademico 2022/2023 è stato chiesto ai futuri insegnanti di realizzare un'attività di *digital storytelling* con l'obiettivo di veicolare i temi della cittadinanza digitale con un messaggio sociale per spiegare l'importanza dell'etica nel digitale.

2. SCOPO E CAMPIONE DELLA RICERCA

A partire dal quadro teorico sopra delineato, nell'anno accademico 2022/2023 è stata avviata un'attività di digital storytelling con l'obiettivo di veicolare i temi della cittadinanza digitale creando storie interessanti, esemplari e con un messaggio sociale per spiegare la rilevanza della dimensione etica nel digitale.

All'interno del nostro studio, per valutare le storie digitali è stata utilizzata la rubrica *Digital Story Assessment Scale* (Ozcan et al., 2016).

L'attività di scrittura collaborativa e di narrazione digitale avvenuta all'interno del Laboratorio di Tecnologie didattiche ha coinvolto 201 futuri insegnanti, studenti iscritti al secondo anno del Corso di Laurea Magistrale in Scienze della Formazione Primaria, il 54% presso la sede di Palermo e il 46% presso quella di Agrigento.

3. L'ATTIVITÀ DI SCRITTURA COLLABORATIVA E DI NARRAZIONE DIGITALE

Ai futuri insegnanti è stato chiesto di elaborare delle storie che avessero come argomento una tra le tematiche della cittadinanza digitale, come ad esempio il cyberbullismo, la sicurezza digitale o l'uso responsabile dei social network.

L'intero studio è durato quattro settimane, con un incontro on line a settimana, su piattaforma teams, di quattro ore. I futuri insegnanti sono stati suddivisi in 39 gruppi ciascuno costituito da 5/6 componenti.

Durante questi incontri hanno scelto il topic, avviando la ricerca delle informazioni utili per elaborare la sceneggiatura. In un clima di collaborazione e brainstorming, hanno discusso e selezionato le idee più interessanti e pertinenti al tema scelto, garantendo così un coinvolgimento attivo e una varietà di prospettive. Successivamente, hanno lavorato insieme alla creazione dei dialoghi, curando l'originalità e la coerenza narrativa delle conversazioni tra i personaggi delle loro storie. Questa fase ha richiesto un'attenta riflessione sulle caratteristiche dei personaggi e sulle dinamiche delle situazioni descritte, al fine di garantire un risultato finale coinvolgente e significativo. Parallelamente, i futuri insegnanti hanno raccolto il materiale necessario per arricchire le loro storie, facendo affidamento su una vasta gamma di risorse digitali. Hanno cercato immagini, video e musica appropriati, valutando la loro pertinenza e integrandoli con cura nella narrazione.

Infine, utilizzando l'applicazione digitale Book Creator, i gruppi hanno digitalizzato le proprie storie, combinando testo, immagini e suoni in un formato multimediale coinvolgente. Hanno sfruttato le funzionalità offerte dalle piattaforme online, come Canva per la creazione dei paesaggi e Pixton per i personaggi, per arricchire le loro narrazioni con elementi interattivi, rendendo così l'esperienza di lettura più dinamica e coinvolgente per il pubblico.

4. DESCRIZIONE DEGLI STRUMENTI DELLA RICERCA

4.1. La Digital Story Assessment Scale

Al fine di valutare le storie digitali create, è stata utilizzata la *Digital Story Assessment Scale* (Ozcan et al., 2016), che è stata dapprima tradotta e poi adattata (Tabella 1).

Questo strumento si compone di 14 voci (dimensioni) articolate in tre aree principali (pianificazione, sviluppo e condivisione/presentazione/feedback).

La parte di pianificazione consiste in elementi come lo scopo dello studio o la creazione di uno *storyboard*. La parte di sviluppo è costituita da elementi come audio, musica, qualità multimediale o sincronizzazione. La parte di condivisione consiste in un solo elemento, ovvero la condivisione durante la realizzazione per il *feedback*. La valutazione delle dimensioni delle tre aree prevede una scala che va da “non pertinente” (0 punti), “debole” (1 punto), “buono” (2 punti) a “eccellente” (3 punti), ad eccezione delle due dimensioni della lunghezza della storia e del diritto d'autore ed etica che prevedono esclusivamente una valutazione debole (0) o eccellente (3). Il punteggio massimo per la scala è 42.

<i>PIANIFICAZIONE</i>	<i>3 punti – Eccellente</i>	<i>2 punti – Buono</i>	<i>1 punto – Debole</i>	<i>0 punti – Non pertinente</i>
DOMANDA DRAMMATICA: Una storia che impressionerà e attirerà l'attenzione del pubblico dall'inizio.	La domanda è usata e ha una risposta chiara nella storia.	Viene utilizzata una domanda ma la storia non è sufficiente per spiegare la risposta.	La domanda non è chiaramente formulata e a questa non viene data risposta nella storia.	domanda/spiegazione non utilizzata
LO SCOPO DELLA STORIA: deve essere predeterminato	Lo scopo della storia è predeterminato e in tutta la storia	Gran parte della storia è incentrata su uno scopo.	Per la maggior parte della storia lo scopo è deviato.	Lo scopo della storia non è stato determinato.

	è stato focalizzato.			
CREAZIONE DI UNO STORYBOARD: lo schema dello storyboard deve includere la sequenza, la transizione e la coerenza tra le scene	Lo schema dello storyboard è stato completato nei minimi dettagli.	La maggior parte dello schema dello storyboard è stato completato	Parte dello schema dello storyboard è stato completato	Lo schema dello storyboard non è mai stato preparato.
ORIGINALITÀ/FAVORITO	La storia è sia originale che avvincente.	La storia è originale ma non coinvolgente	La storia non è originale, ma è avvincente.	La storia non è né originale né avvincente.
<i>PRODUZIONE</i>	<i>3 punti – Eccellente</i>	<i>2 punti – Buono</i>	<i>1 punto – Debole</i>	<i>0 punti – Non pertinente</i>
Lunghezza della storia	Il contenuto del racconto è adeguato alla durata.			Crea l'impressione che la storia dovrebbe essere più lunga/più breve di quanto dovrebbe essere.
Pertinenza del contenuto	I dettagli sono stati adeguatamente trattati nella storia. I dettagli non necessari (visivi/video/audio/musica ecc.) vengono evitati	La storia nel complesso è buona, ma alcune parti della storia hanno bisogno di più o meno dettagli.	Molte parti della storia richiedono la modifica dei dettagli.	Tutti i dettagli della storia devono essere riorganizzati.
Uso della lingua e della grammatica	Il linguaggio e la grammatica usati in tutta la storia sono accurati e comprensibili.	Il linguaggio usato nella storia è comprensibile, ma ci sono alcuni errori grammaticali.	Ci sono errori nella lingua e nella grammatica.	La lingua e la grammatica utilizzate in tutta la storia non sono corrette e comprensibili.
Diritto d'autore ed etica	Tutto il contenuto utilizzato nella storia (sceneggiatura, immagini, musica, ecc.) sembra essere originale o il contenuto è utilizzato in conformità con i diritti d'autore.			Nessuno dei contenuti (scenario, immagini, musica, ecc.) utilizzato nella storia sembra originale o nessuno dei contenuti è stato utilizzato in conformità con i diritti d'autore.
Audio	La qualità dei suoni utilizzati nella storia è	La qualità dei suoni utilizzati per la maggior parte della storia è	La qualità dei suoni utilizzati in parte della storia	I suoni usati nella storia non sono comprensibili.

