

The complexity of work of educational services with young people from a migrant background between the reduction of funds, needs of relationship and the difficulty of networking

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Abstract

The article deals with the topic of the complexity of working with young people from a migrant background who use public, social and educational services. This topic was faced through the analysis of the main results of a research, through interviews to managers, psychologists and educators of public bodies and the Third sector who are engaged in this field. From the interviews, it emerges on the one hand the ability of these workers to satisfy the needs of their users in light of the cuts that this sector has suffered. On the other side it shows the difficulty of networking.

Keywords

Second generations, Street-level bureaucrats, Social policies, networking, relationship.

Introduction

The contemporary individual is within a dense and complex network of relationships (Geertz, 1999), which concern all dimensions of life. The contemporary social context is characterized by a high dose of complexity and dynamism, to which no one is immune. One of the main factors of this complexity is the migration phenomenon.

Since the end of the 1990s in Italy, with the increase in migratory flows (Castles & Miller, 2013), social and interethnic relations have taken on diversified, problematic and changing features, increasingly difficult to interpret and unravel. Relationships with those who have a different cultural background lead to a relativistic attitude, because Western paradigms of rationality are inadequate to understand the complexity of multi-ethnicity.

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The migration phenomenon is an epochal challenge to host societies. In light of what has been said and of the recently fast legislative changes, those who work in the field of welcoming and integration of migrants are concerned with the problem of how: to respond adequately, to welcome and to train those who have the most need, to help native people to better understand the current context, to be able to open up to constructive discussion, to start an active dialogue, to involve different interlocutors. These problems were the reference framework of the research carried out in the Riti project (Integrated and Inclusive Territorial Networks). The aim of this paper is to show through the exposure of the main results of this research both the virtuous relationship between social and educational service operators and youth from a migrant background, and the capacity of these operators to provide the services, despite the difficulties due to the decrease in funds for youth policies.¹

Riti was financed by the Italian section of AMIF program (Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund). It was implemented in the province of Pesaro-Urbino (in the Marche region) between 2021 and 2022. Riti's objective was to improve public services in the area for the benefit of resident citizens with a migrant background, with particular reference to families with minors. The aim was to act on the best planning of services, on the training of public and private operators, on inter-institutional networks with the active involvement of all the actors of public territorial welfare and the Third sector. Riti was inspired by a series of deviant behaviors committed by some groups of youth from a migrant background, living in this area.

The integration of youth from a migrant background in Italy

The approach aimed at the integration of migrants is one of the cornerstones of the current European Commission, which in 2020 presented the *Action Plan for Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027* (2020). Its objective is to lead people with a migrant background in all integration's stages. The European Commission has broadened its scope of action from citizens of Third countries to EU citizens from a migrant background, going beyond the emergency perspective to use an inclusive approach and considering the difficulties of those who have been established for longer. The Plan pushes for Member States to adapt social and demographic policies aimed at promoting inclusion and promoting a more cohesive society and preventing forms of violent extremism. It is underlined that youth from a migrant background are more disadvantaged than the natives, having higher incidences both in the drop-outs (22.9% versus 8.9%) and in the NEETs (21% versus 12.5%).² However, the EU Commission was only able to give generic indications, because it cannot force Member States to act in the direction indicated.

¹ As it is used to say currently, it's about their ability to be resilient.

² Italy, among the 27 EU Countries, is in first place in number of NEETs. Indeed there are 3,047,000, 25.1% of Italian youth. In the 15-19 age cohort, Italian NEETs are 75%, a rate higher than the EU

It becomes necessary to clarify what is meant by integration. Integration includes three types of dimensions: structural, relational and personal. Specifically, a citizen of foreign origin can be considered integrated if he has the possibility of leading a dignified life with his family, if he has a decent job from a contractual point of view, a home and the possibility of knowing, accessing and using public services; if he has a good level of relationships in the social context in which he lives and works, if he does not suffer discrimination and if he has managed to maintain friendly relationships even with members of the native population; if he has acquired a good knowledge of the language and if he is motivated to participate fully in the social life of the host context (Ambrosini, 2020). In all societies there is the need to introduce new members to social life, making them become fully social, sharing with them the language, memories, beliefs, or culture of a society, favoring their integration into a group or in a community through «a process of learning and internal appropriation of meanings and the more general rules that characterize a given society, with those rules and norms that allow the understanding of others and the perception of the world as a reality endowed with meaning» (Sciolla, 2002, p. 19). The migrant, therefore, in the effort to constitute a cohesive society, is the subject towards whom integration efforts and attempts are dedicated.

