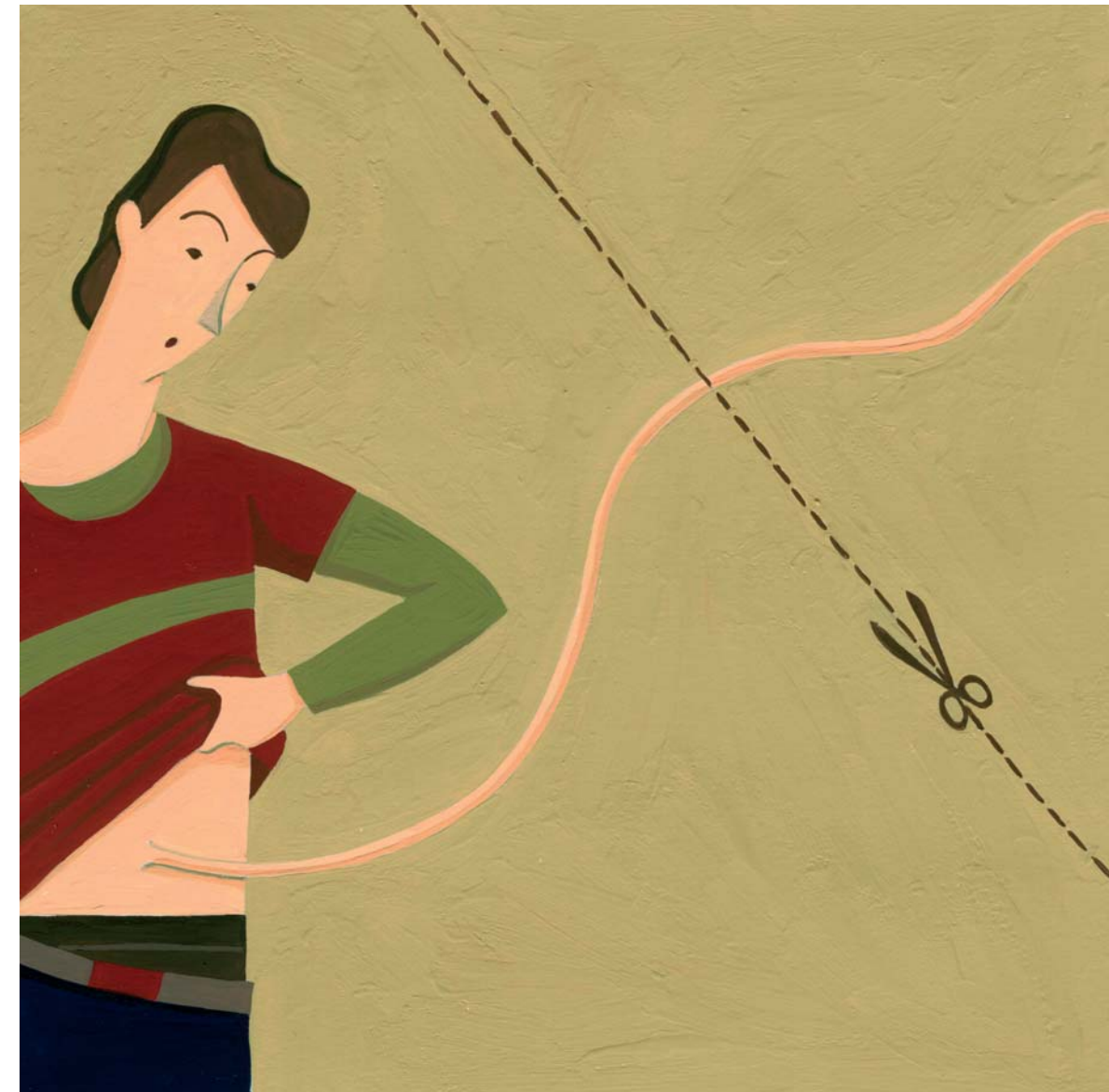The main goal of this issue is to show what the young are like in each country. It is not only about learning how youth is spent but also about knowing when it ends. How do young Europeans acquire autonomy and what transitions do they undergo until they reach adulthood? When does youth end? Which are the suitable indicators, depending on the country, to achieve better understanding of this period of our lives? What is the definition of an adult? Quite often when we study the youth of different European countries and the transition into adulthood we use a framework for analysis that is suitable for one country (such as obtaining a stable job, marriage, leaving home) and is also used to study what happens in other countries. Working on these issues internally in each country - whether quantitatively or qualitatively - will allow us to know which are the interesting indicators to achieve a better understanding of young people's sociological reality and whether or not they take a step into adulthood. We will look at countries from the south of Europe such as Italy, Spain and Portugal, others from the north, like Sweden, Denmark and the United Kingdom, from the central area, such as Germany and France, and from the east, like Romania. We will study the similarities and differences between these countries through a comparative analysis.

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Autonomy of the Young in Europe

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Coordinator
Sandra Gaviria Sabbah

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In European societies, young people follow different processes, not only when it comes to entering adulthood, but also when they deal with personal realisation. Taking a close look at them will allow us to observe the mechanisms and types of behaviour shown by these people. The young wish at a certain point in their lives to become independent from their families. What changes is the way they do it, the process and the emotional and relational ties they make or break throughout life, as well as their relationship towards themselves and the process of individualisation. Youth as a period of life is becoming increasingly difficult to define, as it varies in time and space and is different in each country, where it can change in length, intensity and homogeneity. The young change, they are transformed and no longer follow linear paths. It is a time of life to experiment with independence, autonomy, family, friends and love.

The main goal of this issue is to show what the young are like in each country. It is not only about learning how youth is spent but also about knowing when it ends. How do young Europeans acquire autonomy and what transitions do they undergo until they reach adulthood? When does youth end? Which are the suitable indicators, depending on the country, to achieve better understanding of this period of our lives? What is the definition of an adult? Quite often when we study the youth of different European countries and the transition into adulthood we use a framework for analysis that is suitable for one country (such as obtaining a stable job, marriage, leaving home) and is also used to study what happens in other countries. Working on these issues internally in each country - whether quantitatively or qualitatively - will allow us to know which are the interesting indicators to achieve a better understanding of young people's sociological reality and whether or not they take a step into adulthood. We will look at countries from the south of Europe such as Italy, Spain and Portugal, others from the north, like Sweden, Denmark and the United Kingdom, from the central area, such as Germany and France, and from the east, like Romania. We will study the similarities and differences between these countries through a comparative analysis.

Several important aspects have arisen from all the contributions made. E. Gil Calvo shows how youth is no longer the period in the life cycle where individuals have to make crucial decisions. It has lost its strategic role in favour of adulthood, as now individuals are to make decisions all throughout their lives. F. de Singly explains how we can no longer study youth by considering adulthood as the finishing line reached by the young, as individuals are constantly building their personal identity in a continuous process.

From a qualitative analysis made in the article written by M. Jarvin we can see how the great autonomy awarded to Swedish young people makes them build for themselves their own definition of adult. S. Gaviria makes a qualitative analysis of how French and Spanish young people follow different personal construction processes.

Lia Pappámikail observes not only how the Portuguese young people access the symbols of adulthood such as marriage or work, but also how they define themselves as adults. C. Van den Velde also makes a mixture of a qualitative and quantitative methodology and creates a comparative study of Denmark, the United Kingdom, France and Spain, explaining that youth varies in each of these societies. They are different social and cultural constructions. V. Cicchelli and M. Merico analyse the long transition of Italian young people towards adulthood as partly the consequence of the absence of social policies. They prove how some Italian young people make an individualisation of their careers and not all follow linear paths. M. Vultur gives a context of the careers of Romanian young people, who have become increasingly less orderly and traditional, and are entering an increasingly long youth. A. Rusconi tells us about German young people and studies the factors affecting their choice in their way to leave home and their way to autonomy.

From this set of contributions we can draw some common elements such as the increasing process of individualisation in developed societies or the fact that the young people's careers seem to be more irregular and heterogeneous. We can see that the definition that the young give of being an adult does not always match the sociological indicators that are taken into consideration. Youth in Europe does not end radically and adulthood does not necessarily include the individual's identity for the rest of his/her life, as it does not mean the end of crucial decision making either.

Sandra Gaviria Sabbah

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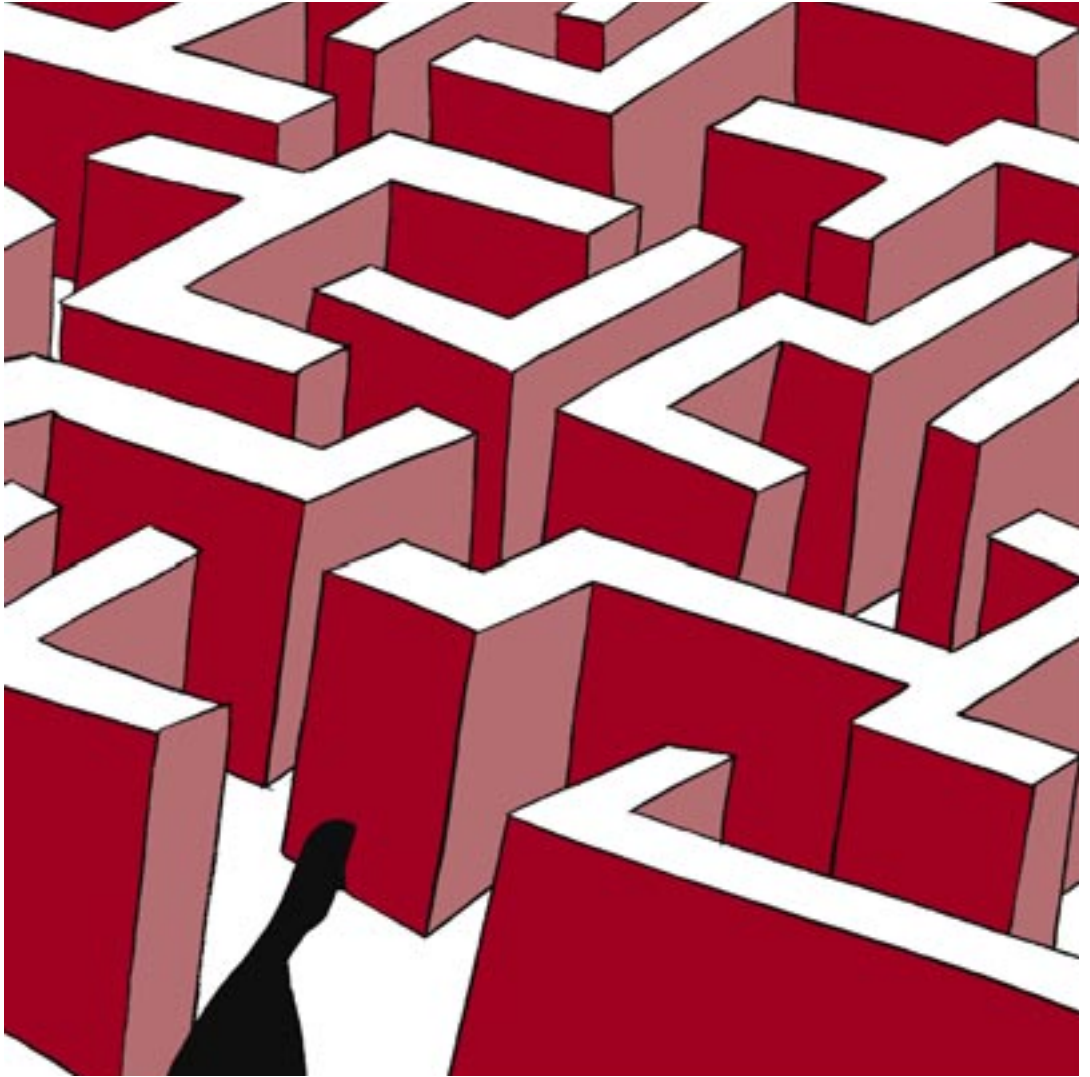
"The ageing of the young"

This article studies the transformation experienced by the young as another stage in their life. It begins by mentioning the issues concerning the individualisation process (Beck) or de-familiarisation (Esping-Andersen) experienced by the new generations belonging to middle urban classes. Then it presents its consequences on the emancipation of the young. Lastly, it addresses the biographical change involved, as youth has lost against adulthood its strategic role as the most important stage of a person's life cycle.

1. De-familiarisation of the urban young

Since market globalization has made post-industrial societies flourish, its consequences have transformed the structure of biographical construction, which is no longer dependant on the family or community network and has now become a new individual or personalised process. Up until 1975 (a date symbolising the fall of Keynes fordism and the subsequent birth of post-industrial globalisation), people became members of society through their families, which assigned them their corresponding acquired status. This was actually possible thanks to their material and symbolic heritage. Their families could successfully achieve their inheritance objectives by deploying a strategy that aimed at *classing* their descendants (1) into social positions at equal or higher levels. By moving the resources provided by their social capital, the parents managed to place their sons and marry their daughters within the same social levels they belonged to. Pierre Bourdieu referred to this phenomenon as a social promotion, reproduction or reconversion strategy, which determined the identity of most people, regardless of their social class. However, even if the sons of the individualist bourgeois members were to emancipate from their families by following their own strategy to achieve promotion through merits at educational, academic and professional levels, their success was - to a great extent - predetermined by the family strategy to finance, guide and support their career towards social promotion.

This was the strategy used until 1975, thanks to Keynes' economic theory of life-long employment that guaranteed a solid and steady occupational structure, so that the *pater familias* (male head of the household) could make sure that their power and influence - reflected in their material and symbolic heritage or their social and economic capital - would remain safe throughout their entire active life and be available to be used efficiently in order to induce and ensure the integration of their successors in the social structure. This allows the children to inherit both the occupational status and the awareness of the class and social relations held by their parents. However, since 1975 post-industrial society broke Keynes' paradigm and the stability of the occupational structure, which was shattered into a mixture of unstable and precarious jobs. It is a tertiary economy of the new financial,

(1)
Bourdieu, 1988.

commercial, communication and personal services whose profitability depends on the introduction of new technologies that reduce stable employment and use flexible employment, based on professional precariousness: de-localisation, temporality, subcontracting, dismissals...

In this situation of new urban markets characterised by their fluidity, lack of stability and uncertainty, the occupation of the *patres familias* no longer guarantees a succession strategy, as its material and symbolic heritage loses its value so soon that it quickly becomes obsolete and can no longer ensure social integration for the children. Under these circumstances the parents cannot make a successful use of their succession strategy as they do not have enough resources to place and *class* their children with the same level of influence and stability. This is known as eclipse of the father, (2) which leaves the family institution without inheritors, (3) as the successors have to play their new role as orphans with no material or symbolic heritage to inherit, and are forced to fight for their future using their own resources without any protection from the family. However, two are the negative effects derived from this phenomenon. On one hand, the appearance of new de-structured families (single parents, reconstituted families, cohabitants, etc) whose main feature is the so-called father's absence and apparently lead to academic and professional failure of their children as they have had no guidance from the fatherly authority. (4) On the other hand we have the forced extension of the children's dependence, who must remain for an indefinite period of time under their parents' shelter, given their lack of success in their attempt to achieve personal emancipation, (5) as we will study in the next section.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that this de-structuring in succession only affects those professional urban families who depend on the access to qualified jobs to make a living. Regarding those families *below and above* the professional urban markets, they do not seem to be affected by this process in the same way, but rather preserve their family strategies. The families of major owners or businesspeople can use their material or symbolic heritage to escape from occupational de-structuring, preserving their full power and influence to place and *class* their children in privileged positions, regardless of the position they can reach on their own in the professional labour markets. Regarding those families living in worse conditions, they are often excluded from the labour markets, especially those whose children cannot manage to achieve academic success as the lack of post-secondary education (or in some cases expulsion due to academic failure) leads them to the only possibility of delinquency or exploited subcontracting. Therefore, excluded young people also depend on a familiar strategy within their community networks to obtain a job and a partner, as they cannot emancipate independently by their own means.

Therefore, the new youth strategy of orphanage I have been dealing with only affects those urban classes (the former new middle classes) who join the professional labour markets and depend on them to make a living and achieve personal emancipation. Up until 1975, in this class of urban professionals it used to be possible to follow family strategy with a chance to succeed, as the parents could place and *class* their children at equal or even higher levels. But this has changed. Now the parents' position is so unstable that they cannot transmit their successors their status (occupation), their social capital (power and influence) or their symbolic heritage (class

(2)
Flaquer, 1999.

(3)
Théry, 1997.

(4)
Gil Calvo, 1997 and 2003.

(5)
Gil Calvo, 2002.

awareness and family identity), so the children have to learn to build biographies on their own, without the possibility to take over their parents' position or identity.

This process of increasing deprivation of family support is known as *de-familiarisation* (6) or *individualisation*, (7) and it represents the loss of family succession strategies, as families today cannot induce or guide their children's emancipation (post-familiarity), but they rather have to build their own future in a nihilistic atmosphere where their only help is material and nutritional family support.

2: The metamorphosis of the young: calendar, limits and sense.

The increasing de-familiarisation process in young emancipation has determined a similar radical transformation by making a considerable modification of the features that used to define the young. Here we will browse through the major changes of the main features and the take a closer look at the endogenous change in the concept of youth (included in the following section), which is regarded as independent from the other stages of life.

2.1: The blockage of the process of emancipation in the young. The main change found in the juvenile period is its duration, which has been increasingly extended, maybe in an irreversible way. This extension does not come as a result of the proportional distribution of the increase in longevity, as it might seem reasonable. The duration of life has been doubled in the west (from 40 to 80) but the youth period has been tripled, as it has gone from lasting five years (from 15 to 20) to fifteen years (15 to 30). There are mainly three causes behind this phenomenon. (8)

Firstly, the technological revolution requires some qualified labour force. It has gone from blue-collar manual work to white collar, pink collar, white coat, etc. technical and professional work. This demands the extension of the period for education and professional training for all segments of the active population, both male and female, thus delaying the beginning of juvenile emancipation.

Secondly, the economic change has also increased the cost of the resources required to have a family, thus postponing the age for emancipation until the capital needed can be obtained. Here we can see several connected factors, three of which are as follows: the loss of financial power achieved through salaries (added to the instability of temporary work, which does not allow the young to engage into the compromise of a long-term mortgage), the increase in the cost of homes (especially in countries such as Spain, where the real estate and property boom is chosen over rental) and the increase in the cost involved in bringing up children (especially when the scarcity of social services such as nurseries does not allow mothers to work outside their homes).

Thirdly, the previously mentioned social change: de-familiarisation does not allow families to support their children to help them emancipate on their own and have their own families. This factor becomes particularly severe in those countries in the Mediterranean area lacking institutions offered by their

(6)
Esping-Andersen, 2000.

(7)
Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2003.

(8)
Gil Calvo, 2002.

State welfare who therefore follow the family traditions, which reinforces the dependence of young people and women on their parents and husbands. (9) When these factors (educational demands, job instability, increasing cost of homes, lack of public services, and dependence on the family) interact they block the emancipation process to an indefinite extent.

All of this has turned youth from being a short period between childhood and adolescence to become a new everlasting period that cannot be exited easily. 50 years ago all young people belonging to the working class married between the ages of 18 and 22, and those members of the middle class did it between the ages of 22 and 26; today neither of them can do it before the age of 30, hindered by the blockage of emancipation that deprives them from their right to have their own family. In order to avoid this obstacle, people form defective or unsuccessful families: this is the case of some unmarried couples who engage in a precarious cohabiting experience and often have to forget about motherhood. (10)

2.2: _Dissolution of the limits of youth._ Besides extending its duration, the period of youth has also dissolved its limits to the point that we do no longer know where it begins and where it ends. Its beginning seems indefinite now, with some sexual experiences that have been considered premature by some, from the point of view of emotional maturity, and other factors such as professional experience, which seems to have been postponed until much later on. The result is that the border between childhood and youth is no longer clear, as we now have some adolescents who look like adults and other older people who on the other hand behave like immature teenagers.

The explanation lies on the fact that there is a great amount of contradiction. On one hand, the young still depend on their families until quite late in life, which makes them more immature from an objective point of view. On the other hand, given the increasing number of cases of _de-familiarisation,_ they are forced to morally break up with their families, which makes them emancipate in symbolic terms, thus losing their family identity prematurely and replacing it for a changing mask of temporary and fake identities. This submerges adolescents into a masquerade of children's games surrounded by a romantic halo of risky adventures and dangers in the form of violence, sex, drugs and rock and roll. (11)

The same phenomenon happens with the end of the period, as the limit is blurred. Only 30 years ago, the border between youth and adulthood seemed to be clear to us, as it was marked by four criteria based on the acquisition of certain great responsibilities that were assumed one after the other: employment, partner, home and family. According to this, anyone who had acquired these four responsibilities could be considered as an adult, whereas those who had not were still regarded as young people. (12) This distinctive feature was reflected in cultural customs, which were opposed between adults who dressed like older people and young people who had not matured yet. However, this limit to the juvenile period has become blurrier and blurrier and people can get together forming couples even if they do not have a job yet. Even if they do have one, this does not guarantee they can buy a house. Therefore, we can no longer establish the distinction between adults and young people as the latter behave like premature adults whereas real adults tend not to behave as such and become young victims of the Peter Pan syndrome.

(9)
Esping-Andersen, 2000.

(10)
Gil Calvo, 2003.

(11)
Gil Calvo, 1996.

(12)
Gil Calvo, 1985.

2.3: Loss of the sense of youth. Although it may seem that this juvenile transformation is only formal, its duration has also increased and its limits have disappeared. Nevertheless, this change does not only affect the formal aspects but also the contents, that is to say, the meaning or sense acquired by youth and considered as a single entity. Back when *de-familiarisation* did not exist, youth was considered as a challenging test in life; a test full of repression and sacrifices, a race full of obstacles. If the person was able to beat all these obstacles and reach the end, he/she would get a prize in the manner of legitimate social integration as an adult, mature and responsible person. This is the reason why this test was considered as an epic story: the heroic battle for life throughout all those difficult *Years of learning* (like in the novel entitled as such, the first part of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* that represents the canonical expression of the *bildungsroman* or didactic novel).

Alike any other story, its narrative sense originated from the ending that gave it all its meaning, making all sacrifices to get there worthwhile. The same thing happened when youth ended, when after all that hard fighting, sexual repression and professional effort, the prize of social integration was finally awarded. Like at the end of children's stories, there was a *happy ending:* they got married and lived happily ever after. Love and work, the two pillars of adulthood defined by Weber and Freud, (13) represented the double prize to be attained at the end of youth. This demanded a double-sided condition of narrative likeliness: above all, the prizes offered should be real, like they used to be when jobs lasted for life and marriages were also long-lasting. In addition to this, the efforts required were to be fairly compensated. This was the message or coda grasped from youth and understood as a narrative of personal improvement.

That is why when youth was still under family authority, those responsible for the surveillance of the emancipation process felt they had the power to repress consumption and sexuality in their children to make them fight for their lives and to only let them get the prize once they had become adults. However, this cannot be done this way anymore: these prizes do no longer exist and people do no longer believe in them, because both employment and marriage have become unstable and precarious and efforts do not ensure the prize, as sometimes these awards are randomly distributed regardless of the efforts made. Therefore, now that juvenile emancipation has been blocked and it is permanently being postponed, those responsible family figures cannot hold back the consumption needs and sexuality of their children any longer, who end up obtaining a premature satisfaction that is not connected whatsoever to their merits or efforts.

This is how the contents of youth have changed. It used to be a period of sacrifice and accumulation of merits, whose compensation would only be obtained in adulthood through stable employment and everlasting marriage, but now sexual and material gratification are given prematurely throughout youth, regardless of the merits acquired. This is why the years of learning have lost their sense and have become an absurd children's game, and therefore destroying the happy ending of youth. No matter how hard one fights and works, in the end we may or may not have the prize awaiting us.

When youth was defined as a process of transition towards adult integration, this insertion into maturity also represented its end, thus providing it with a

(13)
Smelser and Erikson, 1982.

sense of unity. Youth acquired its sense because it ended and led to adulthood like chrysalis turn into butterflies. Youth was like an illness, pre-designed to disappear after a crisis, undergoing a metamorphosis like Kafka's, transforming youth into the opposite: adulthood. But now youth has become a neverending metamorphosis: an everlasting transition without an exit, without a direction, a circular path returning to its own beginning.

Youth is no longer the transition to adult stability because this period has also become a precarious and unstable period like youth, thus becoming its extension but not providing a solution for continuity. Employment is now flexible and precarious and technological advances shorten the duration of the training acquired during youth to last only about fifteen years, thus leading to the need for permanent training. Marriage cannot last forever either, so when young people have become adults but have lost their job or their partner, they have to fight again in search for a new life, in an attempt to acquire a new job, partner and renewed training, although always with the underlying factor of uncertainty and instability. This has turned youth into an everlasting period, as when one seems to have completed it, it starts over again, and adults must be prepared to look for a job and a partner again, behaving like young people in search for a job and a partner, while keeping up their chances to obtain either one during this uncertain period of high professional and emotional risk.

This makes youth no longer seem like a linear story in search for a happy ending but rather like a labyrinth with no way out where one has to sail round and round in circles while trying not to drown in the next gale one may encounter. This is why the young find the metaphor of the labyrinth or spider web quite attractive, as their own lives have stopped being a line with an ending and have become a circle where they wonder aimlessly. (14)

3: The geographical change: adult youth and young adulthood.

Up until 1975 (the date symbolising the end of Keynes' stable employment period and the beginning of the neo-liberal globalisation), youth used to be the most defining period in human biography: it was its core, its centre of gravity. This happened because it was during this period when the most strategic and irreversible decisions were made, marking forever the future events to be experienced throughout the rest of one's life. There were three main decisions, which were the origin of all the rest: (15) the triple election in the field of education (profession, studies), employment (work, career) and partner (marriage, family). These three decisions formed a chain, as partnership and employment depended on initial training and education. But the truth is that, once these decisions had been made, they became not only irreversible but they were also decisions for life, as they were to be maintained for the rest of one's life.

Young people back then had no consumption capacity and had to repress their sexuality, while they were also deprived of freedom. They were subjected to the power of the monopolising adults they depended on. Therefore, in the intergenerational conflict there is no doubt that the relation between forces at different ages favoured adults but had a negative effect on the young. They had to make the most difficult decision, which would determine the rest of their lives. It was the time to choose a career, a job and

a partner, and once these decisions had been made, one had to keep them as an adult no matter what. This explains that fact that, in spite of their apparent irresponsibility, they were going through the most compromising period of them all, as it was then when they had to make the most crucial decisions that would commit them as future adults forever. Youth represented the most difficult crossroads of them all, the one where personality was formed, destiny was built and definite adult identity was acquired.

This explains the fact that literature glorified youth and mentioned the young hero as the protagonist of the novel of his life while building his own future with the agony of his juvenile battle: a useful but self-redeeming passion. And this fact not only appeared in Goethe's *Years of learning* but also in Stendhal's *Red and black,* Flaubert's *Sentimental education* or Maupassant's *Bel-ami*, examples of a man building his own self and obtaining his reward after the glorious or tragic events experienced during his youth. This is why Gyorg Lukács, in his *Theory of a novel*, was able to say that the hero of the bourgeois novel was the literary plot of himself building his own future in search for his own salvation. But the hero's redeeming passion only took place during youth, a crucial period that tested him. Once this period had ended, adulthood was the resulting task that the young man had assumed throughout his youth, and into which he would engage for life.

Nevertheless, things have changed. Now the correlation of forces between adults and young people has been inverted to affect the latter negatively, thus making them lose their decision-making capacity. The truth is that now young people have full consumption capacity and free sexual gratification. On the other hand, the career, job and partner choices made by young people today are not definitive or everlasting whatsoever, as these are precarious, provisional and uncertain decisions, likely to be modified. Nowadays young people know that throughout their life they will have to change jobs, training and partners. Therefore, the decisions made by a young person are no longer crucial but have rather become irrelevant and free, as they can be revised and rectified afterwards throughout adulthood, which has now become much more dramatic and decisive. Indeed, now the heroic period is that of adulthood, as it is here when one must confront the severe problem in changing training, partners, jobs, families and even personal identities, sometimes in several occasions during adulthood, thus entering a process of constant metamorphosis.

This has extended the biographical crossroads that used to be exclusively embedded in youth into adulthood. The unchangeable and crucial triple election is no longer made throughout youth but throughout adulthood, which is now filled with multiple precarious and uncertain decisions to be replaced by other new ones, which at the same time contradict the previous ones, leading to a dramatic process of identity change. This biographical change does not only move the centre of gravity of life onto a later age but it also leads to the explosion of multiple centres of inflection that meet here but are disconnected, and appear one after the other in a discontinuous rosary of variable geometry and an uncertain ending. (16) This is why the old hero of the traditional linear novel has been replaced by Raymond Craver's new *Short Cuts,* a work reflecting post-modernist narrative, the only one that after Joyce's *Ulysses* seems to represent this emerging biographical complexity. (17)

(16)
Gil Calvo, 2001 a.

(17)
Gil Calvo, 2001 b.

To sum up, now one does not decide on one's life in a single bet, but rather confronts the difficulties of adulthood over and over again in a constant series of bets. This is known as "the ageing of youth" (or "young adulthood"), as it means that this heroic battle for life and the decision-making process does not only take place during youth but is rather extended throughout life. This period becomes a continuous rosary of uncertain battles for an uncertain life full of contingencies.

Nevertheless, this new dramatic sense added to adulthood is crossed by multiple breakages and crossroads that force us to reconstruct our personal identity. That is why youth seems to lose its relevance, as it is turned into a children's game lacking all importance. Quoting Shakespeare's *Macbeth,* youth is a story told by an idiot, full of noise and fury, which has lost all its sense because it is unable to predetermine the identity of an adult. It is the noise and the fury represented by the pyres of the cars that burnt in the French autumn of 2005, as an expression of the lack of capacity held by the young, who have been excluded for making a living and who deserve the right for integration into adulthood.

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Enrique Gil Calvo is a Professor of political sociology. His area of expertise includes studies on age and gender. He has published over 15 books, and his latest issues are *El miedo es el mensaje (Fear is the message)* (Alianza, 2003) and *Máscaras masculinas (Male masks)* (Anagrama, in print).

THE TOPIC

2

Magdalena Jarvin, Doctor in Sociology from the Paris V University

Nightlife as the transition from youth to adulthood.
The case of young Swedish people

This article studies the social nightlife relations as a means to analyse the transition from youth to adulthood. The young people of Stockholm tend to go out at night quite frequently at first and, as years go by, then prefer to have dinner at home. Regarding the way they do it, the evolution seems to be similar than in other European countries. However, the Swedish case is different regarding the way the change takes place. From the conversations held we can draw the existence of an implicit norm indicating the behaviour to be progressively followed in order to join the registry of "adult" sociability. Our proposal is to interpret this trend in relation to the place assigned to the young by society. In a universal Providence State system, individuals are encouraged to become autonomous and independent from their family as quickly as possible, thus favouring regrouping and a strong identification with their peers to the detriment of an intergenerational socialisation.

Key words: construction of identities, own presentation, test oneself, group of peers, interaction, sociability, nightlife.

(1)
In the framework of my doctoral thesis, I spent nine months in Stockholm in order to hold some semi-conducted interviews and make some participatory observations. Then I spent a year working in the Parisian field. This proximity with the populations under study has allowed me to share their everyday life, carry out a series of informal debates on the topic and thus hold a series of constant exchanges between the field of study and the analysis. Overall, I held 54 formal interviews, which lasted 1:30 hours each, in both cities. The result of this study entitled "Social relations as a space to form identity. Comparative study between young people living in Stockholm and Paris" were publicly read in December 2002 at the Descartes - Paris V University, as a work conducted by D. Desjeux.

