

Crossing Sights: migrant youth in two Italian cities

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Abstract. This article comparatively analyzes some results of a survey carried out within the framework of the TRESEGY Project, involving the two cities of Genoa and Rome and their surrounding administrative districts. Secondary school students in these areas were asked to answer a questionnaire. In both cities, the sub-sample of 300 foreign students was compared to a numerically equivalent group of Italian students.

The aim of this closer examination is to explore some aspects of the information gathered through the TRESEGY survey, focusing on the issues of self-perception and perception by others, evaluation of discrimination suffered and/or witnessed, identity-building processes and their crucial elements. The results of the survey can be sorted by different criteria: nationality (foreign and Italian students), area of residence (students from Genoa and from Rome) and generation (using the “decimal” method proposed by Rumbaut to distinguish different generations of immigrants). This allows the researcher to compare “immigration styles” according to the different contexts in which migrants live and to evaluate their consequences in terms of self-perception and social inclusion.

Keywords: youth migration, generation, Genoa, Rome, self definition.

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“Second generations” in Italy

The term “second generation immigrant” has spread to Italy comparatively recently and is now becoming more and more common, both in academic articles on immigration and in the mass media. The increasing use of this term indicates that the flow and cycle of immigrants to and from Italy is gradually stabilizing. Immigration has become one of the most significant ongoing social processes in Italy since the 1980s (Pugliese, 2002).

The increasing visibility of the so-called “second generation immigrants” signals that Italian society is changing significantly. One reason why it is particularly important to realize this is the social stigma that is more and more often being attached to foreigners in Italy, who fall victim to stereotypes labelling all immigrants as illegal immigrants and all illegal immigrants as criminals (Rivera, 2009).

According to a survey conducted by ISTAT² on foreign citizens living in Italy, published in 2009, the number of young migrants³ in Italy now amounts to 700 000⁴ and will presumably outnumber one million in the next few years. These figures show that the presence of young migrants is already significant not only in schools of all levels, but also in other kinds of social venues, both formal and informal, where different relational styles between youths of migrant and Italian origin are developing. What is being negotiated here is a presumably crucial issue for the future of cultural and social inclusion in our country, as this new social reality poses new challenges both at the institutional level and for practices of social inclusion applicable to daily life, social relationships and education.

Based on the information gathered within the TRESEGY European research project⁵, the current article will focus on two case-studies, carried

² Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (Istat) is the Italian National Statistical Institute, in charge of administering the official census and managing the national statistical system (SISTAN)

³ Young migrants in an age range between 14 and 26, in accordance with the sample selected for the current survey.

⁴ Istat Demografia, “popolazione straniera residente al 1 Gennaio 2009”, per età e sesso”. The authors of the current article re formulated the content of the article.

⁵ TRESEGY: Toward a social construction of an European youth: the experience of inclusion and exclusion in the public sphere among second generation migrated teenagers. Project financed by the 6th European Commiccion Framework Programme. In Italy, the

out respectively in Rome and in Genoa, aiming to situate some of the general issues mentioned above within these actual contexts.

But first of all, who are we actually talking about when we say “second generation immigrants”?

The term “second generation” is used to describe the children of immigrants who were born in Italy or who have arrived there either as young children or as teen-agers. However, children of mixed couples are also often defined as “second-generation immigrants”. It is apparent, then, how wide and diverse a range of people is generally attributed to this particular category of the migratory phenomenon. According to the definition adopted by the authors of the current article, the main distinctive trait of “second generation immigrants” is the fact that most of their schooling and socialization has taken place in Italy (Ambrosini, Molina, 2002). Unlike the case of other European and extra-European countries, where a significant amount of immigrants became a key feature of the social context much earlier than in Italy, and where by now the presence of a third or even fourth generation has made the concept obsolete (as, for example, in France, Great Britain, or the United States of America), the definition of “second generation immigrant” given by Rubén G. Rumbaut in 1997 fits our country’s situation perfectly. The “decimal” classification proposed by this author divides second generation immigrants into four main groups: the actual second generation, including children who were born in Italy and have migrant parents; “generation 1.75”, including those who arrived at ages 1-5; “generation 1.5”, including children who arrived when they were 6-14 years old; and finally, “generation 1,25”, i.e. migrant youths who arrived in their teens (Rumbaut, 1997). Both academic literature and the media, on the other hand, tend to use the term “second generation” without considering the complexities involved and without acknowledging that the different “decimal” groups may develop specific modes of access to the society and culture of the country where they live.

The problems generated by the original definition of “second generation” are also being debated among the groups and organizations - as yet not many - formed by migrant youths in Italy to represent their own interests. The term “second generation” was coined at the beginning of the

project was implemented and coo-ordinated by D.i.S.A. (Department of Anthropological Studies), University of Genoa. The survey was carried out in the following cities: Barcelona, Berlin, Genoa, Lisbon, Madrid, Metz, Porto, Rome, Utrecht.

20th century by the Chicago school of sociology (Park, 1928 and Park, Thompson, 1939), with reference to migrant families rather than to individuals; consequently, this term stresses relational aspects, referring implicitly both to a “first” generation and to the following generations.

According to Tahar Lamri, an Algerian writer who has been living in Italy since 1986, “the term “second-generation immigrant” contains a self-contradictory element. By labelling the children of immigrants as “second” or “third” generation, these people are made to inherit an “immigrant” status which was never theirs. Maybe this term can be useful for research purposes, but it shouldn’t be used in the media”⁶.

Another critical issue is “age group”: as yet, “second generation” youths are hardly ever fully recognized as members of their group of peers. Often, they are confined in an “ageless” world, where ethnicity defines their identity and their presence is therefore perceived only in terms of “immigrants” and “foreigners”⁷.

The way in which youths from immigrant families are perceived by others is often influenced by “integration” models previously enacted by their parents, models which are generally unacceptable to members of this “emerging” group. It is a fact that first generation immigrants have generally been received into Italian society according to a model of “subordinate integration”: in other words, willingly or not, immigrants have generally adapted to not being perceived as citizens or social actors but merely as additional labour force temporarily present in the country, to be employed in the lower segments of the labour market. The jobs open to immigrants are typically heavy, hazardous, precarious, underpaid and socially stigmatized (Ambrosini, 2005). Moreover, there is a tendency to place foreign workers in “ethnic labour ghettos”, according to their alleged “ethnic specialization”.