In Italy since the end of the 1980s, a dual plan has been implemented for the management of integration and welcoming of migrants. On the one hand, immigration policies have been implemented (national laws aimed at regulating and controlling migratory flows). On the other hand, policies for immigrants have been implemented (having regulations that guarantee immigrants access to social and citizenship rights, implemented by local authorities), so they are very different from each other and characterized by discretion and autonomy, although they must necessarily address the national level (Caponio, 2004; Campomori, 2012). Despite the fact that Italy is one of the EU countries that attracts the most immigrants,³ it has not been able to equip itself with an integration model capable of governing the migration phenomenon in a rational, continuous way and with realistic criteria. The issue was faced in emergency and alarmist terms, with a security approach, therefore the conditions for the creation of an integration model were not created. Over the last ten years, the attention of most of the mass media and politics has focused mainly on arrivals by sea, neglecting the other 5 million foreigners who have settled in the country, of which many of them have integration problems (Coccia & Di Sciuillo, 2020).

In spite of this, migrants have integrated and settled in Italy. Therefore, we speak about an implicit model (Ambrosini, 2001) or a non-policy model (Alexander, 2007). One of the most important consequences of this political inaction is the difficulty of social and

average. See: Risultati del Rapporto Italia 2022 – Eurispes.

³ Spontaneously and in the absence of a model established by the Government, the distribution of migrants in Italy has taken place in a widespread manner, both in big cities and in the rural areas. Accordingly no ghetto areas have arisen, except in some contexts exceptional, unlike what happens in other international contexts.

welcoming service operators who have to provide answers to immigrant users. These operators, who are street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 1980), in many cases were forced to give improvised answers or had to take into consideration Eu regulations and not national ones to ensure rights to the migrants, with a consequent lack of equity (Barberis, 2010; Barberis & Boccagni, 2014). In this scenario, the approach to integration has changed, which has no longer been understood as a set of wide-ranging and medium-term policies and practices, but rather a means which is still used in the face of emergencies. These latter are dealt with in a hasty manner, but this dynamic is precisely caused by the lack of a long-term vision.

Migration policies are delegated to the Social Territorial Areas,⁴ who must draft the Area Social Plans every three years. In the Plans integration policies must be included, considering the national AMIF funds and projects and the commitment of the Third Sector to which the management of the services is transferred. Equally important is the Sai program (Integration Reception System), formerly Sprar, born from a collaboration between Anci⁵ and the Third Sector. The local body, to which responsibility for migration policies has been delegated, is the Region which in turn refers the implementation of these policies to the Municipalities and the STAs (Genova, 2015).

Youth from a migrant background, who continuously interact with the natives, have triggered a social change characterized by multiple and interdependent belongings, which include exchange, intercultural relationships, the construction of belonging and integration (Lannutti, 2014). It is important to pay attention to these youth because, having activated socialization paths in the Country in which they were born and/or grew up, they structure an identity resulting from the intersection of their origin's culture with that of the Country in which they live. Therefore, they experiment on their own identity the benefits or difficulties of integrating two distinct and distant cultural worlds. Their identity is not a «simple» transfer of traditional values in a monolithic way from parents to children, but it develops in a precise historical, cultural and temporal context for which the relational dimension is fundamental, in which the recognition of the other and the belonging to reference groups are important (Besozzi, 2017; Lagomarsino, 2021).

The episodes that solicited the Prefecture of Pesaro-Urbino to finance Riti demonstrate the failure of integration policies. Intervening to fill these serious gaps is important both to repair recent damage and because the second generation of immigrants is fundamental, as the way these youth activate to re-elaborate these different realities within themselves is predictive for next generations (Amborsini & Molina, 2004). The way in which these youth feel perceived will allow them to transmit to their children and grandchildren a certain sense of belonging or rejection towards the community in which they live. Therefore, it is desirable that fair and rational measures are taken towards them, which

⁴ Henceforth STA.

⁵ National Association of Italian Municipalities.

should address towards equal inclusion. It becomes important to analyze the context in which these youth move, which in some cases is characterized by a high level of prejudice towards them. Indeed, they are considered those who more than others can create situations of social tension, for which they are considered «Under watch» (Ricucci, 2020). It is worth monitoring these youth, but we should have a clear meaning of monitoring: do we want to monitor them to carry out a function of control, repression and exclusion or on the contrary, to monitor them to intervene in situations of hardship to resolve and to limit current and future inequalities? Choosing which of these two approaches to use is preparatory to activating migration and youth policies that go in one direction rather than another. This also has a psychological implication, because for the adolescent from a migrant background, the way in which she/he feels perceived is important, because this contributes to the way they have to react to the surrounding environment.

Over one million youth from a migrant background live in Italy, of which more than a tenth of them do not have Italian citizenship (Rosina, 2021). This is indicative of the lack of long-term vision of most of the Italian political classes, if we consider the decrease in the birth rate and the increase of the elderly segment of the population. In the Marche region, the population from a migrant background is 127,606 residents, 8.6% of the regional population. In the 2020/2021 school year there were 23,874 students from a migrant background enrolled in Marche's schools. The incidence on the total student population is 11.4%, a value slightly higher than the national average (10.3%) (Lannutti, 2022).