The sociological research of the young dealing with the process of identity construction and evolution towards adulthood hardly ever takes into consideration socialisation with friends and nightlife; however, this trend affects people aged between 20 and 30 (Desjeux *et alii.*, 1999). Considering, as Berger and Luckmann do (1996), that the construction of identity is never complete, we are based on the idea that identity can be observed through - for instance - nocturnal habits shown by young adults. This individual evolution is carried out in social interpretation through a complex game of presentation and experimentation of certain aspects of our identity (from Queiroz et Ziolkowski, 1997). The individuals we are exposed to reflect these features like a mirror (Strauss, 1992) and thus allow us to discover our image in their opinion. This perpetual movement, this exchange of re/presentations of oneself is what we know as the process of identity construction.

Applied to the nightlife of young adults, this reflection is the study of the interactions between peers in public socialisation spaces (premises such as bars or discos) and during encounters in the private scope (more specifically, at dinners held at home). We have tried to understand how individuals aged between 20 and 30 living in Stockholm and Paris, (1) experience nightlife accompanied by their peers and how they get the impression that they are approaching adulthood through their ways of going out.

The evolution is similar between the two groups studied. The French, like the Swedish, at first tend to gather in public places and then prefer to get together at home. Thus here we see a tendency to get away towards the private scope, a priority of the domestic space translated into the organisation of dinners with a small number of guests (four to six people).

This change in habits is often described in relation to the tiredness caused by work and the dying desire to go out when cohabiting with a partner. However, we believe that there is still another explanation: the reduction in the number of outings to public spaces is understood given their lack of efficiency when it comes to the construction of one's identity.

This article presents the different ways of nightlife socialisation amongst young Swedish people. Through their words we will be able to clearly see the implicit norm indicating the behaviour to be followed in order to be included in the "young" or the "adult" group, as well as the way to evolve from one towards the other. Having described these two spaces-times of socialisation (young/public space, adult/private space), we will suggest some clues for interpretation in order to clarify the features of the Swedish case.

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I. Motivations to socialise in public places

Meetings with friends usually take place as an encounter in a bar at sometime of the evening (from 6 to 7 PM). Sometimes people have a drink and then have dinner, as some bars offer a menu. At weekends people meet later on (around 9 PM) and continue until closing time (most places close at 2 AM). Which are the motivations to go out to these places at night?

1. Going out as a way to break one's routine

Going out to a bar represents a moment of freedom. On one hand, we think that having friends at home demands a certain level of preparation whereas going out to a bar saves us from "*doing the housework and shopping*". Therefore, having friends at home is regarded as something that requires some effort. It also means one has to have alcohol at home. The sale of alcohol in Sweden in monopolised by the State and can only be purchased in off-licence shops (System Bolaget), which are open from Monday to Friday from 11 AM to 6 PM. (2) Those people who wish to invite their friends must prepare these purchases beforehand, which represents an additional effort. Besides the "*organisational effort*", the economic cost of the event can tilt the scales to the side of outings, as it would be more expensive for the host to purchase alcohol for the guests at the System Bolaget than paying for drinks at a bar.

On the other hand, going out to bars is a way to "*change atmospheres*". The outing is presented as a way to break with everyday life and a bar becomes one's "*third room*". If conversations between friends there "*flow better*", it is in a way because it is noisier than at home: *"As the music is louder one has to speak louder and ends up speaking more. If a room is in silence, if there is complete silence people remain quiet, but this does not happen when you go out. All sorts of things are happening around you and you to become chaotic, you speak, you make noise, you shout." (Erik, 22, works and lives by himself).* In addition to this, the interviewees who smoke make the most of the situation and smoke without having to worry about the smell at home the day after. (3) A third example of this feeling of freedom is the possibility of dancing in nightclubs: "*you go out to see people, to see some movement and talk, in general you do it to change and if you like dancing, this can be a reason too." (Karin, 25, works and lives with her partner).*

Bars and clubs are therefore considered as a "*neutral territory*", which puts all individuals in equal conditions. This image of the bar acquires all its sense when people who are not acquainted get together because their home seems to be "*too intimate*" just to welcome mere "*acquaintances*". Nightclubs are the "*third room*" where we can be effectively surrounded by strangers, thus favouring our feeling of anonymity and resulting freedom. The presence of people outside the group of friends contributes to the festive environment and favours the distinction between outings and meetings at home. If single people think that going out to bars is "*more fun*" and those with partners don't, maybe it is because they might meet their future partner there: "*(What is interesting about going out?) Seeing people and meeting people… it probably is about meeting a guy, I think that's it. Those who already have a steady relationship tend to go home earlier and there must be a reason for that." (Tamara, 24, works, lives on her own).* Anonymous equals exchange looks, which does not mean that any contact will be made. Individuals who go out in groups tend to stay with their friends and contact with strangers is not that common. That is why they go to bars and clubs, because there they can stay with friends and "*see people*", but "*not speak to them*".

2. An - implicit - social pressure to go out

Having analysed our studies in depth, it becomes more obvious that these outings to nightclubs respond to one rule: doing what is considered "*fair*"; that means, staying in fashion by doing something "*nice*": "*I think that all this is sending us signals. After all, going out is 'fair'… I think some of my friends fancy being in nice places more than I do, whereas I do not have a bad time when I go out with them.*" *(Marko, 24, student, lives by himself)*. The presence of an individual in "*nice*" bars, that is to say, "*fashionable bars*", gives him/her a certain identity. He/she is observing and being observed by equal actors, who reflect this image of a "*fair*" identity: "*I believe that an identity is formed, I know the nice places to go to and that gives a good impression of you, it gives you confidence, power and the idea that you are someone important." (Marko).* Here we can see the idea that the presentation of certain aspects of one's identity can help towards the individual's formation. The aspect presented is confirmed by the other person's look, which works as a "confirmation of identity" and the individual becomes comfortable in his/her role ("*this gives you confidence*"). For instance, here the role played is of someone who knows how to identify and stay in fashion by going to the "*nice*" bars.

In the case of those who want to "*go with the flow*" by going to the "*nice*" bars, they have to gather information and the ability to analyse the market, so just the fact of not going out so frequently becomes a limitation. Those who stay at home every afternoon and weekend risk being considered as a "*bore*": "*Why do we want to go out?… I think it's because we want to relax and change, although it can get a bit much sometimes. It is not my case, but I think others do get this feeling more than I do. (Why is it a bore?) You have to go out, if you don't, you are a bore if you stay at home on Friday night." (Marko).* However, it is also about the perception others have of the way this person *thinks*, the identity he/she believes that the members of the reference

group award him/her. This is the case of those people who become subjected to the rule that encourages them to go to the fashionable places; to them the looks they get from others are more important, as they could void the identity this person wants to have. This dissension between the comfort of staying at home and the "*pressure*" of going out shows that these individuals give their peers certain power and efficiency. This is why the absence of a nightlife leads to the cancellation of our identity and the loss of a chance to recover our own image through other people's looks.

3. The identity function of our equal anonymous peers

The young adults interviewed in Stockholm have described the wide variety of outings, ranging from having a few drinks in the evening to going dancing in a club. However, the nature of exchanges between strangers is still the same: an exchange of looks rather than verbal exchanges. The vast majority of interviewees admitted not going to bars to meet people, as some of their opinions about these encounters, whether friendly or sexual, were: "*they have no charm*", "*meeting your partner in a bar seems dirty*", "*you don't make friends in a bar*". However, we have noticed some direct interactions between strangers. What matters here is not so much the difference between what is said and what is done, but rather what these declarations reveal about the *representations* of the practice. The role assigned officially to each anonymous peer is that of a silent mirror whose looks can guide us to the expression of ourselves. The bet on identity is reduced here to what can be expressed *through just the presence in nightclubs*; they have chosen to go to the same bars, which means they have something in common. This gives them the capacity and legitimacy to confirm each other.

Little by little, people go out less frequently at night. This general evolution has been described as something "*natural*", and has been explained in reference to the feeling caused by outings: "*you just don't have the strength to go out*", "*you are so tired*". However, besides physical tiredness, should we not also consider a type of tiredness associated to this kind of socialisation? Indeed, some of the interviewees established the difference between the socialisation practices characterised as something a "*teenager would do*" and the types of meetings preferred "*now*". To them, what they have already experienced in their biographical transition, that is to say, the evolution of the practices perceived as belonging to the "*young*" towards meetings that are more suitable for "*adults*" is translated in several ways: a change from "*quality*" to "*quantity*" (going from one bar to another is replaced by staying at the same place all night); one goes from anonymity to intimacy (fewer "*superficial*" exchanges with strangers met in a fashionable place and a greater preference for exchanges with closer friends); public places are changed for private ones (people tend to stay at home). In other words, the motivation to go out at night and "go with the flow" is progressively reduced.

On the other hand, others experience today what has been described as the past and do not make any distinction between before and now. These testimonies let us see the sense to be followed by the evolution of

socialisation at night: the rule shows the progressive abandonment of the night atmosphere, paying less attention to observing and being observed. The function of validation of identity that was initially awarded to our anonymous peers is slowly displaced onto another group, the group of friends with whom we have privileged conversations and with whom we can show our more "*intimate*" features. This is what will be studied in the next section.

II. Predominance of the domestic sphere

When they were still living at home and the parents were not there, some organised "preliminary outings" with their friends. Others have waited until they could have their own space to meet members from their group of peers before going out. The first years after leaving home (around the age of 20), the private space is used especially as the preliminary stage before going out in the public night atmosphere. Friends would get together at someone's home (to get ready or choose their clothes, for instance), to have a drink or eat something to prepare for the alcohol intake that was to come later that night. This practice is known as "*warming up*", which serves as a type of "snack". These encounters between the group members favour the creation of a festive atmosphere where friends prepare together for the identification test that the outing involves.

On the same lines as the reduction in the number of long nights spent in a bar or a disco after these "preliminary outings", interviewees have expressed their increasing interest in getting together at home without the idea of going out afterwards. These private meetings start beating meetings in bars. Thus, some groups split like this, going out to public places, whereas others decide to stay at home. Little by little, the private sphere starts acquiring importance by itself.

1. Paradox representation of meetings in a private space

Home gatherings can be held in different ways: around a dinner served on the table, in front of the TV with some "*dinner trays*" or even at a do where food is served could in a buffet. What we are focusing on here is those meetings were people gather to have dinner around the table. These can vary between "*mixed*" dinners for men and women, "*dinners for couples*" (just for couples) and "*unisex*" dinners, just for people of the same sex.

While some consider that meeting in a bar is more "*practical*" for some reasons we mentioned earlier, those supporting meetings at home state as their main reason the "*cosy*" atmosphere created in them. On one hand, as friends get together at home they award less importance to their looks; and, on the other, the "*relaxed*" meetings of the private atmosphere favour private conversations, and some even say that the exchanges are "*deeper*" than those held in bars. However, in interviews it was revealed that many of the interviewees award great importance to the preparation of their private space before their guests arrive, a fact that maybe changes the relaxed aspect of these meetings. The same way we consider that clothes inform us about an individual's identity, having friends at home is also a way to reveal

some aspects of our identity. Indeed, we can see some features of the latter in the decoration and arrangement of objects at home. The preparation of the space at home (tidying things and cleaning the house) can be interpreted as a way to control the image we are giving our host.

Regarding the organisation of the dinner setting, there has been an evolution. At first friends used to have dinner on the floor with spare dishes but others believe in the increasing importance of using some nice plates neatly on a table. On the same lines, little by little there is an increasing interest in the preparation of dishes that sometimes need to be prepared from a recipe book. Together with this general trend we can see the evident individual variations. Some believe, for instance, that amongst close friends the roles of the guest and the host disappear and the guests are on equal levels. However, in meetings with not so close friends each person's attitudes acquire greater levels of formality. Not showing the suitable behaviour could lead to unpleasant situations, something that has been expressed with laughter during the interviews, and establishes the fact that some things are not likely to happen (such as giving a friend a flower at an improvised dinner). What we are dealing with here is the ability to evaluate the role (Giddens, 1987, Kaufmann, 1998) that each one is supposed to play, which leads us back to the introduction and therefore the testing of the identification features considered appropriate depending on the type of meeting (improvised or planned dinner, "*video night*" or birthday dinner, etc).

2. Evolution towards "adult" practices: example of the dinner for couples

Here we are going to pay special attention to "*dinners for couples*", a type of meeting that has become more popular as the members of a group of friends have romantic relationships and start to cohabit. These dinners are only aimed at couples and single people are excluded. This way being single can become a social obstacle as these meetings are oriented towards the private space and tend to increase in number.

These dinners are considered as a form of "adult" socialisation for various reasons. Compared to mixed dinners, they are considered more "*formal*"; verbal exchanges are organised symmetrically and conversations are held in couples. Another particular feature to do with the general atmosphere of the night: more "*relaxed*" when single and married people are together and more "*intense*" when there are only couples: "*Perhaps the atmosphere will be slightly more intense when people have dinner in couples. Quite often one talks to one member of the couple and it is less intense than when there are various people and maybe there are some pauses between two conversations.*" (Christian, 26, works and lives by himself). If mixed dinners are favoured by a certain level of preparation, dinners for couples have features of "*dinners for adults*"; therefore, special attention is paid to the presentation of the house, serving a dinner with several courses, low noise levels, the guests choose their clothing according to different criteria than when it is a mixed dinner or when they go to a bar. Dinners for couples would therefore lack improvisation: "*these dinners are usually held with another couple. It is exactly the same as seeing our parents with their friends,*

eating, drinking wine, it's like... it's something strange. (Does it bother you or do you like it?) No, quite the opposite, I find it really pleasant and they work out quite well. You have the chance to speak and tell stuff, to know about what others do. I think they are a really good idea. They are fun." (Karin, 25, works and lives with her partner).

While some declare that they regret evolving towards this kind of more "*adult*" meeting, others experience it as something "*normal*" and see no differences with a mixed dinner: *"There is no difference. At the end of the day, if one of the couples had a child...but that is not the case in our circle of friends." (Jonatan, 26, works and lives with his partner).* Regarding those single people who observe this practice from outside, there are some who are sorry not to have the means to take part, whereas others criticise it: "*(What do you think this evolution is due to?) Well, I don't know, I find it absurd (laughter). Well, I think it's great that people make an effort, but I don't know why they do it. I think it's a way to move towards adulthood in a way... it's no so relaxed anymore, I don't know why." (Andreas, 25, works and shares a flat).* Other people who are alone are limited to stating this practice amongst their married friends without judging.

Some of the interviewed perceive dinners for couples as an adult thing to do and do not feel comfortable with this representation. That is why when this type of meeting is criticised and compared to a *game* we can see that they do not correspond to the usual forms of socialisation between these individuals. Their words refer to an implicit norm indicating the evolution that dinners at home should follow "young" to "adult" practices. On the other hand, others do not see dinners for couples as something different to mixed dinners and believe that the children will be what will make the couple break away from all kinds of meetings.

3. Position against a rule and experimentation with identity

Amongst young Swedish adults the level of preparation of the dinner is understood according to two elements: how close guests and hosts are, in which case close friends can come over in an improvised manner, unlike what happens with "*acquaintances*", and the interpretation they make of the rule indicating the evolution of "young" practices towards "adult" behaviours. Some follow the "young" style and have their friends over spontaneously, while others follow the "adult" style and thus put a lot into the preparation of the event.

Even if most of the interviewees agree on the definition of this norm, they do not apply it in the same way. Some practice dinners for couples and other don't; some simply because they are not interested in this type of socialisation. Likewise, we must pay attention to the fact that they do not have the same attitude towards this type of norm. Some pass negative judgments on dinners for couples and others don't at all. One woman said they were "*strange*" and "*boring*", whereas another one said she didn't like them but that "*they weren't exactly like seeing our parents with their friends*".

All these attitudes refer to the same norm but from different points of view. These differences can be understood as several other stages in the evolutionary axis ranging from a "young" style and moving towards an adult" style. Some are far from the objective and others have already reached it, whereas others are badly getting used to the transition. In any case, these young adults find in these interactions with their peers a particular way to experiment their position against the norm prescribing the evolution towards "adult" practices. In the domestic space, close friends are considered as the ones in charge of the norm, those who have the power to acknowledge, confirm and (in)validate the normative position of the others.

<div align="center">***</div>

How do we interpret this importance awarded to other people's opinions? How do we understand the priority of the latter and not of the family, for instance, in the elaboration of the norm indicating the stages towards adulthood? As a conclusion, we will present some cultural and social aspects to gain a better perspective of the data drawn from the field research.

Swedish culture values an "individualistic" conception of the relationship between the individual and society: each one must be perceived as equal to the rest. (4) Individuals come before the group, their actions do not arise so much from the pressure made by the group as from their personal decision; they are defined by themselves from the beginning and less according to their environment (Sjögren, 1993; Daun, 1994). This value is found in the basis of the model for the universal Providence State, a form of government found in Sweden since World War II. We can refer to a large number of political and social measures whose objective is the practice of these principles, the promotion of independence against the original group. This way, all those people who have a child get some financial family aids regardless of the number of children. From the age of 16 (at the end of compulsory secondary education), young people are directly benefited from these aids, which therefore do not go towards the people they are in charge of. Any young person who continues studying (whether at secondary or higher levels) will have a grant. These examples give us an idea of the category that young people are assigned in this country: rather than being considered as their parents' children, they are part of a process of «*familiarisation*» (5) of the treatment given to the young population, where they are considered as individuals regardless of the group they belong to. The aid system allows to turn young people into adults as quickly as possible and make them independent from their families by providing them with an individual maintenance system. Other applications of this conception of the individual in the educational and familiar system can be seen - for instance - in the general maintenance aids stated in the provisions of the civil rights (Jarvin, 2001).

Here is where the paradox is found. If this ideology characterising the Swedish model puts the *individual* first, how can we understand the importance that our interviewees give to the opinions of their *peers*? And how can we interpret the references to a common rule? We have the following hypothesis to explain this: as the evolution takes place in a system that tends to reduce the differences and that puts at the level of

(4)
See for instance «Suède: l'égalité des sexes en question », *Cahiers du Genre,* n°27, 2000; *La protection sociale en Europe*, éds C. Daniel et B. Palier, 2001; *Comparer les systèmes de protection sociale en Europe du Nord et en France*, volume 4, book 1&2, 1999.

(5)
«Although the government aid is given to parents as family aids and for the maintenance of the family rates, from the point of view of identity it is presupposed that from the beginning a young adult will be perceived as "son of" or "daughter of".» (from Singly, 2000:15).

representation the set of individuals as equals (political and social measures are an expression of this), individuals wish to impose situational rules for themselves. As individuals are not regarded in the *first place* unless they are not members of a group and provided that their development depends *first* on them before being integrated in the immediate environment, (6) they must create their own reference system, should they approach anything that has not originally arisen from the group they belong to. We can interpret the importance awarded to the group of peers from this point of view. If peers always play a socialising role, here they seem to be more of a reference that individuals can choose freely. Socialising in a system whose relations are more equal than hierarchical, it seems that peers form the first reference group as they are the "closest" ones (this term does not refer to an emotional relation, but rather to proximity in age and social category). This is why these peers set up a personal system of values. The group respects this system, which from then onwards becomes their reference. That is why the pressure made by this rule is understood: because it was established by young people themselves, and has not been transmitted by their parents.

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(6)
This comment is not an obvious rejection of the importance of family links, but it aims at remembering the definition of an "individual-oriented" ideology.

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From youth to adulthood in France and Spain

This article tries to analyse, beginning from the departure from the home life of the French and Spanish young men/women, the developments and relations they have with their families, couples and friends during youth. The aim is to show that in both countries, people follow different construction processes of themselves till getting the autonomy from their parents. First goes the French case and next the Spanish one. The different ways of developing belong to two education models of the adult identity and also to different conceptions of the relations that the adults must keep with the beloved people around them.

Key words: youth, identity, family, couple, friends

Introduction

The French and Spanish young men/women leave their parents' home, not only in different moments, but also in different ways. The difference is not only the quantitative order but also the qualitative one. The first ones vary into different ways of life until they establish with a couple, whereas the second ones usually move from the parents' house to the conjugal residence. Both countries' young men/women construct their identity in different ways and that's why they leave their homes in different moments, but they leave in different moments because they construct themselves in different ways. Both actions are interrelated. This is possible because there are differences in both countries, both relating to the adult definition and the way somebody must fulfil one's aims to reach that statute.

When we talk about identity, we can talk about collective or individual identity. In this article we will talk about the individual identity and we will see how the young men/women construct it in France and Spain until they reach the total autonomy and independence from their parents. We will consider that the identity is not an essence of the individuals, that this can change and develop during life (E. Gil Calvo, 2001). People can have a bigger or smaller multidimensional identity. We will consider that the individuals have a multiple identity and that depending on the moments and/or circumstances of their lives, they develop and give more importance to some dimensions than to others. Some authors consider that some individuals never obtain a certain unity in their identity and that they are always divided (B. Lahire, 1998). We will see that the Spanish young men/women have a more important unity of their identity than the French ones. We will distinguish between different identities (F. de Singly, 1996). The personal identity comes from: the statute identity for oneself and for the others and the private identity for oneself and for the others. The private identity refers to the one hidden down in oneself. The statute identity refers to the one that comes from its statute in a certain situation. The aim will be to analyse how

both country's young men/women individualize. The two main dimensions of the individualization process are the autonomy (capacity of giving their own law) and the independence (capacity of obtaining their own resources) (F. de Singly, 2001). We will talk about the emotions and feelings individuals show in their reports, but we will do it analysing and taking into account the sense of the reports. These results come from a fieldwork made in France and Spain, with 60 semi-guided interviews in both countries. On first place we will see the French case and next the Spanish one.

I- France

1- To live together with the parents, taking distance

Young men/women become emancipated from their parents. Both parents and themselves consider that somebody cannot construct himself/herself correctly if he/she shares the same place with his family for too long time. It is considered that the total autonomy is only possible if somebody lives in a different place from the family. They explain that when they are living at their parents' home, as they get older, their clear aim is to be able to leave their parents' house soon. If they haven't done it, it's because they can't economically or due to familiar circumstances. Cédric (24 years old), who lives only with his mother says: « I am wishing to having my own house, to invite my friends whenever I want, to able to... to be able to play my music if I feel like and to be able to play video games if I want until five o'clock in the morning.» 25 years old is an appropriate age to leave parents' home (E. Maunaye, 2001). If the young men/women are working at this age it can be earlier, otherwise it can be delayed. Job is a sufficient condition but not necessary to become emancipated. For example, many son/daughter leave their parents' home thanks to their economical help for studying and without having a job (O. Galland, 2001).

We could think that young men/women create an important common world with them during the years they live with their parents, but that is not the case. In the interviews, they say that it is important to create an own personal world separate from their family world. For example, the young's partner has especially a relationship with him/her but not so much with the family. Sometimes the friends and the parents have no relation, since it is considered that the first ones belong to the young's personal life and the second ones to the familiar life. This means that young men/women have a split identity since they have to make different introductions depending on their parents or friends: they develop different facets of their identity that can be reconcilable between them. In the same way, young men/women don't tell their parents very much about their personal life. During the years they live together, they try to obtain their own means to pay for some of their expenses. For them this means having a greater autonomy. They do this independently how much money their parents have, and parents find natural that children look for money. To be constructed correctly, young man/woman must become autonomous and this autonomy begins even when the young man/women still lives with his/her parents. This model is approved by young men/women but also by their parents, who think that it is important for them to get a greater autonomy, even if they still live together with them. They try, for example, not to go with them to the doctor or to get involved in their personal life.

2- Irregular developments

When young men/women leave their parents' home, they don't have a long-term project: they don't know who they will live with, if they will get married or where they will work. This does not mean that having a regular life as a couple is not important. As J.-C Kauffman (1999) says, life as a couple is still the reference model that aims every individual. The important thing is leaving home at any moment. Some young men/women leave their homes to go for studying to another city, just because they want to leave their homes. Hélène (24 years old), for example tells her case: «That was a way of being independent, because my parents were a little bit too protector. My mother has never worked and she has focused on her children. For my parents, it has always been important that we do well in a figurative and proper sense because they have spent much money. It is true that when I chose Lille, which is quite far away from Bordeaux (place where her parents lived) it was, consciously or unconsciously to get my independence». In the beginning, when they leave home, they come back very often, but with the time it is less and less often and they define, more and more, their own house and not heir parents'.

Young men/women leave and usually they live alone or with their couples. Living alone at a certain time during youth is very appreciated. It seems that it is necessary to try this kind of life to find oneself and be sure that somebody has the necessary own autonomy to assume this kind of life. Living as an unmarried couple is something young men/women practice regularly. They often vary into different ways of life during youth; a time with a couple, then alone, the again another couple and so on. There are different combinations depending on each young.

Sharing house with some friends is not so common and actually there are not many social studies that focus on this way of live. Some young men/women share the house, but it is more often when they start their professional career than when studying. These last years, there has been an influence from young men/women that share house between some people, which does not fit with the reality, since it is not so usual. It doesn't either fit with the Spanish student model, the Spanish young people share the house during the school period but they keep having as their defined house, the family house.

During the years, the French young men/women construct themselves away from their families. Their parents only know what the children want them to know and nothing else and parents have less and less possibilities of knowing about their lives. Children change their houses, change cities, ways of life (alone, as a couple, sometimes they come back to the parents' house). When they start working they have no saved money, since they have paid for a house, electricity and all the usual expenses for years. When they start working they don't immediately get a property and keep renting houses to be able to save money.

Young men/women become individuals with a more personal life, where family is less and less involved. For example, when young men/women start living as a couple, sometimes parents don't meet the couple until some months after. In general they don't take into account their parents' opinion to take these decisions. It is something personal and the family, a priori, does

not have to give his/her opinion. Sara, one of the interviewees, started living together with her couple and her mother didn't know anything: «My mother didn't meet him. We started going out together in January, he came to live together with me in July and in August we went for holidays to my mother's house.» In some cases, after breaking up with their couples or after losing their jobs, young men/women go back to their parents' house but usually this return doesn't last very long. It's difficult either for the young men/women or for their parents to live together because each one has his/her own habits, and they have to adapt to the others, sometimes with tensions or conflicts. Both parents' and children's identities are very different and, as they know they are not going to live together for a long time, the efforts are quite limited.

Parents avoid being involved in their children's live but they don't abandon or inhibit them. For instance, they pay much attention to their studies and help them economically, materially and morally so they can do it well: they pay for studies, help furnishing their houses and help them in the path of the autonomy, especially the first years, when they are away from their families and sometimes they feel lonely. (1) Children accept this help but they try to keep margins of economical independence: they work while they are studying, or during summer or even during the whole year.

This process makes young men/women live for some years with a certain material and affective insecurity since they don't know either if the couple relationship will last long or how their lives are going to develop materially. However, they try to assure the development of their personal identity above all, not only to adapt to established roles that they have in their family statues such as "son, daughter of" or personal ones such as "boyfriend of, girlfriend of".

3- The Nets

Youth is a life's phase when young men/women start having more autonomy and when they start separating progressively from the adolescence friends (C. Bidart, 1997). They prefer organizing their relations in nets. An adult is somebody who doesn't have a group of friends but visits his/her friends from time to time. If the group keeps up in adulthood, it's not considered as something positive. The group of young people that keeps up after the adolescence is considered as something bad, as young immigrants going around dangerously in the city. It looks like somebody can't individualize keeping groups of friends. This makes young people have split identities since they can make different introductions of themselves depending on the friends. Ariane tells us thus, her preference of having different friends: «I like having my life with certain people, I don't like seeing always the same people because... Besides, somebody is not always the same person, it is not the same style of going out, it depends on who somebody is with and... I am not very sure about my university friends getting on very well with my friends. I don't know. Everyone has her life, everyone has...Well, but they know each other, and with the other friends is the same, they know each other, but nothing else.» Life's different fields young people belong to, are not strongly related and becoming an adult means separating them and finding oneself in the middle of different worlds, which are not connected between them. For example, parents and friends don't always know each other and when they do know each other, they don't make any activity together such as having

(1)
Interview analysis carried out by students of D.U.T Carrières Sociales – University of Le Havre.

lunch or having a coffee. Esteeming somebody doesn't mean introducing him/her to the family and mixing them.

4- The conjugal autonomy

Young people try to have a personal autonomy also in the couple life. First we will see the sense they give to this kind of life when they are an unmarried couple. We can make two groups. In the first one there are young men/women who live life as a couple, as a cohabitation that can last for a time, but also can stop any day. They start living together but they don't know which the future will be for them and they have no established plans. Sometimes one of them begins coming to the other's house to spend the night, and one day one of them leaves his/her house and moves to the other's house, or they move into a new house. These young men/women can have more than one couple before they get married with one of them. Erwan wanted to try living alone in his house and he did it during a year, but he couldn't see his girlfriend, who also lived alone, very often, so he had to leave his house and move into his girlfriend's: « *Every two nights I used to sleep at Florence's house or she used to come home, but it wasn't very nice for me because I had to prepare my classes and I used to take a lot of papers to her house and sometimes, at 11 o'clock in the evening I used to run back home because I had forgotten something there. Thanks god it was quite close because otherwise it wouldn't have been possible.»* As J.-C. Kaufmann (2) says: «Young couples develop around love feelings and interpersonal relations and they don't even think on establishing a home». Some young people take the decision of living together once the situation already exists because they are usually at the other's house: «The young people who begin living together don't do it having the idea of establishing a home, they do it before they get the idea of doing it» (J.-C. Kaufmann, 1992).

In the second group we find young people who live with the person they pretend to get married to, but this is a minority group. They often do what in France is called "Fiançailles", which is a marriage engagement in front of the families and friends before life as a couple.

For young people who live as an unmarried couple is important to keep a familiar autonomy, but also a conjugal one. For example, if we have a look at how they organize economically we can see that it is very important for all of them to separate the money and to have separate accounts. In general, they place some money in a box or they have a common account where they send some money to pay the expenses such as food or rent, but when they go out for dinner or buy a present, then they pay with individual accounts. This brings some amazing situations from the conjugal fusion point of view: a couple goes out for dinner and one of them can invite the other one, or each one pays for his/her bill. Franck, who has been living with his girlfriend for some years explains us how they organize: «We often go to restaurants and I usually say: "I pay". But sometimes she pays. She pays for the Mc Donald's and I pay for the restaurant, or I pay for the Mc Donald's, well, I pay for the Mc Donald's or for the restaurant". Usually, as men earn more money at their jobs than women, men pay more often for the restaurants". This wish of autonomy also comes out when seeing friends. The members of the couple keep some friends individually, who are usually visited without the other member. Erwan, for example, explains the importance this has for him: «They are different dimensions, with my friends Laura and Anna, I always

speak about things that I would never speak with my girlfriend or about things that I don't have much to speak about with her...because implicitly I can't talk about... yes, about things that I can't talk with her in a explicit way.» These young men/women's behaviour shows that they try to be individualized individuals.

5- Marriage

Young people get married when they think that the person they live with, is the person they are going to spend the rest of their life with. This can happen when they live together for years or also when they get their first child. Marriage doesn't really change anything in the young's life because they have already lived together. Marriage is a ceremony that belongs only to young men/women, not to the family; we can see this through the analysis of their organization. Young men/women organize it themselves and when it is not so, it's because they personally asked the families to do so. On the ceremony day, the witnesses are friends and not members of the family such as the parents of each one. In the wedding breakfast, the couple does not sit with the family but with the friends. It is a marriage between individualized individuals and not between children who are defined by the statute of "son of". It could be said that, even before the wedding day, these young men/women consider themselves and are considered socially adults. Marriage in France is not any more a rite of passage as it was formerly. « Although these days many marriages don't celebrate any passage, they still keep the category of rite since they still offer a space of symbolization» (M. Segalen, 1998, p.96).

After marriage, young men/women keep the same behaviour with their couples as they had in their previous life. With reference to the family, they don't have many obligations with the family and the relationship between them depends more on the wish they all have than on the paper of the statute each one has within the family. For example, on a birthday all the family does not necessarily meet every year with all the members of the family. Sunday's lunches are not very institutionalised. However, there are some differences between the behaviour of the married couples and the unmarried couples. For example, married couples spend more often Christmas together at one of the two families' house, and they don't approve celebrating them separately.