These subordinate models of inclusion are often rejected by the “children of immigration”. These youths, having been born and/or raised in Italy, absorb and creatively transform cultural models and cognitive patterns of the host country’s society; consequently, their expectations

⁶ Article published on *Internazionale*, *Italiani, l’Italia vista dai nuovi cittadini*, December 2008

⁷ For example, in Iard surveys, first-generation and second-generation foreign youths were not included in the population sample researched. See last report published in 2007 (AAVV, 2007).

regarding social status, education and income tend to differ from those expressed by their parents. This in turn causes many young migrants to relate negatively to the socially de-valued image of their parents, as produced by the host country and also by the first generation immigrants' own self-representation. Thus an "expectation gap" between generations is created, and sometimes the focus of discourse on social inclusion shifts from integration through work and income, to integration as a matter of citizenship. A young woman of Congolese descent who was interviewed during the survey expressed this tension in the following words: "our parents had to fight to *work* here, we have to fight to *live* here".

Individual and group perception of "belonging/not belonging" to the juvenile population is one of the starting points from which it is possible to enact different patterns of social behaviour, to interpret racism (both suffered and witnessed) and to chart a possible route towards inclusion or even full citizenship.

So the outcome of the challenge posed by "second generation immigrants" apparently depends on the further development of processes currently taking place in our towns, schools and cities. "Will these young immigrants' children develop their relational network predominantly inside their national/ ethnic group of origin? Or will they be able to expand the scope of their relationships? After leaving school, what will their role in the labour market be?" (Bertani, 2009). Furthermore, will their self-perception be based on an essentialist concept of identity or will they accept their hybrid condition and consider themselves as actors of the so-called *travelling cultures* (Clifford, 1999)?

The aim of the current article is to analyse these issues in order to identify possible analogies and differences between the life-experience of different "decimal" generations.

Definition of instrument and sample group

In Italy the survey was carried out in the following way: two statistically non-significant sample groups of secondary-school students in the areas of Rome and Genoa were administered a questionnaire. The questionnaire was constructed so as to gather information on the following (in this order)⁸:

⁸ This article consists of a cross-analysis of data concerning variables classified in the

social and personal details; composition of families and their main features; education and professional training; work experience; housing; social life; spare time; self- perception and perception by others; expectations for the future.

After a series of preliminary tests, the original questionnaire used in various European regions was partially changed in order to gather more precise information on specifically Italian features. Some questions originally included in the trans-national version of the questionnaire were cut and some extra items were added. The final Italian version of the questionnaire included 63 questions. The questionnaire administered in Rome differed from the one administered in Genoa only by one question, included in the set of additional questions⁹.

The Tresegy questionnaire was administered to 600 secondary school students in the city province of Rome and to an equivalent group in Genoa and its surrounding province.

In both areas, secondary schools were chosen according to the distribution of foreign students and focusing as much as possible on the schools with the highest number of migrant students. A statistically non-significant was therefore composed by balancing the number of foreign students and the number of Italian students in Genoa, while the percentage of Italian students is slightly higher than that of foreign students (51%) among the respondents in Rome.

As far as gender is concerned, in Genoa the situation was almost perfectly balanced (52,7% of Italian students and 50,2% of foreign students were male), whereas in Rome there was a slight unbalance : 61,4% of Italian respondents and 48,3% of foreign respondents were male.

Conversely, as far as age is concerned, the Roman sample was more balanced than the Genoese one: over 60% of both sub-sample group members were aged 17-19, whereas in Genoa the sub-samples differed in age according to nationalities: within the group of Italian students, most (50,3%) belonged to the 15-16 age group, while the group of non-Italian citizens had a majority (51,3%) of members aged 17-19.

following categories: “social life”, “use of free time”, “self-perception and perception by others” and “expectations about the future”.

⁹ See note 12 for more information on the answers given by the Genoan sub-sample.

Table 1: Samples sex and nationality¹⁰

SEX	Genoa		Rome	
	Foreigners	Italians	Foreigners	Italians
MALE	52,70%	50,20%	48,30%	61,40%
FEMALE	47,30%	49,80%	51,70%	38,60%
TOTAL	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%
N	300	300	294	306

The main difference between the two local sample groups concerns the nationality of foreign students, signalling some specific features of the contexts taken into consideration and allowing a first comparison between different “migration profiles”. In Rome, the composition of migration flows may be described as “multicentric” and “stabilized”, whereas the Genoese context features more recent arrivals and a smaller range of countries of origin.

This is further confirmed by the incidence of respondents of foreign origin holding Italian citizenship, which amounts to 17,5% of the sample group of students of foreign descent in Rome, while only a dwindling percentage of the corresponding group in Genoa holds Italian passports. Most students in Rome with foreign nationalities are Romanian (16.4%), Ecuadorian (8.9%), Filipino (7.5%), Peruan (6.5%) and Bengalese (5.2%). In Genoa, the distribution of nationalities within the sample group of foreign students is far more concentrated, as follows: Ecuadorian (54,3%), Albanian (12,0%), Peruan (5,7%), Moroccan (4,0%) and Colombian (3,3%).

Information collected on the respondents’ birthplace further accentuates the differences between the sample groups in the two geographical areas. Only 6 foreign students among the Genoese respondents were born in Italy. Moreover, 27,4% of the foreign sub-sample first arrived in Italy between 2001 and 2002, implying that schooling was begun in the country of origin. On the contrary, a large share of the respondents in Rome consists of second generation students (23,0% of the foreign-origin sample were

¹⁰ Final results listed in Table (N) were obtained excluding questions failed to be answered and/or missing answers for single variables. This implies a variation of final results according to the researched item.

actually born in Italy).

Concerning the type of secondary school attended by foreign respondents, most migrant youths in the Roman sample group go to technical schools (75,5%), while in Genoa, the majority (62,3%) of the foreign sample group choose vocational education.

Situation of teenagers in Rome

By analyzing the outcome of the questionnaires administered to Italian and migrant students aged 15-19, who were attending 11 secondary schools in Rome, it has been possible both to identify some aspects of the life of so-called “second-generation immigrants” and to outline the main features of social inclusion/exclusion processes involving both Italian and foreign students. The first significant piece of information is that most “foreign” respondents cannot strictly be considered as “second-generation immigrants at all. Actually, only 21,4% of them were born in Italy and only 17,5% of them are Italian citizens. It therefore seems more appropriate to choose the less conventional definition of “second generations” suggested by Rumbaut.

Relational networks of both Italian and foreign respondents tend to show a separation of nationalities. Although this tendency toward separation gradually decreases for young migrants who have been living in Italy for a larger number of years, it remains clear that both sub-groups find it difficult to establish social relations with their peers of different origin.