Youth policies

In mature industrial societies, the condition of youth is characterized by difficulties in the transition from childhood to adolescence and from adolescence to adulthood. In youth, a condition of discomfort persists (Nersini et al., 1996). Young people express discomfort in various ways, ambivalently by refusing and asking to participate in the social context in which they live and act, experiencing the reflection of the ambivalent attitudes of the adult world, expressed with dichotomies: refusal/acceptance, authoritarianism/paternalism, etc. In adolescence, social marginalization can be seen as the cause of discomfort and deviance as an extreme expression of malaise.

Youth policies should place the person at the center of attention, interpreted as a unique entity open to relationships with others and structured towards mutual recognition. An individual becomes a person if he/she is within social dynamics aimed at a mutual relationship (Ricoeur, 1993; Cesareo, 2017). The territory in which youth policies are implemented is not homogeneous, but it takes on varied and homogeneous boundaries from time to time, involving the social public services, the Third sector and the market. Welfare functions must achieve effective integration between policies and interventions, after planning the policies and actions that will have an impact on users (Cesareo, 2017).

Italian welfare has recently been characterised by a decrease in services and a greater tendency towards monetary transfer, whereby welfare services have reduced staffing compared to other European countries (Reyneri, 2002; Pavolini et al., 2021). The field of youth policies has a low institutionalisation, because it implies a fragmentation of decision-making choices, between ministries of labour, social policies and education, without a serious attempt at coordination. The consequence is the activation of predominantly emergency measures and despite the high level of need for interventions, there is a lack of ambitious and long-term objectives.

The diamond tip of the youth policies of local bodies is Youth Aggregation Centre,⁶ considered an intermediate space between school, home and street, between peers and adults, capable of providing adolescents opportunities for aggregation in an organized context. It offers both constraints and psychological, pedagogical and structural resources, thanks to which youth can use spaces for animation and meaningful relationships with adults. The YACs can be complementary to school, strengthening the mechanisms of virtuous socialization, which can favour the acquisition of good social capital and trust towards what is external to the family. Youth from a migrant background who attend the YACs can better define their path of identity construction, to become aware of how and where to place themselves in society. However, since 2009 the resources and attention for youth policies have decreased, The Youth Policy Fund went from 130 million in 2007 to 5.3 million in 2015.⁷

The research hypothesis

The research hypothesis starts from two assumptions, that concern how the youth from a migrant background are able to manage their level of frustration and how the professionals of youth services are able to help them to not feel themselves too marginalized.

Specifically, the first assumption concerns the changes that have taken place in recent years in the field of youth policies, and from the literature relating to the sociology of deviance and the descendants of migrants in other international contexts (Crul et al., 2012; De Rosa & Fiorillo, 2017; Gallino & Rotelli, 2017; Lagrange & Oberti, 2006; Palmas, 2006; Roy, 2017; Santagati & Colussi, 2020). Accordingly, the hypothesis is that the condition of the deviant youth from a migrant background derives from the social conditions attributable

⁶ Henceforth YAC. At the end of the 90s, youth, as a disadvantaged part of society, found a solution to their problems in the local area, where the comparison with the institutions was closer, because various local projects arose: YACs, Youth Information centres, self-managed centres, centres recreational facilities, adolescent meeting centres. These were models designed by local bodies (Pattarin, 2001).

⁷ See.: <https://www.oasisociale.it/news/centri-di-aggregazione-giovanile.html>.

to the causes and onset of behaviours considered deviant and observable by the formal social control system and on the basis of social dynamics (Lemert, 2019). To better understand the deviance of these youth it is worth considering anomie and frustration, because youth from a migrant background and disadvantaged socio-economic conditions arrive in a context where goods seem available to everyone, but not everyone can use them. Therefore, the frustration factor is predominant (Melossi et al., 2002). Michael Wieviorka (2005), in fact, explained that what pushed youth from a migrant background who lived in French banlieues to put Paris, Marseille and Lyon on fire and the sword in 2005 was the long intolerance they experienced due to the very limited possibilities of accessing high schools, universities and therefore to the most remunerative and prestigious jobs.

The deviant acts carried out by youth from a migrant background in the province of Pesaro-Urbino must be read with the key reading of Hirschi's control theory (1969), which attributes the cause of deviant acts to the loosening of relationships between educational figures and youth.

The second assumption consists in understanding if and how the intercultural approach has been implemented at the level of migration and youth policies. The theoretical framework of reference is that of intercultural education necessary in every multicultural reality, characterized by the continuous and productive comparison between different models and which calls for the revision and overcoming of erroneous and anachronistic positions and which pushes for the acceptance of better positions and interpretations. So the young people from a migrant background are the indirect target group, it becomes essential to also understand how education, specifically aimed at building an intercultural dialogue, in the analyzed territory, has been cultivated, every day, in the daily opportunities for discussion, cooperation and continuous discovery of similarities and differences (Demetrio & Favaro, 2004).