II. Spain

1- A close cohabitation

Usually the Spanish young men/women stay at their parents' house until they get married (L. Garrido, M. Requena, 1997). It's considered that a young man/woman will be able to construct himself/herself keeping a great statute identity as "son/daughter of" if he/she lives with her/his parents for years. In the interviews young people don't seem to have a great wish of leaving their parents' house. In the Spanish family, the relations have been less and less authoritarian and more democratic in the last years (I. Alberdi, 1999). Sometimes they have a job but they don't show any wish of leaving their houses, they prefer leaving them when they get proper material and affective conditions. Some of them study in a different city but they are used

to coming back home for the weekend and they keep defining the family home as their home; they often come back home when they finish their studies.

Their parents accept this situation and they even live it proudly. If a son/daughter leaves the house too soon, that's a deception, it seems that they have done something wrong. The young men/women who work and live together with their parents are not considered as immature adults. Somebody can be an adult and can also live together with some members of the family such as parents or sisters/brothers. Luis (28 years old), although he's got a good economical situation, doesn't leave the family house: « I feel very well so I don't even think about it. For the moment I will not rent a house. I've got everything I need and this is more comfortable than renting a house: My clothes are always ironed, lunch is ready... Then, why should I spend money?» Job is a necessary condition but not enough to leave home since young people want to leave the house with good economical conditions, they want to save money and even start paying for a mortgage before leaving. At home young people are not as in a hotel, they also do favours to their parents and they give them affection and company. «In the Spanish society not only is usual for some members of different generations to live together – young singles who live in their parents' house until they are thirty years old and a widow parent who starts leaving with his/her son/daughter after his/her couple dies – but also to help each other is usual between ancestors and descendants who live in different houses». (L. Flaquer, 1998, p.131).

During the cohabitation years with their parents, young men/women keep an important common life with them. For example, usually parents and friends know each other and they even celebrate birthdays or go for dinner together. Being adult or becoming an adult doesn't mean separating the different worlds individuals belong to. Thanks to this, young men/women have a great unity of their identity. For example, if they are together with their parents and friends, they have to harmonize the identity of "friend of" with the one of "son of".

2-Stability paths

Most of the young people leave their houses when they are going to get married. Just some of them leave it to start leaving as a couple and even less people start living with friends or on their own. Spanish young men/women don't like living alone. The young man/woman who lives alone is because he/she is alone affectively and this way of life is not valued or wished. Sharing house with friends is something young people do only during the studying period. Usually young people don't have much experience until they start living as a couple: they don't live in different cities and they don't even change they way of life they had. For example, they don't live first as a couple, then alone, afterwards with friends... With this model of behaviour we see that they don't try different cohabitation situations during their lives and before marriage. Sometimes they leave their parents' home to live as a couple or they live one or two years with friends and next as a couple. But they don't spend years varying situations. This means that once they start living as a couple they don't have much experience about how to organize a house.

This means young men/women construct themselves in a familiar closeness and keeping an important common identity with their parents for years. Thanks to this, they have more relations with their families in future, because they get on well with each other. This is why meetings are nice and wished by the members of the family. Parents accept this kind of stable paths, deep-rooted both in the family and geographically. They help their children economically for years, both directly (when studying in another city) or indirectly (keeping them at home for years so they can save money). They also protect them: they get affection, parents go with them to the doctor and always support them. Young people stay at their parents' home for years even if they have a job. This makes them save money to buy a house. The only case when parents don't help their children is when they want to become emancipated without getting married or when they leave the house just because they want to live alone, even in the same city as the parents. In this case here comes the speech: "ok, if you want to leave is ok, but I don't really want to, so I'm not going to help you to make things even easier for you". Parents don't urge children to study far away or to leave the house. I the same way, parents will not help children become emancipated if it's no really necessary.

3- The Groups

During youth young people construct themselves in groups. They have different groups of friends who are also interrelated between them. They often distinguish: friends from school, friends from university and/or friends from work. The friend groups is an institution, the person who doesn't have one is suspicious: is he/she rare? Strange? Does he/she have any problem? One of the important things of theses groups is that they last in the time and don't belong only to a phase of their lives. The maintenance of the groups is possible due to the slight geographical mobility parents and young people have. There is a Spanish tradition that makes people get a property (J. Leal Maldonado, 1998) and this makes families spend years in the same house and children go to the same schools. There are universities all over Spain so people don't have to change the city very often. This makes possible to have stable social relations in space and time. Groups don't only exist during youth, but also during adulthood. It is no considered as something bad, on the contrary, it is something positive to keep friend groups when somebody is "installed" in a stable familiar and professional life. Groups are interrelated between them. For young people it is important that their different worlds get mixed in certain moments. For example, if they estimate a friend, it is good to introduce him/he to his/her parents. Parents and friends sometimes go together for lunch , for example when there is a public festivity or when they celebrate a birthday. When young men/women mix around interrelated groups, they have a strong unity of their identity. Sometimes they have to introduce themselves to different people, for example the couple and the family or friends and the family.

4- The conjugal fusion

Usually when young men/women start living as a couple**,** they ask their parents about it and if they don't agree, they negotiate to accept the couple. Sometimes, if the opposition is very strong, some of them can give up the idea and get married. Young men/women have a strong statute identity and

it is important for them to have their parents' support in their decisions. Some of them keep this way of life even if parents are not very happy with it, but there are not many cases really. They have a strong personal identity comparing to some other Spanish young men/women. We can distinguish into three different kinds of young men/women who live as unmarried couples depending on which sense they give to this kind of life.

In the first group we find more young women, who live this way because their couples don't want to get married. The partner who lives with this kind of woman, lives with her because she is the person he is going to marry further on, but not from the beginning. Juan's girlfriend is in this situation, he explains it: «For her it is a problem not being married, it's against her principles and her education. Usually she doesn't feel comfortable with this situation. She introduces me as her boyfriend but not as the person she lives with».

In the second group young men/women say they are going to get married but not for the moment and bear conjugal or familiar pressures. They say they are waiting to have a better economical situation to organize the marriage.

In the third group we find young people who live as unmarried couples without a defined project and without having the idea of getting married, or without having the idea of how long they will live together.

What is really interesting is that in the first two cases the young couples live as married in every level. Sometimes they have bought a house, even before going to live together. Economically they mix their money. This means that they mix their salaries and share the expenses in every level. They live the couple with quite an important fusion: they visit their friends together, and also the families. They accept spending Christmas separately but they know their parents prefer them to be together and hope that situation will not last very long. Sometimes these young people's parents don't know how to behave with them and what to do in this kind of life. Some of them vary into different attitudes. When they are not happy with this situation, they don't help them to make things easier. For example when they sleep at their parents' house, they have to sleep in separate beds. In some other cases parents tell them that they should spend Christmas with one family or the other one but no separated; the family wants them to behave as a married couple.

Relating to friends, they usually see them together and different groups mix up. When it's not so, they visit one of the groups more often but all of them keep in contact. In any case, couples go out together at weekends during the night and see the friends without the couple during the day.

Marriage

Marriage is still something very important in the transition of young men/women into adulthood. For some of them is still a rite of passage. This is sometimes the first experience as a couple and away from the family house. When they get married they try to save money to be able to buy a house and to keep having a similar living standard after the marriage. In the beginning the new life is complicated since they have to organize the house,

job, money and the couple every day and they are not used to it yet. Once they are married, young men/women live the couple with fusion and their couple is for them the most important reference person in their lives, a head "significant other", somebody who helps him/her confirm his/her identity. After the marriage, young men/women keep having important relations with their families, sometimes they live quite close and the contact they all have is regular, even daily or weekly. Some young people even go back to their parents' home for some days when the couple is away. Or for example, in some other cases, a member of the couple goes for lunch to the familiar home daily. This makes young people keep a string familiar identity even after the marriage. In the same way, the family thinks that young people keep having obligations to them.

Conclusion

In France and Spain young men/women follow different processes to construct their identities, different from the total autonomy and independence from their parents.

The first ones leave the familiar home quite early and in the last years of the cohabitation, they create a personal world. Once they leave, they spend years developing their personal identities and they have a great affective and material insecurity. They don't know very well which their future will be and they don't have any established projects. The day by day experience settles the future decisions. They construct themselves "on their own" and they decide which relations they have with their families, friends or couples in an autonomous way. Their parents only know what the children want them to know and nothing else. What is important for these young men/women is the development of the personal identity. If later on, this coincides with the familiar identity, they will keep more or less important relations with their parents. In any case, people create these relations depending on how they get on with their parents and the motivations they have apart from the statute identities. These young men/women have a splitter identity since they introduce themselves in different ways. This is possible because their worlds don't mix between them.

Young men/women want to be autonomous from their parents but also from their couples. They try to keep their individualization through the economical organization (each one has his/her account) or through friends' organization (to visit them sometimes without the partner). Marriage comes after some years of cohabitation and sometimes after the birth of the children. It is not already a rite of passage, it's a ceremony that creates, above all, the engagement between two individuals, and not between two "son/daughter of".

In Spain, the construction of the young men/women comes from a great logical establishment. They leave the house quite late and the identity establishment is quite strong. They develop their personal identities in a way that it doesn't dispute too much the identity relating to the statute of each one. Due to this, once they are autonomous, they can have strong familiar relations, because the common identity is very important. They construct themselves in groups and no on their own. Their different groups are related so young men/women can have a unity in their identities. Young men/women often move from the familiar home into the conjugal home and there are not many people who follow movable and original paths. Marriage

is a rite of passage for them and sometimes it's a unity between two young men/women who define themselves strongly through the statute of the family. Some of them live as unmarried couples, but in the same way as the married ones, they also share an important world with their couples.

In both countries there are different definitions about the adult signification and about the process somebody has to follow to get this statute. Also about the relations adults must have with their partners, family or friends. In France the adult is a more individualized individual than in Spain and the process a young man/woman must follow is the one that takes him/her to a greater individualization. This would be the ideal construction of the identity but in both countries there are young people who look alike between them due to circumstances. The difference is that the pattern in a country responds to the exception in the other one and vice versa.

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THE TOPIC

4

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Adulthood senses: youth and social changes in Portugal today

The purpose of this article is to study in depth some aspects connected to youth and the juvenile transitions and identities in Portugal based on two levels of analysis. Firstly we have described Portugal today and the important demographical and normative changes it has undergone by making a synthetic presentation of a group of national and international indicators. We have tried to make a special emphasis on the most relevant magnitudes in order to understand the changes and the continuity of subjective juvenile transitions and the factors that help to explain them. Secondly, we have tried to analyse the testimonies of 30 Portuguese young people in the transitions stage (recollection in the context of a European research project – FATE) to certify that they subjectively represent adults, at the same time we state some clues that seem to be relevant in order to categorise identities as established by this group of young people.

Key words: Portugal, social change, youth and adulthood

Introduction

Portuguese society has undergone deep socio-economic changes in the last three decades that have turned around the country from the demographical, cultural and economic point of view. Many of these transformations are common to most European countries, especially in the south of Europe, and tend to be associated with Portugal as they share certain historical and cultural aspects. As a consequence, Portugal today is nothing like it used to be before democratisation, a process that began on April 25th, 1974. Nowadays, for instance, the studies of the Portuguese young people seem to last longer, professional relations have become more flexible and precarious (in spite of the fact that this trend affects all generations), there are higher levels of familiar dependence and the age to get married and have children is being postponed.

However, including Portugal in any kind of typological classification, structuring by geographical, political, economic or cultural proximities can also hide significant differences between these countries, which also award the Portuguese case a certain level of specificity amongst its European peers. This is the framework we will use today to place the trajectories of the Portuguese young people so they can be understood and compared to those shown by their European peers, especially when it comes to trying to understand how they represent adult identity and how they experience the multiple transactions involved. This is therefore the main objective of the present article: a portrait of Portugal today, articulated with a brief analysis of juvenile representation on adult life, made based on 30 in-depth

interviews held with a group of young people undergoing the transition to active life in 2002.

I – Social change and Youth: Portugal today (1)

1. Marriage and fecundity in Portugal: changes and continuity

In reference to the research made based on the population census for 1991 and 2001 (Aboim, 2003), the 90s caused an acceleration in the rhythm of social transformation by nuclearising and individualising familiar and domestic structures. Favouring these trends, several factors appear, such as a better access to housing or a greater informalisation of behaviours in marriage, which is reflected in the increase in the percentage of unmarried couples (which went from 3% in 1991 to 7% in 2001), next to a reduction in the number of marriages (from 7.3 to 5.7) and the increase in the number of divorces and second marriages (1.8 and 11.8 in 2001, respectively).

Also relevant are the changes in the patterns of fecundity and parenthood. There has been an increase in the number of births outside wedlock (from 15.6% in 1991 to 23.8% in 2001), which means, on one hand, that the traditional cohabiting profile and single parenthood model is being preserved, associated to low socio-economic resources, but also to the increase in a cohabiting profile and parenthood that responds to a change in the significant values, which are now less deeply rooted in tradition. According to Ferreira and Aboim the number of children born outside wedlock is greater amongst the lower classes, which apparently prioritise the de-institutionalisation of the links and family transitions, accessing marriage through cohabiting or not having a second marriage (2002). This fact reunited on one hand the increasing importance awarded to experimentation, whose presence is recurrent in the different researches made on the ethics of the life of young people today (Schér, 2000), and, on the other, an objective view of a lower linearity and a greater complexity of life paths (amongst others, Pais, 2001).

However, this trend should not be read as a delay in the importance of formal marriage. In Portugal people get married quite a lot, but later on in life. (2) The average age for the first marriage has gone in men from 26.1 in 1991 to 27.5 in 2001 and for women from 24.1 to 25.3. Both ages came below the EU average for 15 countries, which for 2001 was 29.9 for men and 27.5 for women. These data make us think that people leave home in most cases when they get married, which would also lead us to think in a persistence of the traditional patterns of transition (leave home to get married). However, in this observation we must take into consideration the strength of the economic conditions (low salaries that are not enough for single people to afford to live on their own) and the changes in the values and representations associated to the transitions from one status to the other. Getting married (whether at a civil or religious ceremony) will increasingly become the result of a well-meditated, independent and individual decision, free from family constraints, although backed up by its members. This means

that it is a renewed institution, adding a new sense that is different from those subscribed by a large portion of previous generations in their own familiar transitions (Pappámikail, 2004).

Children also appear later on in life, both for men and women. Here the values registered in Portugal are below those registered in the countries in Southern Europe, where the delay becomes more obvious: if in Spain this value surpassed 30 years of age in the year 2000 (30.7), in Portugal the average age for the first child in women was 28.6, a value similar to that registered in Germany (28.7), for instance. We cannot just talk about delay without mentioning the great reduction of the birth rate in southern countries. In Portugal the reduction (reflected through a synthetic index from 1.6 children per woman in 1991 to 1.5 in 2001) has been quite rough and fast (the index was 3.1 children per woman in 1960) as the result of a significant massification of the use of modern birth control methods (that once again refer to a change in values) (Almeida, André and Lalanda, 2003: 405-406).

2. Domestic structures and transition: the place of young people

From the point of view of domestic structures, transformations have also become obvious, thus emphasising the modernisation process: reduction in the domestic attachés (from an average 3.1 people per attaché in 1991 to an average 2.8 in 2001), and the increase in the number of attachés in people who are alone (from 16.6% of the total of attachés in 2001 to 19.5% in 2001). This last indicator is particularly relevant to place the changes in behaviour (and values) in some categories of the young population. The truth is that most people who are alone are basically elderly people (51%), widowers and, in a precarious situation, we have the young people and adults who live alone and are more educated and trained people, especially single, mainly urban and professionally active (Guerreiro, 2003). We are talking about young people who form autonomous residential units without getting married, whether formally or informally, although some may have done it in a certain point of their trajectory.

We are also dealing with a minority of young people, as most of them still live at home until they are almost 30. Back in 1996, when this factor was analysed, (3) the countries in Southern Europe presented values that were clearly above the average of the 15 countries in the EU – 66% in young people aged 20 to 24, and 32% in those aged 25 to 29. However, Portugal had, within this group, the lowest values: 80% of people aged 20 to 24 and 52% of those aged 25 to 29 lived with their parent, whereas in Italy, for the same age ranges, the value was 89% and 59%, respectively. In Spain it was 90% and 62%. This factor is also coherent with the profile of family transitions that we have just described. On the same lines, we know that not only the economic and political factors (such as a weak Social Security system and a labour market that does not help the young) explain this phenomenon, as several researches point at the strength of cultural factors, which put the family as a space for affection, wellbeing and security, and are

(3)
We have no comparative data from EUROSTAT after 1996. However, we could think that in this last decade there has been a decay in the tendency to extend the stay at home with the parents next to an extension of the studies, difficulties in the labour market and cultural factors we have already mentioned.

not necessarily opposed to the claims for autonomy made by the young (amongst others Santoro, 2000; Gaviria, 2002; Pappámikail, 2004).

3. Portugal in Europe: a peculiar proximity

The variation of the demographical markers is justified when we intend to compare the changes and continuities occurred in the life paths of the Portuguese population and the modalities that are traditionally known as the markers to enter "adult life". (4) As we are trying to emphasise, some deep changes have taken place. However, even if the tendency to change acquires the same sense in every European country, the Portuguese modernisation process (not only a demographical one) has been late in every aspect, in relation to its European peers. Thus, if on the one hand, people get married later, on the other we still do it before Spain and Italy. The same applies to parenthood and other indicators.

As we have already said, Portugal has suffered a process of modernisation in a clear and irreversible manner, which, on the other hand, has been extremely asymmetric, both from the regional and social point of view (Costa and Viegas, 1998). We have experienced an intense process where the tertiary sector, the coasts, construction and economic activities have bloomed, leading to a progressive isolation and ageing process in the interior part of the country, for instance. But what other explanations can we give to justify a demographic profile that is, in many aspects, mixed? From our point of view, amongst the different factors that contribute to explaining this profile, there are some that we do not think deserve to be mentioned specially: dynamics of schooling, the labour market for the youngest generations, some magnitudes related to gender profiles and the participation of women in the Labour Market, and the changes regarding regulations, which create contrasts and tensions in many ways. That is to say, factors contributing to cohabiting in the same social time and space, signs of a persistent traditionalism (an employment system based partly on low qualifications or the reproduction of inequalities in terms of schooling, to name a few) and proof of development and individualisation (that is reflected in the diversification of the forms of family organisation, increase of qualifications, adoption of more expressive and hedonist ethics, for instance).

4. School and the labour market: youth, gender and social inequality

The truth is that the education scope in Portugal today can only be understood by considering the starting point, three decades ago: in 1970, 33.6% of the population was uneducated, a considerable proportion only managed to complete primary education (49.6% of people, who could complete the cycle or not) and only 1.5% accessed higher education or even completed it. Since then certain efforts have been made to increase the levels of schooling amongst the Portuguese population, whose compulsory education lasts 9 years. These efforts have only been partly successful.

(4)
At least if we measure in terms of objective family transitions, which is really limited. Section II of this article deals with subjectivities.

Consequently, schooling in the population increased considerably, which meant that the percentage of Portuguese aged 25 to 64 with just 6 years of schooling was reduced from a 77.7% in 1991 to 62.2% in 2001, registering increases in the population that completed basic education (9 years) from 7.4% to 13.4%, from 8.4% to 13% in secondary, and from 6.6% to 11.4% in higher education. The increase is especially obvious in the younger generations (between 25 and 34), whose education was higher than in previous generations: only 43.8% had 6 years of schooling or less, 18.8% of compulsory education, 21.2% of secondary education and 16.1% of higher studies. In fact, we could even say that in Portugal a very significant part of children and adults grow up in homes with very little educational capital but tend to be the most qualified elements of the domestic attachés, which could lead to interesting tensions as we deepen into the dynamics of intergenerational relations (Almeida and André, 2004).

In spite of this, Portugal still has one of the lowest schooling levels in the 15 European Union, added to some high numbers of people leaving school early. Even though schooling in the youngest generations advances considerably in Portugal and in the rest of Southern European countries, Portugal is special because of the negative sign of this group and because of the considerable differences observed. For instance, let's see the schooling of the young population, especially of the percentage of people aged 20 to 24, who have at least completed secondary education (12 years of education). In 2004, Portugal registered a percentage of 49%, whereas Italy had a value of 72.9%, and Spain, 61.8%. After Portugal we only have Malta, which registered a value of 48%.

As we have referred to premature leaving (5) we can see that Portugal registered in 2004 values close to 40% (39.4%), very far from the 15.7% registered in the 25 European countries. Even so, we must note that Italy and Spain (with values of 22.3% and 31.1%, respectively) also show values above the average. This is without a doubt more relevant in the framework of the processes of social reproduction in the field of education, with a decisive impact in the forms of entry into the labour market and also in family transitions. The truth is that someone who leaves school before the age of 18 (as it often happens in Portugal) and begins professional life in the next years ends up experiencing other family transitions, such as marriage or parenthood, which would justify the behaviour of some demographic indicators. That is why schooling dynamics seem crucial to understand some peculiar aspects of the Portuguese case.

The same way we can talk about an important movement regarding democratisation in access to education, we cannot ignore the fact that we are still far from an equivalent democratisation of educational success (Pais and Cabral, 1998: 203). That is to say, not only the educational profiles are low in most of the population, but there are also important reproduction processes of social and economic inequalities concerning schooling. For instance, the increasing diversification of the socio-economic basis for recruitment of students in Higher Education, which makes us think that it plays an important role as a channel of social

(5)
Measured in a population aged 18 to 24, which simultaneously declared not having any qualification past the 9 years of compulsory education, or even less, and not having taken any courses for vocational training in the four weeks before the survey was made (Eurostat).

mobility. It is enough to see the family features of these students to see the strength that their reproduction mechanisms have. In the sample of Portuguese university students subjected to a national scale in 2004, in 36.6% of the cases the fathers were technical professionals, a sector that only includes 14.4% of the population aged 40 to 60. We also have the opposite phenomenon: 19.3% of the students were children of industrial workers, a percentage that in the total population reaches 39.5%. Even more obvious is the analysis of the qualification profiles where at least one of the parents had taken higher education, against a 9.8% of the total population between 40 and 60; in 16.4% of the cases one of the parents has at least a secondary school level, against 8.9% in the same population group; and 13%, 12.9% and 22% of students come from families where one of the parents has 9, 6 and 4 years of education, respectively, against a 10%, 8.8% and 62.5% in relation to the same levels of education in the whole population (Martins, Mauritti and Costa, 2005: 36 to 38).

Inequality and difficulties still exist in the labour market. On one hand, young people are particularly affected by the unemployment rate (15.4% of the population aged at least 25 in 2004), and, on the other, those who are also the least qualified encounter the greatest difficulties to obtain and keep a job (6.4% of unemployment between 25 and 59 with six years of schooling or less, against 4% of the population in the same age group with higher education or more). This without referring to the fact that, in average terms, they are paid less. This statement places many Portuguese with low qualifications with a double disadvantage. If a person with a higher education diploma takes 4 to 5 months to find a stable job (this means that it will last 6 months or more), those who have not completed education will have to wait at least 19 months to get a job (Vieira and Resende, 2003: 83).

The unemployment rate at a certain point can hide different life situations: unemployment in a strict sense is associated to *underemployment* (any job is good as long as one can earn some money) and *rotatory unemployment* (several jobs alternating with period of unemployment). Those more qualified people can have *prospect unemployment* (a family back up that allows the young degree-holders to wait until they find a job that matches their qualifications) (Pais and Cabral, 1998: 210 and 211). Note that the social condition of the young Portuguese constrains their access to vital resources (especially the educational ones) to build their life trajectory. And even without underestimating the individual capacities to build and obtain capital through other means, the family, as one of the main material back ups (possibly the only one) for young people, constitutes an important factor modelling the possibilities young people can choose from.

(6)
It is important to note the fact that this high rate of activity corresponds in most cases to people working full-time, at the same time that, according to EUROSTAT, only 11.2% of the population employed in 2004 had a part-time job.

Another asymmetry persisting in the labour market has to do with gender. Women also are in disadvantage with their male peers. Another Portuguese peculiarity in the European context is the high female activity rate (61.7% in 2004, compared to 45.2% in Italy and 48.3 in Spain) (6) that has certainly contributed to a progressive transformation of the forms of family organisation and subsequent partial reformulation of the roles of gender in

the family. We have recently witnessed the feminisation of education: there are more and more women who successfully reach high levels of qualification. Observing the percentages of school failure (leaving school early), (7) we will see how important the differences are: in 2004 there was 47.9% of failure in boys, which went down to 30.6% in the case of girls. The same thing happens regarding the percentages of schooling in complete secondary education: 58.8% of women between 20 and 24 completed at least that level of education, something that was only achieved by 39.4% of men that age. Apparently, however, this "success" has not been translated yet into "advantages" in the Labour Market.

5. Social change, generations and values in Portugal today

This superficial portrait of Portugal today would not be complete without the due reference to the evolutions that have taken place in the field of regulations, but after many changes in the behaviour of the Portuguese, as we have stated several times, where the youngest generations have played the main role. Consequently, Portugal has been involved in the appearance of a new order of social values centred in the individual (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991, amongst others). Individualisation has been translated into adoption, especially on the part of the youngest generations, ethics of life of a more hedonist style, emphasising the importance of values such as autonomy, fun, experimentation and other values that form this constellation of the senses with effects on social practice and the paths of life (du Bois-Reymond, 1998; Pais, 1998; Singly, 2000).

In Portuguese society the promotion of these values does not only surpass the frontiers of age, but also those of social conditions. To tell the truth, in spite of the fact that the assumption of these values is stronger amongst the young and the most privileged spheres of society, it is still true that the older generations and the least privileged social groups are influenced by them. To a certain extent, this process has ended up by awarding the socialised agents (the young) the role of socialising agents (their parents) (Pais, 1998: 30). Thus, as there is no generational lapse in terms of social values, in an interview about generations it became obvious that the values shared in a general way by all age and social groups, such as individual aims and solidarity, covered transformations and normative orientations and their contents. Regarding the older generations we can say there is a materialistic individualism and amoral solidarity; young people tend to be identified with an individualism based on hedonistic expression and a "sociable" solidarity (Pais, 1998: 30).

However, according to Singly, there are certain limits in society that are centred on the individual: in spite of the fact that promotion of this type of individuality (made of choices, personal realisation, autonomy and authenticity), as we have already said, extends the effective chances of accessing it, these are unequally distributed (2000:18). Here we see the need, as we attempt to show the subjectivities of the Portuguese young regarding adulthood, of placing them in their macro-social, economic and

(7)
Percentage of the population aged 18 to 24, having completed compulsory secondary education, which is not involved in any type of education or training.

cultural contexts that model them. We really understand that the analysis of the juvenile paths have to show the way that the patterns of the life paths, which are rooted in the logics and dynamics of social institutions such as the Educational System, the Labour Market, Justice, etc., are articulated with decision-making - underlying the time and alignment of transition - and with the representations, senses and individual meanings they are associated to. This means it is about revealing the complex interactions between the structural conditioning, regulation and institutional norms, on one hand, and subjectivity and individual decision, on the other (Heinz and Krüger, 2001).

II – Responsibility and autonomy: territories meaning "adulthood" amongst Portuguese young people.

Research tells us that, together with transactions, full of breaks, advances and steps back, young people have posed the existence of multiple senses, both attributed or requested, about what it means to be and adult today (Plug, Zeijl and du Bois-Reymond, 2003). This is also the result of the first analysis of the testimonies collected through a qualitative approximation made in the context of European comparative approximation on 30 Portuguese young people of different age groups (between 16 and 27) and social conditions (from those who left school with less than 6 years of schooling to those who have a higher education diploma). (8) However, in spite of the fact that this group of interviewed is divided to claim for their own adulthood, in most cases they resort to a type of semantic equivalent: being an *adult* to them means being *responsible*. Especially responsible for the consequences of their decisions, which leads to an important dimension of their identity (whether understood as an adult or not): the *autonomy of choices*. Responsibility and autonomy are thus set like central elements of a normative paradigm modelling their own projections, in spite of the situation of total dependence (both residential and financial) or partial dependence (only residential) from the parents.

This almost total unanimity ended up coinciding with what has been stated regarding the general adoption on behalf of young people as an *ethos* based on the principles of expressive individualisation. The testimonies of these young people allow to impose a signification model, where such "*responsibility*" can be divided into three different territories with adult senses. They are clearly hardly ever isolated, but can appear with several configurations and combinations. However, from the typical ideal point of view, we think it is relevant to establish the symbolic differences between the senses awarded by this group of young people to adulthood and the transitions "leading" to it.

These territories correspond in a general way to the three configurations of responsibility defended by Gaudet: responsibility for themselves, responsibility for "others" and responsibility before the institutions (2001: 79).

(8)
The data used in this article are a part of the comparative research project that involved 8 countries – FATE, Families and Transitions in Europe, coordinated in Portugal by Professor Doctor Machado Pais (ICS). The Portuguese sample was selected through a list of contacts obtained by making a survey amongst students in the last years of the educational system in Almada and at different level (compulsory, vocational, professional and university) during the period from April to June 2002. The interviews were made during periods ranging from five months to a year starting from the end of the school year. We must emphasise the fact that we do not intend to make here interpretations that are representative of the Portuguese population, in terms and social conditions of the interviewed, their paths and their future projects.

1. Responsibility for themselves: maturity as the main indicator of adulthood

Most young people we interviewed (around 2/3) connected the adult identity to a subjective perception of themselves and the individual phase of psychosocial development, that is to say, the level of *maturity* shown by each one in their way of directing their life path and the individual assumption of responsibilities regarding the decisions made (and their consequences). Francisco and Marta gave us the following answers to these questions "What does being an adult mean to you? and How would you define yourself?":

"It has to do with responsibility. To me, being an adult does not have to do with age. It is about having awareness of one's actions and assuming their consequences." (Francisco, 27, upper class, higher education not completed, employed).

"Responsibilities above all! It has nothing to do with age, but with responsibility and maturity to make decisions. And when you make the wrong decision, not to blame others, but ourselves. (…) I have been an adult for a long time now." (Marta, 20, lower/middle class, secondary education, employed).

In this type of identification where the individual claims for a certain status (Dubar, 2000) and autonomy is seen as the main feature, adulthood seems not to be connected to age or change of status (such as entering the labour market, creating autonomous residential units…) and depends just on a personal perception of the self. But further on Francisco even ended up saying that "earning my own money has maybe made me less dependent". These testimonies provide content to the macro-social transformation we have been referring to, especially regarding social values and ethics of life. (9)

On the other hand, we could have here a type of *defensive strategy* facing the future, made objective in the projection of identity that would be adopted by the young in situations of uncertainty and unforeseeable structures (Pais, 2003). The young people interviewed offer some blurred images of their future, and turn this way into a different temporary axis: many possibilities and some specific objectives (10) (getting married, having their own home, having children, fulfilling their professional aims, travelling, etc.), although not in a certain chronological order, thus leaving space for possible reformulation as the "day to day" brings unforeseeable events, certain objectives might fail or there is just a change of plans. "Live the present", "I'd rather not think in the long-run" or "I experience one thing at a time" were the most common answers when asked about their future plans, which means that most of these people avoid (at least in their words) acquiring ontological commitments that risk not being fulfilled. This is exactly what Carla says:

"I don't usually plan the future, or at least not much, because when I do things go wrong and the opposite happens." (Carla, 18, middle/lower class,

(9)
We must not forget that we are dealing with young people who live in the outskirts of the urban area of Lisbon, which, in spite of internal asymmetry, is the part of the country whose life patterns, whether normative or material, are the closest ones to the European average rates.

(10)
These objectives are more "unreal" (Pais, 2003), in the sense that they are not articulated with a perception of the available resources, or with a strategy to reach them, and that the worse conditions the young person is living in, the more chances of educational failure there are.

vocational training, unemployed).