This separation is also reflected in the spatial definition of social relationships: teenagers of different nationalities meet their friends and socialize in different places, signalling that Italian and foreign youths have a different sense of belonging to their city, their neighbourhood and the local social context in general. Most Italian respondents (45,3% of them) stated that their social life originates and takes place mostly in their home neighbourhood and, in a slightly lower ratio, at school (44,5%). Conversely, “children of immigration” indicated school as the place where most of their social life takes place (56,6% of this group of respondents) and find it difficult to become fully integrated in the social fabric of their neighbourhood (17%).

Table 2: The majority of your friends are from...

FRIENDS PROVENIENCE	CITIZENSHIP	
	Foreigners	Italians
SCHOOL	56,6%	44,5%
WORK	4,3%	0,4%
FAMILY	7,7%	0,4%
SPORTS	2,1%	4,7%
CHURCH/MOSK.	3,8%	0,8%
NEIGHBOURHOOD	17,0%	45,3%
OTHER	8,5%	3,9%
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%
N	235	254

As far as the sense of belonging is concerned, most Italian teen-agers indicated their home town as the place which most determines their identity while foreign respondents said they felt more attached to their country of origin.

The two sub-groups differ less as regards processes of self-definition. Both Italian and migrant respondents tend to define themselves based on their gender, age, sexual orientation and clothing¹¹; nationality/culture/religion is not assigned a significant role in their identity-building process by the members of either sub-group. However, these elements do play a vital role in the way migrant youths feel themselves to be perceived by others: 25.7% of them indicate national origin as the main factor of identification by others. A strong discrepancy therefore emerges between self-perception and perceived definition by others for foreign youths, while their Italian peers tend to indicate the same factors both for self-perception and perception by others, suggesting that the latter group experiences the process of self-definition in a more balanced way. Skin colour, on the other hand, was not indicated as a significant factor by students of foreign origin, neither for self-perception nor as regards perception by others.

¹¹ The connection between dressing styles and strategies for contrasting “social ageing” put into practice by some groups of migrant youths in Genoa was researched in Benasso, Bonini (2009).

Perceptions of racism and discrimination suffered and/or witnessed are among the most interesting outcomes of the survey, because they consider both a subjective aspect (perception of racism) and objective experiences (having/not having suffered discrimination). Perception of racism is quite high and widespread among representatives of both sub-groups (over 85% of all respondents maintain that there is racism in Italy); this perception is not directly linked to personal experience. A much bigger share of migrant youths (47,2%) maintain they have suffered discrimination compared to Italian youths (only 11,8%). The main causes of perceived discrimination are national origin and skin colour. School, where most of this group’s social life takes place, is also the most frequent context for discrimination.

In spite of blatant discrimination and exclusion, taking an active part in the democratic processes of the country they live in does not appear to be a priority for either Italian or foreign respondents. A vast majority of Italian students (81,8%) think it is not important to vote in one’s country of residence. The same can be said of foreign students: 70,6% think that voting is not important; at the same time, obtaining Italian citizenship is desirable for most of them (75,3% of foreign respondents). Young people’s low level of trust in political institutions is accompanied by the belief that direct, grassroots action by young people is important to obtain social change. However, this belief is hardly ever put into practice: only 27% of migrant youths and 30,2% of their Italian peers are members of associations or groups that are active within civil society.

Table 3: Did you ever feel discriminated?

DISCRIMINATION	CITIZENSHIP	
	Foreigners	Italians
NO	52,8%	88,2%
YES	47,2%	11,8%
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%
N	290	304

If we attempt to sum up the outcomes of this brief overview and analysis of the responses collected in Rome, we find that teenage students’ perceptions on social inclusion/exclusion, according to the survey, are

primarily influenced by their material and relational conditions, as well as by their daily lifestyle choices and consumer habits. Self-description appears to be based on factors attaining to the individual sphere, rather than collective or social elements, as described by Bauman in *Liquid Modernity* (2000). This is true for both Italian and foreign teenagers; both sub-groups also share a low level of confidence in the State and in active citizenship as means to promote social change and emancipation. Expectations for the future are mostly oriented toward self-realization (ibidem).

Table 4: Italian and foreign students for participation to association activities

PARTICIPATION TO ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES	CITIZENSHIP	
	Foreigners	Italians
NO	73,00%	69,80%
YES	27,00%	30,20%
TOTAL	100,00%	100,00%
N	289	301

On the other hand, it should not be ignored that migrant teenagers also tend to define themselves and to feel identified by others according to their country of origin. This is reflected in the formation of peer groups based on nationality, even though this tendency decreases for those who have been living in Italy for longer periods of time. As mentioned in the introduction, migrant youths, even though they identify themselves primarily as teenagers, do not detach their sense of self from their status of “immigrants” and “foreigners”, especially when describing how they feel themselves to be perceived by their peers and by the host country’s society in general.

This metaphorical “imprisonment” into a “foreigner’s” condition sometimes leads migrant youths to construct “imaginary homelands” – an expression created by Rushdie (1991)– leaving them with an unsolved contradiction between their somewhat artificial “foreign” identities and the perception of living “in between” different cultural universes which, on their turn, are inevitably “mixed”.

The stories told by the teenagers interviewed suggest that their affiliations are not yet entirely clear, resulting in a continuous tension

between “mimicry” (Bhabha, 2005) or imitation of current Italian cultural models for their age group, and a search for a distinct and meaningful perspective. This often leads migrant youths to take refuge in an alleged essential “difference”, constructing and “stiffening” their cultural identities by the same mechanisms that have developed within the Italian receiving society.

In spite of the difficulties of social and cultural inclusion, it should not be undervalued that the spontaneous encounters between “native” and “migrant” groups, even when they are conflictual or “forced”, lead to “unconscious hybridizations”. These in turn lead, in time, to the creation of new models, both in a broader socio-cultural perspective and in everyday life. Based on this assumption, informal social venues are vital in providing opportunities for socialization, mutual recognition and exchange between teenagers of migrant origin and their Italian peers.

Situation of teenagers in Genoa

Information gathered through the survey outlines the main aspects contributing to identity-building and representation of migrant youths, highlighting both differences and similarities between them and their Italian peers. As expected, the longer the permanence of foreign teen-agers in Italy, the smaller the differences between the two sub-groups: in other words, foreign youths having lived in Italy for a longer period of time tend to give answers which are more in line with those of their Italian counterparts. Consequently, the greatest difformities between the outcomes of the questionnaire were registered between Italian students and foreign students having resided in Italy for less than 4 years.