Research methodology

The research was carried out with an interdisciplinary sociological and pedagogical perspective. Particular attention was paid to the adolescent area and to youth policies and their implementation, with a focus on the difficulties of the operators who work in this area and on the relational methods that they have with these youth. The research was carried out through 18 semi-structured interviews with managers and social workers of the STAs of Pesaro, Fano and Urbino, educators of centres for minors (YAC, after-school, youth centres) and psychologists responsible for reception communities for minors. The track included the following topics: general information on the service; shortcomings, critical issues, strengths and training needs of the service; the major shortcomings of the territory and the collaboration with other bodies/organizations; how services are provided for disadvantaged families from a migrant background.

The representatives of the STAs were interviewed first. They were asked to act as privileged witnesses, so their requests, reflections, proposals and analyses were addressed and explored in depth with the other interviewees.

Interviewees were coded with their professional role and institution.

The main results

The people interviewed were exclusively professionals and volunteers, so it was possible to obtain, through a deductive method, a fairly complete picture of what the priorities are, what the main difficulties and current needs are of young people from a migrant background, how the services satisfy the relational needs of these young people and whether and how they act in synergy with each other and what their strengths and weaknesses are, taking into account some important socio-economic dynamics, which have impacted this sector. All these aspects were deepened and analyzed in this paper.

Over the last three decades, inequalities have increased in most Western countries (Piketty, 2020; Ferrera, 2019; Gallino 2011, 2012, 2013; Saraceno, 2015; Crouch 2011), in parallel with the acceleration of economic globalization processes, widening the distances between social classes and between territories, a dynamic that concerns economic availability and access to welfare services (Saraceno & Saraceno, 2019). Italy has not been immune to this process, because the welfare reforms of the last three decades have put universalist programs at risk (Guardiancich, 2019). This situation has worsened under the Monti government, which has implemented austerity policies aimed at reducing social spending and the supply of public services (Canari et al., 2019; Martinelli, 2019). It is clear that the Framework Law (Legge Quadro) 328/00 about the integrated system of interventions and social services, which is intended to eliminate territorial inequalities, and the reform of the Fifth Title of the Italian Constitution were ineffective (Arlotti & Sebastianelli 2020).

The difficulty of operators in limiting inequalities

Youth and migration policies were the most penalized by the general economic dynamics above mentioned, due to a reduction of human resources. However, the representatives of local bodies, social workers, psychologists and educators interviewed underlined the effort they make to promote integration and inclusion paths. The critical issues that emerged are many and concern all the areas investigated, many of which are transversal, because they involve multiple sectors.

When I was an educator, I worked 36 hours a week, I had two returns in the morning. We had supervision of all cases and another for the educators with a psychotherapist. We were open on Saturdays and all summer, with summer activities for children. Over time,

the service was reduced to twelve hours a week and in some municipalities the service disappeared. Municipalities have reduced resources for adolescence and pre-adolescence, with serious repercussions on users and families, widening the gap between those who can and those who cannot access services. The latter experience greater discomfort. It would be better if they had a recreational facility and a service that provides homework help and after-school care. The kids socialized through sports assisted by an educator. Now there is none of this anymore, the money goes to the sports club or the swimming pool. There is a very limited user base, then discomfort is created because they go to coffee shops and parks, where we find them. Many kids have nothing left. Online psychological help desk opens, but we leave them in the middle of the street all day and they communicate with us with their concerns, because when we carry out interventions with the street educators, we find them at any time, abandoned to themselves (Pedagogical consultant YAC of Pesaro).

This excerpt from an interview clarifies the practical implications that austerity policies have had on social services for children and adolescents, the main consequence of which is a reduced offer of both educational references and psycho-pedagogical tools, such as supervision for staff, useful to face effectively the problems of these users. Also relevant is the emphasis that the pedagogical consultant made concerning the choice of policy makers to favour financing of sports facilities, which are then managed by private actors, rather than continuing to invest in the pedagogical relationship. There has been a lack of respect for the basic principle of public welfare: the elimination of inequalities, which has implicitly favoured the worsening of disparities between those who can purchase recreational-sports services on the market and those who can only use the residual public services. Accordingly one of the main difficulties for educators is due to the fact that the choices of policy makers have increased inequalities by going against the principle of public welfare and triggering the dynamic whereby the YACs have become containers for youth with fewer economic possibilities. These inequalities are perceived by those who attend the YACs, so educators try to help these youth to manage their frustration with frank discussions and by offering workshops

We try to make mediation work with the youth who attend the YAC. On the one hand, we have to tell them the truth about the economic difficulties of their parents and the consequent impossibility for them to attend courses that they like. On the other, we equip to organize ad hoc workshops for them, such as guitar or dance lessons (YAC Pesaro coordinator).