Going back to matters of identity, it is true that assuming adulthood depends on a subjective examination, but this does not stop some young people from identifying some moments in their trajectory as particularly relevant for the perception of themselves as adults. They give us several examples of different circumstances or critical moments (Thomson et al, 2002), which have led to a process of consideration of dynamics for identity reformulation. As an example, we have the case of Manuel, 20, not interested in school, but who ended up taking a vocational training course and managed to be top of the class:

"It was more or less around the middle of the year. People realise, right? Maybe I even have a talent for this! After some time (...) a teacher told me he would find me a job... And that was just around mid-year! He called me and told me that. I started thinking... that this was something serious. And I said to myself: this is what I want to do!"

It is interesting to note how, as people stay with their parents for longer, the autonomy of identity can be built/acquired without an independence as such or total emancipation from the "body" they depended on, support or family surveillance, for instance: only an objective analysis of the dissociation between autonomy and independence seems to take place with individualisation (Singly, 2000). Almost all those interviewed said that their parents' back up and presence did not interfere with their educational, professional or personal choices and decisions: (11)

"My parents have always supported me, I had to do what I wanted to do (...) I always made my one decisions. I have always known which was my path" (Isabel, 23, middle class, last year at university)

"My father and mother have never interfered in my decisions, which I think is wise. When I make a decision they are always there to support me and not criticise me. (...) I listen to their opinion, but I always want to decide for myself. We have to make mistakes and suffer to learn (...). They gave me this freedom so that I can grow up" (Carla, 18, middle/lower class, vocational training, unemployed).

However, it is necessary to understand these statements in a context of identity reaffirmation. On one hand we have the words said by the young project this "rhetoric of autonomy" (Thomson et al, 2002: 351), the cross with meditations about the modalities of interaction and familiar exchange have allowed us to contextualise this rhetoric in the context of a "situated autonomy", subjected to parental guidance, which can be assumed to a greater or lesser extent and with different intensity. Let's talk about an "autonomy situated in a certain regulation system and also in a certain group of socialising practices that contribute to restrict or broaden the field of possibilities that are actually available for the young" (Pappámikail, 2004: 16).

(11)
This statement was later reaffirmed by some parents, who said that their *lack of interference* in their children's decision was one of the main elements of the strategies/educational practices that were carried out. It is peculiar to note that this strategy is rooted in two different reasons: one of them is normative, and refers to parents who suffered interference from their own parents and have not wanted to "press" their children the same were they were. Another reason is the omission on behalf of parents who, due to their low educational qualifications, avoid giving their opinion or interfering in areas where their children are much more qualified than they are, thus just intervening only regarding behaviour and values (Pappámikail, 2004: 106-108)

2. Responsibility before the "others" and the institutions: family and work as indicators of adult identity

Some young people (a minority in the sample context) however opted for a reference to the family (and the status of material dependence) to define the adult condition. In their opinion (even if they never question their autonomy in decision-making) only when they are truly "independent", both financially and residentially speaking, they will feel the "right" to claim for their adult status.

"Being an adult... a lot of responsibilities. It is being an independent person!" (Diogo, 20, middle/upper class, vocational training, works and takes higher education at the same time).

"I don't know, but being an adult means you can pay for your own bills (...). I still depend on my parents... and I think that my transition into adulthood will take place when I leave their shelter. And when I have responsibilities!" (Maria, 25, middle/upper class, last year at university).

The others place adulthood in a negative place, regarding the access to the labour market.

"What a pain! Because we have to get up early to go to work according to an awful timetable. I have started to get the feeling that I cannot "skip work" (...) I know that when you start working you cannot help having an adult perspective of life!" (Lourenço, 21, lower class, higher education, employed).

In both cases, otherness (whether in the private or public scope) appears as the external element attributing the status of an adult to certain transitions: in the first case, leaving the parents' home (associated to an independent way of life from the financial point of view), and, in the second place, entering the labour market. For these young people adulthood is an imposed requirement (or is assigned, using Dubar's terminology, (2000)) which does not please some, such as Lourenço. This is due to the fact that this type of projection of themselves shows a clear confrontation between representations with an opposed meaning: a happy youth without commitments and a serious adulthood full of obligations.

Under these representations, which we find in many speeches (regardless of the senses assigned to responsibility), we can see a confrontation of the ethics of life, but that are not translated, as we said in I, into generational breaks. (12) Especially the ethics that many of the young people find in their parents (most of the time less qualified than them, as we have shown) and who assume the paradigm of adulthood. As a consequence, this apparent normative confrontation is less clear in those cases where the young people came from families whose members held higher qualifications.

However - and in general - this "adulthood" opposes a juvenile *ethos* which is supported on individualisation values and is simultaneously a *generational ethos* we want to respect throughout the cycle of life. However, they disapprove of the "weight" of *responsibility* that does not let them do it

(12)
Normative confrontations between parents and children, which are present in several aspects of the children's lives, and which can lead to some minor conflicts, seem to calm down with the affective atmosphere that, according to both sides (parents and children) regulates and intervenes in intergenerational cohabiting.

successfully. As we refer to the ethics of an ant ("a static" and boring adulthood they associate with their parents), but rather go for the ethics of the cicada (hedonist and emphasising mobility and accumulation of different experiences), they disapprove of adulthood and award it a negative sense (Nilsen, 1998:74 and Pais, 1998: 408).

Final comments

As a corollary of this presentation, which has been made necessarily short and in two time periods, one at a macro level, statistically characterising Portugal today and the changes and continuities that have transformed it, and another at a micro level, which has tried to award it an empirical content to this portrait, it is important to make two final comments.

Firstly, the fact that we have observed the existence of some "defensive strategies" in their own projection (as we refer to the validation of adult identity to subjective instances) articulated with a normative paradigm that is clearly rooted in expressive individualisation. These manifestations are presented as associated to a structural context of uncertainty (or at least the belief that there is one). In these cases what seems to be important for the young people interviewed is not being an adult (in a "traditional" sense) but the acknowledgment as a citizen with full rights, in spite of dependence and potential reversibility behind the statutory steps taken. When the young refer to adulthood by stating external elements of specific transitions, which would socially assign them this status, that is to a certain extent undesired, they do not intend to reinforce their dependence or reduce their autonomy, but to reject a normative model of adulthood where they do not see themselves reflected. It is also a semantic opposition: the word "adult" has a symbolic meaning to it that these young people would prefer not to assume. The first ones seem to opt (more or less consciously) for the reformulation of its content, by adapting it to their life circumstances and values.

Secondly, note that, in spite of these undefined and uncertain speeches, as it has been proved by the demographic indicators exposed in section 1, we must not forget that most Portuguese young people end up getting married, having children or building autonomous residential units even before their peers in Southern Europe. So the representations synthetically analysed here contribute only to give texture to the importance of family and professional transitions in their relation with personal identities, with the new sense awarded by the individuals. From the point of view of the social values, the importance awarded to autonomy underlies these important changes, which, in our opinion, have contributed greatly to the transformation of Portuguese society.

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Joven

adulto.

THE TOPIC

5

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Entering adult life.
A European comparison

The aim of this article is to show the existence of different social models between the youth in the contemporary Europe. It is based on a comparative analysis of the familiar and the professional development of young adults in Denmark, United Kingdom, France and Spain. It shows that the definition of «young adult» varies very much from one society to another one and that belongs to a social and cultural concept which refers to settled social agreements. The analysis is based on the complement of statistic and qualitative information obtained in two different ways. On one hand, from the use of the six longitudinal groups of The European Community Household Panel (1994-1999) and, on the other hand, from more than hundred interviews made to young individuals between 18 and 30 years old in the mentioned four countries.

The limits between infancy, youth and the adult age vary greatly from one society to another one. They show the cultural and political images of the attributes related to the different phases of life. This article tries to analyse some of the youth's social conceptions in the bosom of our contemporary societies inside a European frame. It's based on the comparative analysis of the autonomy processes carried out by Danish, British, French and Spanish young men/women: more than 135 thorough interviews have been made between 18 – 30 year old young people in theses countries (1) and they have been completed with six groups of the European Community Household Panel (1994-1999), a study made "without frontiers" and coordinated by Eurostat in the occidental European societies.

We have designed a map that shows the steps to adulthood, each one being related to defined social elements. More than sex and social life, is the social dimension what is shown as the most structured element during this period of life development. If we analyse it from a comparative point of view, "the prolongation of the youth" is far away from combining, in a transverse way, the same features from one society to another one. This article follows this structure, it develops successively four social models that define the youth and adulthood phases, but also the path that joins them.

I – *«To find oneself»* or the logic of the personal development

To begin, a first way of experiencing youth appears in a logic of personal development and takes the shape of a long time exploration that leads to a continuous independence from parents. This means «finding oneself» before having adult responsibilities. This designates youth developments that start

(1)
Study carried out in Madrid, Pamplona, Paris, Valenciennes, London, Brighton, Copenhagen, Alborg, between individual sampled in function of gender, category and social means. The guide, the interviews, same to all of them, talked about the family relations, the relations with the studies and about the associated definitions to adulthood.

with a forward independence and remain, during a long time of alternation, between different groups, such as residential, familiar and professional groups. These comings and goings give them the possibility of experiencing and forming their identity. Youth is considered then, as a long exploration path and finishes quite late, when they are around 30 years old, usually due to the birth of the first child. This is considered as the step from the own responsibility to the responsibility for others.

This logic of the personal development belongs especially to a generation tendency: nowadays young European people are registered in the life cycle, above all, with the reference of "being oneself". Most of the interviewed young adults, especially the ones who belong to well-off families, show some confusing elements about this experience, especially a great ambition for "finding themselves" and finding the image of an adult, which is more related to identification elements than to legal ones.

However, beyond this relative generational transversality, young Danish people are, more than British, French or Spanish ones, the ones who incline more to formalize, in a definitive way, this aspiration to the "searching of myself"; but they also begin long developments towards independence and experimentation that come from this searching and are relatively homogeneous depending on the gender and social sources.

1 – Experimentation developments

More often than in the other three countries, the youth phase in Denmark takes the shape of a long path, usually not straight, with trips, jobs and studies financed by the State. This phase is registered inside the continuity of an adolescence autonomy, which is in the bosom of the family. It seems that Danish young people experience an exit that is not only faster, but also easier and more natural, comparing to the cases of the other national or social groups included in this study. It's considered that only the confrontation to a familiar socialization is able to favour the individual identity: staying at parents' house is considered a "lost of time", a very bad "isolation", even something "dangerous" that stops "becoming an adult" and breaks the creation of an "own life".

After the exit comes a long period of experimentation, which can last until 30 years old more or less. Here they assert a wish to face a lot of experiences, having the aim of "fulfilling oneself" or "being ready" to take professional or familiar responsibilities: they have to "do the ego-trip" before having a family and joining the adult life. This way, there is a relation with the time marked by the no urgency and the experimentation. The rhetoric of the urgency appears in the Danish young people's speeches and they object to, for example, the "distress of the delay", which is more related to the French young people who have similar conditions and age. These last ones show a relative absence of pressure in the moment of the affective incorporation to the active life. The horizon looks far away and the periods quite long. Many people say they don't have any hurry to finish their studies because they prefer exploiting this shared and legitimate time, as shows a 24 year old

young, talking about her friends' development. She thinks she will have to wait "a long time" to start working. Another young says she is "quite worried" about finishing her studies at the age of "only" 25 years old.

This logic of flexible time finds its purpose in the discontinuous developments they alternate such as trips, studies, stops in the studies, jobs, beginning of the studies. The Danish young people have then, in a privileged way, experimentation developments which are presented by comings and goings between a lonely life and a free union, and also by comings and goings between students and wage-earning workers before they finish studying, usually quite late. As a phase of legal and salary inversion, this period of "young adult" is considered above all, as a legitimate and personally institutionalised time. To start late with some complete studies, even after having finished some other studies and having started an active life, is a behaviour that shows this experimentation logic. One of the examples is the development of a boatswain's son who gets a familiar help. After one year in England, he continued his nursery studies. He lived with five or six more students in the same house. Nowadays he's a qualified nursery, he lives alone and has worked for two years in a day nursery. However, he doesn't like taking care of ill people any more and he wants to change his life. Being 27 years old he's going to start studying musical sciences while he keeps working.

More than any other beginning – such as the exit from home, the job or the end of the studies - the arrival of a child is what is considered to be the relative term of this period of legitimate "direction taking". However, the arrival of the first child doesn't break the process of the identity formation: in essence, this requirement of self-realization induces a certain length and doesn't accept the closing. Adulthood, usually associated to the maturity, is a subjective horizon line, an age where people are introduced "furtively". This confirms, always in a context, the development of tendencies that proposes Jean-Pierre Boutinet about the image of an adult as a process and as a "perspective". (2)

2 – A democratic achievement

This logic means more a "democratic achievement", in a certain way, than a simple answer to a certain economical security. The effects of the Welfare State say that the cycle of life is essential in this case, since the financial policy for young students or unemployed people institutionalises the existence of a long and exploratory-character youth: a direct and universal assignation guarantees the economical survival of the young adult with independence from the family resources: their temporary flexibility allows the material prolongation or even the late incorporation to the studies. This policy takes place in the bosom of a society which is structured by a great middle class that separates the election of the studies and the inversions from a simple aim of professional o economical profitability. However, it doesn't obstruct at all the quick and massive incorporation of the students and the young adults to the labour market.

(2)
Jean-Pierre Boutinet (1998),
L'immaturité de la vie adulte,
Paris, PUF, p.27.

Thus, if this is possible due to an unfamiliar state policy, the existence of this kind of youth responds, finally, to stronger cultural roots. These itineraries find their bases on a quick socialization of the autonomy in the bosom of the family, where independence and equality seem to be quite strong pedagogical values. The same state policy has started to counter the paid-job of the students, and thus, the independent behaviours of the young adults that existed before. Thus, it's in this confusion of cultural values that shows up the individual autonomy and political and economical conditions which make them possible, where we can explain the existence of the Danish young people's developments ruled by a logic of personal development.

This social configuration is not usual in Denmark, but it's more underlined in the other Scandinavian countries. So, we can make the hypothesis that says that this kind of societies are more appropriate for the existence of developments with longer and exploratory character, before they start taking responsibilities as adults.

II – *«To assume oneself»* or the logic of individual emancipation

A second way of experiencing youth is framed in a logic of individual emancipation and has a strong meaning of " assuming oneself". This is characterized by a generalized precocity of the professional and familiar transitions and it adopts the figure of a young adult moved by the wish of breaking every dependence relation that joins him/her to the others: to his/her parents or to the State. It's considered that this break can be used as a base by an adult. Youth is seen as a short period of time which takes young people into the financial independence, as a reference point towards an early adulthood, and it has positive connotations. This logic of "self-constitution of the emancipation" is related to short developments where studies form a totalised experience, finished by a rapid entrance to work, which is the base of the financial independence.

Now, the qualitative analysis and the statistics relate more this logic to the British young people than to any other social group, especially the British people who belong to well-off families: their developments – short, directed to the quick access to the marital situation and with a salary – seem to be more inclined to showing a logic of emancipation, even if we can't enclose them in it.

1 – The precocity of a situation

Exactly, in the United Kingdom, the residence independence is also very premature, but differing from the Danish case, this is not guaranteed by an unfamiliarised State and depends on the individual responsibility. Even if it's not the end of the parents' financial help, the exit from home means a real symbolic break in the intergenerational paths and relations. The social rule invites the individual to become an adult; this means, a responsible human being who provides his/her own necessities. The parents' home is associated

to the infancy; so, the exit from this one, which is especially symbolic, becomes a founder act of the adult. During the studies, they prefer indebtedness and professional activity to parents' solidarity: the financial dependency, still partial, restrains the sensation of being an adult. Due to this they have short term studies and they rapidly come into the labour market. The access to parent category and marriage are also premature.

Now, British young people are especially inclined to define themselves as "adults" – related to the residential and professional category – and, in the same way, they are distinguished by the positive image they said they had of this phase of life when relating it to the "reference point" of increasing development. Far away from the "no urgency" that distinguished the experiences as young people from many Danish people, the English young people's testimonies show, on the contrary, a way of precipitation to the access of the adult category and to the professional and familiar responsibilities that come with them. Many of them say they are "wishing", "impatient" and "curious" for going into this adult life which is similar to a "real life" and is also similar to the real reference point of a path that they wish it will be really individual. The Danish ones showed a clear tendency of defining themselves as "young adults" until they become 30 years old, but the British ones usually define themselves as "adults" after the 20 or 22 years old, the age that responds, more or less, to the end of the studies and to the definitive professional entrance. This is more related to the beginning of the independence more than to a long and undefined process of maturing: the adult identity is considered to come directly from a social and familiar category. This way, adulthood seems to be very related to the notion of individual independence and in fact, depending on their residential and financial situation, the interviewed British young people consider themselves to be "adults" in the bosom of their life cycle or not.

2 – The liberal requirement

The analysis of the British young people's development showed that this kind of youth was strongly related to the conjunction of a liberal society and familiar model with individualistic tendencies.

The individualism in the United Kingdom is distinguished by its hierarchic composition where the strong sense of the autonomy developments is the emancipation. Adulthood is a positive perspective, even an ideal. The young adult is invited to make his/her path in an individual way in the bosom of a society that values the professional success as a merit. The youth developments are framed in a cultural context that devalues parents' financial dependence after the exit from adolescence, and gives importance to the search of a paid job more than the familiar help, even while studying. The most important individualism, between the analysed British families, differs from the democratic tendency shown in the interviewed Danish families: the equality in the bosom of the family is not obtained, it's deserved, especially by showing the individual capacities of independence.

The State intervention, of liberal inspiration, confirms the principle of

individual responsibility. When there are no direct subsidies, a loan policy incites to the self-financing. In spite of that, the high prices of studies make necessary, in most of the cases, the family help, and this limits the entrance to university for middle-class and well-off families. The actual evolution is a rise in the educational expenses. Following some long studies means making a decision between facing the expenses during one more year and the profitability it has in the labour market in the frame of a low unemployment rate. Thus, more than being a normative invitation to "being adult", the liberal requirement conditions, in the same way, the precocity of the British developments.

3 - *«To place oneself»* or the logic of social integration

A third way of experiencing youth is framed in a logic of social integration and means "placing oneself". It's characterized by a massive dedication to the studies justified by the wish of having a definitive job. The phase of the youth, associated to studies, is thought as an inversion in the family that determines, almost definitively, the future social level of the individual, and then, legitimises the acceptation of a transitory familiar dependence. Youth is characterized by quite short studying itineraries, although lineal, and after this ones there is a necessity, sometimes not achieved, for a quick marriage and professional installation. The relation with the time is framed in a logic of urgency where options seem to be definitive and irreversible and where it seems to be that future, fixed in the professional way, has already begun. The access to the professional establishment is the main symbolic entrance into the adult life.

Young French people seem to be the closest ones to this logic, but in a relatively ambiguous way, divided between an aspiration to a personal development and the limitations of a social structure that conditions strongly the possible job in the initial formation.

1 – The age of the "definitive"

In France the most important thing is the semi-dependency. There are many intermediate situations characterized by the ambiguity between a relatively premature exit and a later effective professional establishment: cohabitation without the parents' approval, student accommodation paid by parents, effective official and financial autonomy... the progressive developments associate familiar solidarity practises to an ethic of the autonomy. An effective family solidarity, in spite of having a meaning of a premature independence, responds to the social election of this period considered a life inversion. In this society, characterized by the importance of belonging to a professional group in the social and individual definition and characterized by the connection between this category and the title got at the end of the studies, the youth phase is considered to be the phase where "life is constructed" and it's dominated by the pressure of "integrating" socially, "entering a cycle", where you need to reach a position in the bosom of an already established hierarchy. The problem of a "social definition"

conditioned by the level and the area of the studies forms, in a effective way, a key for the basic understanding of the development into the incorporation to the active life. This makes more important the question of "orientation" for the development and takes to a relation with the time marked by the pressure for going ahead and for making no mistake that can be perceived. The urgency of the integration and the absence of profitability associated to studies contribute to continuous and prematurely begun academic developments. There is a marked division between the studying period and the incorporation to work.

Adulthood is represented as the age of the definitive stability with a first negative connotation; however people looks for it as the age pressure rises. French young people's adulthood images reflect the relative ambiguity they show to position themselves in the bosom of the placing developments. In fact, they juxtapose two opposite definitions that make able to see a potential tension between the individual aspirations and the importance of a premature determination. Beyond a generalized image in terms of identity and personal development – "to be mature", "to be responsible", "to feel autonomous" - , the negative connotation that some young people have associated to adulthood, comparing it to the "routine", to "fixed", to a "sad a straight line" or to a "completely designed path" hasn't find a real equivalent in the rest of the European young people. Adulthood appears, then, codified, like the age of something definitive and imposed. These images reflect the existence of a give and take between a limitation to the premature social determination and an aspiration for a personal development they refer to.

2 – The corporative pressure

As reflect of French young people's experience, this kind of youth has been associated, in a privileged way, to a corporate kind of social structure.

This youth experience is framed in a social model which makes the belonging to a professional group one of the principal definitive criterions of the individual, but in the same way, it limits the access to it through the certificate. Here we find one of the components of a corporativism that invades the French society, which is strongly structured around a hierarchy of divided socio-professional categories. The concession of the social rights seems to be properly divided and related to profession. In France this approximates to a "corporativist" Welfare State, as Gosta Esping-Andersen (3) defined. The educational system and the labour market remark this division with a pronounced split of the different studying and working sectors, and also with an extreme valuation of the initial title during life.

Besides, the state intervention in front of the "dependent" young adults confirms the principle that parents take care about the studying phase and the professional integration. However, this is combined with some unfamiliar features that legitimate, for instance, a partial right of the residential independence for students and unemployed young people by means of a housing help policy. This shows a quite strong division in the bosom of the

(3)
Gosta Esping-Andersen (1999), *Les tríos mondes de l'Etat-providence. Essai sur le capitalisme moderne,* Paris, PUF.

French youth between an aspiration to the independence and the adaptation to a parents' provisional maintenance, at least economical. Despite they belong to a catholic society, French young people usually adopt independence behaviours and family values which are closer to the ones we find in the protestant countries.

In the way that the corporativism is especially structured, even if it comes together with a rigid formation-job link and an elitist educational system, we can suppose that the French society is the one which offers the most susceptible frame in order to create this kind of experiences, even if it's possible to happen, in a more partial way, in other corporativist societies.

IV – *«To install oneself» or the logic of familiar belonging*

Finally, the fourth kind of youth is framed in a logic of familiar belonging and adopts the development of home permanency while they don't have the conditions for establishing as adults. The strong signification associated to this development could be resumed by the expression "to install oneself". The youth phase is considered to be a waiting phase and a phase when they have to prepare the economical and familiar conditions for a future installation. The exit from the parents' house means a symbolic break of great importance in the young adult's development, because this finishes a autonomization period in the bosom of the family and bases the entrance in life as an adult. Leaving parents' house is the last phase of a process which has three acts: having a stable job, getting married and buying a house. It's considered that the familiar cohabitation keeps on while these three conditions don't happen. Leaving parents' house outside this frame seems to be a way of "affective treason". The integration by means of financial and residential interdependence makes possible the integration in the bosom of the group and the home exit breaks its balance, although this extends thanks to a continuous renovation of the familiar belonging.

In a certain way, in this fourth logic we can add the speeches of the Spanish young people, interviewed in this study. The reasons they give to justify the long time they stay at their parents' home has the mark of a belonging logic and shows the existence of images related to a federator home. However, these rules seem to be claimed – even imposed – by the parents' generation and their maintenance at home comes also from a certain economical pragmatism.

1 – An overdue installation

The exit from the parents' house in Spain is later indeed, and finishes the youth developments taken place in the parents' house; it's based in a legitimacy of a permanence in the familiar home while they don't have the financial conditions for an installation as adults and while the couple's links are not so strong to create a new home. The cohabitation of the young adults and the parents is sometimes called "Luxury hotel" by young men. Helping the family financially is more usual in families with less resources,

while in other situations, parents tell children to start saving money for their future installation. This relative absence of the economical participation usually doesn't make young people feel bad, because it's inside a logic of insure and long term reciprocity: it's considered that, later on, the sense of intergenerational solidarity turns around completely. This is why cohabitation is considered to be a way of collective inversion for the "child's" installation, because this way, he/she can save money for a future housing inversion. The price of this "hotel" seems to be somewhere else, especially in the respect to the family values that guide the cohabitation.

As the culminating moment of a guided youth itinerary, guided by the familiar home, the exit seems to be, thus, a "great step" to the adult life. Usually associated to the economical stability and the familiar responsibilities, the images young Spanish people develop in adulthood are dominated by the logic of installation. Certainly, as happens with all the other interviewed Europeans, the evocation of an identifying process has dominated greatly the expressed definitions of what "becoming an adult" is. However, we have to underline that few Spanish young people choose this identity formation to install themselves in the life cycle: they define themselves as "no adults" due to the lack of achievement of an economical and familiar stability, which is supposed to be what defines the definitive entrance to this age". Youth is usually seen as a long phase of preparation and a wait of an establishment as an adult.

2 – A familiar rule

The analysis of the Spanish youth experience shows that this kind of development takes directly to a conjunction of a familiar rule and a high unemployment rate.

This kind of experience is framed in a society that doesn't offer a social paper to young people before having a relative high age and keeps people in a waiting situation for a long time. Apart from being a simple answer to a rule of installation, the permanency development at parents' house is also strongly conditioned by the economical limitations and by the material impossibility of being able to "offer themselves" an exit once they are installed. Taking into account a quite high unemployment rate between young people and a saturated renting market, orientated to the buying of a house more than to renting, the absence of public helps to be able to get an independence, make people extend their youth phase while they don't have the conditions for having a stability as adults.

However, it's the basic place the "belonging" to a familiar group has, what makes possible understand the belonging development in the parents' house by young adults. More than by his/her independence, the individual defines himself/herself by his/her situation in the material and affective interdependence that renews once and again. Home is the privileged space to create this interdependence and leaving it without having a new one is seen as an affective "treason". In this sense, young adults' autonomy developments consist, above all, on forming their individuality in the bosom

of this familiar belonging through the introduction of a reciprocity with the parents and the preparation of their own installation. Accordingly, in similar ages and social categories, Spanish people usually extend the familiar cohabitation comparing to the other studied countries.

Once we have seen the familiar and social indicators, Spain belongs to the greatest group that consists on the Mediterranean countries, having Italy as the extremity. Thus, we can suppose that the south European countries, which have similar socio-economical conditions – family kind Welfare States and adversely structured labour markets – guide themselves to this kind of experiencing youth.

Conclusion

In view of all this about a society, when can we say somebody is an adult? Where is the legitimate limit between the child and the parents, between the independent individual and the integrated citizen? This article has shown that age keeps forming a political and social idea and that there is still a strong sign of the societies in this phase of life. Depending on the state intervention, the established educational systems and the labour markets, each society tends to institutionalise different ways of going into adulthood and also tends to create specific experiences and images of this vital development. However, the comparison invites not to forget the role of the cultural values and the religious legacy in the differences between the European young people. The different young developments can't be considered as a simple consequence of the institutional characteristics of the educational system, the labour market and the Welfare State. Young people's developments and images respond, in a same way, to stronger cultural and religious roots, and not only to economical features. In this point, the Europe's map is startling: the precocity of the exit and the couple union, pit totally the protestant countries against the catholic ones, including Ireland. (4) The protestant and catholic inherencies mark, in a same way, the behaviours, especially of young people's families. Thus, when internationalising the educational systems and the labour markets, when we pose the question of the potential convergence on the steps to adulthood in Europe, this comparison invites to think that the destiny's multiplicity in this "European generation" would resist – at least partially - to the harmonization of the educational policies and the economical globalisation.

(4)
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THE TOPIC

6

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Study of the transition to adulthood for Italian young people:
Between crossing the threshold in an orderly way and individualising biographical paths

This article analyses the specific aspects of the transition of young Italians into adulthood. We have observed that the extension of youth in Europe and of the tendency of the young to stay at the family home tends to be more accentuated in Italy (and Southern Europe) than in other places. Additionally, Italian sociologists focus on the transformation of the intergenerational relations, paying attention to the great freedom awarded to the young and the absence of limitations. On the other hand, factors such as the weakness of the political policies aimed at the young and the obstacles found in the rental market have not been deeply analysed. Even if there is a large consensus about the importance of familiar socialisation with the young, the ways to move on to adulthood confront those researchers who defend the appearance of an individualisation of trajectories with those who believe that the stages of their transition are most of the time ordered in accordance with a precise sequence: end of studies, joining the labour market, leaving the family home, marriage and birth of the first child.

Key words: Young adults, «extended» family, «typical» sequences, «atypical» sequences

1. Introduction

The aim of this article is to analyse the forms of transition of the Italian young into adulthood, paying attention to their specificity regarding the European context. Even though we have observed an extension of youth all over Europe, the Italian young (and the young in other countries in Southern Europe) seem to tend to stay at the family home more than young people in other countries (Cavalli and Galland, 1993). In order to study this phenomenon we have often given certain explanations indicating that the cause is the difficulty to start working. Nevertheless, this thesis has been abandoned due to the high number of young people with long-term contracts who still live with their parents. In addition to this, many authors have focused on the family and its internal performance to study this trend. Certain expressions such as *famiglia lunga* (extended family) and *giovani adulti* (young adults) have become popular to talk about this trend to stay with the family (Donati, 1988). If the analysis of the transition into adulthood has generated a large number of researches in the field of family studies, other factors have been forgotten, especially those referring to the lack of social policies oriented towards helping the young to become independent and the crisis in the rental market. Additionally, and although it may seem like a paradox, for a long time there has been a public debate on the social effects of the dependence of the young on their families. Even though it is quite recent, there has been a despicable lack of interest on behalf of the

Administration and the public powers regarding the analysis proposed by social sciences (Rauty, 1989; Cavalli, 2002).

Having remembered the different versions of the theories about the transition to describe this phenomenon, we will focus on the 5 studies undertaken through questionnaires made by the Iard Research Institute between 1983 and 2000 (1) about other quantitative studies developed by large organisations. It is important to note that, even though they follow the same protocols, the interpretations about the individualisation of the biographical trajectories in the transition to adulthood are different in these researches. On the other hand, there seems to be a wide consensus about the temporary social and demographical consequences of the extension of youth.

2. New and old theories about the transition into adulthood

After a preliminary sociological research phase about youth dedicated to the generational conflict and the forms of juvenile culture (between 1940 and the first decade of 1970), during the last thirty years the matter of transition into adulthood has reached an important place (Saraceno, 1986; Cicchelli and Merico, 2001; Merico, 2002; 2004). We can even state that this focus has managed to attract almost exclusively the attention of youth sociology, although a large part of it tends to be confused with the study of this transition.

It is interesting to note that most studies on this phenomenon have taken a point of view provided by John Modell, Frank Fustenberg and Theodore Hershberg (1976) consisting in studying the step into adult life, analysing the moment when five thresholds are crossed: leaving the educational system, joining the labour market, leaving the family home, marriage and the formation of a new family with the birth of children. From now on the referential figure will be formed by these thresholds. However, these three authors insisted on the fact that event though it is not certain that all people share the same calendar for the transition into adulthood, it seems heuristic to state that each society defines its own rules in relation to adulthood and the way it is reached. These thresholds have been useful on one hand to locate the "sequence" that for a long time characterised its normal paths, that is to say, those paths that were socially acknowledged and legitimate for the transition into adulthood (Hogan, 1978; Marini, 1984) and, on the other, to analyse this step by referring to two axes: the first one is familiar and matrimonial and the second one is educational and professional (Galland, 1990, 2000).