The most frequent aspect differentiating the opinions upheld by foreign respondents from those of their Italian classmates lies in a general tendency towards a style of self-representation at least partially influenced by a desire for “social desirability”¹². In particular, this tendency is visible in the answers given to items regarding the frequency of problematic situations

¹² In other words, some answers given to some particular items of the current questionnaire seemingly have been especially designed in order to give an image of oneself coinciding with the stereotype of “the good boy”.

and judgement of certain more or less stigmatized social behaviours¹³.

As far as “relational” problems are concerned, the percentage of migrant youth having reportedly experienced some form of conflict with “official” authorities (such as teachers and the police) is much lower than the percentage of their Italian counterparts. These findings may very possibly be influenced by the foreign sample group’s desire to be considered “normal”. In line with this, as has already been mentioned, this group also tends to express more conservative opinions than its Italian analogue when asked to judge forms of “deviant” behaviour, especially on such matters as use of addictive substances (ranging from tobacco to “hard” drugs) and “non-traditional” sexual behaviour (e.g. pre-marital sex, abortion, extra-marriage relationships and non-married couples).

At the same time, as far as certain aspects of everyday life are concerned, and especially with regard to the issue of intolerance, the tendency described above is reversed, and Italian students appear to conform their opinions to media representation more than their foreign counterparts. In particular, the two sub-groups gave different answers to items concerning perception of racism in Italy. Although less than 20% of Italian students allegedly experienced racist discrimination (against 50% of their migrant counterparts), Italian teenagers appear to be prone to speak out against racism, while their foreign counterparts are more cautious in their assessment of episodes potentially branded as “discrimination”, probably because they need to adopt a more rational approach to social exclusion episodes, having been directly involved.

¹³ The list of *items* included: using public transport without paying the ticket; occasionally smoking marijuana; getting divorced; getting drunk; pretending to be sick in order not to go to work; stealing in shops; having sexual intercourse before marriage; beating someone up in order to defend one’s opinions; fighting with supporters of the opposing team; counterfeiting one’s individual income statement; smoking tobacco; having homosexual sex; living together without being married; taking heavy drugs (heroin, cocaine etc.); getting an abortion (for oneself or for the partner); being in a relationship with a married person; damaging public property (park benches, train-wagons etc.) having occasional sex without using a condom; trying ecstasy in disco-clubs; using pirate CDs, DVDs, software etc.; drunk-driving; taking medicines in order to improve one’s performance (in school, in sports, during sex etc.); paying to have sex; using pornographic material (magazines, films, websites etc); allowing the death of a relative who is terminally ill; allowing to use organs of a dead relative for transplants; using artificial techniques to have children; undergoing plastic surgery in order to improve one’s physical shape.

Table 5: Did you ever feel discriminated?

DISCRIMINATION	CITIZENSHIP	
	Foreigners	Italians
NO	53,40%	82,80%
YES	46,60%	17,20%
TOTAL	100,00%	100,00%
N	294	296

A possible explanation of the more intense perception of racism by Italian students might involve a greater exposure to the representation of racism by Italian mass media, which could account for perceived high levels of racism by the Italian teen-agers, regardless of personal experience.

Tables 6: For what reasons you felt discriminated?

REASONS OF DISCRIMINATION	CITIZENSHIP	
	Foreigners	Italians
AGE	3,70%	7,80%
GENDER	2,20%	11,80%
CLOTHING STYLE	5,90%	23,50%
RELIGION	3,70%	2,00%
ORIGIN	51,90%	17,60%
CULTURE	8,10%	3,90%
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	0,00%	5,90%
SKIN COLOUR	22,20%	5,90%
SOCIO/ECONOMICAL STATUS	0,00%	3,90%
OTHER	2,20%	17,60%
TOTAL	100,00%	100,00%
N	135	51

In this case too, the longer foreign students have lived in Italy, the more their answers become similar to those of their Italian counterparts: their perception of racism increases and the gap between the causes of social exclusion suggested by the two sub-groups narrows slightly. The first of these factors may well be related to increased (statistical) probability of

experiencing discrimination in the receiving country, but also to increased awareness of the gap between the rights enjoyed by “first-class” and “subordinate” citizens.

As far as causes of discrimination are concerned, Italian students reported having been discriminated most often for reasons related to their dressing habits (23,5%), while foreign students (over two thirds of them) indicated their nationality and skin colour as the main causes of discrimination. This gap also narrows for foreign students who have lived in Italy for many years, who more frequently indicate dressing styles as causes for discrimination (dressing usually plays a key role in the symbolic system of juvenile sub-cultures, regardless of ethnic origin).

More generally, for the group of foreign respondents, driving new roots in the Genoese context appears to mean being perceived by others simply as “young people”, breaking away from their stereotyped image as “young immigrants”. Consistently, the way foreign youths perceive themselves to be seen by others also changes in time. At first, ethnic origins are indicated as the prevalent distinctive feature; then, gradually, the features mentioned become more diverse and include typical adolescent factors such as age and dressing styles.

A process of increasing attachment to the local context of the host society is reflected both on a general relational level (migrant teenagers report making an increasing number of close Italian friends as their permanence in Italy gets longer), and by the contexts indicated by the foreign respondents as important for their self-definition. Although their parents’ country of origin remain the first factor in identity-building processes recognized by the sample group of foreign teenagers, as time goes by being Italian and European also tend to gain relevance, especially for the female group. This seems to confirm the assumption that women, rather than men, tend to build their identities on a “double” basis, reproducing the values and symbols of their country of origin while also bringing them into an active relationship with the culture and values of the receiving country (see Sassen 2008 and Ambrosini 2001).

As far as similarities between the two sub-groups are concerned, social habits and free-time activities seem to be quite similar for both groups. Italian and foreign teenagers choose to meet their friends in the same places (essentially, school and the city centre), and make similar use of their free-time (spent mainly in meeting friends, listening to music and watching TV).

A partial exception is represented by the lower level of familiarity with their local neighbourhood reported by the foreign sample group (although, especially for males, this gap also tends to narrow as the duration of permanence in Italy increases). Another common aspect is the low level of participation in organised groups (except sports clubs¹⁴). This tendency seems in contrast with the importance foreign young people attach, as they state, to collective action by young people as a means to obtain improved conditions for themselves and for others.