The choices made by policy makers have also caused these important difficulties in the relationship between educators and users. Therefore, the former must make a great mediation effort, activating personal resources and drawing on personal and service social capital to satisfy the needs of adolescents. The important work carried out by these educators also serves the function of preventing feelings of revenge and envy from being triggered in these youth from a migrant background, which are widespread in Italy.⁸

⁸ See: https://www.censis.it/sites/default/files/downloads/Rapporto_0.pdf (Homina, 2018).

The strengths and weaknesses of the network

The economic conditions described in the previous paragraph and the indications of the government and the EU encourage local bodies to networking, which is not always easy and achievable, because the territories and the workers are not always in a position to do so. The Marche context is historically characterized by difficulty in networking. In recent years, the social services sector of the Marche Region has tried to coordinate all the organizations operating in this area, to make them more efficient and to limit the waste of resources (Lannutti, 2009, 2021), as the Prefecture of Pesaro has recently been doing. However, the laudable effort of these public managers has not always been reflected and, if in some periods it has produced positive effects, these unfortunately have not had continuity. The interviews reveal a notable effort aimed at establishing networks between the existing social services. Nevertheless, the result is characterized by some virtuous situations thanks to the effort that all the operators interviewed make in order to work from a network perspective, the strengths. Other situations, on the contrary, are determined by a practical difficulty in working in synergy with other organizations, unless human relationships and esteem have been consolidated over time, but which risk falling apart when a worker goes away, the weaknesses. The provincial president of Auser Pesaro-Urbino (a volunteer organization) explains very clearly the difficult relationship between local bodies and the Third sector, which must be considered as a reference framework, as he underlines a very important political aspect.

The public administrations never wanted the associations to collaborate with each other, because it was easier to govern them. The Third sector has become the largest sector. Industry and agriculture are declining, while, services are increasing, the Third sector is the largest provider of services and represents a huge electoral consensus. The policy maker gives the service to a specific subject, he does not put it in networking, as would have been useful and to improve the service, activating a dynamic of: I give to you, then you give to me. With co-programming and co-planning, this dynamic ends, because then we will all be involved in the planning, so there will no longer be me-to-me, but there is the «me» of the administration with the «you» of the local bodies and organizations of the Third sector. I'm trying to make people understand that networking multiplies the possibilities of access to financial sources. Calls for tenders have been rewarding the network for some time, but many are not ready to do the planning for calls for tenders (Provincial president of Auser Pesaro-Urbino).

The provincial president of Auser Pesaro-Urbino spoke about the new path that has been undertaken in the management of social services. On 31/3/2021, the guidelines for the implementation of co-planning were approved, in which public bodies must plan and organize interventions and services in the sectors at a territorial level with the active involvement of Third sector organizations. The change of direction that will be brought about by co-planning and co-programming, if used well, will bring benefits to users and make services more efficient, who at this point will be induced to networking. In this way,

local bodies and Third Sector organizations should be induced to inevitably think from a perspective of collaboration and empowerment, so that localist attitude, which imply a difficulty in governing and monitoring territories in a widespread manner, are overcome.

Strength

The STAs workers in this area necessarily work in a network, both with other authorities and public institutions: healthcare, prefectures, schools, and with Third sector organizations to which the management of many services is contracted and with the voluntary sector. Overall, almost all the workers interviewed, both from the STA and the Third sector, are satisfied with the mutual collaboration. The host communities are networked with other Third sector organizations and in a constant relationship with the Municipality and the health services.

We collaborate more with institutional bodies, with which we work very well, than with the Third sector. There is a lot of synergy between us and the Municipality to networking, to make the best use of the services, so we work with the Department of Mental Health, with the Department of Pathological Addictions, but also with public labor supply and demand services. We have drafted protocols with everyone. We try to solve problems, to go inside them. We have undertaken collaborations with employment consultants, vocational training schools and high schools. We came into contact with Confindustria (Italian association of entrepreneurs) and the trade unions, so the insertion service began to work, so when the users have to go, they left with work (Tandem Psychotherapist).

This is an excellent example of the resourcefulness of a community for minors, which after working hard to create a network, achieved excellent results, thanks to the fact that they took action with all the appropriate institutions.

Weaknesses

One of the main weaknesses declared by almost all the interviewees is that, on the one hand, they work in a network, out of necessity, or sometimes out of friendship and mutual respect. On the other, this network is not always fluid and in some parts of the net the work is stopped. The skills and limits of public bodies and institutions are experienced with intolerance by Third sector workers, who, when they are not «forced» to provide a voluntary service, are pushed to be creative and to satisfy users' needs, being on the «front-line».

The impact of STAs meetings is not always effective, because after these meetings, organized to create or strengthen the network, some of the participants are unable to want to work in collaboration with each other.