	chiara e comprensibile.	chiara e comprensibile.	è chiara e comprensibile.	
Musica	La musica usata nella storia si adatta al flusso e all'emozione della storia.	La musica utilizzata nella storia è incoerente con il flusso e l'emozione della storia in alcune parti.	La musica utilizzata nella storia non è coerente con il flusso e l'emozione per la maggior parte della storia.	La musica utilizzata nella storia non è adatta al flusso e all'emozione della storia oppure la musica non è stata utilizzata.
Qualità multimediale	La qualità delle immagini utilizzate nella storia è abbastanza buona e si adatta allo scopo della storia.	La qualità delle immagini utilizzate nella storia è abbastanza buona, ma non è adatta allo scopo della storia.	La qualità delle immagini utilizzate nella storia non è buona, ma è adatta allo scopo della storia.	La qualità delle immagini utilizzate nella storia non è buona e non si adatta allo scopo della storia.
Sincronizzazione multimediale	C'è sincronizzazione tra l'audio e le immagini in tutta la storia.	La stragrande maggioranza della storia ha la sincronizzazione tra l'audio e le immagini.	Parte della storia ha la sincronizzazione tra l'audio e le immagini.	Non c'è sincronizzazione tra l'audio e le immagini nella storia.
Disposizione	Le transizioni e gli effetti non necessari non sono stati utilizzati nella storia.	Transizioni ed effetti non necessari vengono utilizzati in alcune parti della storia.	Transizioni ed effetti non necessari vengono utilizzati per la maggior parte della storia.	Durante la storia vengono utilizzati transizioni ed effetti non necessari.
<i>Condivisione/Preselezione/Feedback</i>	<i>3 punti – Eccellente</i>	<i>2 punti – Buono</i>	<i>1 punto – Debole</i>	<i>0 punti – Non pertinente</i>
Condivisione per feedback	La storia è stata condivisa durante le fasi di creazione per ottenere feedback da compagni di classe ed esperti.			La storia non è condivisa per il feedback di compagni di classe ed esperti

Tab. 1. Digital Story Assessment Scale (Ozcan et al., 2016)

4.2. I focus group

Ci siamo preposti di analizzare, in dettaglio, le percezioni e l'esperienza dei futuri insegnanti nella creazione di storie digitali. Si è scelto di utilizzare i focus group perché questa impostazione risulta particolarmente efficace per la raccolta di dati prettamente qualitativi in un tempo limitato privilegiando l'analisi condivisa e in

profondità. I focus group sono stati condotti con tre gruppi di 12 futuri insegnanti scelti come testimoni privilegiati e su base volontaria, ai quali abbiamo chiesto di riflettere sulle seguenti domande:

- riflessione sulle storie create (Qual è stato il coinvolgimento emotivo del gruppo durante la creazione della storia digitale? Quanto la storia ha inciso sul vostro apprendimento?);
- feedback sul compito di digital storytelling (Quali sfide avete incontrato?);
- punti di forza e debolezza del digital storytelling come strumento didattico (Quali aspetti dell'esperienza ritieni più efficaci?);
- interazione tra pari (Quali strategie avete adottato nel vostro gruppo per gestire le interazioni e suddividere i ruoli in modo efficace?);
- riscontro sullo strumento digitale utilizzato (Ci sono stati problemi o limitazioni nell'utilizzo dello strumento digitale? Come hai gestito queste sfide?).

Il *focus group* come tipologia di intervista direttiva è caratterizzato dalla presenza di un moderatore con un ruolo di direzione attiva dell'intervista stessa, di moderatore dei soggetti che intervengono troppo e, dalla presenza di un logista, con compiti più di natura organizzativa (registrare l'intervista, annotare gli interventi dei partecipanti).

Le sessioni sono infatti state audio registrate e analizzate nel contenuto tramite la trascrizione lessicometrica (*keywords-in-context*) che ha consentito di rilevare le frequenze lessicali e analizzare le parole chiave contestualizzandole nella sequenza del discorso.

Le trascrizioni trattate secondo un processo di anonimizzazione sono state poi analizzate con un software per l'analisi qualitativa (MAXQDA), un programma progettato per l'analisi di dati, testi e file multimediali con metodi qualitativi e misti.

L'analisi del contenuto è stata svolta in due fasi:

- conteggio, nel campione complessivo, delle frequenze lessicali di termini riferiti alla riflessione generale sull'esperienza, ai punti di forza e di criticità e alla valutazione dell'interazione tra pari;
- rilevazione delle risposte rispetto tre aspetti fondamentali: fattori positivi, difficoltà incontrate e commenti negativi circa l'esperienza vissuta.

5. PRIMI RISULTATI

All'interno di questo paragrafo vengono presentati i risultati della valutazione delle storie digitali attraverso la *Digital Story Assessment Scale* (Ozcan et al., 2016) e delle sessioni di focus group online svolte al termine dell'attività.

5.1. La Digital Story Assessment Scale

La rubrica delle storie digitali è stata utilizzata per valutare le narrazioni sviluppate dai futuri insegnanti. In una fase preliminare di analisi, sono stati identificati i principali temi trattati all'interno di tali storie (Figura 1).

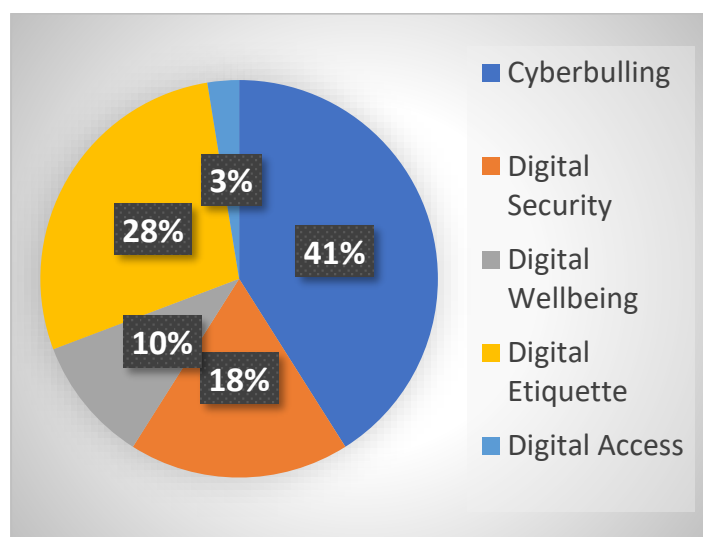


Fig. 1. Argomenti trattati nelle storie.

La maggior parte delle storie digitali (41%) si concentra sul tema del cyberbullismo, evidenziando l'uso dei social media come mezzo per denigrare gli altri. Questo suggerisce un'attenzione particolare verso le problematiche legate alla sicurezza e alla convivenza online. Il 18% delle storie affronta la tematica della sicurezza digitale, mettendo in luce le precauzioni elettroniche necessarie per garantire un ambiente online sicuro. Il benessere digitale, che comprende aspetti fisici e psicologici nel contesto digitale, è trattato nel 10% delle storie, evidenziando una sensibilità minore nei confronti del benessere degli studenti nel mondo digitale. Il 28% delle storie si concentra sull'etichetta digitale, sottolineando l'importanza di considerare gli altri durante l'utilizzo dei dispositivi digitali, promuovendo una cultura di rispetto e responsabilità online. Infine, solo il 3% delle storie affronta il tema dell'accesso digitale,

evidenziando la necessità di garantire un'equa distribuzione della tecnologia e delle risorse online per tutti gli individui, promuovendo l'inclusione digitale.

Secondo i risultati, i partecipanti vengono divisi in tre gruppi diversi in base al loro punteggio (Figura 2).

Highest score	35
Lowest score	20
Average total score	28

Fig. 2. Distribuzione dei punteggi per la Digital Story Assesment Scale

I punteggi delle storie digitali, ottenuti dai 39 gruppi, variano tra 20 e 35 punti, con una media complessiva di 28 punti. Questo suggerisce che, in generale, i gruppi di futuri insegnanti si posizionano su un livello medio-alto di competenza nella creazione di storie digitali, considerando che la scala massima di punteggio è di 42. Tuttavia, è importante notare che ci sono ampi margini di miglioramento, poiché i punteggi non raggiungono il punteggio massimo possibile. Questi risultati indicano che i futuri insegnanti potrebbero non essere ancora del tutto abituati alla creazione di storie digitali e potrebbero necessitare di ulteriore pratica e formazione per raggiungere punteggi più elevati.