The latest advances in research have emphasised the deep transformations experienced by the entrance into adulthood since the war ended (Hogan and Astone, 1986). This way, we can notice a postponement of the ages to take the step and cross the threshold, thus leading to an extension of youth (Keniston, 1968, 1971). Even though it has followed different temporalities and modes, this phenomenon has ended up by affecting all western countries (Fussel, 2002). More specifically, we are witnessing a significant transformation of the way to move up the ranks towards adulthood: transition along two axes (educational-professional and familiar-matrimonial) will not take place in a synchronised manner, as the first one is taken much

earlier than the second one (Modell *et alii*, 1976; Galland, 2000; Iedema *et alii*, 1997). In a more general way, it is obvious that the localisation of a "normal biography" must take into consideration variations in gender, social position and ethnic origins (Pisati, 2002).

Another point of view focuses the attention on the individualisation of the biographical trajectories (Beck, 1986) and the transformations of juvenile temporalities (Leccardi, 2005*a*, 2005*b*). Three elements indicate the impossibility of the social frameworks to determine from now on the individual destinations. Firstly, the increasing division of experiences leads to multiple possible careers. This creates a strong uncertainty regarding the future and can create in the individual the impression that he/she has no control over destiny (Evans and Furlong, 2000). Secondly, the paths can be reversible because crossing the threshold is nothing definite. Individuals can go back and forth between situations that used to be exclusive in the educational-familiar axis or the familiar-matrimonial axis. Some sociologists use the *yo-yo trajectories* to define this constant oscillation (Egris, 2001; du Bois-Reymond and López Blasco, 2004). Thirdly, in this context of great differentiation of social systems, the increase of unemployment, of flexibility and of the lack of connections between training and the labour market, young people can continue at the same time with their education and have a part-time internship or a flexible job, for instance. To sum up, where the sequences and orders were normalised in the *steps to adulthood* now we can see a multiplicity, a reversibility and a simultaneity of the *situations of young adults*.

3. Researchers' point of view about the transition into adulthood in Italy

In the field of Italian youth sociology, studies about the transition into adulthood have a privileged place. This transition has usually identified the paradigm of sequences, either covering the entire 20th century or looking at the last 30 years. Even if there is a wide consensus about the delay in leaving home and about the role played by the family in this transition into adulthood, there are certain differences regarding the temporary transformation of life paths. Some state that in Italy too there some more individualised biographical paths, whereas others deny this hypothesis. What is to be emphasised is that fact that both theses are actually opposed, especially regarding data interpretation; however, both resort to the same research guidelines that compare a biographical trajectory to a route along certain limited, ordered and exclusive stages.

3.1. A century of transitions into adulthood

Since 1997 few longitudinal studies have been made amongst Italian families (ILFI). These data allow us to analyse the transformation of the rhythm of transition into adulthood in this country during the 20th century (Schizzerotto, 2002). Here we have proved (Table 1) that not all classical indicators of this transition (the leaving home factor has not been considered) follow the same evolution when the data are compared for the group of Italians born between 1910 and 1927 and those born between 1958 and 1967. Both in the case of men and women, the axis of training and professions follows a linear growth: the average age to leave the educational system and the average age to join the labour market go up irregularly (2)

(2)
These results only converge taking into account working women, as the average figure for the entire female population shows non-linear movement in growth and a reduction of the addition into the labour market.

On the contrary, the marriage and familiar axis takes a U-shaped curb. Until 1950 the age for marriage and birth of the first child went down. Then, these two factors started to be postponed.

Table 1. **Average age to obtain the diploma, get the first job, marry and have the first child** (per generations and sexes).

	Average age to leave school		Average age to get the first job		Average age to get married		Average age to have the first child	
	Men	**Women**	**Men**	**Women***	**Men**	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**
1910-27	12,1	10,7	15,8	15,7	28,6	24,8	30,5	26,5
1928-37	13,7	11,2	16,6	17,6	28,2	24,4	30,2	26,3
1938-47	15,1	13,6	17,4	18,2	27,2	23,8	29,1	25,6
1948-57	18,1	15,7	18,8	18,7	26,6	22,9	29,0	25,0
1958-67	18,7	18,1	20,2	19,6	28,5	24,8	31,9	28,3
1968-79	19,6	19,7	21,5	**	**	**	**	**
Total	17,3	15,1	19,4	18,5	27,8	24,4	30,2	26,5

Source: Pisati, 2002
* These data refer only to women who have had at least one job.
** There are no data because over half of the interviewed did not have to cross a threshold subjected to studies.

If young Italians choose now to postpone their entry into adulthood in the familiar aspects it is due to the comparison with the generations born after World War II. These data allow us to make another comment. Taking as an indicator the "width" (3) of youth, the U-shaped curb followed seems to weaken the thesis according to which the extension of this stage of life is a phenomenon connected to current times; on the contrary, we could also suggest the hypothesis that the extension of youth is a feature of the periods of recession, whereas we can see a shorter duration throughout the period of economic growth and social welfare (Pisati, 2002).

3.2. The long stay of the young at the family home

The trend to postpone the entrance into adulthood appeared in the mid-20th century becomes confirmed when we bear in mind the studies collecting data for more recent groups. To begin with, let's refer to the studies undertaken by the Iard Institute. (4) In addition to this, from the 80s, including the generations born at the end of the 50s, we can see a postponement of the adult age applicable to all indicators (Table 2). Up until the age of 20, young Italians who leave the educational system form a minority that becomes steadily reduced from the age of 30. Within the next age group (20-24), the percentages of those who stay in higher education are globally stable and are different in the next age group: it is also true that in the year 2000, 12.5% of those over 30 still continued to receive training. This comes to show that the age to enter the labour market is postponed and that a fourth of the young people over 30 admits not having had a job yet (Buzzi, 2002).

Leaving the family home is being gradually postponed: in the year 2000 only 3 out of every 10 young people had left home between the ages of 25 and 29, whereas in 1992 the percentage was 40%. Also, almost a third of those young people between the ages of 30-34 lived with their parents when the last survey was done. There is an observable difference between the behaviours shown by Italian young people and their peers, who leave earlier in other continental and Northern European countries, but behave similarly to young people in other Southern European countries (Chambaz, 2001;

(3)
«Width» here indicates the period between the average age to leave school and the average age to have the first child (Pisati, 2002).

(4)
This institute has been doing a study every four years since 1983 through a questionnaire about the situation of the young in Italy (Cavalli *et alii*, 1984; Cavalli-de Lillo, 1987; 1992; Buzzi, Cavalli and de Lillo, 1996; 2000). The interviewees were aged between 15 and 24 for the studies carried out in 1983, 1987 and 1992; aged between 15 and 29 in 1996 and aged between 15 and 34 in 2000.

Corijn and Klijzing, 2001). These data about leaving the family home late are confirmed in this section dedicated to Italy in the retrospective study entitled *Family and Fertility Survey* (FFS): from the 1946-1950 group to the 1961-1965 group, the average age to leave home goes from 24.6 to 27.1 in men and 22.8 to 25.2 in women (Billari and Ongaro, 1999). From the second half of the 50s, men have been the ones to postpone leaving home and women followed five years later. Regarding those people born between 1946 and 1975, both in men and women, the postponement coincides mostly with the formation of a family. In 1995, three quarters of those who had left did it because they started having their own families: 10% for professional reasons, 9% for educational reasons and 7% for other reasons.

As opposed to other countries where the opposition between saying at home and residential independence loses little by little its pertinence due to its morphological complexity (Cicchelli, 2001*a*), in Italy it is still alive. Leaving the family home is done as one gets married and young Italians go straight from living at home to having their own family, without experimenting and living on their own or with a partner in an independent home (Ongaro, 2001; Rusconi, 2004). According to a study done by the *Istituto di Ricerche sulla Popolazione* (IRP) in 1998, those males aged 20-34 living on their own only totalled 5%, a percentage that in the case of women totalled 3%. These proportions vary notably when referring to those young people with jobs (6% and 5%, respectively). Cohabiting with friends hardly ever takes place: 2.5% of males and 2% of females (Bonifazi *et alii*, 1999). Also, unmarried couples are not common (Castiglioni, 1999), as Italians prefer marriage as a means to get together (Angeli, Pillati and Rettaroli, 1999). Data issued by the IARD confirm these dominating models as a transition from the family to the creation of another new family without any other form of cohabiting in between, which shows a reduction in the number of young marriages in Italy (Buzzi, 2002).

This way we understand that almost four out of every ten people interviewed had not had any children yet. Also, «estimated in general terms, but probably very efficient ones, if the transition of the three stages is an indicator that one has reached the category of an adult, then we must consider that 98% of Italians aged 18-20, 94% aged 21-24, 73% aged 25-29 and 35% aged 30-34 are *not* adults» (Buzzi, 2002, p. 27). The analysis of these data allows us to confirm the hypothesis according to which during the last 30 years there has been a postponement of the ages to cross the threshold in Italy too and therefore youth is extended. More specifically, here we can see not only a sliding in the crossing of the threshold, but also a re-structuring process: between 1996 and 2000, the time needed to find a job after leaving school was shortened, whereas the time to join the labour market and have a family was extended.

Table 2. **Postponement of the entry into adulthood** (% of interviewees crossing the threshold).

Stages of transition	Age of the interviewees				
	15-17 years	**18-20 years**	**21-24 years**	**25-29 years**	**30-34 years**
Leaving the educational system					
1983	16,7	39,4	46,1	-	-
1987	11,0	30,8	44,6	-	-
1992	5,6	25,8	38,0	53,1	-
1996	7,2	32,1	49,7	75,6	-
2000	6,8	29,8	49,2	70,9	87,5
Insertion into the labour market					
1983	5,4	18,1	29,7	-	-
1987	4,6	15,6	32,7	-	-
1992	4,6	15,1	35,0	49,7	-
1996	1,5	10,7	26,6	43,9	-
2000	2,3	21,2	39,2	57,4	74,1
Leaving the family home					
1983	0,1	2,3	13,5	-	-
1987	0,3	2,5	12,5	-	-
1992	0,0	3,0	10,2	39,0	-
1996	0,0	2,4	8,5	36,2	-
2000	0,3	2,4	6,1	30,3	67,7
Marriage/cohabiting					
1983	0,0	20,2	20,2	-	-
1987	0,1	15,3	15,3	-	-
1992	0,0	11,4	11,4	35,5	-
1996	0,0	6,8	6,8	31,9	-
2000	0,3	4,8	4,8	23,7	61,9
Birth of the first child					
1983	0,0	12,2	12,2	-	-
1987	0,4	10,4	10,4	-	-
1992	0,0	5,0	5,0	20,6	-
1996	2,0	5,0	5,0	21,6	-
2000	0,0	3,0	3,0	12,2	45,2

Source: Buzzi, 2002, 26

4. From juvenile unemployment to relationships: the extended family

How can we explain this extension of Italian youth and, especially, the postponement of leaving the home? There is no doubt that there are some factors in Italy like in other European countries, such as the extension of education and democratisation of higher education, greater precariousness in jobs and uncertainty in the labour market, a transformation of the intergenerational relations - in the sense that authority has been weakened - and a greater margin for young people to manoeuvre (from Singly, 2000; Cicchelli, 2001*b*; from Singly and Cicchelli, 2003; Biggart *et alii*, 2004).

The particularly high proportions of youth unemployment, especially amongst young women and in the southern regions of the country (Pugliese, 1992; Cortese, 2000), make us take this factor into consideration; however, there are four other considerations that encourage researchers to look for other explanations. Firstly, the postponement of the age to marry and have the first child is usually more common in the richest Italian regions (Buzzi, Cavalli and de Lillo, 2002). Secondly, 40% of youngsters living at home admit that they have a job (Bonifazi *et alii*, 1999; Facchini, 2002). Thirdly, two fifths of those people interviewed for the IARD study believe that their salary would be enough to live in an independent flat, but only 23% of them declared having attempted to do this (Facchini, 2002). Lastly, in 1998, the most popular sentences repeated by one out of every two Italians who lived at the family home (aged 18-34) was «I'm fine this way and I still have my autonomy». Only 17% of the interviewees justified their stay because they did not have a paid job (Carrà Mittini, 2001).

This is why we understand that sociologists look at how the familiar sphere works. From this point of view, from adolescence and as long as the individual belongs to the family, it is understood that familiar socialisation is a process for the insertion of the younger members in the generations, in a process that witnesses a complex *association* both for parents and children, and which demands reciprocal support. Researchers have shown an interest in the ways young people and their parents interact, and the territory that the latter dominate in their families (Scabini and Rossi, 1997). The reconsideration of intergenerational relations can be understood well provided the broad freedom margins that young adults have and their low levels of participation in house work (Facchini, 2002). More specifically, the proportions of young people who can have friends over, choose their friends without their parents' opinion and choose the places they usually go to total 80%. There are, however, certain differences in gender, age and place of residence, but the image suggests a great freedom to move both in the domestic environment and the public scope. The more freedom, the greater proportion of young people who are happy to stay with their parents. The implication of young people in domestic life is quite low, especially for men: less than three out of every ten men take part in tasks like shopping, cooking, ironing, running errands and doing paperwork (Facchini, 2002, 176). Also, the financial contribution made by those who have a job to the family budget is quite limited. We must not forget that there is a large number of young people who want to continue living at home due to socio-economic reasons, but in the case of other young people it is due to the family atmosphere (Scabini and Cigoli, 1997).

We could possibly ask ourselves whether there is an alternative to the model of the extended family, but the answer is no. However, the last study done by the IARD proves that the marginal situation must not be forgotten. We still have an early abandonment of the family home and marriage, basic elements of the *traditional* Italian model of transition into adulthood. (5) These behaviours refer quite frequently to young people who belong to lower classes, live in small villages and start working soon. Additionally, we have already seen that there are some young people who live in their own homes but are not married yet (Facchini, 2002). This is the case especially of young people belonging to the middle and upper classes of Italian society who live in the urban centres of the central and southern regions. It is obviously too late to know whether this new behaviour will become an alternative to the extended family, in which case it would be an intermediate stage between the traditional and future models.

5. «Typical sequences», «atypical sequences»

Has the extension of youth brought a modification in the calendar of transition into adulthood? Some authors calculate that this transition is made in Italy according to a strictly ordered itinerary: «the ideal route towards the obtention of autonomy in Italy is formed by several stages: first, the end of studies and joining the labour market and then marriage. This group of events tends to form today, more than ever, a succession following a strict chronological order, with a more linear and less flexible model of transition into adulthood compared to other countries» (Decanini and Palomba, p. 10). Two sources can be mentioned confirming the existence of a «normal biography» formed by sequences and followed by

(5)
However, historical demography studies have shown that it is difficult to speak about an Italian model of an age to get married, due to great regional differences (Rettaroli, 1992).

most young people. The first one corresponds to the analysis of the groups proposed by the Ilfi. The latter has tried to check effectively whether, as decades go by, the itinerary that begins at the end of studies, followed by the addition into the labour market and completed with marriage and the birth of their first child has always followed the same order. The «typical sequences» are those paths that respect the previously mentioned calendar and the «atypical sequences» are the remaining cases. This way we compare the groups of male Italians born between 1910 and 1927 with the rest until 1958-1962, and it becomes obvious that the set of typical sequences is the most important one: even though they might vary a little, their values match around seven out of every ten cases. In the case of women, it is confirmed that the dominant model is the one respecting the calendar although bearing in mind that this distinguishes their paths from those of males', the percentage of typical sequences grows significantly and regularly: from 21% in the case of women born before 1927 to 33% in the case of those born between 1958 and 1962. This increase is due especially to the fact that more women have joined the labour market before continuing with their studies (and therefore, before marrying and having children) (Pisati, 2002, p. 136). The second source corresponds to a second use of data issued by the Iard. Excluding those individuals who have not crossed any thresholds, the percentage of those who have managed to follow a regular path or are currently doing so totals 53.2% in the case of men and 45.3% in the case of women. 10.7% of men and 18.8% of women follow a regular path.

Besides this dominating model, however, we can also confirm some important elements that prove a transformation of the paths into adulthood, which have become more individualised. Firstly, and should circumstances remain the same, the more discriminatory variable about accessing adult life following an «atypical» path is the school diploma. Having a *laurea* diploma (equivalent to four or five years of higher education, depending on the degree) increases these chances by 30% in men. In the case of women, it is by 44% (Pisati, 2002). Also, some answers to the Iard questionnaire are valuable indicators of a modification in the postponement of the future, as people seem to award greater importance to having an open future and the modifiable options: thus, 7 out of every 10 people interviewed considered the final options as a risk («one has to leave many doors open in life») and 6 out of every 10 think it is possible to go back and change («even the most important choices are never valid forever, you can always go back»). On the other hand, the multiplicity of situations experienced by the young is translated into the possibility of a plural definition: thus, 15% of workers living with their parents define themselves a students, as well as 21% of those who live with their new family but do not have a job, and 9% of those in the same situation but working. A qualitative study done by Monica Santoro (2004) confirms that these data indicate through certain factors the level of simultaneity of the situations experienced and how the consequences are reversible. In the Italian scope, which was characterised some years ago by a wide range of training possibilities, young people tend to take over intermediate positions between youth and adulthood that include several conditions of the labour markets as well as the training options.

6. Fears shown by researchers and weak points of the social debate

In Italy the world of research is trying to encourage the social debate on the effects of this extension of the dependence of the young on their parents, as the Italian media seem not to care much about this matter. They focus on adolescence and more brutal forms of violence (including the frequent parricides appeared in the press) or more bewildering types of apathy.

When we talk about the means that young people must be provided with to help them become a resource for the future society, we refer to the traditional agent in charge of Italian youth: the family. The State does not take part in this debate due to the weakness of family policies since the Republic began and the marginal role of the public powers in the definition of private life. If we try to summarise the main changes of the family rights known in Italy during the 70s (like in other European countries), we will see that the Italian State participates less than its peers from continental Europe in the categorisation of private life (Saraceno, 1998). This can be clearly seen in the fact that family aids are less generous (Lévy, 1998). Even if the fecundity rate in Italy is the one of the lowest in the world and this has been debated by many demographers (Dalla Zuanna, 2000), there has been no support to correct this situation.

The subject of young adults is posed in connection with this problem regarding the birth rate, as a later entry of women into maternity has negative consequences on their final descendants (Palomba, 1999). In Italy, most women have a child after getting married, as cohabiting outside wedlock is not common and people hardly ever leave home before getting married (De Sandre, Pinelli et Santini, 1997). That is why it is about addressing natality in the framework of a wider debate on relations between generations. Provided that the family is one of the resources needed to move into adulthood, it becomes an ambivalent institution. As there are no other regulating institutions and mechanisms, it is the only one providing material and identifying solid resources, and it is assigned the tasks of socialisation and material, emotional and symbolic support. Therefore, at the same time we have the formation of a joint association between parents and children based on dialogue and a reciprocal attention at the time that large complexities arise regarding the social effects of this approximation. Many fear that an excess in family will prevent a generational separation and influence young people's capacity to become integrated in the world of adults and parents to put a deadline to their socialisation task (Cavalli, 1997; Scabini and Rossi, 1997). If a family is too welcoming it may not offer the young the conditions they need to reach definite independence levels. Those young people who are not able to reach a real *generational transition* guaranteeing their access to the parent category live in this state of social ungravity without having to worry about the risks behind an intergenerational change. These issues are framed in a more general diagnosis about the weakening in relation with the future, the absence of a project amongst the young and how they fall back on the present. (6)

7. Some final comments

We would like to finish this article about the transition into adulthood amongst young Italians by focusing on some data extracted from research.

(6)
Italian youth sociology has worked hard to study the relations of young people throughout time. See Cavalli, 1985; Garelli, 1984; Donati and Colozzi, 1997; and in the case of women, Leccardi, 1996.

The data used by Italian sociologists to this study this phenomenon are obtained from a research protocol that matches most of them to the localisation of sequences throughout life. If we study the paths according to the way we cross the well-known conventional thresholds, few are the elements that allow us to see diversions in the paths, returning to the fact that several categories may be joined. A young person may have an unstable job or spend all his/her time on new training before joining the labour market. People can be autonomous and dependent at the same time (from Singly, 2000; Cicchelli and Martin, 2004). The complexity of the situations a young person can conform at the same time, including private life, is not included in questionnaires, which are inspired in the sequential paradigm of the transition into adulthood. Thus, possibly the tool used by researchers for the last 30 years to analyse the types of changes into adulthood in Italy may have hidden the appearance of a greater individualisation of biographical paths, a phenomenon that, on the other hand, has been noticed through indices.

We can imagine that Italian society is also subjected to the same historical changes than the rest of European countries; not bearing in mind this element would mean condemning young Italians to an invincible otherness that would not allow them to find any common areas with other cultural fields. Nevertheless, it is necessary to modify this universal view with a large dose of particularism, as we will probably not be able to reduce the importance of the role that the history of this country has played. Let's see two examples to this need to take an intermediate position between universalism and particularism, (Breviglieri and Cicchelli, *to be published*). Firstly, if in the Italian case, like in the rest of Southern Europe, the extension of youth does not consider the existence of a period of life between the source family and the new family, researchers must make an effort to create the construction of autonomy of the young in a framework where there are no elements to mark the social ungravity and experimentation phase and where one enters adulthood in an institutionalised manner. Therefore, two are the possibilities: either in Italy young people access adult life straight away without experiencing freedom, so they would not be like the French, German or British young people, or else they can experience this stage of life without having to experience a lack of familiar socialisation. This is why it is necessary to revise the continental and insular definition of social experimentation to understand the Italian reality (Cassano, 1998; Cicchelli, 2001*c*). Instead of defending that the definition assigned to autonomy as the basis of an individual is not at all like the one found in other countries due to an incomplete transition of Italians into modernity, we suggest that another path be followed: maybe the sense awarded to links and their maintenance is different and there might be no contrast between autonomy and dependence. How can we explain then the fact that Italian young people do not complain about their extended dependence on one part and seem to make a virtue out of need on the other? Secondly, as we have already seen, the local translation of the European phenomenon of youth extension is produced in the name of a family specificity that had already been taken into consideration a long time ago and had been condemned in other fields as an Italian cultural aspect. (7) Now, we must not allow this explanation to become an indication of a cultural specificity, as it would stop us from taking into consideration the role played by the main factors that have been left aside for a long time, such as the great absence of Italy in the public offers directed to youth or the lack of offers on houses for rent. In other words, we

(7)
On this section, see the extensive critique about «amoral familiarism» written by American anthropologist Edward Banfield (1958) to characterise the negative impact of the southern families on the participation of individuals in the public scope.

must bear in mind that the use of the category of the extended family reactivates and confirms certain conceptions about the role of the private scope in the socialisation of young people, about the place of the interventions of the public scope to deal with its dysfunction, and about the contract (in terms of rights and duties) between generations.

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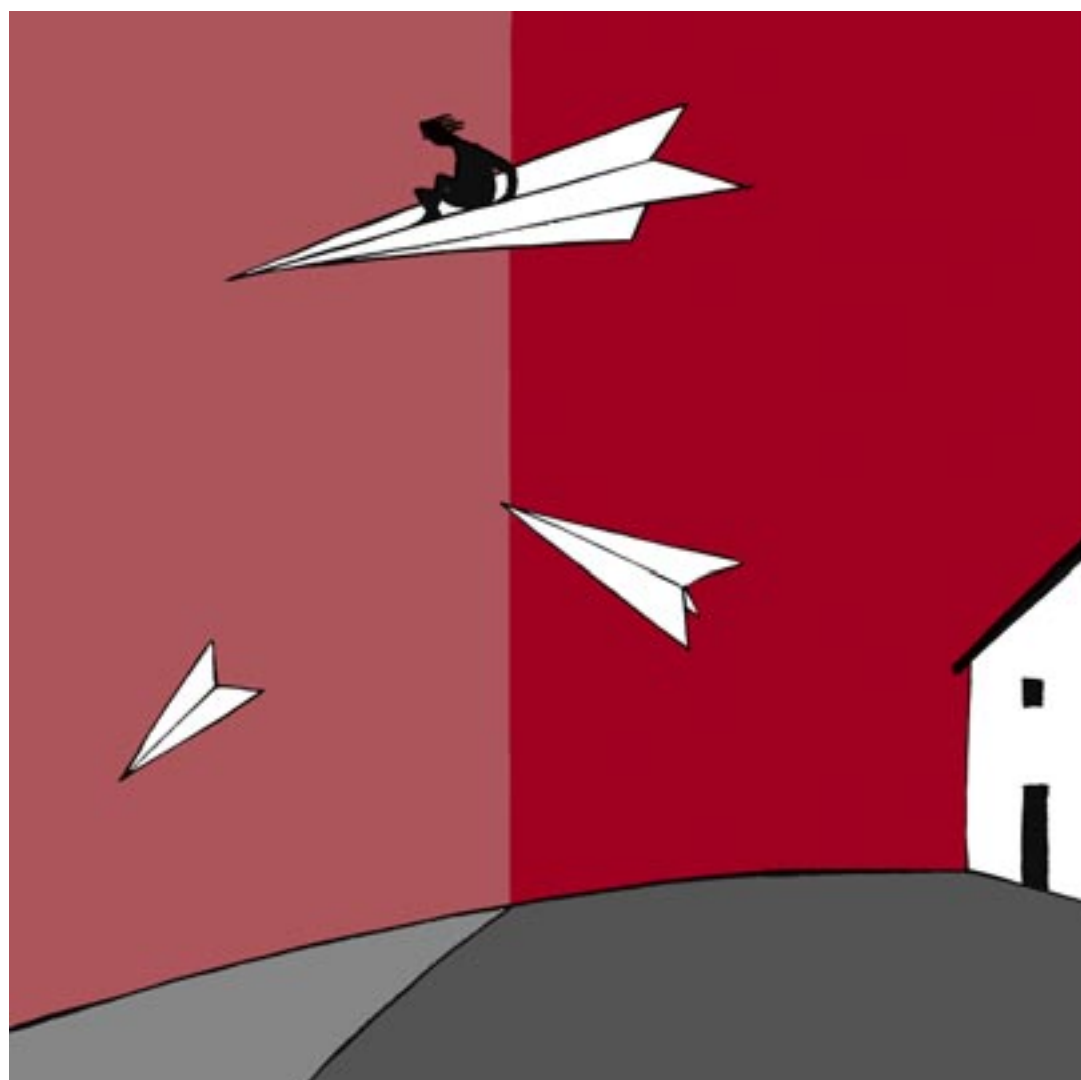
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The blurred structures of adulthood: transformation of social relationships and «extension of youth» in Romania

This article aims at presenting the particular transition into adulthood observed in Romania. Our reference will be the definition of the entrance "objective" into adulthood established by Galland (1993) and we will present the "extension of youth ·that is taking place. In order to do so, we will study the situation and behaviour of the young in relation to school and the labour market, factors marking their transition into independence, the way these structural transformations in Romanian economy are modelling the process of cohabiting between young people and their parents and the contributing factors, as well as the modifications in the creation of a couple observed in Romania since 1990.

Key words: Young people, Romania, adulthood, individualisation, schooling, professional insertion, family.

Introduction

If we can study youth as the *age of life*, this is, the state that leads us to study the opinions of young people and their way of life, we can also analyse it as a *process* leading to adulthood (Vincens, 1997; Brannen and Nilsen, 2002). This last focus, which will be prioritised in this article, consists in the analysis of the list of features characterising adults and the factors that extend or shorten the period during which an individual is still «at a young age». In accordance with this focus, the entrance into adulthood is presented as a form of transition that, according to Galland (1993), is carried out following two main axes: the educational-professional axis and the familiar-matrimonial axis. Four "objectives" can be identified along these two axes to define adulthood: completing studies, beginning a professional life, leaving home and cohabiting with a partner. These limits or thresholds are characterised by 1) a strong synchronism, especially typical in traditional or collectivist modernised societies 2) trends to relate or disconnect, especially common in modern societies or those in the way to modernisation. From this point of view, the transit to adulthood is marked by specificities and national traditions, although we cannot, unlike "globalists" do, assign these differences to the "national spirit". Persistence of specificities and traditions in this transition to adulthood can be explained especially in the framework of methodological individualism, as it basically comes from what the young use from the past and the present situations (which are obviously different in every country) to define their strategies and to access adult life. Although this framework for transition is defined by the structures and social norms of every country, young people are the ones to choose the paths towards participation in the institutional system, in order to assume roles in their life as adults. The permanence of traditions or social changes takes place through representation and individual designs.

In Romania, after the fall of the communist regime in 1989, the social atmosphere where the young people evolved changed and the transformations that have marked social life have modified the configuration of the entrance process into adulthood. During the dictatorship that made of Romania a modernised society, although following a traditional and patriarchal static path (Magyari-Vincze, 2004), the end of studies, the beginning of professional life, leaving home and having a partner used to happen at the same time. Young people developed in a regulated and institutionalised manner in every stage, from primary school until they found a job. The trend was to close as fast as possible the stage of youth through marriage, which also awarded the right to have a home. This way, one went from family dependence to adult life; that is to say, to a situation of economic, residential and affective independence without hardly any transition. The important part was marked by the ritual of the great step of marriage.

The problems to access adulthood today appear under a different light. The autonomy threshold in the terms defined by Galland no longer coincide and the frontiers between the young and adult phases are blurred. Certain intermediate spaces are created in between these thresholds and the democratization that began in 1990 has led to a process of social "individualisation" amongst young Romanians (Machado País, 2000) that has led to a great variety of moments and modalities in the transition into adulthood. The tendency to relate and disconnect thresholds to enter adult life mark the Romanian society today, which presents some specificities that distinguish it and at the same time make it similar to other European societies.

The purpose of my article is to present the particular form of transition into adulthood in Romania. Taking as a reference the "objective" definition of entrance in adulthood established by Galland, I will explain the process of "youth extension" in Romania. (1) In order to do so, I will present several aspects of this transition along the two previously-mentioned axes (educational-professional and familiar-matrimonial) analysing the processes of education and professional insertion, leaving home and beginning life with partners. More specifically, I will study the situation and behaviours of the young in relation to their schooling and the labour market that mark their step into independence and the way they model the structural transformations of Romanian economy, the phenomenon of cohabiting between the young and their parents and the contributing factors, as well as the modifications in having a partner that have appeared in Romania since 1990. These analyses are based on statistical data resulting from other studies and on other qualitative empirical data collected amongst young Romanians. (2)

More extensive studies

After the fall of communism, the phenomenon of schooling has experienced in Romania a period of contradictory development. Between 1992 and 2002 (years of successive census), we can observe, on one hand, the slight reduction in the level of secondary schooling and, on the other, a strong increase in the level of higher and university studies. This way, the level of attendance to secondary schools amongst young people aged 15-19 was reduced from 92.5% in 1992 to 83.3% in 2002 (table 1). This evolution

indicates that some families 1) are not able to afford the schooling of their children due to the increase in prices, which contrasts the situation during the communist regime, when secondary schools were almost free or 2) they award less importance to education as a means to reach social and financial success as they only see unemployment as a result, or they follow those people with no training (athletes, businessmen, salespeople, etc.) whose success is broadcasted on TV. (3)

These slight descents in the levels of schooling are compensated, however, by a significant increase in the levels of higher and university training. Between 1992 and 2002, the number of diploma-holders increased by 41.7%. In comparison with 1992, the percentage of young people aged 20-24 taking higher education increased by 2.3% (from 0.3% to 2.6%) and the number of young people taking university studies doubled from 1.2% to 4.1%. In the 25-29 range increases were 3.2% and 4.5%, respectively (next table).

Table 1. **Structure of the Romanian population according to their level of education, 1992 and 2002** (in %).