Until 2019 I also participated in these meetings organized by the Municipality. I have often noticed the lack of networking culture. Many of the participants are unable to work in networking. They participate in the meeting, but there is neither the spirit nor the competence to network, collaborate, share objectives. I noticed this when I was part of the meeting about minor problems organized by the STA. Between the same communities, even on common problems, there is no unity of purpose. I have raised this problem many times, shared by all, but without any practical consequences for solving it together. There is no culture of networking to multiply skills and resources (Coordinator of Casa Canaan Community).

The relationship between Third sector organizations and local bodies is not always fruitful for users, especially when a municipality assigns an office in the suburbs to the organization that carries out after-school activities and teaches Italian L2

Our headquarters is a former nursery school on the outskirts. For us, it would be better in the center or near the station, because our users also come from far away, but Municipality of Fano does not always provide us with facilities available in the center of the city. We wanted to teach Italian L2 to migrants and activate a mediation service for them. The administration should have reserved some facilities for us, but we are looking for a more functional location. We have been teaching for twenty years Italian, but we have also carried out an important function of inclusion. For this reason, there are no problems related to inclusion in the city. We worked with many migrants. For everything we have done, the municipality should give us a more functional headquarters (Coordinator of Millevoci).

The activity that the Millevoci association has carried out in Fano in recent years has contributed to promoting the inclusion of migrants, for which the coordinator claims the role played in the city in these twenty years by her association and legitimately complains that the Fano administration has not really listened to its needs.

Another important problem that is not always managed in the best way concerns families with different types of problems, including housing, for which the members are located in different living arrangements. This is an indicator of how the network work carried out at a certain point finds very deep flaws, so that no appropriate action is taken, not so much for the situation at the moment, but for what that type of choice can determine in the medium term, with respect to the reactions that the minors involved may have.

Need for relationships and the containment response

Those who work in YACs, in addition to providing various services, must first of all be able to establish a relationship.

We realize that, basically, kids are looking for a relationship, not a laboratory. They need to confront each other. Many times, someone tells us: «You are good as a psycholo-

gist»! «No, I'm not a psychologist». There is less and less of a need to play a board game and more of a need to talk about him/herself (YAC Fano coordinator).

These youth need a healthy debate. Some, in fact, have a limited relationship with their parents, because they work all day and, unlike many of their native peers, cannot count on the family network. The fact that an educator is mistaken for a psychologist is a touchstone regarding the need of these adolescents for comparison with positive and adult figures. This need also emerged in situations in which some boys and girls created disorder and removed the door of a YAC, for which the educator then made the adolescents responsible, in an assertive and effective manner, because then the door was reassembled, and the YAC has been put in order. The effectiveness of the educator's behavior must be considered within an educational and recreational context. It is clear that those adolescents need precisely that firmness, behind which lies, but not too much, a need for containment normative and therefore educational rules. The workers of services for minors therefore have to carry out complementary, if not substitute, support to the parental function, because educators are one of the main channels for the transmission of social values in the socialization process of these youth. However, at the same time in order to guarantee an effective pedagogical relationship, educators, psychologists and managers have shown a high level of flexibility and, therefore, a functional spirit of adaptation in their relationships with youth, as well as a great ability to adapt to social change, in order to manage the new and different demands placed on those attending the YACs, that are the relationship, the interview or regulatory and pedagogical containment. This ability to adapt to social change has also emerged by changing the operating mode of some services, physically exiting the services, therefore no longer having the approach of someone waiting for the user, but going to 'look' for the user, entering into a relationship with him in the streets, in the squares, at their homes or in other meeting places.

The contexts in which youth implicitly ask for regulatory containment are transversal to all the areas in which they act. Even in school transport buses a pedagogical intervention is necessary, given that the drivers are in difficulty. The Santa Marta school in Pesaro has established an agreement with Auser, whose members support the drivers of school transport buses in managing students who have aggressive behavior and reporting cases of students with deviant tendencies to the teachers. These aggressive behaviors are indicative of the problem that many families of both native and from a migrant background are experiencing about the transmission of norms from one generation to the next. This problem has been defined by psychoanalysts as «father loss», understood as the lack of transmission of the norm within families from the adult generation to that of the youth. This produces forms of uncontrolled and exasperated narcissism, that leads to a worrying confusion in which not only the son identifies himself with the father, but the reverse process also occurs, that is, the father mirrors himself in the son. The conclusion of this mechanism is an evaporation of the adult, who is evidently no longer able to carry the weight of educational responsibility, thus activating an anthropological mutation (Recalcati, 2010, 2013).

The kids with the greatest difficulties evidently have problematic families behind them, so most of those interviewed reckon that it should be useful to intervene, take charge of the entire family units, which in many cases are no longer capable of accepting the provocations activated by teenagers. However, the need for containment is even more evident in reception centers for minors, which by vocation and mission respond to complex needs, which include both educational and material aspects. These must take into account the ongoing social changes which have an impact on the changes in psychological and relational problems, so they cannot be rigid in proposing, or imposing an educational model which, given how a user needs change, must have a margin of flexibility.