5.2. I focus group

Quanto ai dati rilevati attraverso le sessioni di focus group, in questa sezione verranno analizzati i risultati emersi dai focus group, che per comodità sono stati raggruppati in tre aree tematiche principali:

- riflessione generale sull'esperienza;
- punti di forza e di criticità;
- valutazione dell'interazione tra pari.

In relazione alla prima area, i partecipanti hanno evidenziato come attraverso la scrittura collaborativa e il Digital Storytelling abbiano avuto l'opportunità di sviluppare competenze utili per il proprio futuro professionale, così da coniugare gli aspetti tecnici e pedagogici a quelli etici e civici nell'uso dei media. I futuri insegnanti si sono

sentiti parte attiva del processo di apprendimento. Hanno potuto costruire la loro conoscenza in modo divertente, utilizzando le risorse di internet per organizzare e scrivere le storie. È stato apprezzato lo svolgimento dell'attività in piccolo gruppo, in quanto questo ha permesso di superare le difficoltà. I futuri insegnanti hanno, inoltre, affermato di non aver mai usato (o raramente – 2 studenti) il digital storytelling in altri corsi.

Riguardo ai punti di forze e alle criticità uno degli ostacoli più significativi segnalati riguarda la fase di scrittura delle storie. Gli studenti hanno evidenziato la loro difficoltà nel formulare la trama, determinare i personaggi e definire i luoghi, attribuendo tale difficoltà alla mancanza di esperienza precedente nella creazione di narrazioni. Questa carenza di esperienza ha compromesso la loro capacità di immaginare e utilizzare la creatività nel processo di scrittura delle storie. Rispetto ai punti di forza emerge come la creazione delle storie abbia generato in loro un livello di impegno e attenzione maggiore rispetto la semplice spiegazione dei fatti, rendono avvincente l'apprendimento.

Infine, in merito all'interazione tra pari, emerge che dopo un momento iniziale di assestamento e familiarizzazione con il compito, si sono sviluppati processi di reciprocità, tali da coinvolgere tutti i gruppi in una relazione dinamica di scambio e collaborazione. La possibilità di lavorare in piccolo gruppo ha permesso ai futuri insegnanti di essere partecipi alla realizzazione del prodotto; infatti, testimoniano come ognuno di loro abbia avuto la possibilità di mettere in campo le proprie competenze e conoscenze all'interno del gruppo. I futuri insegnanti riferiscono, anche, quanto sia stato importante la capacità di negoziare e di promuovere relazioni positive all'interno del gruppo.

Per concludere, abbiamo individuato tre categorie principali emerse dalla discussione in cui categorizzare la ricchezza dei commenti emersi:

- fattori positivi: partecipazione attiva; scelta dell'argomento; supporto tecnologico; apprendimento cooperativo; maggiore motivazione; apprendere nuove tecnologie;
- difficoltà: creazione di script (dialoghi, personaggi, ecc.); divisione dei compiti; scelta dell'argomento e delle informazioni.
- commenti negativi: le storie non sono state presentate ai colleghi; poche esperienze nell'uso del digital storytelling.

CONCLUSIONI

Livingstone (2014) sostiene che la competenza nei media digitali contribuisce a una vita piena e significativa ed è importante per una società competente, creativa ed etica. Il digital storytelling ha il potenziale per promuovere le competenze digitali e l'impegno civico e può coltivare la curiosità intellettuale e creativa attraverso la competenza nei media. Il digital storytelling si è dimostrato utile per favorire la creazione e la costruzione di un ambiente in cui imparare a vivere come cittadini produttivi per una società informata, creativa ed etica. È interessante notare che i futuri insegnanti che hanno partecipato all'attività di storytelling hanno acquisito una comprensione più profonda delle reciproche sfide e opportunità legate alla cittadinanza digitale e alla tecnologia.

L'analisi quantitativa e qualitativa dei dati evidenzia l'efficacia formativa e educativa del digital storytelling.

I risultati complessivi hanno chiaramente indicato che il digital storytelling è un'efficace strategia didattica in grado di stimolare l'apprendimento significativo e promuovere lo sviluppo di competenze chiave per il futuro dei futuri insegnanti. Alla luce di ciò, emerge la necessità di integrare lo storytelling digitale nell'insegnamento e nell'apprendimento futuri: infatti, implementarlo in modo più sistematico e regolare potrebbe arricchire ulteriormente l'esperienza formativa dei futuri insegnanti, consentendo loro di esprimere la propria creatività, migliorare le competenze comunicative e collaborative e sviluppare una consapevolezza critica delle questioni contemporanee. Inoltre, promuovere l'adozione del digital storytelling potrebbe contribuire a una maggiore inclusione e partecipazione degli studenti, soprattutto considerando il suo potenziale nel coinvolgere e valorizzare le diverse voci e prospettive presenti nelle nostre aule.

Sarà interessante organizzare momenti di valutazione tra pari al fine di accrescere e migliorare le conoscenze, anche perché uno degli aspetti più negativi è stato quello di non poter ricevere un feedback sulla storia creata.

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COMMUNICATION, POLITICAL SOCIALISATION AND PARTICIPATION THROUGH DIGITAL MEDIA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND BEYOND: THE CASE OF SECOND-GENERATION TAMIL YOUTH

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Abstract Reflexive political socialisation (Bettin Lattes, 2006) also passes through digital media. This contribution aims to analyse intergenerational political socialisation as a bidirectional and transactional process (Percheron, 1974; Macaluso and Tumminelli, 2017) within the Tamil community in Palermo. The Sri Lankan community is among the largest non-EU foreign communities in Italy (102,906), and the Italian diasporic community is the largest Sri Lankan community in Europe, followed by the French and Swiss communities (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2022), within this the Tamil minority is one of the biggest in Italy. For a broader study, twenty in-depth interviews were conducted with second-generation Tamil youth (Macaluso & Tumminelli, 2023). Digital media play a significant role in keeping diasporic communities connected in different countries around the world, in maintaining ties with Sri Lanka, and in disseminating information and norms of the country in which they live with an interesting intervention of the younger generation. Many members of the first generation do not understand technical Italian so during the Pandemic Tamil second generation created the website Tamil Info Point for translating and explaining anti-Covid-19 measures and cross-checking news for their parents.

1. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: A LIFE-LONG REFLEXIVE POLITICAL SOCIALISATION PROCESS

Starting from the understanding that education as commons is linked to the various dimensions of identity construction in political, cultural, and economic life, the paper considers an interactive, transactional, and life-long political socialisation process (Percheron, 1974; Macaluso & Tumminelli, 2017; Sigel, 1989) rather than a unidirectional transmission of knowledge, skills, and political positions. The paper reflects on the multiple ways of expressing citizenship in specific context, such as non-citizen minorities. Social media are central in this process not as a virtual and isolated

space, but as a pervasive space in the logic of deep mediatisation (Couldry & Hepp, 2017).

The intervention aims to analyse, within the *reflexive political socialisation processes* (Bettin Lattes, 2006) of the second generations of the Tamil community in Palermo, their digital communication toward first generation and peers. In the city of Palermo, the largest foreign communities are from Bangladesh (5,340), Romania (3,219), Sri Lanka (3,204) and Ghana (2,595) (Idos, 2022). The Tamil community of Palermo is one of the biggest in Italy and this contribution deepens and continues a broader research on the Tamil community carried out by conducting twenty in-depth biographical interviews with second-generation Tamil youth (respondents aged between 17 and 45 years resident in the city of Palermo) analysed using T-Lab+ (Macaluso and Tumminelli, 2023).

The theoretical reference framework considers political socialisation a process whereby one becomes a member of a political community, in close connection between this and a broader socialisation with overlaps between the political dimension and the other aspects that mark each person's life. An active and changing path that each subject contributes to creating between continuity and change. In which the institutional and individual dimensions intertwine, in a complex framework that unites several levels: local, national, and transnational in the biographies of individuals and in the life of the diasporic community.