Age groups	Level of instruction							
	university		higher		secondary		primary	
	1992	2002	1992	2002	1992	2002	1992	2002
Total	5,5	7,7	2,1	3,2	67,8	69,8	19,7	14,9
15-19	-	-	-	-	92,5	83,5	6,0	13,2
20-24	1,2	4,1	0,3	2,6	95,2	84,2	1,9	6,0
25-29	8,2	12,7	0,6	3,8	87,4	77,9	2,3	3,6
30-34	9,7	10,0	1,3	2,4	83,9	83,8	3,7	2,4
35-39	9,8	10,5	4,1	2,0	79,4	83,2	5,3	2,7
40-44	9,7	10,6	6,4	2,4	73,0	81,2	9,5	4,1
45-49	8,1	10,6	5,0	5,4	59,2	76,6	25,8	5,8
50-54	5,6	10,4	3,9	7,6	51,6	70,0	34,8	10,1
55-59	4,5	8,7	2,3	6,0	44,7	56,0	40,9	26,3
60-64	4,6	6,1	1,2	4,7	45,3	48,7	40,5	34,7
65 et +	7,0	4,6	1,2	1,7	59,8	39,3	51,8	40,4

Source: Romanian National Statistics Institute.

(3)
The masses of money gathered in few months by speculators that were almost uneducated, but clever, make many young people feel jealousy and admiration at the same time. Earning money in any way and showing it off – a typical feature of the accumulation of capital – is an essential element of the social ideal proposed to the young in Romania.

(4)
The gross schooling rate represents the number of students at a certain level of education, whatever their age is, expressed by the percentage of population of that age corresponding to that level of the educational system. In the case of higher training, the population studies grouped the last five years after leaving secondary school, which happens at the age of 18 in Romania.

This situation is due to the "fee" system established by the communist regime, which limited number of students who could take higher education, as well as to the appearance of private education which, especially at university levels, experienced a huge expansion after communism. In Romania there are currently 56 state universities and other private institutions, where the enrolment figures have increased up to 28% in 2000 and 10.6% in 1990. We can also notice that the gross schooling rate (4) in the level of higher education went from 21% in 1998 to 35% in 2003 (UNESCO, 2005) and amongst young people aged 18 to 35, the proportion of students went from 11% in 1993 to 21% in 2003 (Roharik, 2004). As a general trend we see here an extension of the schooling levels that covers all social classes (Neagu, 2004).

This increasing extension of studies is directly connected with the institutional changes in the training offer and is also the result of the great value awarded to diplomas by the collective mentality. Diplomas are a sign of a higher category and the guarantee to obtain a better place in the labour market. This way, amongst young Romanians there is a social tendency to accumulate titles, which is strongly supported by the parents. Accumulation of diplomas and studies makes young people believe that the acquired knowledge "gives the right to…", "guarantees priority of…". However, it is necessary to observe that businesses do not acknowledge the value of qualifications and that the influence networks are more efficient to obtain a good job than the years of education certified by a

diploma, which are often relegated to a category considered as a "time for enjoyment and fun", as one of the interviewees said. This situation has created a type of young figure that is "hooked to studies". This sort of person is illustrated by young people aged 18-30 who have "not left their studies, don't have a partner, don't have children, don't have a paid job and still live with their parents" (Roharik, 2004, 120). Between 1993 and 2003, the number of people associated to this group established from two studies around some representative samples of the Romanian population aged 15 onwards (5) increased from 16% to 25%.

In the scope of access to adulthood, this extensive schooling keeps young people away from professional activity for longer, thus extending the state of dependence from the parents, who, in Romania, have to pay for their children's studies. Continuing with studies keeps the ties of dependence with the family tight, especially of economic dependence. The family also extend the "category of childhood". In the case of most young students who have taken part in the debates held by the *focus groups*, belonging to the world of adults with the category of a student is confusing ("young and adult" at the same time or "neither young nor adult"). The privileged feature is mainly economic independence, according to those interviewed when identifying the category of an adult, but this situation is not a feature of those young people who continue studying. It is interesting to note that for many young people money is important, a defining feature of "a real adult", and this is more frequent in the case of males. (6) Even if they continue with their studies, the young people I interviewed do not seem to award any importance to knowledge. Pragmatically, they award a priority to the most useful aspects of the training offer, and so amongst the reasons why they choose a certain type of education and profession we have the financial aspect and the low unemployment rate associated to that profession. In particular, finances, banking, insurance, transport and certain sectors of industry such as tobacco and extractions guarantee the best salaries (around 300 euros a month as opposed to an average 180 euros in 2003).

The beginning of professional life: between precariousness and flexibility

Since 1990, the Romanian labour market has experienced great re-structuring, which has led to a modification of the possibilities and employment perspectives. This re-structuring has created an unstable professional world where the uncertainty of transition has made many jobs precarious and has left many professions and knowledge obsolete. This has also led to a great dose of insecurity and risks for the professional evolution of the young. During the communist regime, we did not know of unemployment in western terms, (7) but during the period after its fall, the unsuitable macroeconomic policies and the institutional atmosphere, which does not promote the creation of private jobs, have made their contribution to the reduction of possibilities for young people to access the labour market. Especially due to their lack of experience, unemployment has affected terribly this sector of the population. (8) The unemployment rate amongst young Romanians aged 15 to 24 was 18.7% in 2003, much higher than for the population aged 15 or over, whose unemployment rate for the same year was 6.6%. In relation with the group

(5)
It is a *Study on the values of Romanians* done in 1993, where 1.103 people were interviewed, and the *Barometer of public opinion,* which interviewed 2.100 people. For a detailed analysis of these studies in connection with the different indicators of the autonomy of the young, see Roharik (2004).

(6)
This posture reflects the forever dominating element in Romanian society, the division of work by sex, which assigns the male the role of earning money.

(7)
The communist regime hid the unemployment rate so as not to confront the ideals of the Marxist ideology and the Constitution about the working rights. There was a huge overdimensioning of the number of employees in large industrial companies all over the country. According to the studies made by the OECD (1993), approximately 30% of the total working time corresponded to an "artificial" maintenance of the labour force. This phenomenon is also obviously connected to the economic crisis of the regime and its crash.

(8)
This comment is valid for the countries in central and Eastern Europe. According to data issued by the International Work Organisation, in 2000 the average unemployment rate amongst those people aged 15-24 was 30% in the 18 countries undergoing transition; that is to say, double the global employment rate. Over 40% of these young people had been unemployed for over a year. However, there are important variations within this geographical region, with approximately 7% unemployed people in the Czech Republic against 49% of the Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, 27% of the Russian Federation, 30% in Croatia and Poland, 32 % in Slovakia and 33% in Bulgaria.

of unemployed registered in 2003, those aged 15-24 represented a proportion of 31.4%. Democratic transition has abandoned the young and has made them look for new orientations without any institutional support, to learn to overcome insecurity, to consider the situation as dependent on the market, on their efforts or on their family circumstances.

This evolution in the labour market has generated new paths for transition from youth to adulthood. Firstly, here we have a tendency to *delay even more the entrance in the labour market and a stable career* after completing studies. The stage of professional insertion for young Romanians is characterised today by receiving training that does not guarantee a job. Recruiting young people who have just finished their training has become more unlikely in state businesses, whose dimensions have been greatly reduced, whereas the private sector does not create enough new jobs either. This way, unemployment affects more and more those young people with studies. In 2003, for instance, 37% of the unemployed had a higher education and university diploma but had still not entered the labour market (PNATR, 2003). We have also stated that amongst the young diploma-holders there is an increasing phenomenon known as "return to the preceding state". More precisely, "it is a sort of back to school process taking place several years after people have completed their studies and is done by those youngsters who have not managed to find a job and end up taking higher education (diplomas and PhDs)" (Roharik, 2004: 119). This situation explains why, in the framework of the *focus groups* I have created, most young people have mentioned getting a stable job and economic independence as the priority features of being an adult. "I won't see myself as an adult until I start working, even if I have finished studying." Being an adult means "having your own money, not depending on anybody and having a long-term job" (male, 26).

Secondly, we can see an *increasing maladjustment between the qualifications and the corresponding jobs*. The phenomenon we mentioned earlier about training in young people does not create more jobs or necessarily improves professional options, but rather contributes more to the phenomenon of the change of social position (9) that in 2002 affected 12.5% of employed young people aged 15-24 (Neagu 2004). The causes for this phenomenon are manly due to the few number of professions included in the labour market and the rigidity of the educational system, which is isolated from the economic world and still enclosed in its own reproductive logics. Young Romanians experience this situation as a maladjustment between the instrumental conception of education as a productive investment and an unregulated market constrained by unforeseeable forces (especially the power of the influence and customer networks). This situation is reflected in its position in relation to education. 25% of the population aged 15-29 considered that school barely responds to the needs of the labour market (PNATR, 2003) and makes one of the interviewed in the *focus groups* declare that: "the aptitude to memorise dead knowledge developed by teachers amongst us does not have much to do with the capacity to join the labour market in its current situation". However, for this young man, "being an adult means achieving my professional objectives because if I can't work in the field I am trained for and my job position is below what I would like to do, then I won't consider myself as a real adult" (male, 25). This young man's adult identity is

(9)
The change of social position is defined as the situation for which a young person has a higher educational qualification in connection with the training required for the option taken. This phenomenon did not exist during the communist regime which, through strict control of the training-employment connection, gave each young person a job according to their level of training and qualifications.

articulated around a previously planned professional career that involves a work-training correspondence, even if this means postponing getting a job. Note that the results of the opinion surveys show that an increasing number of young Romanians is sensitive to professional success through the correspondence between work and training. In a national survey made in February 2001, 30% of young people aged 18-25 believed that working in the field one has trained for is a very important indicator of professional success. This proportion increased up to 34.4% in 2003 (The Gallup Organisation, 2004).

Thirdly, we can also see in Romania the appearance of a phenomenon that had not existed during the communist regime called *part-time working and studying*, especially at university level. The flexible feature of the labour market allows an increasing number of students to work at weekends or summer holidays, which did not use to happen before. For those students interviewed about this aspect in the *focus groups*, as well as an opportunity to get some pocket money, getting a job while studying was a socially relevant decision. Young people access this way certain independence and start entering the adult world. This way they can reach a means of institutional and paternal emancipation that could hardly be reached by just staying at school. "I felt like I was somebody, an adult, the first time I saw in my hands my first salary after working during my second year at university" (male, 27). For this young man, working while studying has a symbolic value of independence. However, this independence is strongly connected to the instrumental aspect of work, concerning the material advantages in having a job. On one hand, this dimension has been the most popular one for the young people interviewed in the *focus groups*. The mentality has been clearly framed into an «Adam Smith» type of logic, that is to say, it clearly expresses its wish to "improve luck" through "an increase in fortune". A survey made by *The Gallup Organisation Romania* for the British Council in 2004 shows, on the other hand, that 84% of young Romanians considered that the salary is the first criteria to choose a job and only 30% awards importance to other expressive aspects of work such as the environment or relations with colleagues (The Gallup Organisation, 2004).

It is also important to note that in Romania, a country that went from "a socialism of underdevelopment" to a "capitalism of underdevelopment" where the standard of living only applies to 27% of the average in the European Union, many young people - especially from the middle classes and villages aged 25 to 35 - have been forced to emigrate, quite often illegally, to different western countries as a means to earn the money the need to have a decent life. Customising and nepotism in socio-professional relations and the incorrect application of the laws have created amongst these young people the feeling of frustration when it comes to "making a living" in Romania. To this regard, between 1990 and 2001, 1.6 million Romanians had left the country to work in the west and, according to data drawn from the survey made in 2003 by the Centre of Urban and Regional Sociology in Bucharest, 4% of Romanians declares having worked abroad and 9% have relatives working abroad (Capelle-Pogacean, 2003). The experience of «dincolo» («on the other side») work represents for these young people a ritual to move into adulthood, as an experience lasting several months or years abroad allows to reach certain goals faster, such as purchasing a house or having a partner. Leaving to another country to work

(especially to countries such as Spain, Italy or Ireland), engaging into a "migratory career" (Diminescu, 2004) is the origin amongst many young people of a social difference in relation to those who have stayed in the country. Those who have managed to reach the "western paradise", especially through legal means, and have returned as richer people consider that this experience has been "the real step into adulthood". "I have experienced during my time in the west my capacity to be a real man. After returning, I now feel like an adult", says one of these young men who has narrated all the difficulties encountered during his "illegal work period" in the European Union from 1990 and 2002. As a Romanian citizen, he was a member of the "black list" of countries whose citizens needed a travel visa and a work permit.

A long stay with the parents

In 2002, in Romania 78% of young people aged 15-29 declared they still lived with their parents (PNATR, 2003), an intermediate situation between Italy (where 80% of young people aged 15-29 lived with their parents) and France (around 65%). This situation of the "extended family" is explained through the joint action of two combined factors. Firstly, it is a traditional feature of Romanian culture, as parents are assigned an important role in the protection of their children, even if they are adults already. Secondly, we can see the utilitarist or economic explanation that applies in the current situation in Romania, characterised by the horrendous absence of affordable homes for young people, which has become a real obstacle for their independence. The high cost of rentals, which surpasses many young people's financial possibilities, and the absence of a financial system allowing to purchase a home hinder the access of young Romanians to the possibility of achieving residential independence. (10) Thus, the possibility of getting a loan did not exist before 2001, as banks believed it was too risky to offer this service to the population. Those people whose income was over the average salary had to save their money to add up for the required sum to purchase the home, whereas for the rest this was close to impossible. The Administration has taken part to solve the issue of the scarcity of homes by creating the *National Housing Agency*, an organisation that manages the construction of buildings for young people with some financial aid, and allows people to purchase a house through a loan with a 15-25-year mortgage. Nevertheless, even in these conditions, most young people find it impossible to pay off their mortgage. In addition to this, the number of homes available is low, so the criteria to assign them are mainly political and decided by the administrative agency. The media frequently talk about cases of fraud in the system to favour important members of the government or other state institutions, who take advantage of these offers. Customising, a common feature in traditional and communist systems, showed a great capacity of survival during the period for democratic transition and still plays an important role in Romanian society.

Regarding leaving home, in Romania it happens in certain ways that can also be found in other European countries. For instance, it is what Buck and Scott, (1993) called *living away*, which means living away from home but preserving a relation with it. This is the case of students who live somewhere else during the week (a student hall or apartment) financed by the parents

(10)
A survey made by the Ministry of youth and sports in Romania reveals that in 2001 94% of young people interviewed aged 18 to 29 considered that getting a home represented the biggest of problems.

and then return home at weekends. This type of de-cohabiting is also found amongst the young members of the upper classes (the "new rich people" who appeared from the ruins of communism), many of which have a home paid by their family.

In the case of those young people living with their parents, cohabiting is progressively adapted to the advances of Romanian society towards modernism. Thus, young people living with their parents who find it impossible to emancipate from their family negotiate some autonomy spaces in it. Cohabiting does not mean that they are subjected to certain traditional family rules characterised by the father's authority and the control of their activities. They are young people who benefit from a great autonomy that is represented in the possibility to go out at night without any restrictions, not give parents any explanations about their friends, being with people from the opposite sex without parent control, etc.: a trend towards independence that is growing and is manifested when they are still at the family home. The family model is framed by great concern and a strict control of studies (financed mainly by the parents), but also by a not-so-strict control of the use of time, relationships and private life, which mainly contributes towards weakening the tendency to leave the family home. On the other hand, this trend is reinforced by the fact that young people with a paid job do not help towards the family budget. Thus, they can save most of their income and not pay for living expenses, so they can spend their money on the typical elements of juvenile culture; something their "independent" peers cannot do, as they must spend on other basic needs. We might say that the impulse towards autonomy is particularly slowed down by the practical advantages of living with the family. (11)

Cohabiting, and consequently, the importance awarded to the family, do not have much to do with the persistence of the traditional values, but rather with a logic to adapt to the situation. If young Romanians indeed are loyal and more attached to the community, this is often reduced to some interesting considerations. Thus, young people have told us about their feeling of belonging to a family and their principles, but do it not so much because of the influence of a tendency towards conformism and tradition, but rather because these principles have a functional value to them. They feel like members of a family and insist on this feeling, not due to an inertial mechanical feeling, but rather because the family values support their interests. This way they can stay with their parents for as long as they wish or they can also stay with them if unemployed. *Youngsters have the impression that the whole social problem finds its solution in the family framework and this belief increases the importance of the family.* Their ideals and beliefs legitimate the family and also support their interests. (12)

Many ways of living with a partner

The analysis of certain dimensions about life with a partner in the mentality of young Romanians allow us to state the importance of marriage as a way to access adulthood, especially in the case of girls. In Romania, girls have a well developed devotion to marriage and this explains why 21% of young Romanian girls get married before the age of 19 (the highest percentage in Europe). However, even if marriage is highly valued, the average age for the first marriage has gone between 1990 and 2000 from 25 to 27 in men and

22 to 23.6 in women. At the same time, there are new ways of cohabiting, such as unmarried couples of single parents. In 2001, for instance, according to a survey made by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, 0.7% of young Romanians aged 15-24 lived with their couple but were not married. (13) On the same lines, between 1992 and 1998, the proportion of young single people aged 15-29 increased from 60% to 63.4%, whereas the proportion of married people went down from 37.7% to 34.9%. After the fall of communism there has been a reduction in the marriage rate (except in women aged 20 to 24), as the graph shows:

Figure 1:
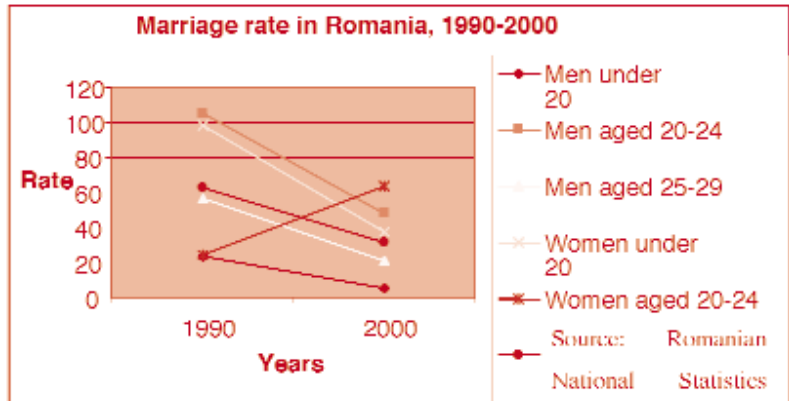
Source: Romanian National Statistics Institute. Data collected by the author.

Figure 2:

Source: Romanian National Statistics Institute. Data collected by the author.

(13)
This rate is far from the ones found in most western countries, where the percentage of young people living as unmarried couples surpasses 15%. At this regard, we could say that the position of young Romanians regarding cohabiting out of wedlock shows a "cognitive dissonance" between the values expressed and the respect to these values. Thus, most young people I have interviewed seem to approve of this type of life, but at the same time they say that marriage after a period of cohabiting will "easily be a failure". "I prefer, says a young man, getting married without living together first. Cohabiting is good to get experience, but not to prepare marriage". When asked "do you think that living together before marriage would be good because the members of the couple could judge each other before making an official commitment?", most young people gave a negative answer.

Therefore, if in 1990 the marriage rate amongst men aged 20 to 24 was 105.4 marriages for every 1,000 people, in 2000 the figures reached only 47.4 marriages per every 1,000 people. During the same period, this rate was reduced amongst women aged 25 to 29 from 62.4% to 31.3%. We can only see an increase in the group of women aged 20 to 24, where this rate went up from 24.5% to 63.3%. This situation could be explained by the effect of the strategies applied by these young women, according to research made by Brinbaum and others (2003), to certain categories, as they seem to award more importance to living with their partners in order to leave home, unlike men, who first tend to get a job and then cohabit with their partners. In the framework of the *focus groups*, those women in their 20s were more inclined to designate marriage as the symbol of acquisition of adulthood, whereas for

most men the priority was first to get a job and economic independence to reach adulthood. Marriage according to males appears as a secondary indicator of adulthood and not as a main priority to "get on in life".

The reduction in the number of marriages is accompanied by an increase in the number of divorces. Data extracted from graph 2 indicate a trend amongst young people to get divorced, when compared to the year 1990.

This phenomenon reflects the difficulties in the relations between young people who confront the economic crisis that is typical in a period of transition: insufficient income, unemployment, scarcity of housing... On the same lines, they are the result of the modifications in the behaviour of young people in the context of transition to liberal capitalism. This context offers young people new possibilities to choose options to favour the increase in individualism that becomes in many cases a form of solipsism (Vultur and Fecioru, 2004). This is joined to a greater effect of the redefinition of paperwork within the couple and the difficulty to find the right person in an uncertain and changing world without the axiological objectivity typical in societies regulated by State tradition. We can also see amongst the young a deeper transformation of the sense awarded to romantic relationships. The sentimental order in young people is based on collective values, but is also based, and in an increasing manner, on an individual aspiration to build one's own identity. For instance, fidelity "while love lasts" replaced little by little fidelity "imposed by marriage". The hopes of the members of the couple evolve. What they look for in a relationship is the exchange of the conditions of their personal plenitude: beyond rules, they want honesty, authenticity and solidarity in freedom. The family-reference dictating the norms leaves a place for a family-refuge where one does not suffer, but rather finds company and support.

Conclusion

The presentation of some constitutive elements in the process to "access adulthood" amongst young Romanians leads us to represent the hypothesis of an "extension of youth", whose common feature is the disconnection from the threshold of acquisition of economic, residential or affective independence. The time for education, the entrance into active life, leaving home and having a partner seem to be more variable in Romania today than in previous generations, whose destiny was constrained by the social forms of regulation of a traditional and collectivist style. The position and succession in time of education, active life and family relations have become less foreseeable and stricter for young Romanians. The emerging capitalism has a strong influence on decisions made throughout life, such as leaving school, studying the chosen degree, having a family, etc. We are witnessing in this country the emergence of a "new adult" that combines different fields in life and for whom the pragmatic election and the adaptation to situations are more important than prediction as an element of security in an uncertain future. The random and fragile success of liberal democracy in Romania will be indices for these "new adults" who, as they claim for their right to act and become richer in both material and symbolic ways, they are placed in situations that involve applying innovative actions and several strategies for these situations. The ways of communist reproduction according to which the forms of interaction are transmitted generation to generation have lost their meaning today and the path of young people today is no longer

structured by objective and permanent regulations, but is rather subjected by objective and permanent regulations and to the increasing importance of *individualisation, rationalisation and contingency*. This situation refers to the nature of transformations in Romania today, as well as to the contradiction and the multiple centring of the market system. These young people are constituted around central axes in current transformations and are, both in Romania and the central and Eastern European area, the vectors for the introduction of social links that are to consolidate the democratic regime and the market economy in this part of Europe.

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German departures from the parental home: A new pathway towards independence?

As in other countries, also in Germany one can observe a delay in the events which the literature considers beings crucial for the achievement of the adult status. In this article I will argue that a particularly important marker is the establishment of an independent residence from parents. The focus is therefore on the opportunities and constraints young people face during their transition to adulthood and their outcomes on the residential trajectories from the parental home. Since young people can leave home for diverse reasons, not only the timing of departure from home, but also the different pathways that young adults follow when establishing an independent residence from their parents are a central issue of this article. The main idea is that there are not only opportunities and constraints of departing from home, but there are also opportunities and constraints in taking a specific route out of the parental home. Using the Family and Fertility Survey I will empirically compare four birth cohorts in order to discover similarities and dissimilarities in the leaving home behavior of young Germans from the mid 1960s to the early 1990s.

Keywords: Life-Course, Youth, Leaving Home, Transition to Adulthood, Family, Europe.

1. Introduction

In the last decades of the 20th century considerable changes have taken place in the transition to adulthood of young Europeans; characterized by a common trend toward emancipation postponement (Galland, 1995, Bendit, 1999). Also in Germany one can observe a delay in the events which the literature considers being crucial for the achievement of the adult status: completion of education, entrance into the labor force, leaving home and family formation. This article will focus on the changes occurred in the leaving home behavior of West Germans born from 1953 to 1972. Two are the reasons behind the choice of this particular transition. First, because of the crucial importance represented by the departure from home for young adults' personal development, which nowadays has become the "key indicator of leaving childhood behind" (Goldscheider and Goldscheider, 1993: 3). Given that having an independent residence from parents is "a vital condition for social recognition", any change in the leaving home process can be regarded as both a symptom and a cause of difficulties in the social integration of young people (Cordón, 1997: 579). Second, in a time of overall convergence in economic and social patterns, leaving home is the social indicator presenting the most striking differences among EU countries (Cordón, 1997, Corijn and Klijzing, 2001). This divergence can only be understood by referring to institutional arrangements and normative values which, together, structure individuals' decisions about leaving home. Thus, the focus on the leaving home behavior highlights which opportunities and constraints young Germans face during their transition to adulthood as well as the meanings and expectations associated to it. (1)

(1)
When not otherwise specified, throughout this article Germany is used as a synonym for West Germany, i.e. those States that constituted the Federal Republic of Germany before reunification in 1990.

The article is structured as follows. First, I will discuss the emergence of young adulthood as an important phase in life and the role played by the departure from the parental home for the transition to adulthood. In a second step, I will present my research design and the data used for empirical analyses. The fourth section presents and discusses the principal empirical results of how young Germans achieve residential independence from parents. Finally, the German situation is put back in a European context and the importance of institutional settings in encouraging young people's residential independence from parents will be highlighted.

2. Becoming an adult and leaving the parental home

According to the most reckoned life course sociologists, a specific feature of modern societies is the distinction of different life phases. In such societies life phases remain biological facts, but their meanings become "social facts or constructions" (Elder, 1975). Consequently, nowadays life course and age represent an "independent dimension of social structure" (Kohli, 1986, Kohli, 1985). Different life spheres are, however, more or less age-bound: the highest degree of institutionalization of age criteria is found in "legally defined ascription of roles and statuses" (e.g., compulsory school attendance), while age criteria based on informal consensus presents the lowest degree of institutionalization (e.g., 'appropriate' age at leaving home) (Buchmann, 1989). The officially regulated states and transitions influence however the sequencing of positions and roles in non institutionalized life spheres; probably as a "result of the practical acknowledgement of the objective requirements that the 'state-regulated' pace of life imposes on the individual's scope of action" (Buchmann, 1989: 25). With other words, each society imposes its own schedule and individuals internalize such normative timetables, by which they can plan their lives, and interpret themselves as being early, on time, or late in regard to familial or occupational events (Hogan and Astone, 1986: 114). The emergence of particular life phases is then also related to historical processes which allow different life phases to develop in their specificity.

A youth phase increasing emerged in all social classes not earlier than at the beginning of the 20th century, thanks to the rising importance of schooling or educational training (Nave-Herz, 1997). (2) In the past 20 years, however, this life phase has progressively extended and the transition from one status to another shifted to an ever later stage in people's life. The transition to adulthood in these societies is then better described as a *process* instead of a single event. Nonetheless scholars agree upon the existence of critical events through which young people must go through in order to achieve adult status: completion of education, becoming active participants in the labor force, achievement of economic and cultural independence, establishment of independent living arrangements, and the formation of one's own family of procreation (Kerckhoff, 1990, Billari, 1998, Shehan and Dwyer, 1989).

In this article young adulthood will be considered being a crucial and formative period in the life cycle characterized, nowadays, by two main aspects. On the one hand, it is a time of transition in which personal identity and social and economic independence are established. On the other hand young adulthood is also a life stage during which young people have to build an adult world of their own. In this sense, having an independent residence is

(2)
According to other authors, in Europe before the 60's "youth (in the sense of having a 'youth life') was a privilege for males. In certain cases only for middle-class urban males". (Bendit et al., 1999: 12)

crucial for developing an own identity and lifestyle (Bendit et al., 1999). Because of the meanings and expectations associated with an independent residence, "the process of leaving home is viewed as an integral part of establishing economic and emotional independence from the parental home" (Holdsworth, 2000: 201). Allowing young people to independently decide what, how, when to do what they please within their own four walls it symbolizes the achievement of individual autonomy from the family of origin. It is also a signal and chance for organizing relationships and partnerships for oneself, an opportunity for a new definition of the relationship to one's parents and infrastructure for standing on one's own feet (Gaiser, 1999: 55). But the departure from the parental home signifies not only freedom and privacy; it also implies costs and responsibilities. It is a learning process of how to take care of household duties, household finances, and time management. Thus, there are both advantages and disadvantages in both staying in as well as leaving the parental home; suffices to think at how much a young adult can save staying home and not paying a rent, electricity, etc. Hence, for some young people, establishing an independent household could represent suffering a considerable decrease in their standard of living (Ainley, 1991, Piccone Stella, 1997, Rieser, 1997).

3. Research question and design

The central research question of this article reads: What 'triggers' and what 'discourages' the departure from the parental home in Germany? Thus, the focus is on the opportunities and constraints young people face during their transition to adulthood and their outcomes on the residential trajectories from the parental home. Since young people can leave home for diverse reasons, not only the timing of departure, but also the different pathways that young adults follow when establishing an independent residence from their parents are central issues. The main idea is that not only do opportunities and constraints of departing from home exist, but that there are also opportunities and constraints in taking a specific route to residential independence. On the one hand, these relate to resources and expectations young people – but also "relevant others" (above all parents) – have. On the other hand, these also are closely related to the opportunity structures young people face. Thus, the interplay of resources, norms and institutions shapes the individual decision making process to leave the parental home in order to form an own family, to enter employment, to escape unemployment, enroll into education, or just to live independently.

The empirical analyses of this article are based on the German Family and Fertility Survey (FFS), which was carried out in 1992 by the Federal Institute for Population Research (BiB). Separately for West and East-Germany, 10000 Germans aged 20 to 39 years were interviewed with two different questionnaires for men and women. A comparison with German official statistical data reveals an adequate representativeness of the sample (Hullen, 1998). Two questions focus on the departure from the parental home: whether the respondent lives at the time of interview in the parental home and whether and when he/she first left. My analysis will include only individuals who lived with at least one parent, at least until their 15th birthday. The first limitation excludes all those who did not grow up with their parents, since my interest lays in the transition out of a household 'governed' by parents. The second limitation is due to the fact that an earlier departure,

apart of being very unusual or result of data-error, possibly implies a transition to another dependent or "semiautonomous" household (Goldscheider and DaVanzo, 1986). In order to reveal the association between leaving home and other events which characterize the transition to adulthood, and so to determine which events 'trigger' the achievement of residential independence, a new variable was created combining the timing of the departure from home with the timing of other role transitions. Although monthly information is available for all events, I decided to allow a certain time-span before or after the departure from the parental home. This approach is more realistic, since people plan their decisions and might decide to leave the parental home, because they know they are going to marry, or have a child, or start a job in a few months. Or they might have experienced a specific event, but need some time to find a new residency and move. Accordingly, all departures will be considered being triggered by a specific event if this takes place 6 month before or after leaving home; with the exception of childbirth (9 months before). In total 2372 women and 1594 men born in West Germany between 1953 and 1972 are included in the analysis.

4. Residential independence through marriage or while in education?

There is not a unique way to leave home: departures from the parental home show great variation between the genders, educational attainment, areas of residence, and among birth cohorts. The main differences can be connected to different pathways from the parental home, which result in a different timing of departure. In the following I will highlight the major features and differences.

4.1 Different routes toward independence

German women are quicker than men in achieving residential independence from parents. Scholars ascribe this gender difference, common to a wide range of countries, to different marriage behavior (Goldscheider and Goldscheider, 1993, Kerckhoff and Macrae, 1992, Rossi, 1997). Given that women are usually younger than their spouses when they enter marriage, departures motivated by such family event will mirror such age difference as well. In fact, also in Germany the major difference in the timing of leaving home can be found between men and women who depart in order to enter married or unmarried cohabitation (almost 2 years). When young adults leave for other – 'nonfamily' – reasons such age difference disappears almost completely (Tab. 1).