It is necessary to have a flexible and open attitude. We are now facing a period of social crisis due to a rigid, dogmatic vision, which has to do with the maintenance of unbalanced power relations. I believe that in the community the regulation cannot be taken literally as an emanation of a higher health authority that can manage all the complexity of things. We must give value to the disorder that is created over time and know how to stay with it and know how to follow it. A family from a migrant background opens a window of cold air in the community. A little girl who says: «I was abused by my father or my brother lets you know everything that is not understandable, and you cannot put everyone in the order of your proposals to recover your peace of mind as a professional. You have to understand things, you have to open up, you have to let the wind mess up your room a little, and then get back to the thread of the conversation. People obviously need to be welcomed, so it is difficult to maintain the idea of community regulation. It is very difficult, because the rules regulate relations with the outside. All the rules acquire a value that goes beyond their function. Sometimes we risk establishing a relationship to make them respect the rules, with families to make them respect their commitments and we judge on the basis of this. Instead, they need to be listened to (Psychotherapist of the Cante di Montevercchio community).

Over time, some operators lose the ability to fully listen to their users. They hide behind the rules nullifying the most important value of the operator-minor relationship in difficulty, using the rules as a means of communication.

Intervention strategies and implementation of services for adolescents

In this area, the STAs have well understood the importance of making youth from a migrant background take roots, providing them with educators who push these youth out of their homes and take them to YACs so that they integrate into the social fabric in which they live, but the resources to pay educators who should work in the houses of these youth are still scarce

We activated the educational program in a small group, which was very effective. In Petriano there is no a YAC, but there is a small group of youth coordinated by educators, that in agreement with the local primary school identifies the children who may be

most in need. This service has always been maintained during the lockdown months. In these groups there is scholastic support, but it is also a way to meet, to do something together. They meet in a local municipality or in a social cooperative. This service has given many results, because the children are encouraged to work together with others, so even at school the teachers have found greater motivation, which is an important aspect for performance. Where feasible, it was done in places where structured entities such as the YACs exist, to raise awareness of the place and encourage participation in more structured forms of aggregation in one's own municipality to stimulate more active participation. Being a very effective intervention, we want to bring it to other realities (STA Coordinator of Urbino).

Covid-19 has also exacerbated the problems experienced by adolescents from a migrant background and with greater fragility, so the most effective strategy to meet these difficulties is to create or solidify a network between the services in which the adolescent acts: school, YAC, in which families are also involved.

Another effective strategy used is to «leave» the social services offices, to go into the territories, squares and streets, because only if the services oversee the territories, with an offer of animation and involvement in virtuous activities of young people, it is possible to prevent forms of conflict and youth discomfort. To achieve effective results, time is needed. These are processes that need to be consolidated, because, as the educators said, it is essential to establish with these youth a relationship, show them that you are there for them and can give authoritative answers.

STA of Pesaro has worked to obtain an integrated collaborative relationship with the police forces, with the aim of defining the areas of intervention, i.e. that they must respond to a problem with respect for legality and in an immediate manner. While social services carry out long-term intervention, results are not obtained immediately, as they do not have the tools to resolve a contingent problem, such as that of a group of youth who commit deviant acts, which is not always easy to make mayors and citizens understand. In other areas of the provincial territory, such as Borgo Pace, at the time of the interview the street unit was about to activate various activities for teenagers, similar to initiatives and festivals that had taken place in the Urbino hinterland twenty years earlier. These activities are very important, because they are a valid alternative to alcohol use and abuse in pre-adolescence, providing the most effective response. Because the idea of creating devices to help children spend their time in a virtuous manner is what every Municipality should do in order to avoid emergency situations. Actions like those implemented by this small Municipality will have positive implications in the medium term, although and response is not immediate. Even if when prevention is implemented, the risk of youth committing actions that are harmful to themselves and to others is avoided or at least lowered.

Italy is the EU country with the highest drop-out rate among students with a migrant background. In the 2020/2021 school year, 32.1% of youth born abroad in the 18-24 age group left school prematurely, 11% of those born in Italy made this choice, while the European average is 13.7% (Di Pasquale et al., 2022). This is a topic on which the social

services of this area are working on. In fact, STA of Pesaro has presented a project for the «Educare in Comune» (To educate together, but at the moment of the interview it was still being evaluated) tender, the aim of which is to create new spaces in the area for youth, especially those who are socially withdrawn or who drop out of school and then have no contact. Inside the Municipality of Pesaro they are offered a year of experience in a meeting place and training courses are offered. A highly personalised intervention is also provided, based on the characteristics of the types of people welcomed. This project also includes workshops and allows the boys and girls to reflect for a year and then come back to school, so that that gap year is not useless. The aim is to allow a teenager in difficulty to meet educators, adults and teachers. In these workshops there will be different rhythms that school has, the method will also be different, in order to attract this type of youth.

Another method of intervention is to intervene in the NEET problem, using street workers, in particular, paying attention to those who, abandoning the school path, no longer have any relationship with the institutional subjects of the paths known.