The reversible and changeable character of socialisation as a process open to change also suggests interesting insights into permanent socialisation. We can take up the metaphor of Pellicani (2002) who compares socialisation to the relationship between langue and words identified by De Saussure (1987), for whom language is both social and dependent on the individual. Socialisation as a "hinge" as Cesareo defines it "between the social world of norms, values and relations between roles and the individual world of personality formation and construction of the subject's identity". In which "individual traits are delineated (...) within the framework of a social belonging" that "in turn, cannot disregard the will of individuals to appropriate (by re-elaborating them) the fundamental elements of the culture [and let us add of the political community/polity] to which they belong" (Cesareo, 2000, p. 43). Thus, political socialisation as a "process of individual self-construction" (Bettin Lattes, 2006, p. 237), "as a process that makes available those resources, primarily symbolic, that are

useful to the individual to unfold his need for citizenship within the complexity of postmodern politics” (ibid.).

In this conception, Paradigm of Action and Paradigm of Conflict, a Weberian, encompassing and pluri-causal perspective of political socialisation, and A. Percheron’s approach of political socialisation as the acquisition of a symbolic code, the development of a representation of the political world and a political identity; following Bettin Lattes, a reflexive and communicative, intentional and latent political socialisation are combined. Which hybridises several paradigms with a view to overcoming the order vs. conflict, macro-micro dichotomies at the origin of previous classifications.

2. THE TAMIL DIASPORA IN PALERMO. MASS AND DIGITAL MEDIA IN BIOGRAPHICAL INTER-VIEWS

The Tamil civil war and discrimination by the Sinhalese government in Sri Lanka (Balasingham, 2001) have been at the root of the diaspora of numerous groups who have managed to maintain networks of relations with each other and with relatives left behind in their homeland, a transnational community that has settled in different cities around the world. About a quarter of the world’s Tamil population lives outside Sri Lanka, residing in Canada, England and India. Tamils arrived in Palermo in the 1980s in response to the local demand for domestic help, facilitated by the possibility of working in the black market even without documents.

Over time, families settle down and regularise their position, and for the new generation they set up Tamil language schools, pupils there study also mathematics, literature and art. Sports teams and schools for traditional dance and Carnatic music are established. Every year, the memorial day of 27 November is organised to commemorate the martyred heroes of the civil war, and there are numerous festivals and events celebrated by the community throughout the year. Among the most frequented places are St Nicola of Tolentino’s Church and the Hindu temples that still stand in garages and makeshift accommodations years later.

Mass media and digital media represent fundamental channels of socialisation from an early age and create (and/or maintain) local and transnational interconnections. Many girls tell of anxiously waiting until they are over 18 to create their own social

profile, the decision is often negotiated with their parents anyway or in other cases hidden to avoid bans.

I have my birthday on 1 April and on 31 March, so the day before, I asked my father if I could join Instagram and he said 'yes, why not', when he said 'yes' I opened Instagram and from that day on I can say that my life has changed a lot because, as outgoing as I am, I started talking a lot, making a lot of friends, to open myself up more, to inform myself more and more because Instagram is not just a social networking site where you make friends and post pictures, it is not a useless platform because you get a lot of information there and there are many movements that thanks to Instagram I can grow, make followers (*SEX_F *AGE_19, our translation).

Furthermore, old and new media are an important channel of political socialisation, used to inform themselves and to disseminate political issues dear to the diasporic community. The media have progressively integrated into a hybrid reality in which mass media and digital media coexist and contaminate each other, with generational differences in media practices. This development and the perceived differences in media enjoyment in the family are evident in the words of the interviewees:

Being a student of political science per se, I must... I must know, let's say, I must be well-informed. (...) as far as Italy is concerned, information is... let's say, transparency is a fundamental value, something that exists in Italy and is protected, therefore... it is easy to get information and it is also easy to distinguish fake news from true news. While in Sri Lanka there is not so much freedom of speech, so for this reason measures must be taken a little more... that is, one must concentrate more to know, to know what really happens... maybe the news broadcasts one thing while in reality something else happens... yes, so... OK, me being... coming from a Tamil family, we say we use the Indian channels of... of the south of India where (...) Tamil is spoken... so, my father is a news fanatic, that is, the television news.

The means of communication have changed, like... even ten years ago to call in Sri Lanka, I don't know if you know the flash card, you use... like phone cards that comes with a PIN, like for five euros you can talk, for example, I'm going to say something stupid, sixty minutes, right?

I used to... OK, I'm part of an association... the Tamil Youth Organisation, which is... which includes all the young Tamil people here in Italy, right? But it is a point of reference where we all share our opinions, our experiences, and we try to do something... in fact we have two websites where we write articles about... okay, one is in Tamil and the other in Italian... the one in Italian especially to show the Italian population what it means... what is happening in Sri Lanka. (...) I also participate actively in politics (*SEX_F *AGE_22, our translation).

The girl interviewed actively contributes to the website of the Tamil Youth Organisation and compares the Italian and Sri Lankan Media System denouncing State controlled information and the recurring use of fake news. She defines her father “news fanatic” referring to the use of television. The same generational distinction can be found in other interviews, however, highlighting how television news consumption is also often done through webcasts reporting international news or through web channels of major television stations in other countries inhabited by Tamil diasporic groups. In line with their Italian peers, many of the young people interviewed mainly use social media for information as well as for other educational, recreational, or relational purposes.

Now we have stopped a bit because many people are graduating, so we are a bit busy, etc. But we'll start again. I mainly on Instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram... Telegram is more for school, education, etcetera, WhatsApp is more for relatives (*SEX_F *AGE_19, our translation).

I have Facebook, Twitter which I never use. I only see the posts, I use Instagram but I also often use TikTok, because there are the TikTok of Koreans, but anyway, yes, I see Instagram, I see TikTok as well, seeing Instagram I understand when there is a Tamil person because I also see the way they post, because (...) they put more hearts (*SEX_F *AGE_22, our translation).

I unfortunately don't watch the news, I don't watch it at all. So either on Instagram or in any case on Facebook, there's PalermoToday I think is the source, as far as Italian news is concerned, it's the very first source PalermoToday. Then anyway now let's say all the news pages and things anyway have a profile, let's say social (*SEX_F *AGE_22, our translation).

OK, years ago I used to watch television, when I was younger... lately I tend to use social networks more, so in what little time I have left, I usually use Instagram, and also YouTube to watch informational videos, or to learn more about school topics, which I perhaps distinguish more for..., or to listen to music, for example when I don't like the random Spotify adverts any more. And then, I have to be honest, I actually keep up to date, I mean, on current affairs, often there are some news of striking cases that are talked about in class and sadly on those occasions I become aware of these specifics that the news, or at home my parents watch the news but in Tamil language because clearly more importance is given to what happens clearly in relation to our community, both at local level, so in our motherland, and at international level as a diaspora, right? (...) they go to consider news, for example of the ongoing war, or because many Tamils have moved to London or generally to the UK (...), they also talk about that... (*SEX_F *AGE_17, our translation).

3. THE TAMIL YOUTH ORGANISATION AND THE TAMIL INFOPOINT DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND BEYOND

Several interviewees recall the importance of religious and cultural associations for the diasporic community. Age-differentiated religious associations allow younger people to freely associate with their peers, promoting cultural change even among the older generations, who are described by their children as gradually becoming more open, for example, to the idea of the possibility for their children to share associative life with peers of the opposite sex. Other associations deal with political issues geared towards demanding the human rights denied to the Tamil population in Sri Lanka but have a minority following from the youth.

Among the associations mentioned in interviews by activists and sympathisers is the Tamil Youth Association (Associazione Giovani Tamil). This association creates a strong cross-cultural peer bond. It unites diasporic communities within the single nations in which they live and whose language they use, it unites a broader transnational diasporic community with residents in several Western countries and compatriots living in their parents' country of origin.

Every place, in every country there is the Tamil Youth Organisation, young_tamil Italians, there is this association in every country dedicated to young people and there are young_tamil speaking there. Even here in Italy, I am part of it. (...) Political associations no, but of the young_tamil... and of the church, of the young people of the church (*SEX_M *AGE_22, our translation).