Table 1. **Type and median age at departure from home**

	Men		Women	
	%	Age	%	Age
Marriage/ cohabitation	33,8	22,4	50,0	20,7
Birth of first child	0,9	22,2	1,1	22,2
Commence of first employment	7,2	20	5,4	19,6
Still in education	28,2	20,3	22,6	19,9
Completion of education	5,7	20,4	4,4	19,9
None in time-span	24,3	22,5	16,5	22,3
N	1256		2113	

Source: FFS Germany, own calculations

Yet, women achieve residential independence from parents more often than men simultaneously with a family event (50% of women vs. 34% of men). Men achieve an independent residence from parents more often while still in education and without having experienced any other role transition in the timespan of departure. Thus, whereas women frequently switch between family households, i.e. from parents to a partner, men experience in-between some 'nonfamily' residential experience (either living alone or sharing an apartment with others, non relatives). But can this different behavior be only ascribed to different preferences with regard to which pathway should be followed when leaving parents behind? The situation of young people who did not yet achieve residential independence tells us a different story. More men than women are still living with their parents at time of interview (21% vs. 11%), yet women's permanence in the parental home appears to be more closely linked to a lack of own resources. Although over half of the respondent residing in the parental home at time of interview reported their own earnings as their main source of income, this proportion was greater for men. Of those young adults who did not yet achieve residential independence, fewer women had experienced a first job (61% of women vs. 71% of men) and less reported their own income or state benefits (especially education allowance) as the main source of income, while more women depended on the support of their family (32% of women vs. 19% of men). To some extent these results suggest that women's permanence in the parental home is less a free choice than for men; a considerable number of these young women depends also financially on their parents.

Nonetheless, the predominance of co-residence with parents, despite having a first job and particularly despite having an own income, is quite remarkable. A possible explanation is that an employment might be not (or not considered) sufficient for establishing an independent household; in particular if the young adult wishes to simultaneously form an own family. As discussed above, such traditional pathway out of the parental home is, although not predominant, still quite frequently followed. The fact that ca. 40% of the first jobs experienced by young Germans residing in the parental home are trainees' contracts is possibly a further constrain. Although these contracts guarantee an income and social insurance rights, the wages depend on the profession chosen and give – at the most – only a proportion of a normal adult income. Thus, they are often not sufficient for sustaining oneself, let alone a new family.

The importance of economic but also cultural resources is strengthen by the observation that there are, for both genders, significant differences in the leaving home behavior depending on the type of education attained. With higher qualification, family formation as a reason for departure looses importance, while leaving home when still in education becomes more relevant. Whereas 60% of the women with a low or middle secondary degree had left home coinciding with married or unmarried cohabitation, this was the case for only 32% of the women with tertiary education. Men present a similar pattern. Half of the young Germans men and women with tertiary education have achieved residential independence from parents while still in education. In Germany this non traditional pathway out of the parental home is not only facilitated by parental resources, but also by state financial support. According to the principle of subsidiarity, in Germany parents must support their children's education until their first professional degree. Yet, the German state provides financial support for education and training

(BaföG) for those young people in education (especially university), whose parents are not able to guarantee a sufficient maintenance. (3) The importance of this state benefit refers not only to the financial resources it provides, but also relates to its being a frame of reference for family obligations. From a legal point of view, the minimum parents are obliged to give and the maximum children in education can ask (as well as the length) is anchored to *Bafög*. Obviously, some parents may be willing (and able) to provide more support and/or for a longer time whereas other families may be willing (or able) to give only less. Moreover, only a minority of students will want to enforce their right in front of a judge. Yet, this clarification of duties and rights allows young Germans to decide, independently, how to spend the money and some might decide to leave the parental home; eventually supplementing the financial support with either part-time jobs or with extra parental contributions. And the results show that German young people take advance of this possibility in order to achieve independence while still in tertiary education.

Another factor which facilitates departures of young people who are not yet well established on the labor market, and consequently dispose of only limited financial resources, is the housing market. In international comparison, the West German market for rented housing is "extremely well developed": almost 60% of household live in rented dwellings and ca. 10% of the income is spent for the rent (Hoffmann and Kurz, 2002: 3). Thanks to financial subsidizes and the availability of affordable dwellings for rent, in Germany nontraditional departures from home, such as leaving while still in education, become an accessible alternative to staying in parental home. The importance of the housing market is further supported by the observation of rural-urban variation. Especially for men, the proportion of young adults residing in the parental home at the time of the interview is greater by those who grew up in rural areas or in small townships (ca. 25%), than those who grew up in cities with over one million inhabitants (12%). These differences can be related to the different pathways from the parental home: young adults who grew up in smaller communities left home more frequently for married or unmarried cohabitation and to a lesser extent while still in education. Differently, young adults who grew up in metropolitan areas left home to a higher extent while still in education and coinciding with the first job. In addition, while overall more women than men had left for family formation, young adults who grew up in metropolitan areas left home for similar reasons: only one fourth had left for married or unmarried cohabitation and over 40% while still in education. Apart from cultural factors, a possible explanation for West German rural-urban variation can be found in the different housing market situation. (4) Young people in rural areas or smaller townships are confronted with a tighter housing market, especially with regard to rentable dwellings.

4.2 Countertrend to emancipation postponement?

From a cohort perspective, there has been only a slight postponement of approximately one year in the achievement of residential independence (Fig.1). Moreover, this delay can be observed only across the three oldest cohorts, while this trend cannot be confirmed for the youngest cohort (1968–72).

(3)
Only education leading to a degree, and only the first degree, is supported. In 1972, 45% of the university students received support. In 1982 – when a new regulation changed the support into a full loan – only 30% received support. Since 1990, *Bafög* consists of 50% allowance and 50% loan, only in exceptional cases there is a full allowance. However, only approximately 25% of all students meet the requirements to obtain support. In 1997, only a third of all entitled persons had utilized it. (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2001)

(4)
The permanence in the parental home for young people in small communities does not appear being a result of lacking own financial resources. Ca. 70% of the men report the own earned income as main source of income. Differently, cohabitation with parents in metropolitan is often linked to lacking resources: fewer have a first job and more depend on the support of their family (ca. 42%).
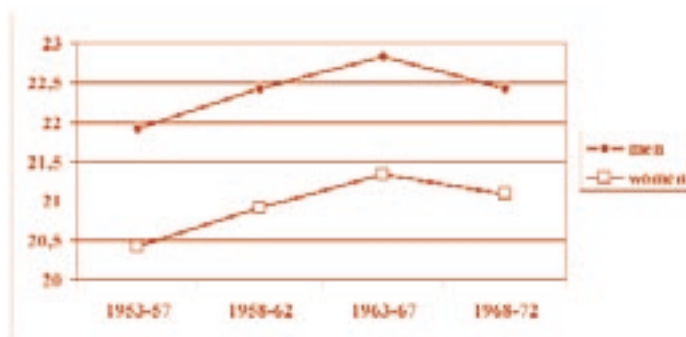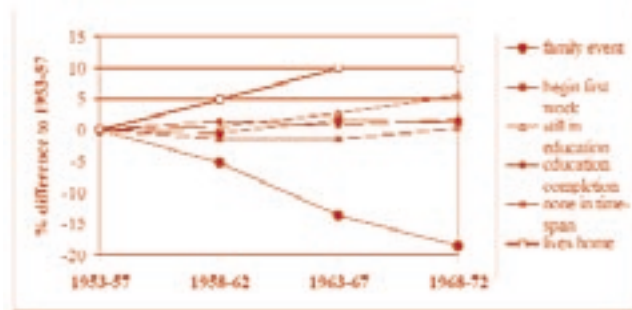
Source: FFS Germany, own calculations

Embedding leaving home in a general vision of the transition to adulthood – and thus considering also the timing of the conclusion of education, achievement of the first job, and family formation – the time spent in these transitional phases increased across cohorts (from 5.4 to 7.5 years for men and from 3.8 to 4.8 years for women). Moreover, men need more time than women to conclude the transition to adulthood and such a gender gap is not only due to the fact that men form their own family later. Women leave home faster than men after the achievement of their first job. A further gender difference is that, for men, there is no clear association between the historical trend of other transitional events and leaving home; with the remarkable exception of family formation. Apart from family formation, men's postponement of residential independence is not reflected by a similar delay of the events that characterize the transition to adulthood. The pattern for women is different: the procrastination of leaving home occurs in a context of a general postponement of the transition to adulthood.

Notwithstanding important gender differences, up to the 22nd birthday more young people left home in the past than today, and the reasons for departure differ as well. (5) Across cohorts, fewer young Germans left home in order to cohabit with a married or unmarried partner, while more left while still in education. Figure 2 shows that only departures for family reasons declined; i.e. those that took place coinciding with marriage, unmarried cohabitation, and the birth of the first child. Yet, this trend is partially counterbalanced by a growth in alternative pathways. In particular, departures that take place while the young adults are still in education increase. These two different trends result in only a relatively small increase of young people who were residing with their parents at their 22nd birthday (from 41% of the 1953-57 cohort to 51% for the 1968-72 cohort). Thus, family formation delay is reflected by a decrease of departures motivated by family formation, but the residential outcomes of this postponement are partially compensated by an increase in alternative pathways from the parental home (Fig. 2).

(5)
When comparing different birth cohorts, one should keep in mind that respondents have been censored by the interview at different ages. A solution to such a problem is to look at young people at their 22nd birthday, age that had been reached by members of all cohorts.

With regard to the role transitions experienced by young adults who were residing in the parental home at their 22nd birthday, for men these are quite similar across cohorts. Differently, across the cohorts considered, fewer women had experienced a first 'normal' job, while more had a trainee contract or were in education without any employment experience. Thus, it appears that nowadays in Germany the permanence in the parental home is, especially for women, more related to a lack of own resources than in the past.

Source: FFS Germany, own calculations

These descriptive results provide valuable information as how young Germans experience their transition to adulthood and, in particular, achieve residential independence from parents. A considerable number of departures took place simultaneously with family formation, yet marriage was not the predominant route to residential independence and unmarried cohabitation is gaining importance. Moreover, quite a few young people left home while still in education and, generally, for 'nonfamily' reasons. Education and the area of residence during childhood appear to play an important role in the decision of when and how to leave home. From a cohort perspective, there was only a slight postponement of leaving home and fewer departures took place coinciding with family events. Thus, in West Germany the delay of family formation had been accompanied by an increase of departures due to 'nonfamily' reasons and especially due to education. As a result, the postponement of family formation appears to be (at least partially) counterbalanced by an increase of premarital (pre-family) departures from the parental home. This development is possible because, among other factors, state provisions provide a frame of reference for family obligations clarifying both duties and rights of parents and children. Thus, such detailed regulations of family obligations open 'residential' alternatives. Obviously, the decision of taking advantage of such opportunities and choosing one pathway instead of another will still also depend on young adults' preferences.

4.3 What favors and what discourages leaving home?

In order to distinguish the influence of different factors on the leaving home behavior, it is necessary to go beyond bivariate analyses (such as the result presented above), and compute multivariate models; such as Cox regressions which estimate (proportional) increase or decrease on the transition rate

(out of the parental home) induced by covariates (Blossfeld and Rohwer, 1995: 229). Such analyses show that several factors trigger or discourage the achievement of residential independence from parents, and that these partially differ for different pathways out of the parental home (Rusconi, 2004). I would like to highlight here two major findings of this research. First, as in other countries, also in West Germany leaving home 'follows' the achievement of the first job; i.e., in order to become residentially independent young adults generally must have entered the labor market. Yet, the models also reveal important gender and pathway differences that reflect the existence of different gender role beliefs in the West German society. The achievement of the first job has an especially strong positive influence for men who leave home coinciding with marriage and family formation. Women who depart for marriage or a family event are less constrained by the presence of their own material resources, since it is acceptable for them to rely on their partners' resources. Differently, men who depart in order to form their own family must have their own financial resources. When young Germans leave for reasons other than marriage, both men's and women's departures increase with the achievement of their first job. Thus, when departures follow a nontraditional route, also women must to rely on their own material resources. In addition, the models also reveal the importance of another societal expectation that family formation should take place after the conclusion of education. Consequently, the departure rate for marriage and family reasons is strongly increased by the conclusion of education; yet this effect is greater for women. This reflects the fact that for men the conclusion of education might not be a sufficient precondition for family formation because they still have to enter the labor force in order to gain sufficient means to sustain their new family. The second major outcome of multivariate analyses is that the attainment of higher educational qualifications favors departures not motivated by a family event. Young people with higher education do not wait for marriage (or another family event) but instead present higher departure rates for education, employment, or other reasons. On the one hand, this might be due to the fact that in order to enroll into university some young adults have to change their place of residence (e.g., when their favored university or course of studies applies a numerus clausus). On the other hand, higher-educated young adults might have a stronger preference for independence. Moreover, since marriage postponement is especially strong for this educational group these young adults have only two alternatives. Either they remain at home for a quite long period of time while waiting to finish their studies, then find a job, and then finally leave home with a partner; or they leave home during education (possibly only temporarily) into a 'nonfamily' household. The results show that it is this second pathway that is followed. Although this is true for both men and women, the effect is stronger for women. This might be explained by the stronger 'emancipation' effect that education has on women's behavior. Given the gendered division of household duties, to the disadvantage of daughters and wives, women gain more – in terms of privacy, freedom and household duties – by spending at least a period of time in a 'nonfamily' household.

5. Conclusions

Over the last decades of the 20th century in Western industrialized countries, important elements of the transition to adulthood have been delayed. Particularly, young adults experience a prolongation of their time spent in education, a postponement of labor force participation and marriage delay – if they do not forego marriage altogether. Moreover, not only young people enter the labor force later, part-time and temporary jobs are becoming more and more common (Cook and Furstenberg, 2002). Given the strong linkage between marriage and the departure from the parental home, it is important to focus on such transformations. Since the mid 1960s, the nuptiality rate of most western countries has decreased: marriage takes place (if at all) at increasingly older ages. Yet, this common trend has been accompanied by different residential outcomes: in some countries the link between leaving home and marriage became weaker and young people increasingly experience premarital departures, while in other countries they prolong their co-residence with parents. Notably, in Western Europe this divergence has followed a North-South divide: Northern-Central Europeans leave home earlier and more frequently for other reasons than family formation (and marriage) than their Southern European peers (Billari et al., 2001, Cordón, 1997, Goldscheider, 1997).

The principle aim of my work was to determine the main influences of young Germans' decision to leave the parental home and whether and why leaving home differs among different birth cohorts. In order to achieve a complete understanding of the leaving home process, it was necessary to recognize that young people's decisions are not only influenced by different types of resources and behavioral norms, but also by the opportunity structures young adults face. Moreover, leaving home was differentiated into different pathways, and particularly between 'family' and 'nonfamily' departures. Finally, this article did not neglect to look at those who did not yet achieve residential independence from their parents. This perspective gives important information on the possible reasons which induce young people to stay in the parental home.

Also in Germany, a considerably number of departures from the parental home takes place in coincidence with a family event. Yet, this pathway is not predominant. Particularly for men, departures for 'nonfamily' reasons are more frequent than those triggered by family formation. And, from a cohort perspective, there has been an increase particularly in the proportion of young people who leave the parental home while still in education. Yet, there are some gender inequalities: more women depart for family formation and the female permanence in the parental home is more frequently linked to a lack of own resources. This is due to the fact that fewer women enter the dual training system, which provides training wages, and when they do so, they are more frequently trained for less prestigious and lower paid positions. Thus, more women have to depend during their vocational training, and also when taking their first steps into the labor market, partially or completely upon parental support. The fact that in particular women who have attained only lower or middle secondary education leave for family

formation is a strong indication that also in Germany in certain social environments the prevalent 'accepted' pathway from the parental home is still through family formation. And that some parents might be more willing to support an alternative departure of their sons than of their daughters, especially if they have only few resources of their own. Yet, these gender differences disappear for those who grew up in metropolitan areas and for highly educated Germans, which indicates a stronger emancipation effect of higher education in Germany. Moreover, since secondary and tertiary educational expansion has nearly equalized participation by gender and students' subsidies do not discriminate between men and women, students enjoy support regardless of their gender. Thus, these highly educated women can negotiate with their parents from the same position as men.

As with other European countries, also in Germany family formation and marriage are increasing delayed in a later life stage. This development has important consequence for the achievement of residential independence from parents, and also in this country one can detect a slight delay in leaving home. Yet, in a cohort perspective this article could show that only departures which take place in coincidence with a family event have decreased. Moreover, this decline is partially counterbalanced by an increase in the proportion of young adults who leave home while still in education. Thus, there is neither a general decrease of departures, nor a general increase of premarital departures. The development of the leaving home behavior toward the achievement of residential independence while education is favored by the opportunity structures young German face. In this country parents must support their children's education until their first professional degree, whereby their financial responsibilities are quite clearly specified in their amount and length. If parents are not able to guarantee sufficient maintenance, the German state provides financial support for those young people in education. Thus, depending upon which secondary education certificate the young adult holds, he/she can 'freely' choose his/her further professional education and, at least from a legal point of view, can independently dispose of the money he/she is entitled to. The crucial importance of training wages and educational allowances extends beyond the (additional) resources they provide to the conceptualization of higher education as an individual right and public good worthy of financial support. This conceptualization clarifies duties and rights of both parents and children, emancipating young adults from their role of 'children' dependent on their parents.

At last, it is important to point out that while in West Germany young adults increasingly experience new (alternative) types of departure, the traditional sequencing of family formation is still predominant: young adults in education generally do not start a family. They still wait to have concluded their education. Men especially wait to have achieved a stable employment. But, instead of staying in the parental home, an increasing number spends this period of time in nonfamily households. Thus, this 'new' behavior is based on a 'traditional' expectation that the role of a partner and parent should be taken only after having terminated the 'pupil' role. Yet, given that in Germany the achievement of the adult role is, to some extent,

unconceivable without the achievement of residential independence from parents, young adults increasing adapt decoupling residential and family trajectories. And possibly because the meanings associated to residential independence for the self-realization of young adults are widely shared in the German society, this country provides a clearly defined frame of reference for family obligations.

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THE TOPIC

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9

How to put an end or not to youth

It seems worth to analyse the reasons why the branch of sociology dedicated to youth pays attention to its "end" rather than other factors. What are the reasons for this close-to-obsessive interest in knowing what limits the end of youth? Maybe it is just because the entrance into adulthood has become a problem provided that, as opposed to what happens in "globalist" societies, there are no obvious rituals or indicators to mark the transitions into adulthood? For instance, marriage is still significant from an individualistic point of view – both men and women can get married however they like throughout their lives – without necessarily marking the entrance into married life and without experiencing it as one of the ways to leave youth. Nobody in France believes that two people who live together but are not married are less mature than two married people. This confusing of the frontiers between ages, even the notion of age, determines to a great extent the fact that youth sociology has focused on the "end", refreshing certain questions made by individuals and groups, and echoes their inquiries and concerns. The thesis for this article to show the difficulties involved in the end of youth is based on the theory of individualism and individualisation of modern advanced societies (Giddens, 1991) (Beck, Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) (Singly, 2005). In our case, in the framework of a second modernity – a period that, since the 60s, breaks with most of the hindrances that existed during the period of the first modernity, especially to control the expression of individualism (Wagner, 1996; Beck, 2001) – all individuals must be "individualised", which means that they have to show certain "personal" competences. Three are the most relevant ones: firstly, a certain disconnection from the parents, secondly, a certain coherence between the two dimensions of the process of individualisation, independence and autonomy, and thirdly, a permanent formation of the self, an opposed imperative to the classical connection of adulthood. The effect of the combination of these three demands is to lead each one to end youth partially, even once adulthood has been reached.

1. Ending childhood and youth by keeping a distance with the parent-children link

The process of individualisation is necessarily based on a certain "dissafiliation", a distance between the definition of the self as a "son" or daughter" and the right to take part in inheritance and transitions (Singly de, 2000b). This separation is visible with the evidence for the vast majority of inhabitants in the western world of the rejection towards "prepared" marriages and even more towards "forced" marriages. Love has progressively imposed its rules on the institution of marriage and has destabilised its almost universal sense; that is to say, the fact that it is a link between two families. Now, the invention of courteous love, the love fantasy – like in

Tristan and Isolda – does not make sense without the formation of a double conception of identity. An individual is always the "son of" or "daughter of". Without having this dimension structure the child's entire existence, he/she can choose as a "free" man or woman and not in the name of the family interests. Since the 12th century, love has been born outside marriage because of this peculiarity: a woman can be a "wife" at the same time as a "daughter" and be loved by another man. The paths of love rejected the confusion between the husband and the lover because they considered that both links led to different functions. When love became a part of marriage, the latter joined even more frequently individuals that had not been chosen by others for being the "son of " or "daughter of". Emotional freedom shows the strength of the ideal of an individual that must disaffiliate through some of his/her actions, but does not stop him/her from being the "son of" or "daughter of" (this is possible if parents accept this division).

This individualisation is not the result of a secret, but rather of a long process that begins in childhood. This is translated into a change of education between the first and second modernities. During the first one (schematically, since the end of the 19th century until the 60s), education was based on obedience and discipline. The course imparted by Émile Durkheim on «morale education» (Durkheim, 1963) is a testimony of this point of view. During the second modernity, the value of autonomy dictated that the child had to evolve on his/her own and to do so must progressively become more distant from the family, particularly from the parents, competing with the value of obedience.

This imperative of the "individualised individual" (Singly de, 2001) shaped new forms of pathology. In those societies where one of the main features is the psychology of existence, one of the sources of individual discomfort could be found in an insufficient level of "dissafiliation" or little separation from the parents. The analysis of case (1) allows us to know one of the modalities in this process of emancipation against the parents. It is the case of a young single woman, aged 23. Her parents belong to the lower class and have managed to take over important positions. After secondary school (end of higher education), Aurora enrolled in university, faculty of arts, and her mother is a professor of classical arts. She sees it as an obligation, she looks like a "good student" and is very afraid: *"I think that for years I have been programmed, I did not think about what I did, so I went to class, did what I had to do, what I thought was normal… I have always acted as automatically I as I have been told to… At the same time, I was deeply unsatisfied with that life but could not manage to find something that… in fact, if I worked like an automat it was to keep my parents happy, as I knew that is what they expected of me"*. Aurora began to have sleeping problems, stopped attending lessons and searched for the shelter of cafés and public transportation: *"I was running away from my life"… Everybody thought I was somewhere but I was really somewhere else. I got up in the morning and became a different person. My life had become that unbearable"*. The "normal" sources of separation during adolescence or divergence of identity (that is to say, an identity that moves between the filiation and personal dimensions) happened late in the case of Aurora and this seems to have the effect of making life more difficult, the crisis gets "more painful" with this maladjustment. She turns into "the daughter of", who knows how to be obedient and content, and another young woman who she would like to turn into but has not found yet. According to the terms used in *Le soi, le couple*

et la famille (Singly de, 1996), Aurora has not been able to form a personal identity because she is pressed by an overwhelming legal identity (which takes place due to a strong sense of belonging to her parents). Aurora, using one of her expressions, lives in an *"apparent normality"*; the good daughter (of) cannot reach her own depths to discover the myth of contemporary societies, the real me that is resistant to external pressures. She has no friends, the only "close being" next to her is her cat. He can console her but not help her in this process of personal construction. The construction of the "individualised individual" in modern societies does not take place, it is one of the paradoxes of a society that has quickly been called narcissist, without the help from someone close or a professional.

Lost in her "fake self" (2), Aurora thinks she must do something:*"I began to realise that if I wanted to change the way my life was developing, I had to take an initiative to do with me and not with my parent's support"*. This way, she requested to be hospitalised: *"If I wanted to build my life, have a life, be an individual, that was what I had to do"*. She connected the change of identity with a change of space; she had tried the cafés and public transportation, which are common spaces considered as the opposite to the private space where she is the "daughter of". This had not been enough so she opted for a solid institutional space. Aurora uses a metaphor for this step: "*it is like being in a race course and suddenly going into the garage. That's all, I just stopped the stress of going round in laps and just had a general check up"*. Aurora remembered the (vicious) circle of the circuit forgetting to mention the race she is being pressured to take part in by her parents, regarding social promotion. She stops at the bodyshop not to "get fixed" but to leave, and the term "check up" acquires another meaning: the hope for discovery of the meaning of life. She does not want to go round in circles anymore, she wants to make her own route. The idea of an "individualised individual" often drives her in the trip to freedom of composed legal and received identities.

In spite of the social and psychological burden of the garage and the check up, Aurora is happy she changed "engines" and stooped being a race car:*"Finally, I am an individual and not just my parents' daughter. I am finally a person".* In another moment of the interview, Aurora went back to this point: "*I have started to be a real individual with a real life* [her cat meows], *and I have a cat"*. She has rented a flat for herself and has changed her professional orientation: she wants to become a make-up artist and work in theatre, a project her parents find funny and laugh at (out loud?). A make up artist? Aurora is a competent person! She knows that at another level this means "keeping appearances". Does her real life consist in helping others to keep their appearances? Time will tell. What counts now she has been born again, is the fact that she has broken a defined identity by others and has affirmed a relative autonomy.

Today it is impossible to be oneself in a world designed by others. That is why one has to try to be the author of one's life in one way or another. In this scope, leaving youth means completing the creation of the self, often thanks to a distance with the identification dimension as a son or daughter, which does not exclude, depending on the spatial or historical context, the defence of one's roots (Ramos, 2006) and preserving a tight relation with the parents but still be an economically independent adult (Gaviria, 2005).

(2)
A different sense to that established by Donald Winnicott.

The possibility of ending youth accumulating autonomy and independence

The specific education of the second modernity moves between the classical logics of transmission and the logics of revelation itself. According to the former, the child must be taught some discipline, and must learn the rules to live in society and socialise as much as possible. According to the latter, the young person must learn to create a personal world (in the strict sense of "autonomy") without waiting to reach this socialisation. The function of the second one is self-production, partly controlled by educators and close people (Singly de, 1996).

The adjustment of the tension between both educational logics often produces a divided identity. In some moment of existence, young people are involved in their own world but also in another one imposed by the parents (and teachers). The first dimension falls under their responsibility and concerns everything to do with friends, sex life and leisure, and the second one falls again under young people's responsibility and also the parents', and includes all about educational affairs (Dubet, 1991) (Singly de, 1996). Secondary school students will have more of a right to choose their boyfriend or girlfriend than to choose their educational option in college. The frontiers of the personal world are not stable, and young people use "strategies for slow destruction" (Ramos, 2003) to extend their domain, as Frank says: "*My parents do it well because it is not them who give orders or establish limits, but me. It is a real interaction and I try not to surpass the limits so as to avoid problems. They give me freedom and I can even press them sometimes to get a bit more*" (Ramos, 2003).

This separation of identities (3) allows us to define specificity of youth in the second modernity. This interpretation is based in the distinction between two notions of political philosophy, autonomy and independence, which are often confused in both colloquial and educated contexts and used as equivalents (Renaut, 1989), (Renaut, 1995), (Chaland, 2001). Independence is based on the monadologic conception presented by Leibniz: individuals do not have to give explanations to anybody because they have resources that allow them to evolve independently. Defended by Kant, autonomy is the capacity of individuals to award themselves their own law, to form a vision of the world, a "world" in the sense of constructivist sociology. Thanks to this distinction, we have proposed that youth can be defined in the second modernity as the period of life where the two dimensions of individualisation are disconnected (Singly de, 2000a), (Singly de, 2004). The young find themselves in the social and psychological conditions that allow them to have a certain autonomy without having resources, especially economic resources, enough to be independent from their parents. In this area, we can understand - in theory - the financial support provided by the parents as one of the ways to protect the children. Young people can have certain autonomy without being independent.

From this point of view, we must reconsider the event that the "classical" youth socialisation considers as the entrance into adulthood, as not all of them are equivalent in relation to independence and autonomy. Some allow for certain independence, whereas others sustain autonomy. Thus, for young people getting their driver's licence is a significant step, as it increases to a certain extent their spatial freedom. Even having a paid job to earn enough

(3)
The divergence of identity, between the educational capital controlled by parents and the personal life, less controlled by them, is one of the ways where we can find a divergence of identity, the most theoretical one we have between belonging to the family and the expression of the self between legal and personal identity.

to pay for their own expenses is another decisive criterion for independence. The latter is in theory the most relevant element so as not to depend on anybody. Indeed, while young people are independent, they will have greater difficulty to establish the family inheritance balance because they are still being defined by their filiation link due to this economic dependence. On the other hand, if they have access to personal and stable economic resources, they can practice their right to inventory and transform, for instance, their relations with their parents from a "hereditary" link to a more "elective" one.

Access to an economic independence does therefore not have the same sense as moving house. Leaving the family home (Maunaye, 1997) especially marks the increase of the personal universe. For this reason, some young people leave at their parents' home a good number of objects so that their new world, their new "home", will not be full of past memories and they can express more easily their new autonomy. The fact that they are "inheritors" (whether understood as an extension of the self through family goods) emphasises their old dependence links. To accept the symbolic inheritance in society today, it is often necessary to have acquired one's own independence. On the other hand, inheriting a certain sum of money from grandparents or getting a certain financial aid from the parents is not compatible with the creation of an autonomous universe (Cicchelli, 2001).

Autonomy does not stop us from having a life in common with the parents, a friend in a shared flat, or with the partner, as long as the "companions" let them carry out this task of acquiring rules and principles. However, those people who live on their own (Kaufmann, 1999) are more easily convinced that they are "autonomous" in that the absence of negotiation is experienced as an indicator of self-determination. As they grow up, always under the regime of dependence, young people get their autonomy in two ways, either negotiating the content of common practices with the other people living at home or by creating "their own little world" in their room (Singly de, Ramos, 2000) or outside with friends. Thus, parents accept (the mother, who is often in charge of keeping the house tidy, with greater difficulty) the disorder that marks the separation between two universes: the family with the principles of order and the threatened young person whose principles are not exactly perceptible by others, but is concerned about moving aside and not being confused with the "family".

The success of the "culture of the young", especially with the kinds of music, magazines, films, radio stations or TV channels, is explained on the side of perception by the fact that at a certain ages (the limits are blurry) they are authorised to be reaffirmed as such in both the public and private spheres. This culture is one of the pillars proposed for young people to remake their world. There are other resources to build it and this way some students (although still economically dependent from their parents) can go on a school trip to start building their own personal world. This is the case of Julia, who decided to move to London for some time to "take control of her life". In the past, possibly as a form of resistance from her parents, she tended to ignore her studies and "go with the flow". This is why she engaged in this project: "*I don't know, maybe I just needed to find myself, find references in another city that was not imposed and get away from everything. I think I needed a sort of guideline, one that was not imposed, but chosen by me. It is what I have tried to do this year in London".* (Moisset, 1996).

The origins of dissociation

The dissociation between autonomy and independence is created through a double mechanism: valuation of self expression, expansion, authenticity; in a few words, the individualised individual - more common in the west since the 60s - and the extension of education in the case of young people of all social classes and both genders (Terrail, 1990), (Baudelot, Establet, 1992) constituting the new capital of the family (Singly de, 1992). Schooling has stopped the transition into the labour market (including the paradoxical effect for those who leave early without a qualification as they feel excluded from this market) and, therefore, also stopped the access to economic independence. The latter, which follows the acquisition of educational capital and a stable job, is reached much later than the legal adult age. When looking from a more subjective indicator, the answer to the question " How old were you when you got your first real job?" is also on this limit: "whatever the socio-professional category and the gender, *real* employment is generally obtained before the age of 25" (Rougerie, Courtois, 1997). Young people do not wait until then to lead an autonomous existence.

We cannot deny that dissociation does not represent an ideal. The model of a "complete" individual today is that of a person who can join (relative) independence and autonomy. We can also perceive the undervaluation of the model of the "woman at home" (that dominated during the first modernity), an "adult" woman, dependent and nevertheless temporarily autonomous. We consider that the link of both dimensions authorises the individual to be autonomous because he/she has greater independence and the means to temporarily transform the universe and the surrounding relations.