Combining this last piece of information with the high level of skepticism expressed by migrant youth towards participation in political life through voting, it is possible to infer that local institutions are perceived as distant; however, the difficulty of attempting dialogue with the seats of political power has not generally given rise to passive resignation, but rather to a desire to re-negotiate one's rights through "grassroots" activism, according to the "informal" model of political action described by Sassen (among others), which is commonly observed in young people's movements. Lastly, as far as individual expectations are concerned, foreign students seem to be investing more expectations than their Italian peers in their schooling and professional training, which are perceived as vital steps in the process of acquiring full citizenship.

Crossing sights: Genoa and Rome in comparison

Comparing the two case studies carried out in Italy, it is possible to further analyze some aspects of the respondents' processes of self-definition and perception by others. Some of these aspects have been reconsidered in the light of a new variable, namely "generation", which allows subtler results than simply referring to years of residence in Italy. The variable was calculated as follows: the "decimal" classification approach suggested by Rumbaut (described above) was put into practice by combining information on citizenship and place of birth of the respondents and their parents. After students belonging to the "second generation" were identified, further categories were determined by analyzing the variable

¹⁴ The authors of the current article do not underestimate the importance of participation in sports' clubs and its significance in terms of community-building; however, in this article we would rather focus on participation in associations with a stronger collective identity.

“age of arrival in Italy”.

Strictly speaking, as mentioned above, the term “second generation immigrants” is inappropriate to the sample groups involved in the survey: this is why the use of this new variable can be useful in interpreting some salient features of respondents’ samples. Distribution of respondents according to age of arrival in Italy varies significantly for the Genoan and Roman sub-groups. In Genoa, 52.0% of respondents can be classified as belonging to generation 1.75, followed by students belonging to generation 1.5 (43,4%); 2.5% of respondents can be classified in generation 1.25 and 2.2% in generation 2.

The Roman sample is more diverse: most respondents can be ascribed to generation 1.5 (46,8%), followed by generations 2.0 (23,0%) and 1.25 (17,5%); generation 1.75 has the smallest share (12,6%).

In this study, in order to reduce the impact on data analysis caused by too diverse a range of generations, generation 1.25 and generation 2 will be considered jointly with “short-term” and “medium-term” generations.

Table. 7: Generations of migrant youths in Genoa and in Rome

Generation	Genoa		Rome		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1,25	7	2,5	47	17,5	54	9,9
1,5	121	43,4	126	46,8	247	45,1
1,75	145	52,0	34	12,6	179	32,7
2	6	2,2	62	23,0	68	12,4
Total	279	100	269	100	548	100

Table. 7bis: Generations of migrant youths in Genoa and in Rome grouped together in two categories

Generation	Genoa		Rome		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
short-term gen.	128	45,9	173	64,3	301	55
medium-term gen.	151	54,2	96	35,6	247	45,1
Total	279	100	269	100	548	100

The spatial dimensions of affiliation were addressed by assessing levels of affection for different territorial contexts. Within the Italian sub-group, it became apparent that youths from Rome attach more importance to the urban dimension than their Genoan peers: when asked to choose their primary space of affiliation, most young Romans indicated the city, while their Genoan counterparts chose Italy. For migrant students, on the other hand, the most significant territorial context is their country of origin, especially for the Genoan sub-group. It is interesting to underline that the migrant youths living in Rome, just like their Italian classmates, attach more significance to the city they live in than do their Genoan counterparts, while answers given by the two migrant sub-groups regarding other aspects tend to coincide. The particularly intense affiliation to the urban sphere felt by inhabitants of Rome, whatever their country of origin, is probably connected to the symbolic relevance of the capital city; nonetheless, the information gained from the migrant sub group seems especially interesting.

Table 8: With what spaces you indentify more?

SPACE AFFILIATION	Generation					
	Genoa			Rome		
	Short term gen.	Medium term gen.	Italians	Short term gen.	Medium term gen.	Italians
NEIGHBOURHOOD	11,0%	9,5%	24,4%	6,6%	12,0%	21,5%
CITY	16,5%	11,6%	30,8%	16,8%	37,0%	51,0%
ITALY	13,4%	15,6%	32,8%	8,4%	14,1%	18,9%
THE COUNTRY OF MY PARENTS	45,7%	56,5%	3,0%	52,1%	22,8%	0,3%
EUROPE	3,1%	3,4%	4,3%	9,6%	8,7%	4,3%
OTHER	10,2%	3,4%	4,7%	6,6%	5,4%	4,0%
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
N	127	147	299	167	92	302

Observing this spatial factor in relation to the “generation” variable highlights the differences between the Genoan and Roman samples in a way that confirms the general analysis: for the Genoan sub-group, attachment to their country of origin remains strong and even tends to

increase in time (45,7% of generation 1.5 vs. 56,5% of generation 1.75), while migrant youth in Rome, most interestingly, tend to grow increasingly attached to the city where they live. Moreover, migrant teenagers in Rome tend to attach increasing importance to their neighbourhood as their space of affiliation, whereas Genoa’s migrant sample shows a slight decrease in affection for the home neighbourhood.

Affiliation and sense of belonging were also explored in relation to the issue of citizenship. Migrant youths (only) were asked which citizenship they would pick if they were obliged to choose only one. As answers were sorted by the generation factor, it became clear that respondents in Rome and Genoa related differently to citizenship: in Rome, longer permanence in Italy corresponds to a larger share of students who would have chosen Italian citizenship (even if it meant renouncing their current one); in Genoa, the majority of interviewed migrant youths would have chosen Italian citizenship, whatever the duration of their permanence in Italy.

The analysis of these data suggests two distinctive elements for the Roman and Genoese areas. Genoan migrant youths appear to be re-inventing their “ethnicity”: prolonged contact with the social context of the receiving country leads them to intensify their bonds with their country of origin, thus creating situational identities which are “shaped” largely by interaction with Italian peers and institutions (cfr. Feixa, 2006). Migrant youths in Rome appear to be more oriented towards an “assimilatory” model: the higher their “generation”, the more these teenagers tend to identify and fuse with the general category of “young people”.

Table 9: Should you choose only one citizenship, what would you decide for?

OTHER CITIZENSHIP CHOSEN	Generation			
	Genoa		Rome	
	Short term gen.	Medium term gen.	Short term gen.	Medium term gen.
ITALIAN CITIZENSHIP	48,6%	60,3%	36,7%	60,0%
MY CURRENT CITIZENSHIP	39,0%	30,6%	48,7%	25,0%
OTHER CITIZENSHIP	12,4%	9,1%	14,6%	15,0%
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
N	105	121	158	40

Concerning the elements that are considered relevant for the process of individual self-definition, outcomes of the survey indicate that “native” Italian students in both cities tend to attach more significance to their origins than do their migrant peers, especially in Genoa, although “origins” are never the primary “identity-building” factor. It seems that having Italian citizenship is something to be “proud of” for Italian students; however, this is not one of the elements of identity-building. In fact, both Italian and migrant students stated that the identity-building factors most important to them were gender, age, dressing style and sexual preferences (in this order). The only difference is the Genoan sub-sample tends to attach more importance to religion as an identity-building factor.