The respondents' reference to the use of digital media, and the activities initiated online during the pandemic, opened up a new avenue of research oriented towards investigating the type of communication that takes place through the web. During the covid-19 pandemic, in fact, community support activities were multiplied through the Internet, even intervening where local institutions in some cases failed to be effective, as in the case of institutional communication during the health emergency aimed at linguistic minorities.

Basically, my friends and I are part of the Tamil Youth Organisation of Italy, and we carry out various projects, so we deal with this topic (27 November). (...) Yes, let's say that it is both politics and voluntary work that we do, both for our compatriots who are in Palermo and for our brothers who are in Sri Lanka in conditions that are a bit dangerous for their lives and therefore need our support. It is a cultural

association, yes in all senses, even during the pandemic, for example, the people who were here had difficulty filling out forms, self-declaration, quarantines, communications to the ASP [local health units] to declare a positive reaction, and in this case we intervene, we are part of this association, with translations, we give a hand to do this kind of work, for example during the pandemic (*SEX_F *AGE_29, our translation).

Looking at the sites and social media indicated by the young people interviewed, and in particular Tamil Info Point and the Tamil Youth Association's Italian pages, during the period of analysis from January 2020 (the first period of Covid-19 dissemination in Italy) to March 2023, three communication modes stand out, which we can distinguish according to objectives and target audience as follows:

- *communication of Italian regulations on the health emergency by translating and explaining them in Tamil language* (January 2020 – March 2022 Decree-Law No. 24 of 24 March 2022 – for phasing out the health emergency from 1 April 2022). Aimed at reaching the first generation of Tamil migrants, with direct messages to their parents and relatives.
- *Awareness-raising: counter-narratives*. Aimed at young Tamils and Italians, in Italian (and English), a tool for information, memory, “truth”.
- *Call to action: spreading news about protest actions*. In Italian (and English). Aimed at international public opinion to obtain support in the demands for respect of human rights in Sri Lanka and public recognition of the genocide.

These three communicative modes will be briefly illustrated in the following paragraphs.

3.1 The communication of Italian regulation: the YouTube videos during Covid-19 pandemics

The main channel for the first type of communication is the Tamil Info Point (TIP). The creators describe their website as:

an information platform that was created with the aim of disseminating to the Tamil Community, official, truthful and reliable information about events and happenings of public interest taking place in Italy. An easily accessible and affordable web platform that promotes and encourages socially responsible behaviour. TIP was realised by the Tamil Youth Organisation by creating a network of young Tamils living in Italy who share the same interests. This is an innovative platform for publishing

news and information from current and reliable Italian sources. Underlying this is a careful and meticulous process of 'cross-checking' the data collected, which allows the reader to acquire precise and accurate information.¹

During the pandemic, in addition to translating official documents and notices for the local communities, they decided to make videos on the YouTube channel translating the rules for the health emergency into Tamil (see figure 1). The girls in particular started a kind of web news programme during the pandemic to inform the first generation in Tamil who were unable to understand complex texts in Italian or follow technical language.

We created a YouTube channel where we presented general world news... it's always a Tamil InfoPoint channel on YouTube. And we used to present them to our parents in such a way that they understood the steps, how to do it instead of going to the government office for tax assistance and information they could also do it online. It was a very useful thing for our parents (SEX_F*AGE_19, our translation).

The TIP YouTube channel, which was active between 2021 and 2022, reached 8,384 views, providing a very useful service in a time of health emergency, when local institutions did not provide dedicated communication for this linguistic minority and the only other intermediation between the municipal administration and foreign citizens was their representatives in the Council of Cultures in Palermo.

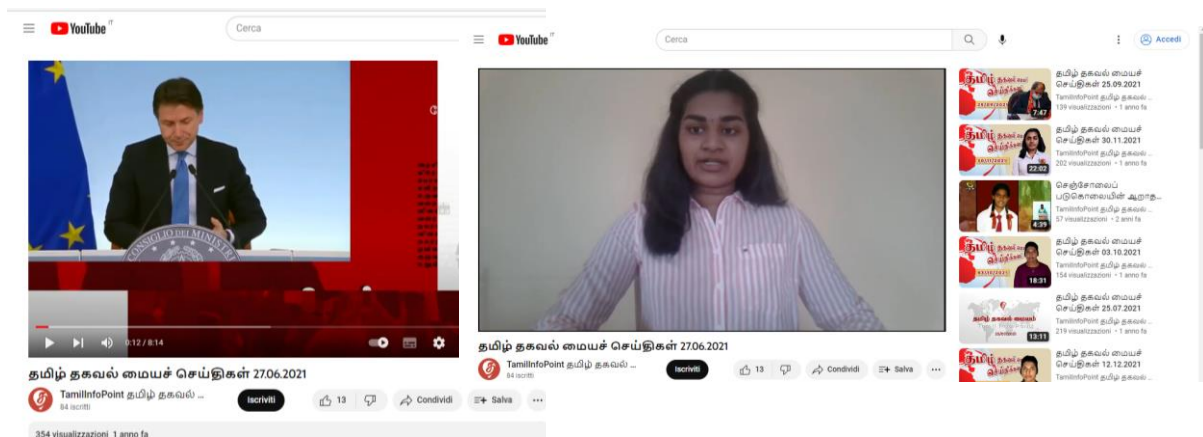


Figure 1. The TamilInfoPoint Youtube channel².

¹ <https://www.tamilinfopoint.it/>

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bAGh5Zl7e5c>

Through these interventions and their active associative participation during the pandemic period³, second-generation youths carried out a reverse process of political socialisation aimed at the older generations by helping to ensure compliance with prevention rules and debunking false news or false remedies. This activity for the benefit of the entire community creates a shared commons that enriches the entire city.

3.2 The counter-narratives on Instagram (and Facebook)

The TIP, in addition to the website and the channel on YouTube, also has a Facebook page, and an Instagram profile. These channels vary from the website and address different targets in Italian. These channels are also the way in which many second-generation youths come into contact with the Tamil Youth Organisation.

These digital media are also the way in which many second-generation youths come into contact with the Tamil Youth Organisation, through the awareness-raising campaigns launched to raise awareness about the history of the Tamil people and the international recognition of their rights.

The period of the pandemic provided an opportunity for some to strengthen their cultural and political identity, deepening and informing themselves about their history. For example, one girl interviewed recounts:

For Sri Lankan history, in my case, as in the case of so many other Tamil children and adolescents, every year, like around November, on Martyrs' Memorial Day, a rhetoric contest is organised. (...) At least it is still sown, you know, that first push that guides you to explore your history. And then however recently, during the covid above all had a greater interest, I got in touch with the Tamil Youth Association, and just as a propaedeutic clearly to the activity of the association we talk about history, clearly starting from the beginnings, so pre-colonialism, colonialism... Then starting from the formation of the Sri Lankan government... then the different discriminatory campaigns that came into play and that also triggered the non-violent protests that were suppressed, which consequently led to the outbreak of armed conflict. So I have, however, recently... given myself a smattering, that is: I've been interested and I've been able to kind of reconnect and pick up on nexuses

³ About the political participation of second-generation youths in Italy see Riniolo, V. (2019), "Second-generation youths. Experiences of Political Participation in Italy", *Special issue "Young People and Inequalities. A Sociological Analysis"*, *Studi di Sociologia*, 57 (2), pp. 187-196.

that had been introduced to me at a much younger age... (SEX_F*AGE_17, our translation).

So, for some interviewees, the counter-narratives created on social media by second-generation Tamil youth provide an opportunity to reconnect the thread of memories, bringing back what was learned while attending Tamil school. Instagram is also considered a way to easily understand political issues also when politics is not a topic of family debates:

maybe we watch the movie or anyway series in common and talk about that... We don't talk so much about politics. However, now I have to say that thanks to Instagram or social media, politics is more... I can say simpler, explained in a simpler way, either schematically or through videos that would be reels, let's say (SEX_F*AGE_22).