Postponement of the end of youth perceived as the end of the formation of identity

From the point of view of youth sociology in the second western modernity, it is not about posing the equivalence amongst all ages, about denying the specificity of the young in relation to adults, but it also becomes necessary to break the representation of the sense associated to these age groups. Adulthood is used to become "superior", which is preferable on the one hand, although some semi-individuals see it as "inferior" on the other. Schematically, the possibility of having one's own resources and not being dependent is regarded as something positive; the devotion to a paid job is a risk of not being able to experiment, to fall into a routine, to fall into self-destruction through an established identity that is not authentic. Adulthood, according to this dimension, is not longer attractive. Some denounce this with the negative term "young-ism" and consider that the young people who have an excessive autonomy "mature" very quickly and even become adults too soon, and those adults who act in the opposite way are trying to be young again when they are too old to do so (Deschavanne, Tavoillot, 2004). (4) Instead of complaining about what seems to be a regression and a threat to good social order - where each one has their own place - we try to understand the reasons why "adults" want to be young again. In order to make intelligible this historical movement from a youth that they all feel sorry to leave, it would be necessary to develop a more complete theory of modernity and the transformations of time and the relation with it.

We will just point out some comments. Let's begin by reading a section of a Christian weekly journal, *La Vie*, where for three years different people were asked the following questions: "What is being an adult? Are you an adult? Do you think being an adult is important in this society?". The answers show the difficulty found by most of those interviewed when it came to stating clearly that they became adults when they were well in their 30s. The term "adult" is not accepted, as writer Jacqueline Kelen says: "*Being an adult? I prefer the concept of maturity including at least one type of age and expressing the capacity of renewal of the being. There is an expression I like and I hope to experience: "Stay in youth"*". Maybe Jean-François Deniau, member of the French Academy and former minister, gave the most relevant answer of the contemporary relation with adulthood:*"It all depends on the definition given of the word adult. If being an adult means being aware of responsibilities, then I hope I am an adult. If, on the other hand, we accept my definition: "Being a human who has stopped growing up", then I really hope I am not one yet. We must not forget about childhood or declare it finished"* (5). Even in the last stage of life this man refuses to be an adult because he does not want to leave childhood definitely. Why? Because childhood and youth are perceived as ages for possibilities and, therefore, for hope. Thus, we see adults as beings with no possibilities, who have nothing left to discover in the world or about themselves.

Youth sociology should also bear un mind the social sense awarded to the category that centres its analysis and listens to the warning made by Georges Lapassade who, since 1963, criticised the term adult by insisting on the fact that individuals are incomplete in many ways (Lapassade, 1963). Adult is a word full of different meanings, some positive and some negative. This is what you discover when listening to a young German man: "*The more you work the more conservative you become. That is why I would like to a have a job where I feel good and can fulfil my professional needs… because to a certain extent I am afraid of becoming an adult, really becoming an adult. To me this means becoming conservative, and that means being like my parents"·* (Zoll, 1993). In other words, this young man is saying the same as Jean-François Deniau. To him, adults, taking his parents as a reference, are often individuals that are somehow wondering sleepily because of their routines. He does not want to be like them whatsoever, he wants to fulfil his objectives. Sociologists estimate that the imperatives of modernity, especially the ones ordering individuals to be themselves, only exist for these individuals with a better social and cultural preparation, and the statement made by this young man - as well as the results from the study made by Rainer Zoll - in general reveal that there is an interpretation mistake: if the conditions to practice this imperative experience strong variations, and bearing in mind that modern societies are still as unequal as the preceding ones, there can be some common beliefs; an adult age that can be associated to oneself constitutes one of these beliefs with relations to the belief in the "self" that is always partially hidden and is yet to be discovered (Taylor, 1998).

A model based on the transition into adulthood and defined as a primary objective does not correspond to the advanced modern societies that work according to another myth, the one for the search of the self that can lead people to retake studies, leave their partners, spend some time "on their own", start over their life in common, leave their company to start a new activity…Thus, in one of these interviews a thirty-year-old man who had just

(5)
A book has collected some of the sections published (Tuininga, 1996).

got married after the birth of his first child and had just got a stable job as a state worker confessed that he felt unhappy about what he referred to as the "straight line". He felt that his life had ended, he confessed he dreamt of "zigzagging". The depression caused by contemporary society does not necessarily appear from the excess of flexibility or an excessively hard competence between individuals in the performance market, but can also result from a dissonance between the desire to have a life full of events and a reality that is too even: the development of a professional and family life.

Individuals - whether "young" or not - can be afraid of being enclosed in a life that does not let them be themselves. It is the story told by Douglas Kennedy in *L'homme qui voulait vivre sa vie* (1998). Ben Bradford was successful in life: he was a thirty-year-old important lawyer, married and with two children. In spite of all that he felt unsatisfied and wanted to make his vocation true: becoming a photographer. He meets a friend on a boat and feels tempted to leave everything behind: *«We keep dreaming about a freer existence but we let ourselves be trapped by obligations and domestic traps. We'd like to leave, travel without luggage but can't help accumulating more weight until we are immobile. It is our fault because beyond the dream of evasion, we never say no; also, there is this irresistible attraction of responsibilities: profession, home, parent scruples, debts...all of this puts our feet on the ground... but even if all the people I know are secretly angry for having landed in a domestic dead-end, we keep going into it and staying there"* (Kennedy, 1998). Ben Bradford decides to leave everything behind. Does he therefore lose his category of an adult and becomes a "post-adolescent?". This is an absurd conclusion. As opposed to some thesis that say that "the general childhood atmosphere has smothered the adult", what we have to do is make a new definition of adulthood (why has youth sociology tried to understand the new meaning of youth without questioning the category of an "adult"?). The myth of the individual, the hidden treasure of a personal identity to be permanently constructed, associated to the right to have several lives, leads us to invent an "adult" category that does not exclude certain features of the "youth" category. Michel Blanc has witnessed this when remembering the trajectory of his hero in *Mauvaise passe*: "*He has become a teacher because he has to make a living somehow. At the age of 45 he has a senior teaching post, a wife and a son, but that is not what he wanted when he was young. Suddenly, he realises he is an old man and that if he wants to change his life, it's now or never".* The producer and the hero are similar because the first one remembers his own life after the success of the film, *Marche à l'ombre*: "*I had the feeling that if I had continued along the same path, my life would have been a lie". Or rather: of course, I am who you think I am, I only am the character that I have always been playing"* (6).

The definition of a category of an "adult" is the focus of a theoretical and ideological battle between two visions of the world, between two relations in a second modernity. For those in favour of the first one, the "normal" existence should be the succession of institutional stages leading to adulthood, which does not allow us to "behave like children" (Anatrella, 1988). For those defending the second one, the ages must be re-established. Thus, philosopher Yves Michaud requests that the legal adult age be lowered to 12 (7): children should have the right to vote, even if they are not mature enough. It is not necessary "to be the prisoner of the dream of perfect rationality in citizens". Adults can be manipulated and the elderly are not deprived of the voting right. There is demand from the start: "the civil

capacity is variable and the greatness of democracy consists in adapting to it". Children could have the right to vote not for being and "adult" before the time established by law, but because the inequalities of maturity (which must include the loss of this competence) do no longer divide ages. Adulthood is no longer the door towards the world of adults. Young people "have the advance payment of maturity" thanks to their decisions to purchase or the access to sexuality. Adults want to keep their "resources" associated to youth so as not to be enclosed forever in an excessively strict identity. Novelist Christian Bobin defends this position in his books by referring to one of the Gospels: only children will go to Paradise. The rest are too serious to be carried away by the madness of God, of others, of themselves. Adult becomes an equivalent of "serious". Christian Bobin tenderly remembers the sentence stated by his loved one: *«Nobody is exactly where they should be, but this is good because a strict adaptation would be unbearable»* (Bobin, 1999). He denies that each one of us is defined by the place we have; there must be a game (in every possible way) so that nobody stays in the same place, to make life go on: *«Childhood continues for much longer than the established period for it: it is experienced by people in love, writers and acrobats"* (idem). According to this concept, the individual has not been completed - "What do you do in life? Nothing, just learn" - and is being constantly transformed thanks to the look of the loved one, to the work on oneself through writing, by taking risks that allow us to move and not stay stuck in a definition of ourselves, and go up to the heights of the acrobat. From this point of view, which agrees with the demands of the second modernity, adulthood can turn into an unattractive category.

An individual's complexity as one goes into adulthood, this claim for a "part of childhood" do not imply, however, the denial of a process, of a personal development (Singly, 2001a). The self is transformed continuously and without limits. What is demanded is the preservation of childhood not just to have permanent resources to create a world and oneself, but also to be able to have the sense of the unit of the self, made in relation to one's own origins. Individuals do not refuse to grow up but do not want to refuse to what youth means either: their own birth and at the same time the chance to be born. Young people can dream of becoming "adults". Understood in the sense of accessing stable and sufficient economic resources, an adult can dream about being forever "young", understood as the capacity to experiment with the self. In this sense, individuals do not wish to end with youth, but always want to have projects, a future, even if the objective social conditions limit their possibilities.

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Selection of documentary references on The Autonomy of youth in Europe

This list is formed both by books and magazine articles or documents from different sources that have been recently added and selected from the data base at the Youth Institute Library.

Should you find any of these documents of interest, feel free to request a copy of any of the copiable materials, in accordance with the current legislation, as well as of other retrospective resources by writing to the following address: *YOUTH LIBRARY. Marqués de Riscal, 16.- 28010 MADRID. Tel.: 913637820-1; Fax: 913637811. E-mail: biblioteca-injuve@mtas.es*

Miret i Gramundi, Pau
¿A mayor educación, emancipación más tardía?: Análisis longitudinal de la emancipación juvenil en España para las generaciones nacidas entre 1924 y 1968. (The longer the education, the further away the emancipation? : longitudinal analysis of juvenile emancipation in Spain for those generations born between 1924 and 1968) / Pau Miret Gamundi. -- [Madrid]: [Spanish Sociology Federation], 2004 24 h. Electronic document
Paper presented at the 8th Spanish Sociology Congress; Work Group no. 17: Sociology of age and the life cycle; coordinated by Luis Garrido Medina. Possible discussion on the extension of the strategy consisting of leaving the family later in order to have more time to study, or whether the strategy is used to spend more time with the parents to extend the period for education.

Casal i Bataller, Joaquim
Capitalismo informacional, trayectorias sociales de los jóvenes y políticas sobre juventud. (Informational capitalism, social paths of the young and policies on youth) / Joaquim Casal. -- [Madrid]: [Youth Institute], [2002] 20 h. Analysis of the changes occurred throughout the social paths of the young in the last decade, as well as the different methodological interpretations made by sociologists when studying the transition from youth to adulthood. Also topics such as consumption or professional precariousness, as well as public policies on youth in this period, distinguishing between nuclear/implicit and peripheral/explicit policies implemented by territories and communities.

Feixa i Pampols, Carles
Del reloj de arena al reloj digital: sobre las temporalidades juveniles (From the sandglass to the digital watch: study on juvenile temporality) / Carles Feixa. The young: magazine on youth studies. -- n. 19 (July-Dec. 2003) ; p. 5-27. ISSN 1405-406X
Interpretation of the mechanisms used to measure access to adult life, considering the ages as the different biographical stages constructed on a

cultural and social environment. The article analyses three alternative models of transition into adulthood and suggests a study of the historical evolution of the life cycle of the young and of the relation between youth and society.

Alvarez, Rosario
Economía y juventud (Economy and youth) / [Rosario Alvarez, Mª José Azofra, María Cuesta]. -- Madrid: Youth Institute, 1999 206 p.; tab., graph. See study in R.L. D02218. Including annexes. Bibliogr.: p. 205-206
The main feature defining the young today is how late they leave home. In Spain this fact affects over half of the young, who also depend on their parents from an economic point of view. This research deals with this issue and the general economic situation of the young, also paying attention to other factors such as consumption or saving, and exploring into their socioeconomic universe.
ISBN 84-89582-47-5

Moreno Minguez, Almudena
El mito de la ruptura intergeneracional en los jóvenes españoles (The myth of intergenerational rupture amongst Spanish young people) / Almudena Moreno Mínguez. -- [S.l.]: [s.n.], 2002. In:. Revista de estudios de juventud (Youth Studies Magazine). -- no. 58 (September 2002); p. 33-44
It states how the state of welfare or family socialisation contribute to the delay in emancipation, leading to a phenomenon known as familiarism, characterised by dependence and family solidarity and typical in Mediterranean countries. It also mentions the idea of the repetition of family models, avoiding intergenerational rupture and preserving the continuity of values.

Gil Calvo, Enrique
Emancipación tardía y estrategia familiar: el caso de los hijos que ni se casan ni se van de casa (Late emancipation and family strategy: the case of those children who neither get married nor leave home) / Enrique Gil Calvo. -- Madrid: Youth Institute, 2002. In:. Revista de estudios de juventud (Youth Studies Magazine). -- n. 58 (September 2002); p. 9-18
The issue of this delay in emancipation is something to be concerned about, especially in countries in Southern Europe such as Italy and Spain. Since the 80s, and in spite of experiencing certain periods of economic reactivation, this trend to stay at the family home seems to have fossilised. Several economic, cultural and institutional theories are presented in an attempt to explain this fact.
ISSN 0211-4364

Oinonen, Eriikka
Extended present, faltering future: family formation in the process of attaining adult status in Finland and Spain / Eriikka Oinonen Young. -- v. 11, n. 2 (may 2003); p. 121-140. ISSN 1103-8830 Bibliogr.: p.138-140
Marriage and parenthood have always been the main indicator of adulthood. Today there is a trend amongst the Nordic young to postpone and even reject this concept of family. Economic or professional independence is the main feature in the transition to adulthood. It suggests a comparative study between those Finnish young people emancipating early and those Spaniards who do it much later and usually follow the classical model of marriage.

Gerzer-Sass, Annemarie
Familie und arbeitswelt: familienkompetenzen als potential für eine innovative personalpolitik / Annemarie Gerzer-Sass, Jürgen Sass DJI Bulletin. -- n. 65 (Winter 2003); p. 4-7. ISSN 0930-7842
The family is a good point for support in the task of individualisation of the young and the assumption of competences they will encounter in their transition to active life.

Martinez Sanmarti, Roger
Formes de vida i cultura juvenil, avui: l'espai juvenil com a renovació social / Roger Martínez Sanmartí. -- Barcelona : [s.n.], [1998] 30 p. Bibliogr.: p. 29-30
Analysis of the types of social relationships found in youth, which affect the whole society. The objective conditions of these new relations are: the extension of the transition between childhood and adulthood, greater academic training and the increase and diversification of consumption.

Get in! : report on the Youth Convention on Social Exclusion and Employment / organised by the European Youth Forum at the European Economic and Social Committee on 21 February 2000. -- [Brussels]: [Youth Forum Jeunesse], [2000] 75 p.
The idea of organising a convention on employment and the social exclusion suffered by the European young originated from the concern of the European Youth Forum regarding youth unemployment rates, late emancipation and the poor levels of social participation of the young groups in political decisions.
A forum is created to exchange ideas and the participants explain how they see the future of Europe, especially the effects of employment. The key factors are: geographical mobility, temporality and professional instability, as well as the increasing social integration of emigrants.

Barraca Mairal, Jorge
Hijos que no se van: la dificultad de abandonar el hogar (Children who do not leave home: the difficulty to leave home) / Jorge Barraca Mairal. -- Bilbao: Desclée De Brouwer, 2000 240 p. : tab.. -- (Colección Crecimiento personal (Personal growth collection). Serendipity; 47) Annex Bibliogr.: p. 227-240
It analyses why the young tend to delay their emancipation and how this delay affects the relationships between parents and children. Amongst the many causes and factors affecting the delay in leaving the family home, some are professional precariousness, the issue of buying a home, unfinished degrees, the comfort found at the family home, etc.

Technical report on: the demographical consequences of the delay in emancipation / School of Political Science and Sociology. -- [Madrid]: [Injuve], 2002. 254 p.: tab. -- (E-86/2002) Bibliogr.: p. 235-254
It deals with the social, economic and familiar circumstances affecting emancipation and the creation of new homes formed by the young in Spain, as well as their perspectives to have children depending on these circumstances. It also provides some statistical data on the socioeconomic and familiar variables whose consequences are late marriages and low birth rates.

Jóvenes adultos y permanencia en el hogar de origen: El fenómeno de la "no emancipación" de los hijos en los hogares españoles : (Young adults

staying at the family home: the phenomenon of "non emancipation" of children in Spanish homes) Evolución (Evolution) 2001-2003 / National Association of Doctors and Degree-holders in Political Science and Sociology; Study conducted by: Lorenzo Navarrete Moreno. -- Madrid: Injuve, 2003. 334 p.: tab. -- (Estudios y biblioteca (Studies and Library); E-95/2003) In cub.: Programa de estudios 2003 (Study plan 2003) Bibliogr.: p. 170-176
It aims at clarifying some of the most relevant sociological features, which configure and explain why those Spaniards aged between 30 and 44 stay at home. By studying the last part of the "non-emancipation" process we can achieve better understanding of the intermediate part of the process (ages 20 to 30) and therefore make better proposals to overcome the social issues resulting from the delay in emancipation.

Bendit, René
Jugendliche in Europa auf dem weg in die selbstständigkeit / René Bendit, Kerstin Hein. DJI Bulletin 63. -- n. 63 (Sommer 2003); p. 4-7. ISSN 0930-7842 Bibliogr.: p. 7
It offers data about the emancipation of the young and the issue of buying a house in Germany. It makes a comparative analysis of the situation with the rest of Europe and studies the evolution of this problem in the last few years.

Requena, Miguel
Juventud y dependencia familiar en España (Youth and family dependence inn Spain) / Miguel Requena. -- [S.l.] : Youth Institute, 2002. In:. Revista de estudios de juventud (Youth Studies Magazine). -- no. 58 (September 2002); p. 19-32
It studies the familiar dependence of Spanish young people and its social context. This generation extends its period of youth and delays the time to assume adult responsibilities. Consequently, the training periods are extended, as well as the chance to obtain a paid job and – therefore- the access to purchasing a home.

Baizán Muñoz, Pau
La difícil integración de los jóvenes en la edad adulta (The difficulty of integration for young adults) / Pau Baizán Muñoz. -- [Madrid]: Fundación Alternativas (Alternatives Foundation), 2003. 43 p.: tabl., graph. -- (Work document; 33/2003) Bibliogr.: p. 37-40
It shows how the process of integration of the young in society has been extended throughout the last two decades. Certain key steps such as making an independent home, getting a steady job and having a family are not taken until people are over 30 years of age. This unusual situation has spread all over the world and has important social consequences. This work shows some results drawn from recent studies on some of the mechanisms involved. Finally, some proposals for public policies are made to compensate the situation.
ISBN 84-96204-33-2

Moreno, Pilar
La situación actual de los jóvenes en Europa (The current situation of the young in Europe) / Pilar Moreno. -- [S.l.] : [s.n.], 2001. In: Entrejóvenes (Amongst young people). -- n. 66 (June-August 2001); p. 5-7
It summarises some of the most important contributions made by the "Study of the Situation of the Young and Youth Policies in Europe". It concludes by

stating that the European young are the best trained in the history of the western counties and have had the best opportunities throughout childhood and adolescence, but have the worst perspectives in comparison with young people 20 years ago.

Rodriguez Victoriano, José Manuel
La sorpresa no era la emancipación adulta: autonomía y dependencia real en la juventud española de la década de los noventa (The surprise was not adult emancipation: autonomy and real dependence of the Spanish young in the 90s) / José Manuel Rodríguez Victoriano. -- [S.l.]: [s.n.], 1999. In: Revista de estudios de juventud (Youth Studies Magazine). -- no. 45 (June 1999); p. 103-111
In a context dominated by professional instability, youth sociology uses terms such as "exclusive autonomy" and "real dependence" to describe a situation where we refuse to make an in-depth analysis of the socio-economic dependence conditions affecting the young today.
Neo-liberalism is the one to blame of the fact that youth can only have access to a sort of virtual autonomy. It also studies the methodology of post-modernist youth and youth policies.
ISSN 0211-4364

García Moreno, José Manuel
Las redes sociales y su influencia en la transición a la edad adulta (Social networks and their influence on the transition into adulthood) / José Manuel García Moreno y Laura Feliciano Pérez. -- [Madrid]: [Spanish Sociology Federation], 2004. 24 h.: tab. Electronic document
Paper presented at the 8th Spanish Sociology Congress; Work team no. 17: Sociology of age and the life cycle; conducted by Luis Garrido Medina.
It describes the importance of employment for the young, the access mechanisms, socialisation and development of the transition process into adulthood based on the strategic use off family networks. It ends up by describing the conclusions drawn from research obtained from the qualitative analysis of some in-depth interviews.

Gaviria Sabbah, Alejandra
Le processus de construction identitaire des jeunes espagnols et français : du domicile familial à la vie de couple / Alejandra Gaviria Sabbah, François de Singly (thesis director). -- Paris: University of Paris, Faculty of Social Science of Sorbonne University, 2002. 471 p.
Research on the Spanish and French young, defining the considerable differences between them in spite of their geographical proximity; while the French leave home earlier and go far away without any intention of having their own family, Spaniards do not leave the family until later on, usually live near their relatives and have their own families.

MISLEADING trajectories: integration policies for young adults in Europe? / Andreas Walther, Barbara Stauber [eds.]... [et al.]. -- Opladen [Alemania]: Leske + Budrich, 2002. 194 p.: graph., tab. Bibliogr.: p. 179-189
Comparative analysis of the situation experienced by the young in Europe and the various policies implemented in various countries of the European Union for the social addition of this group. A specific study is conducted on education matters analysing the concepts, perspectives and trajectories followed in each country, as well as the advantages and disadvantages and

the connection between training and the labour market.
ISBN 3-8100-3450-9

Casal i Bataller, Joaquim
Modalidades de transición profesional, mercado de trabajo y condiciones de empleo (Types of professional transition, labour market and employment conditions) / Joaquim Casal Bataller. -- [Barcelona]: [s.n.], [1998]. [36] p. Included in: Cuadernos de relaciones laborales (Notes on labour relations).- n. 11 (1997) ; p. 19-54
Youth is a transitional period: the step taken by "social adolescence towards total emancipation". This process includes the academic-contextual training, pre-labour experiences, professional transition, experiences as a citizen and the family autonomy processes. Professional precariousness is the main feature of youth, which means that we turn into adults later on in life.

Sweden. Ministry of culture
[In their terms: a youth policy for democracy, justice and belief in the future] / Ministry of Culture. -- Stockholm: [Riksdagen tryckeriexpedition], [1999]. 89 p. Before tit.: Swedish Government Bill 1998/99:115.- Tit. Taken from cub.
Presentation of the general guidelines of the youth policy to be implemented by the Swedish government in the next few years. The main objectives can be summarised into three points: offering the young some opportunities to live their life independently, increasing their capacity to participate and have an influence and, lastly, providing them with tools to make them be creative as well as critical.

Jurado Guerrero, Teresa
¿Por qué los jóvenes franceses se van antes de casa que los jóvenes españoles? : El papel de las políticas sociales (Why do the French leave home before the Spanish?: The role of social policies) / Teresa Jurado Guerrero. -- Barcelona: [s.n.], [1998]. 36 p.: graph.
Even though in some EU countries we can see a delay in family emancipation, this happens even later in Spain.
This comparative analysis of the French and the Spanish explains the causes of this delay. Its main distinguishing feature is the aid provided by the French state to the young in terms of employment and financial aids.

Gaviria Sabbah, Sandra
Retener a la juventud o invitarla a abandonar la casa familiar: análisis de España y Francia (Keeping the young at home or encouraging them to leave: analysis of Spain and France) / Sandra Gaviria Sabbah. -- [S.l.]: Youth Institute, 2002. In:. Revista de estudios de juventud (Youth Studies Magazine). -- no. 58 (September 2002); p. 45-52
The Spanish and French young leave home in different moments and under different circumstances. This is not only due to material reasons such as unemployment or housing, but to different conceptions of the relationship between parents and children when they become grown-ups. They do not build their identity following the same logic or pursue the same objectives: while the Spanish search for protection and safety, the French prefer autonomy and risk.
ISSN 0211-4364

SISTEMAS educativos en sociedades segmentadas: "Trayectorias fallidas" en Dinamarca, Alemania Oriental y España (Educational SYSTEMS in divided societies: "Failed paths" in Denmark, Eastern Germany and Spain) / Mathilde Morch... [et al.]. -- [S.l.]: [s.n.], 2002. In: Revista de estudios de juventud (Youth Studies Magazine). -- no. 56 (March 02); p. 31-54 Graphs, tables Bibliograph.: p. 77-86

Analysis of the conditions and structures enabling the success of the systems for the transition of the young into adulthood and their social integration. Research is centred in Denmark, Eastern Germany and Spain and is divided into five sections: adolescents and transition paths towards adult life as a part of educational plans, relation with the logics underlying the division of society, analysis of the educational systems and labour markets, role of education and development of the educational systems through modernisation processes, and analysis of the systemic and subjective risks inherent to the paths of the "young adults".

ISSN 0211-4364

Romero, Martín J.

"Tardojóvenes" acomodados (The accomodated young are late) / [Martín J. Romero] Misión joven (Mission young). -- no. 327 (April 2004);p. 35/3 del Cuaderno joven n. 183. ISSN 1696-6432

Reproduction of an article from El Periódico about the late emancipation of the young today. The main causes seem to be professional precariousness and the increase in the cost of housing.

"TRAYECTORIAS fallidas", entre estandarización y flexibilidad en Gran Bretaña, Italia y Alemania Occidental ("Failed paths", between standardisation and flexibility in great Britain, Italy and Western Germany) / Andy Biggart... [et al.]. -- [S.l.]: [s.n.], 2002. In: Revista de estudios de juventud (Youth Studies Magazine). -- no. 56 (March 2002); p. 11-29 Bibliograph.: p. 77-86

Comparison of some of the factors behind the transition between school and work in the case of the young in Great Britain, Italy and Western Germany. Examination of the failed paths in three aspects: institutional and structural differences between the analysed countries, subjective perspectives of the young about transitions and integration of the subjective structural dimension when it comes to generating risks of social exclusion.

ISSN 0211-4364

Casal i Bataller, Joaquim

TVA y políticas públicas sobre juventud (TVA and public youth policies) / Joaquim Casal. Revista de estudios de juventud (Youth studies magazine). -- no. 59 (Dec. 2002); p. 35-49. ISSN: 0211-4364

Research about the "Transition towards adult life" and the "new situation of the young", dealt with in two parts: one about the theoretical framework about the sociological analysis made of youth regarding the social change and participation, and another about the debate on the role played by the State and the institutions in the development of the fields of action of the integrated youth policies.

Wendebiographien : zur _konomischen, sozialen und moralischen Verselbst_ndigung junger Erwachsener : ergebnisse der Leipziger L_ngsschnitt-Sutdie 3 / Walter Bien, Ralf Kuhnke, Monika Reibig (Hrsg.).

-- Munich: Deutsches Jugendinstitut, cop. 1999. 246 p. Including annexes
Bibliogr.: p. 237-246
Research about the process of economic, social and moral change of the
young in their maturity stage and the process of emancipation.
ISBN 3-87966-384-X

Arnett, Jeffrey Jensen
Young people's conceptions of the transition to adulthood / Jeffrey Jensen
Arnett. -- [S.l.]: [s.n.], 1997. In: Young & Society. -- v. 29, n. 1 (September
1997); p. 3-23 Tables Bibliogr.: p. 21-23
Analysis of the perceptions of a sample of young people about what it
means to be an adult. Frequent roles in this type of research, such as
marriage, end of education, entrance in the labour market, etc. are rejected
as criteria. From the results it is concluded that the new young generations
conceptualise the transition into adulthood in intangible, gradual,
psychological and individualistic terms.
 ISSN 0044-118X

Jurado Guerrero, Teresa
**Youth in transition: housing, employment, social policies and families in
France and Spain** / Teresa Jurado Guerrero, Open University, Madrid. --
[Hampshire]: Ashgate, 2001. 358 p.: graph., tab. Including annex Bibliogr. p.:
339-353
Comparative study of the interests of the European young, analysing the
differences between the way to confront access to adulthood made by the
Spanish and the French, as well as the different participation policies
implemented.
ISBN 0 7546 1816 1

Enrique Gil Calvo
Enrique Gil Calvo is a political Professor of Sociology. His area of expertise includes studies on age and gender. He has published over 15 books, and his latest issues are El miedo es el mensaje (Fear is the message) (Alianza, 2003) and Máscaras masculinas (Male masks) (Anagrama, in print).

Magdalena Jarvin
Doctor in Sociology at the René Descartes – Paris V University (2002). She was awarded a grant for post-Doctoral research by the University of Ottawa, Canada (2004) and is currently working as a teacher at a Social Workers' School (IRFASE) in Paris.

Her main field of expertise is youth Sociology, socialisation and nightlife, as well as consumption habits (food and alcohol) from an intercultural point of view. She has published her first work about this topic entitled *Regards anthropologiques sur les bars de nuit. Espaces et sociabilités,* directed by D. Desjeux, M. Jarvin, S. Taponier, Paris, Editions l'Harmattan, 1999.

Her second field of expertise is connected with power and commercial relations, role games and the idea of trust.

She has just been coordinating a collective project (with N. Hossard) about the uses of urban spaces in European, African and American cities entitled *C'est ma ville! De l'appropriation et du détournement de l'espace public* (Editions l'Harmattan, 2005).

Sandra Gaviria
She is a Professor of Sociology at the University of Le Havre and a Doctor in Sociology by Sorbonne University. She is a member of the CIRTAI research centre (University of Le Havre-CNRS) and an associate member of CERLIS (Paris Univeristy 5-CNRS). Some of her works published are: *Quitter ses parents* (PUR, 2005), *Se construire comme jeune adulte en Espagne et en France: L'installation en concubinage* (Agora, 2005)*, Deux formules pour devenir adulte en France et en Espagne* (Dialogue, 2001). She has worked on some research connected with youth and the family: emancipation, unequal distribution of house work... She has also dealt with economic and social trends in Spain (DSA Stoclet).

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in Europe, where 8 countries took part. She is now researching about the processes of family autonomy in Portuguese young people from an intergenerational point of view.

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Sociology Professor at the faculty of Human and Social Science of Sorbonne University. He is the director of a prestigious laboratory: the centre for research on social links (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique et University of Paris 5 Descartes).

He is an acknowledged specialist in the field of Sociology of the family, gender and education. He has published several books, such as: Fortune et infortune de la femme mariée; Le questionnaire; Sociologie de la famille contemporaine; Le Soi, le couple et la famille; Libres ensemble. L'individualisme dans la vie commune; Quand l'individualisme crée du lien, Les uns avec les autres; L'individualisme est un humanisme. He takes the point of view of the Sociology of a second modernity, and puts first the process of individualisation of construction of identity. This way he contributed to the creation of an individualistic Sociology. Within this theoretical framework he is working now on pre-adolescence and adolescence.

Mircea Vultur
Professor of Economy and Sociology at the national scientific research institute of Québec and member of the "l'Observatoire Jeunes et Société" observatory. He has written a book entitled "Collectivisme et transition démocratique" (Presses de l'Université Laval, 2002) and has led the group project under the name "Les jeunes en Europe centrale et orientale" (Les Éditions de l'IQRC and Presses de l'Université Laval, 2004). Some of his works are "Vocational integration and relationship to work among Quebec youth without high-school diplomas" (with Claude Trottier and Madeleine Gauthier) and with Laurence Rouleau-Berger (dir.), "Youth and work in the Post-Industrial City of North America and Europe" (Academic Publishers Brill, Boston, 2003); "Social and professional insertion of the young in Quebec. Evolution and current situation", with José Antonio Pérez-Islas (dir.), "New looks on the young in Mexico and Quebec," (Mexican Youth Institute, Mexico, 2003) and "Os jovens e os programas de inserção profissional no Quebec: entre a lógica do ator e a normatividade institucional" with Lucia Rabello de Castro and Jane Correa (dir.), "Juventude contemporânea: perspectivas nacionais e internacionais," (NAU Editoria, Rio de Janeiro, 2005).