In this contest, analysis of the “origin” factor according to “generation” does not indicate striking differences among the “foreign” sub-sample.

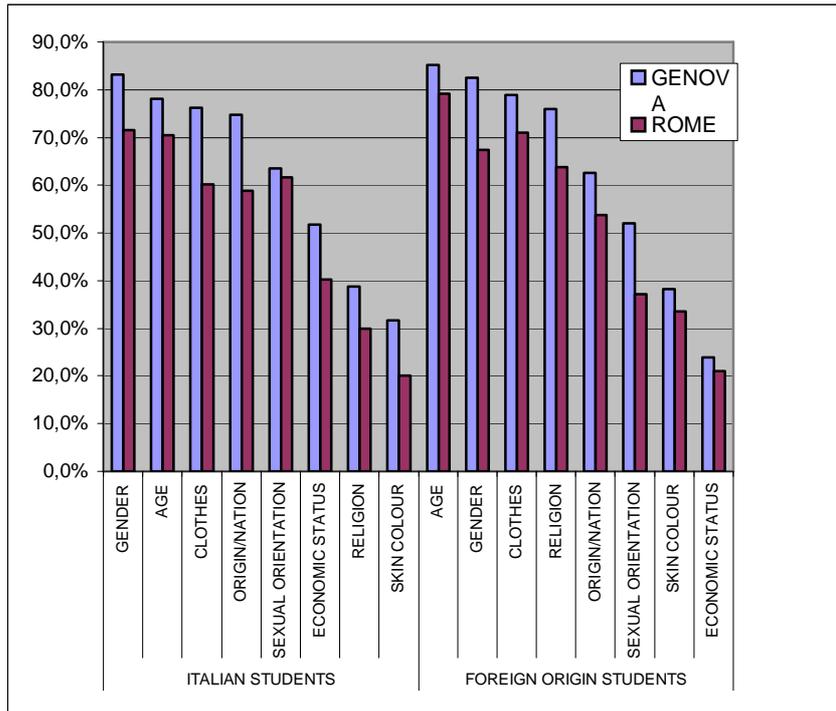
Analyzing responses concerning “perception by others” shows strong differences between the experiences of Italian and migrant youths: Italian students in both cities perceive that other people identify them primarily in terms of age, dressing style and gender, while migrant youths indicate their origins and age as the elements most strongly perceived by others. In particular, most migrant students in Rome indicate their origin as the main factor by which other people tend to perceive them, while Genoan students indicate their age, immediately followed by their origins.

However, by considering the variable of “generation”, we discover that within the Roman sample the perceived importance of “origin” in perception by others decreases in time, i.e. according to generation, whereas in Genoa the importance of this factor shows a slight increase. In other words, upon their arrival in Rome, migrant youths feel that they are perceived by others primarily as “foreigners”, but later on they consider that more importance is attached by others to their age. In Genoa, being categorised by others as “young people” is always considered the primary factor, whatever the duration of permanence in Italy. This confirms that migrant youths in Genoa tend to attach increasing importance to their origins as time goes by.

The cross-comparison of survey results concerning processes of self-representation shows that foreign students in Rome perceive their origins as a key factor of perception by others, while their peers in Genoa tend to place their migrant origins at the heart of self-perception, considering them a defining factor as important as their age group, without any tendency to

revise this perception as their permanence in Italy goes on.

Chart 1: Share of Italian and migrant students maintaining some factors are “important” or “very important” for self-representation



The information gathered through the survey suggests that, for students of foreign origins living in Rome, the process of collective self-definition determined by social group affiliation - and, consequently, the identification process - is primarily oriented towards recognition of their status as “young people” and as social actors within the group labelled as “youth”, unlike the Genoese context. However, this discrepancy does not appear to be directly related to any higher degree of social inclusion in Rome, where forms of self-representation and socialization most often remain linked to a “migratory discourse”, giving rise to juvenile social experiences marked by separation and by over-representation/ over-perception of differences

between Italian and foreign youths.

Table.10: Factors branded as “important” or “very important” for self-representation by migrant youths

FACTORS	Generation			
	Genoa		Rome	
	short-term gen.	medium-term gen.	short-term gen.	medium-term gen.
AGE	80,8%	78,4%	69,6%	69,8%
GENDER	82,4%	85,3%	69,6%	73,7%
CLOTHES	79,2%	75,9%	58,8%	62,1%
RELIGION	35,5%	42,8%	30,0%	27,1%
ORIGIN/NATION	73,8%	74,1%	58,2%	60,2%
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	68,6%	60,0%	59,0%	65,3%
SKIN COLOUR	32,5%	32,2%	19,4%	22,1%
ECONOMIC STATUS	51,6%	51,4%	44,0%	32,3%