Among the tools that simplify political issues, while providing in-depth insights through easily accessible language and a communicative style suited to the medium, is TIP's Instagram profile. Precisely, in order to raise awareness and spread counter-narratives about the present and past of the Tamil population in Sri Lanka, the column "Did you know?" (see figure 2) was born. It is a daily column activated for 18 days in May 2022 on the Tamil Info Point Instagram profile (the columns are also posted on Facebook). The choice of the month was not accidental but is connected to the memory of the atrocious final stages of the civil war that ended in May 2009 and to the Tamil diasporic community's choice of 18 May as the International Day of the Eelam Tamil People, against war crimes and the genocide of the Tamil people carried out by the Sri Lankan government.

This thematic column includes information on international community measures adopted, British television documentaries, Tamil genocide, colonialism, pre-colonialism and post-colonialism in Sri Lanka.

An example of counternarratives is the page from the column on post-colonialism about the measures of the Sinhalese government in Sri Lanka after independence (fig. 2, in the orange box), referring to the choice of Sinhalese as the only official language and the legal attempts, through laws, and illegal attempts, through violent repression, to make the Tamil language and population disappear from the island by pushing it into migration or submission. This narrative contrasts with the nationalist narrative of the nation's freedom from the "British enemy" after the conquest of

independence. Another example (fig. 2, in the blue box) is the recognition by the United Nations of the serious human rights violations perpetrated by the Sinhalese government on Tamils, documented by videos aired on and denied as false by the Sinhalese government.



Figure 2. The Column "Did you know?" on The TamilInfoPoint Instagram profile. Source: TIC Instagram profile (@tamilinfopoint).

Social and institutional recognition of the Eelam Tamil cause is of utmost importance to the diasporic community, and news of such local public agreements, while remaining symbolic political events, are appreciated and reported on social media. Thanks to the activism of the Tamil community in Palermo, with an agreement between the association and the Municipality of Palermo in 2021, the genocide of the Eelam Tamil people by the Sri Lankan government was publicly acknowledged, establishing the 'Tamil Genocide Education Week' from 11 to 18 May each year. In Italy, as mentioned by the interviewees, a similar initiative had been implemented locally by the Trivero Municipality in Piedmont in 2012.

3.3 Call to action and open questions for concluding remarks

There are several instances of call to action that we could mention, from web protests, to petitions, to web and local art contests, among which a simple and viral system was the dissemination of the Mullivaikkal kanji rice soup that is considered the “Symbol of the Tamil Genocide” (fig. 3) for the government’s killing, on 18 May 2009 at the height of the civil war, of Tamil people queuing to receive a cup of kanji the only food available in the no-fire zone. Inviting on 18 May: ‘to come together to collectively share the pain and suffering. Also prepare the kanji and share it on Instagram, using the hashtags #Mullivaikkalkanji #symbolofgenocidetamil. Also invite at least one person to prepare the kanji. Tag @tamilinfopoint @giovanitamil’.

The slogan is a classic example of snowball communication: “invite at least one person to prepare the kanji” and also addresses outside the Tamil community to international public opinion to mobilise the respective governments to exert pressure and the international authorities to intervene.



Figure 3. Call to action: sharing kanji for international recognition of the Tamil genocide. Source: TIC Instagram profile (@tamilinfopoint).

To conclude, let us see how the active political participation, socialization and communication through social media of second-generation Tamil boys and especially girls shows different cross-media and intermediary references, with differentiated targets at local, national and transnational levels, internal and external to the diasporic community, intergenerational and intragenerational, open to the associative dimension and to the relationship with local institutions.

Their openness to dialogue and orientation towards the peaceful resolution of the painful issues of their own history bode well for the process of demanding justice no longer through the weapons of revolution, but by appealing to the international community in support of the rights of their own minority. Will the international community be able to accept this peaceful challenge? Will it know how to listen to the voice of those who without renouncing their language and cultural traditions, in a mix in which the feeling of being Italian still clashes with the unresolved issue of the right of second generations to Italian citizenship?

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ENHANCING DATA LITERACY THROUGH DIGITAL COMPETENCE AND ETHICS OF COMMUNICATION DURING PANDEMIC. SOME REFLECTIONS FROM LIFELONG LEARNING PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract This multidisciplinary analysis focuses on the ethics of data communication in post-Covid-19 emergency contexts, exploring the enhancement of digital competence in a lifelong learning perspective through DigComp 2.2 framework. During the pandemic, the infodemic emphasized the crucial importance of digital literacy in mitigating misinformation and disinformation. The authors propose some interdisciplinary reflections based on ethical, digital and data literacy approaches.

EMPOWERING LIFELONG LEARNING: EUROPEAN INITIATIVES, DIGITAL COMPETENCE AND THE EMERGING ROLE OF DATA LITERACY

The knowledge society poses major challenges in the educational context such as certification of knowledge, qualification of professional skills and the acquisition of transversal skills as a favorable condition for finding employment and living in society as active members, keeping up with changes and developing an ability to adapt to them.

As early as 1995 with Cresson’s white paper in which a new concept of lifelong education was introduced that laid the foundations for the knowledge society in 2000 with the Lisbon Conference, Europe began to formulate a new idea of education that was more responsive to the needs of citizens to promote employability and social inclusion. In the report to UNESCO *Learning: The Treasure Within* (Delors, 1996), education begins to be considered as the pillar of a democratic society and places it in the heart of the development of lifelong learners in their entirety as responsible and active citizens. The concept of lifelong learning has been debated extensively, especially from an economic-functional point of view, but its generative and transformative character is evident, which sees lifelong learning as the key to individual and

collective change in complex societies open to democratic processes. Nussbaum (2010) considers the individual capacities of the person to be central and inalienable: the model of human development is linked to democracy because having a voice in choosing the policies that govern one's life is a basic ingredient of a humanly worthy existence. Nussbaum's perspective aligns with the broader notion that political participation and the ability to influence decisions that affect one's life are integral to human flourishing. Democratic principles, such as the right to have a voice in governance and policy, are considered essential components of a life that is considered morally and ethically valuable. There have been many European initiatives over the years aimed at developing competences in a lifelong learning perspective: in 2006 with the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC), redefined in the Recommendation of 2018, which indicates eight key competences. Three competencies are specifically referred to basic knowledge: Literacy competence, Multilingual competence, Mathematical competence and competence in science technology and engineering; the other five competencies are transversal: Digital competence; Personal, social and learning to learn competence; Citizenship competence; Entrepreneurship competence; Cultural awareness and expression competence. All competences are aimed to empower individuals to understand topics, to apply knowledge to achieve results and to cope with situations and needs related to societal change in a lifelong learning perspective.

The European Digital Competence Framework, also known as DigComp, designed to support the development of digital competences of citizens' digital skills to enjoy a good quality of life, participate in democratic society and are competitive in the labour market, was published for the first time in 2013 by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and became the main reference for the development of digital skills. These guidelines are structured in a matrix that includes five dimensions: Competence Area; Competence; Proficiency level; Examples of knowledge, skills, and attitudes; Uses cases.

The work on operationalising digital competence following the 2006 Council Recommendation, started in 2010. In 2013, the first DigComp reference framework came out defining digital competence as a combination of 21 competences grouped in five main areas. Since 2016, the five areas are: Information and data literacy; Communication and collaboration; Digital content creation; Safety; and Problem solving.

The 21 competencies are assessed on a scale of eight levels formulated for each of the 21 competences through learning outcomes (defined following the Bloom taxonomy and the EQF European Qualifications Framework). Each level of description contains knowledge, skills and

attitudes contained in a single descriptor for each level of competence, for a total of 168 descriptors (8 x 21 learning outcomes).