Conclusive remarks

The research carried out within the Riti project provided an interesting insight into the difficulties of managers and operators of social services and youth policies in the area investigated: the province of Pesaro-Urbino. Both bureaucrats and street-level bureaucrats have a certain level of discretion, but are limited by the cuts to social services that Italian governments have implemented over the last 15 years. The lack of an integration model has sharpened the discretion of the street-level bureaucrats who operate in the sector of integration and welcoming of migrants, but also with their difficulties. These cuts, and the consequent reductions in services offered to children and adolescents, are indicative of the fact that Italian welfare places the people, with their difficulties and needs, less and less at the center of attention. Attention is limited to youth, who attend the YACs, who predominantly have a migrant background. If these youth attend YACs that in recent years have been weakened, they have less possibilities of establishing relationships of mutuality and of undertaking a path of identity construction, to become aware of how and where to place themselves in the society.

What has been said is the context in which the managers, psychologists and educators interviewed work, who, despite having a clear concept of public and universal welfare, find it very difficult to carry out the mission of the office for which they work. Thus, the educator relationship-youth is also affected by this factor. YACs educators are therefore having difficulties managing the frustration of YACs attendees.

Accordingly, it is essential that policy makers, together with the managers of social services and those who work directly with children and families from a migrant background, constantly work with the aim of defining educational objectives that are capable

of intervening on daily problems, as much as re-inventing a shared social identity and reaching a sharing of values. Involving all social actors favors social cohesion, because it is everyone's responsibility to be an active part in achieving social solidarity. In this way the Italian welfare could favour a vision and a practice implication of the current complexity theorized by Geertz. Essential tools to achieve this aim are listening and empathy. Only with the use of these tools can we understand the needs of new and future Italian citizens. The YACs educators underlined the importance of the relationship and the need to be listened to by the youth with whom they work, to the point that one of them is mistaken for a psychologist. This highlights how much these adolescents need comparison with positive, adult figures. Dialogue, discussion and support are daily tools for those who carry out a pedagogical-educational profession, such as educator, should be made more available to youth, in particular those from a migrant background, because in many cases they spend many hours alone, as their parents work all day. It is precisely in these situations that social services should be monitoring, so that they can intervene with these tools, through educators, to try to prevent or reduce social and psychological problems in these future citizens. Listening should also be used by policy makers to understand the difficulties of educators, social workers and psychologists.

If the deviant acts are to be read with Hirschi's theory of control, according to which the cause is the loosening of relationships between educational figures and youth, it is clear that the cuts that the youth policy sector has suffered, they have exacerbated this loosening as it has been effectively explained by the educators and psychologists interviewed. However, the efforts of these professionals show their intention to intervene on the causes and onset of behaviors considered deviant as theorized by Lemert, working with the aim to objective of making the socio-economic inequalities between those who attend YAC and their native peers felt as little as possible. Besides, these professionals work with the aim to prevent or at least lower the level of frustration of the youth from a migrant background.

In these conclusive remarks, it is necessary to reiterate what Ambrosini maintains regarding integration, understood as a positive interaction, based on equal treatment and mutual openness, between the receiving society and immigrant citizens. A principle that in Italy is respected in an arbitrary way by the various institutions and is indirectly, behind the motivation that pushed the Prefecture of Pesaro-Urbino to finance Riti, the failure of the integration policies, that we could say almost non-existent, dedicated to youth from a migrant background, who evidently were not listened to in their needs. In fact, the profound distance emerged between what was foreseen by the Action Plan and the difficulties of the professionals who work in the territories. On the contrary, services have been cut, demonstrating the 'classic Italian shortsightedness' of not being able to consider the consequences in the medium and long term, aspects highlighted by all the interviewed, forced to respond to emergency situations when and how they could.

Finally, a note should be made regarding the networking work. Co-planning can be a solution to overcome localist attitude and encourage collaboration between entities,

although we don't know if the law will be able to resolve the difficulty of those who are unable to networking.

In fact, co-planning could be the tool that helps these operators to work in synergy and improve networking, where this has been activated, and create networks where this is lacking, with the aim of using the Relational Social Service paradigm. The operators interviewed have demonstrated that they have the professional competence aimed at the relationship and are willing to increase and implement it more and more. Therefore, more structured and continuous networking over time would help them to offer a more relevant relational service aimed at resolving their users' problems more effectively. The flexibility and the ability of listening shown both by the STAs coordinators and by social workers and educators is an excellent premise for activating networking which, once structured, can generate other services capable of satisfying the needs of youth from a migrant background.

In conclusion, it can be argued that the hypotheses were confirmed in the research both in terms of the effort of the educators to help these children manage their level of frustration, and the considerable effort that the managers of the STAs also make in achieving the Italian welfare objective of reduce inequalities, despite the economic cuts decided by Italian governments.

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