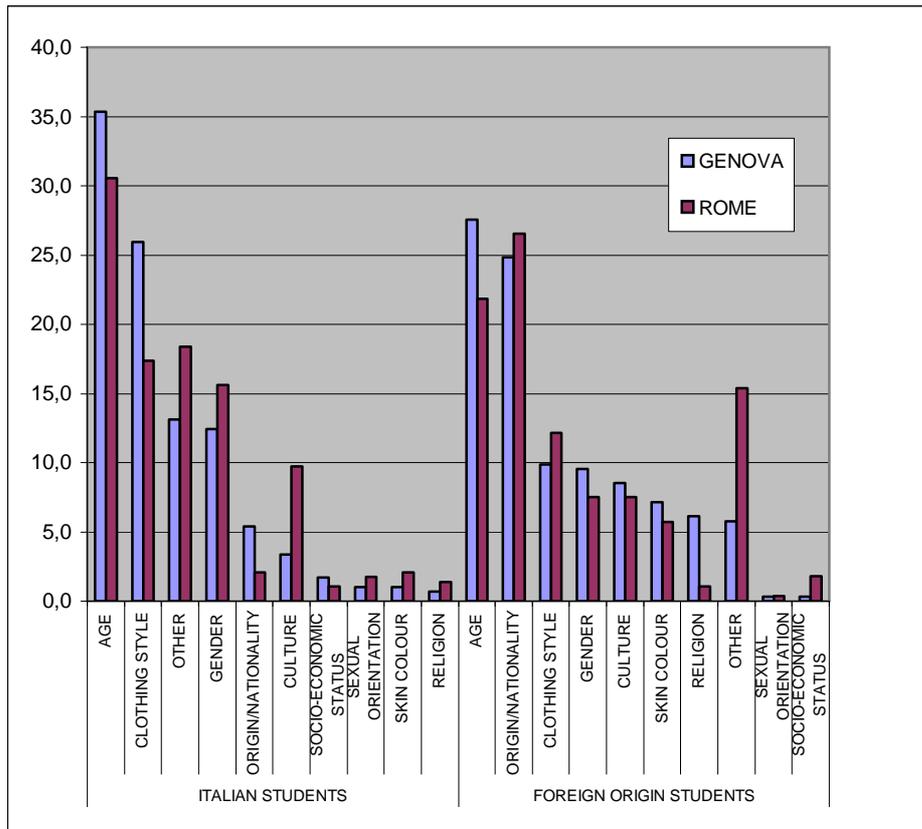
It seems more plausible that foreign youths’ general tendency to identify themselves primarily as “teenagers” is a way of staking a claim to “normality”, a claim which often, sadly, is dwarfed by modes of perception and consequent behaviour patterns on the part of others. These are frequently based on overestimation of “difference” and diminishment of foreign teen-agers, which leads to a condition of hyper-visibility being imposed on migrant youths (see Goffman, 2003).

However, practices concerning friendly relationships, as described by respondents, seem to partially counterbalance the objective separation between Italian and foreign teenagers. Both in Genoa and in Rome, a positive correlation exists between duration of permanence in Italy and number of Italian friends¹⁵, indicating that youths of foreign origin gradually become rooted in the Italian social context (as is further confirmed by analyzing these results according to the “generation” factor).

¹⁵ Italian respondents in both cities report that 95% of their friends are Italian. This appears to be a significant piece of information, showing lack of “openness” by Italian teenagers toward their migrant peers.

This process also has a spatial dimension: even though school remains the primary scene of socialization and the place where new friendships are made, migrant teenagers seem to gradually get closer to their peers living in the same neighbourhood, especially in Rome, indicating that distances are generally shortening.

Chart 2: Factors of representation by others both for migrant and Italian respondents



In general, the outcome of the survey seems to confirm the results obtained by similar research recently carried out in Milan (Colombo, 2005). In both cases, foreign youths are perfectly aware of the discrepancy between the ways in which they define themselves and the ways in which

the receiving society tends to relate to them. Age, gender and lifestyle play the crucial roles for their self-perception, especially for those who have been living in Italy for extended periods of time, exactly as is the case for their Italian counterparts; at the same time, migrant youths are perfectly aware of the “magnifying” effect their nationality has on the receiving society¹⁶. This perception is confirmed by answers regarding the issue of racism. Both Italian and foreign students perceive a high level of racism. However, there is a rather striking difference between the two local samples of migrant students: the number of those who described the level of racism as medium to high in Rome exceeds the number of analogous choices in the Genoese migrant group by 10%.

Table 11: Factors of representation by others for migrant youths

FACTORS	Generation			
	Genoa		Rome	
	Short term gen.	Medium term gen.	Short term gen.	Medium term gen.
AGE	22,8%	30,6%	18,3%	22,2%
GENDER	10,2%	10,2%	7,9%	6,7%
CLOTHING STYLE	15,0%	6,1%	12,2%	14,4%
RELIGION	6,3%	5,4%	1,8%	0,0%
ORIGIN/NATIONALITY	22,8%	26,5%	34,1%	14,4%
CULTURE	6,3%	8,8%	9,8%	5,6%
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	0,0%	0,7%	0,6%	0,0%
SKIN COLOUR	7,9%	6,8%	3,7%	7,8%
SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS	0,8%	0,0%	1,2%	2,2%
OTHER	7,9%	4,8%	10,4%	26,7%
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
N	127	147	164	90

Moreover, while in Rome Italian and foreign students have a more homogenous perception of racism and gave similar answers regarding this

¹⁶ As far as distinctive “hyper-visibility” see Delgado (2007) and his theories about denial of the “right to be invisible” to migrant people.

issue, the same is not true for their peers in Genoa. Among the young generations of foreigners living in Genoa, perception of racism is rather evenly distributed: cross-comparison of answers quantifying racism as “some” or “a lot” shows that 78,0% of foreign youths belonging to “short-term generations” and 74,5% of those belonging to “medium-term generation” describe levels of racism as “medium” or “high”. In Rome, the same answer was given by 85.4% of “short-term generations” and 87,2% of the “medium-term generation” .

Table 12: Wich is the origin of the majority of your friends?

FRIENDS ORIGIN	Generation					
	Genoa			Rome		
	Short term gen..	Medium term gen.	Italians	Short term gen.	Medium term gen.	Italians
ITALIANS	47,5%	40,5%	96,60%	42,24%	63,54%	96,60%
FOREIGNERS	52,5%	59,5%	3,40%	57,76%	36,46%	3,40%
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%
N	122	148	298	161	96	298

Table 13: Is there racism/discrimination in italy?

RACISM	Generation					
	Genoa			Rome		
	short-term gen.	medium-term gen.	Italians	short-term gen.	medium-term gen.	Italians
NONE	1,6%	3,4%	3,4%	0,6%	1,0%	1,3%
LITTLE	20,5%	22,1%	11,4%	14,0%	11,5%	11,5%
SOME	52,8%	47,7%	50,2%	56,7%	51,0%	48,4%
A LOT	25,2%	26,8%	35,0%	28,7%	36,5%	38,8%
TOTAL	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
N	127	149	297	171	96	304

Given the limited data available and the lack of scientific literature investigating this particular aspect, it seems difficult to formulate any reliable and consistent hypotheses to interpret these findings. However, the

social context in Rome can be held as one of the crucial reasons why self-perception and perception by others are so different in the two cities. Some forms of social and political conflict seem to be more violent and more deeply ingrained in Rome as compared to Genoa, and this is reflected at the symbolical level. Rome's metropolitan scale, marked by strong social and economic disparities between different neighbourhoods and by friction between the city centre and the suburbs, a context in which power relations and conflicts are further complicated by the physical presence of central national institutions and by the high visibility of the capital city in the media, may have led both to a stronger perception of racism by foreign youths and to more widespread discrimination and xenophobic behaviour.