Over the years, different versions of the framework have followed up to the most recent DigComp 2.2 in 2022 which takes up the 2.1 version of 2017 integrating it with more than 250 new examples of knowledge, skills and attitudes that help citizens to deal with trust, critically and safely with digital technologies and with new and emerging ones, such as guided systems given by artificial intelligence (AI). The pervasiveness with which content and news accompanied by evidence-based data and theses spread, especially in online environments but also offline, has necessarily led to the integration of the DigComp with new examples that specifically concern digital citizenship skills and can be used to address issues relevant to today's society such as: "Misinformation and disinformation in social media and news sites (e.g., fact-checking information and its sources, fake news, deep fakes) linked with information and media literacy; The trend of datafication of internet services and apps (e.g., focus on how personal data is exploited); Citizens interacting with AI systems (including data-related skills, data protection and privacy, but also ethical considerations); Emerging technologies such as Internet of Things (IoT); Environmental sustainability concerns (e.g., resources consumed by ICT); New and emerging contexts (e.g., remote work and hybrid work)" (DIGCOMP 2.2, p. 5).

In this framework, therefore, computational aspects of reality, big data and artificial intelligence systems also find space.

In order to be aware of one's rights and participate responsibly in democratic life, Marinelli (2021) considers mathematical-statistical skills, coding or knowledge of technologies as functional.

The European initiatives described above, according to Raffaghelli (2018), although up-to-date and including the concepts of numeracy and active citizenship, are not sufficient to encompass all the richness of data literacy, which should also be considered as one of the frontiers of numeracy. Raffaghelli suggests in what terms speak of "data literacy, within numeracy, but beyond statistical literacy" (2018, p. 110).

A data-literate person was defined in the Oceans of Data Institute's 2016 workshop report as an individual who "understands, explains, and documents the utility and limitations of data by becoming a critical consumer of data, controlling his/her personal data trail, finding meaning in data, and taking action based on data. The data-literate individual can identify, collect, evaluate, analyze, interpret, present, and protect data" (p. 4).

This definition goes far beyond statistical literacy which is defined by Gal (2002) as people's "ability to interpret and critically evaluate" statistical products, as well as their ability to "discuss or communicate their reactions" to statistical products (Gal 2002, p. 2–3). Gould (2017) states that the concept of citizenship is often used as a reason to promote statistical literacy "since democracies require informed debate, and almost all policy discussions require some statistical understanding" and considers basic objective of SL "the development of critical consumers educated to play the dual role of producers and consumers of statistics" (p. 22). Another definition of SL is that of Wallman (1993) who defines it as "the ability to understand and critically evaluate statistical results that permeate our daily lives-coupled with the ability to appreciate the contributions that statistical thinking can make in public and private, professional and personal decisions" (p. 1).

In other words, the broadening of the concept of data literacy according to more nourished approaches that also consider ethical and creative elements in addition to cognitive ones, seems indispensable nowadays for everyday activities such as understanding a written text and active participation in democratic life.

The final report of DATALIT project, joint research led by the Institute for Educational Technologies of CNR – aimed to promote Data Literacy in higher education and businesses – highlighted that outside formal education, DL skills are not recognized and validated through a standardized approach and an operational approach for the identification, validation and certification of skills acquired in non-formal and informal learning (NFIL) contexts is still lacking. The DATALIT project report also shows that data literacy does not even appear among the skills validated in higher education context. While university education offers an abundance of advanced data-related fields, such as machine learning or big data courses, there is not a wide offer of university courses focused on the basic skills of working with data, especially in degree courses not related to data science.

FOUNDATIONS OF DATA LITERACY: DEFINITIONS, COMPLEXITY AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY IMPLICATIONS.

The definition of key competencies essential for comprehensive data literacy is still a subject of debate. The absence of universally accepted definitions, along with its multidisciplinary and parallel evolution to the development of the data science sectors, encourages the ongoing debate. In the last few years, data has grown in terms of variety, velocity, and quantity. All domains recognize the importance of data management and manipulation. Although highly specialized data experts are sought after in various sectors, what remains overlooked is how

individuals may navigate and deal with the vast volume of data and its complexity. Everything is data (Olson K., 2021) and every individual manipulates, produces, and uses data constantly. The diffusion of the use of mobile devices, social media, and online navigation represents a vast pool of data, which is systematically collected, stored, and employed for different purposes driven by the expansion of the online population.

Data has been defined by the Statistical Bureau of Australia as “measurements or observations that are collected as a source of information⁷⁹”. As the alphabet serves as a written codification of a language, data can be seen as a broader codification of reality, providing a means to represent various phenomena in “an object, variable, or piece of information that has the perceived capacity to be collected, stored, and identifiable” (Data-Pop Alliance White Paper Series, 2015, p. 4). As the alphabet is a fundamental tool for written communication, data serves as a fundamental element for understanding and representing aspects of reality, assuming various forms such as text, sound, picture, or video, collected through empirical observation, and measurement or derived from other data. Its versatility and variability in form reflect its complexity and richness.

Achieving proficiency in data literacy requires the development of a range of complex skills to act in different roles such as communicator, maker, and scientist (Wolff, A. et. al, 2016). Its development might be important also for researchers and might lead to the development of figures, and specific spaces such as the academic library (Koltay, 2017). Giving a proper and commonly accepted definition of what is data literacy is extremely challenging due to its multidisciplinary and complexity. It has been defined as “the ability to read, work with, analyse and argue with data” (Bhargava, R., & D’Ignazio, C., 2015, p. 1) or “as the component of information literacy that enables individuals to access, interpret, critically assess, manage, handle and ethically use data” (Calzada Prado, J. & Marzal, M., 2013, p. 126). Data literacy can be summed up as the set of knowledge that allows individuals to critically interpret, understand, and reuse information regarding data sources, the process of data collection, storage, and sharing. Furthermore, it should stimulate a broader discussion about data, encouraging individuals to reflect on why data is collected and how it will be used. This perspective highlights the importance of promoting privacy and ethics literacy related to data in everyday life. It must be considered a critical process of reading, interpreting, and understanding data where the

⁷⁹ <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/understanding-statistics/statistical-terms-and-concepts/data> accessed: 17/01/2024.

individual should be able to individually evaluate, analyse, and interpret data as well as protect it (Oceans of Data Institute, 2016). Real-life examples are useful to assess implications in real scenarios of every individual as a data user and producer.

Data literacy is not the only skill required when dealing with data. It coexists within a broader context of literacies overlapping and influencing each other. Information literate is defined by UNESCO as the individual able “to access information about their health, their environment, their education, and work, and to make critical decisions about their lives⁸⁰“. Other fundamentals literacies are graph literacy, defined as the ability to critically read a graph (Nayak et al., 2019), media literacy which represents the set of knowledge useful for managing efficient and effective communication in social platforms (Daneels & Vanwynsberghe, 2017). All of them are complementary and overlapping, giving the idea of the complexity of the knowledge that the dominant paradigm defines as “basic skills”.

Data literacy should increase user awareness (Selwyn & Pangrazio, 2018) and increase a critical view toward data, enhancing the awareness of privacy regulations as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the European Union and what is the main content in terms of data protection, transparency, fairness, and on personal and non-personal data protection as part of the privacy literacy as a fundamental element present in all the literacies. Institutions are putting the responsibility of correct use and understanding of data on the citizens who must be able to read and verify data, representing a further element of inequalities in the societies, reinforcing divisions based on race, gender, and class (Robinson, 2015) or be caused by unequal access to the internet (Heponiemi et al., 2023) and by information asymmetry. Knowledge is often institutionalized, and biases, cultural influences, and power dynamics can affect how data is collected, processed, and interpreted. Acknowledgment of these influences is crucial for understanding any society where the interdependence and influence of social, economic, political, and legislative factors affect every aspect of it. Furthermore, it reinforces the importance of critical thinking on the potential limitation of data that can contain the same constraints and limitations of the reality it seeking to capture. Bias, errors, and simplification might occur, and acknowledging them allows a more accurate interpretation of information, and it is a fundamental step for any literacy.

⁸⁰ <https://www.unesco.org/en/ifap/information-literacy#:~:text=Information%2Dliterate%20people%20are%20able,critical%20decisions%20about%20their%20lives> accessed: 17/01/2024.

The key points of the data literacy process should take into consideration an exhaustive reflection on the definition of data in all its forms and aspects, raising awareness of the production and use of data. Additionally, an analysis of data sources and their distinction is essential, considering the various processes of data collection. It should include a broader understanding of the specific regulations within a country concerning data protection. An essential initial step involves acquiring knowledge about privacy issues and examining study-case examples of how data is gathered, stored, and transferred to different countries. Then, it should stimulate reflection on the process of data collection and the underlying purposes and facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the reasons and its destination. In this context, statistical literacy emerges as a crucial element, connected with other literacies. The ability to interpret a graph, for instance, demands an understanding of the phenomenon and of its context enhancing the importance of endogenous and exogenous factors. Furthermore, awareness of potential errors and uncertainties, enables a critical evaluation of the information, data, and output, allowing a critical decision-making process based on data. Proficiency in reading data might be fundamental not only in the process of critically reading and interpreting media and information but also as a possible way to discern misinformation and fake news (Jones-Jang et al., 2021) or in improving patients self-care, arising the importance of health literacy (Nayak et al., 2016). In conclusion, data literacy should involve a thorough understanding of its real-world implications. It plays a crucial role in enhancing comprehension of phenomena and serves as a fundamental basis for everyday decision-making. It should include an understanding of data manipulation and being aware of potential biases. Additionally, it should cover statistical models and their output data analysis, and a strong knowledge of descriptive statistics becomes essential, providing a solid foundation for other literacy domains. It results in multidisciplinary competencies involving a combination of technical, analytical, and critical thinking abilities.

NAVIGATING THE INFODEMIC: CHALLENGES, CAUSES AND THE URGENCY FOR ENHANCED DIGITAL LITERACY POST COVID-19

Starting with the additions of DigComp 2.2, we will look at how during the pandemic period some situations related to misinformation and disinformation were exacerbated and how it is necessary, now more than ever, to implement them in order to have a more aware society, offline and online.

The Covid-19 outbreak and response has been accompanied by a massive “infodemic” – an over-abundance of information – some accurate and some not – that makes it hard for people to find trustworthy sources and reliable guidance when they need it (WHO, 2020).

An *infodemic* is too much information including false or misleading information in digital and physical environments during a disease outbreak. It causes confusion and risk-taking behaviours that can harm health (WHO, 2020). We note that the term infodemic did not originate with Covid-19 pandemic, but is a term coined in 2003 by Rothkopf, in his article *When the buzz bites back* (Rothkopf, 2003), but with the Covid-19 pandemic, the phenomenon has been greatly amplified. Led to a surge of rumors, hoaxes and false theories about the origin of the virus, its spread and treatment options, which in some cases have even resulted in deaths (Ferreira Caceres, 2022).

All this has been made possible mainly through the daily use of digital platforms. On the one hand, digital platforms were useful in promoting debate within the scientific community and disseminating valuable information as well as investigative results. On the other hand, they also helped disseminate flawed studies and misinformation (Colomina, 2021). The following are three fake news stories that circulated in Italy, France, Germany, and the United States during the pandemic period (NewsGuard, 2020 – AGCOM, 2020):

- massive doses of vitamin C have been shown to be an effective treatment for Covid-19;
- Covid-19 virus contains “HIV-like sequences,” suggesting that it is an artificially constructed virus;
- getting the flu shot increases the risk of contracting Covid-19 (NewsGuard, 2020).

It is interesting to note the mechanism of dissemination of this scientific news, analysed by NewsGuard contributors:

- publication of a scientific article and/or press release;
- the latter, taken up on social media and re-shared in a brief time on all media platforms.

This leads to two crucial questions, the first how it is possible for a fake news story to be generated from a scientific study, and the second is about the undeniable success of these news stories compared to other, more scientifically sound and less sensationalist studies.

To answer the first question, as analysed by West and Bergstrom, the media enthusiastically report potential discoveries, often failing to clearly indicate their preliminary nature, and add that another problem with reporting preliminary studies is that journalists rarely report when the studies discussed previously fail to exit the scene. Furthermore, because journalism favors

click, there is a strong focus on findings that are highly surprising and perhaps less likely to be correct (West & Bergstrom, 2021).

Another reason can be found in cases of scientific misconduct, which were exacerbated during the pandemic but have always occurred. As analysed by Lipworth and colleagues, research has experienced extraordinary progress, yet there are many doubts regarding the ethics, rigor, and integrity of scientific research, academic publication, and public communication. Many failures in scientific rigor and integrity during the pandemic were intensified by the rush to produce, disseminate, and implement research findings. This not only created opportunities for unscrupulous actors but also compromised the methodological, peer, and consultative review processes that would typically identify sub-standard research and prevent compromised clinical or policy decisions (Lipworth, 2023).

Other reasons could be analysed, they are reported for completeness: agnotology (Fortaleza, 2020) and cases of scientific fraud (Chavda, 2022).

Regarding the success of fake news, in addition to their ease of dissemination, it is to be traced back to cognitive and psychological factors. Among the former, we can include confirmation bias, political partisanship, prior exposure and intuitive thinking. Among the psychological factors, it includes attraction to novelty, a high emotional state and the emotionally evocative content of fake news. High digital literacy protects against believing fake news (Beauvais, 2022). Additionally, it is important not to forget how false news finds fertile ground especially in emergency and uncertain periods, as stated by Hancock, when people are fearful, they seek information to reduce uncertainty. This can lead people to believe information that may be wrong or deceptive because it helps make them feel better or allows them to place blame about what's happening. This is often why conspiracy theories become so prominent (Stanford News, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The evolutionary journey of educational competencies in Europe starting from the conceptualization of lifelong learning in 1995 to recent initiatives such as DigComp 2.2, has underscored the centrality of transversal skills, including data literacy, in preparing individuals to tackle the challenges of the Knowledge Society. DigComp and key competencies EU recommendations incorporate essential elements such as digital citizenship and are addressed to mitigate emerging challenges like online misinformation and disinformation.

Data literacy, considered by Nussbaum as crucial for human development and linked to democratic ideals, represents a frontier beyond numeracy, encompassing ethical and creative aspects. Its continually evolving definition reflects the complexity of the concept and its significance in the information age.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the infodemic highlighted the importance of digital literacy in discerning accurate information from misleading ones. Ethical communication, based on principles of honesty, transparency, and trust, is crucial to counteracting the spread of misinformation and promoting accurate understanding.

Italian universities, aware of contemporary challenges, are responding with educational innovations such as Minor. These initiatives aim to provide students with additional skills that not only enrich their academic journey but also address the needs of the modern workforce. From those provided by the University of Bologna one called “Learning from Data”⁸¹ offers an interdisciplinary programme that proposes a culture of knowledge based on the understanding and communication of data. The topic is part of the so-called “data literacy” and this aimed mainly at students from degree programme with quite different subjects, who however appreciate the importance of being able to read data and extract information and knowledge as a way of complementing their learning programme.

In conclusion, the promotion of transversal skills like data literacy, coupled with ethical and conscious communication, is essential to prepare responsible and empathetic individuals capable of successfully navigating the Knowledge Society and addressing emerging challenges with wisdom and discernment.

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⁸¹ <https://www.unibo.it/it/didattica/corsi-di-studio/corso/2021/5871>. Last access: 17/01/2024.

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EDUCATION AS COMMONS

Selected Papers from AIS Education International Mid-Term Conference 2023

This volume stems from papers presented at the mid-term conference of the Education Section of the AIS (Italian Association of Sociology), held in Palermo, Italy, on April 12-14, 2023. Under the theme Education as Commons: Democratic Values, Social Justice, and Inclusion in Education, the conference inspired a call for extended contributions to capture key insights shared there. Reflecting the conference's pluralistic approach, the volume includes sociological and interdisciplinary perspectives, with both theoretical and empirical contributions that employ a range of methods—from qualitative to quantitative and mixed—and languages.

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