This reflection might give us grounds to suppose that in Rome, in certain contexts and among some migrant social groups, a higher level of "group awareness" exists or may be forming, leading to an increased perception of the discriminating and racist climate prevalent in the country's politics, in official institutions, in the media and in the social sphere in general. This awareness might in turn lead migrant youths to stake legitimate claims for social, cultural and political rights. However, similar processes of self-perception as social actors seem applicable to those Italians who tend to re-define themselves by an increasing polarization of the differences between "us and them" and by developing a working-class culture emphasizing fear, insecurity and consequently racism, making immigrants (in particular illegal immigrants) the "whipping boy" for all that goes wrong. By emphasizing the alterity of foreigners and constructing essentialist identities, some young Romans seem to be confining themselves behind the fence of a "closed" identity. This may serve to confront a growing sense of personal insecurity, which is rooted in local culture but ultimately in social insecurity. This attitude, which is spreading in many former working-class neighbourhoods now facing de-industrialization, is probably a "little white man's" form of xenophobia, i.e. racism as a result of channelling frustration toward those who are on the immediately lower social level (Rivera, 2009).

In this respect, some parallels emerge with passages of Enzo Colombo's article published in this issue of our magazine. Colombo describes how Italian teenagers "build the threat" presumed by the presence of migrant young people and shows how racist attitudes are justified by an alleged inversion of inequalities. In other words, foreigners are fictitiously

represented as beneficiaries of certain privileges offered by the State, allegedly to the disadvantage of Italians facing social and financial difficulties. Some results of the in-depth survey carried out in Rome in the framework of the Tresegy project do in fact appear to confirm these suggestions. In schools, some Italian teachers and students have blamed general teaching/learning difficulties on the presence of migrant students, complaining about a presumed “positive discrimination” by teachers in favour of migrant students. Teachers are accused of having different expectations about Italian and migrant students.

Conclusions

Critical analysis of the results of the quantitative and qualitative investigation carried out in the framework of the Tresegy project, together with the cross-comparison of results pertaining to the Italian national context which was performed for this article, allow us to identify some interesting trends regarding social inclusion/exclusion as experienced and enacted by young second-generation immigrants.

First of all, the definition “second-generation immigrants” seems itself inappropriate for a social group (in our case, a sample) mainly composed of young people of foreign origin who were born abroad and who have arrived in Italy during childhood or puberty. Furthermore, the term “second generation immigrants” does not appear to be used as a label for self-definition by those who are thus defined by scientific literature. What still prevails is self-perception (and, often, perception by others) as “immigrants” and “foreigners”: in our opinion, this makes it easy to confuse the condition of migrant youths with that of their parents, while in reality their identity-building processes and relational patterns differ strongly from those of adult immigrants. Migrant youths, who are thus imprisoned in the status of “immigrants” and often victims of racist and xenophobic behaviour, encounter significant obstacles in building their individual and collective identities. This consequently tends to be done primarily on a “community” basis, and therefore affiliation and socialization are prevalently experienced with reference to national origins.

Foreign youths’ tendency to build exclusive social relationships with peers of the same nationality is confirmed by the outcome of the current

survey; however, the longer foreign teen-agers' permanence in Italy gets, the more cross-cultural their social relationships become. However, this tendency is different in Rome and Genoa; foreign teen-agers living in Rome report having more Italian friends as their permanence in Italy gets longer, while in Genoa the situation is less clearly defined.

The place where most cross-cultural relationships are formed is school; on the contrary, in other urban social venues socialization appears to take place "separately".

Comparative analysis of responses collected in Rome and in Genoa shows opposite trends for the two locations. In Rome, interviewed migrant youths tended to develop a progressively stronger bond to their city of residence, in direct proportion to the duration of their residence in Italy; in Genoa, on the contrary, even the "oldest" residents kept their affiliations firmly linked to the ethnic community and only collaterally referred to the urban context. While the frequency of friendships with Italian peers does seem to increase in both cities as the period of residence lengthens, this doesn't seem to lead to a "recognition" of the local dimension as significant. One might conclude that "multi-centric" immigration in Rome (where migrants from a much more diverse range of countries live side by side) makes it easier for young people to create a less "communitarian" and "ethnicizing" context, in which relational strategies are more fluid. In Genoa, on the contrary, the strong prevalence of some national communities allows social relationships and consequently self-representation to become "ethnicized", thus encouraging the idea that "ethnic difference" can "explain" social behaviour. Consequently, "ethnicity" tends to become synonymous with identity, culture and affiliation to a certain social group and may ultimately assume the role of essence and founding principle not only of the individual identity, but also of solidarity, of social status and of independent and conscious social action. In Rome, vice versa, "difference" appears as a social construction which can materialize during interaction in specific contexts, but which doesn't achieve the status of "a social fact". In such a context (in line with the results of a similar survey carried out in Milan by Bosisio, Colombo, Leonini, Rebughini, 2005), "difference" and origins are not a determining factor *per se*, i.e. these elements do not shape forms of individual and collective behaviour according to foreseeable models, but rather they appear as an instrument, a possibility, a potential resource for social actors,

who may use them to define their selves and situations encountered in everyday life. It therefore should be avoided to interpret the experiences related by the interviewed teenagers and their rhetorics according to rigid models, e.g. “assimilation” versus “marginality”. On the contrary, we believe that it is important to keep in mind the plurality and diversity of individual behaviour and action, reading them in the context of interaction with other social actors.

At the same time we think that a positive aspect which, though still embrionically, is emerging in Rome (but seems as yet to be lacking in Genoa) is the territorial dimension of socialization, which leads subjects to develop a sense of belonging to the urban spaces in which they actually live and act. For this reason, school and other informal social venues could play a vital role by offering these positive social trends, which are currently still *in nuce*, adequate physical place to develop fully, giving rise to everyday cross-cultural social interaction capable of overcoming the “us/them” dichotomy, in favour of “normal” juvenile socialization practices.

As shown by the results presented here, spontaneous processes of hybridization and interaction already exist. These processes, which are correlated to long-term residence in Italy, lead youths of foreign descent to express a stronger identification with the “cross-cultural teenage community”, and a desire for the possibility (and the right) to become citizens of the country where they live, study and work. Moreover, long-term residence also seems to enhance the ability of these youths to relate creatively to the different cultural contexts in which they are involved, thus enabling them to use the cross-nationality of migration cycles and the links between “here” and “there” in a positive way (Riccio, 2006).

Access to the right to citizenship would be an important response, counterbalancing the tendency to individualism and lack of social participation shown by data on citizenship and active participation, which did not differ substantially in the two sample cities.

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