

The Social Construction of the Youth-migration Nexus in Contemporary Spain. A Critical Overview¹

Luca Queirolo Palmas²

Abstract: The article identifies the different features that mark the academic debate in Spain over the youth migration nexus: a) the ideological production of youth as a classless subject; b) the ethnification of national young people in terms of tribes and vulgarisation of a culturalist discourse; c) the oblique visualisation of class under the sign of race and ethnicity in a post-migrating society and d) the construction of differential integrability criteria by culture. The emergence of a migrant youth issue in Spain in 2003/2004 was strongly marked by the discourse of *gangs* termed *Latin*, as the children of the *undeserving poor*, judged for making a non conforming use of the city. Paradoxically, these subjects, thought initially as culturally close, could suddenly make a shift in the public representation, enacting with their memberships and behaviours the panic and the virus of imagined gangs and violent young people, not as a product of the receiving society, but rather as an imported product.

Key words: Youth, Migration, Tribes, Gangs, Spain

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² University of Genoa and Universitat de Lleida. E-mail:luca.palmas@unige.it

Behind the production of youth

According to the last institutional report about youth (IJE, 2008), Spain is probably the European country with the greatest number of studies about youth promoted from public and social institutions. The *Instituto de la Juventud* (INJUVE, Youth Institute), a consolidated Ministry Agency since the transition to democracy, promotes a wide range of studies about youth from different perspectives; *youth* has thus become a recurrent subject in the social sciences since the 1980s, as also in the political debate and arena (Martín Criado, 1998).

One could see in the institutionalised age range (“the famous 15-29”), in the setting of administrative criteria for measurement, in the generation of statistical groups that are meant to be significant, in the proliferation of figures and objective tendencies that have become natural objects and facts, the mirror effect of the ways a society is produced or represented, as well as an interesting and interested range of concerns.

Behind any smokescreen thrown up by the different institutions to articulate a discourse, i.e. a cultural hegemony, we need to look at the simpler device that this is trying to conceal: to affirm the discourse of a society which is stratifying around a generational axis, making other factors invisible and putting them backstage of legitimate representations.

If contemporariness is not sufficient to create a generation (Mannheim, 1990), if youth “is just a word” and to talk about young people is only “an evident manipulation”, “a language abuse to put different social universes that have nothing in common under the same concept”, in other words an illusion (Bourdieu, 1984), we will need to ask ourselves about the performative and effective character of this production from a symbolic and a material approach. Under this perspective, Martín Criado highlights the boundaries of the first wave of grand reports and youth studies in the 1980s, inserted in a quantitative framework: substantialism and essentialization, homogenization of a category, culturalism and association of identity profiles from the coexistence in the same age cohort, concern about the distance from the rules. Thus, the age/generation struggle would replace the class struggle in the discourse of social hierarchy and its transformations.

Once the articulation young versus adult established as a distinction, not only through the administrative denomination but also through the

generalisation of the school system, the detachment of some age groups from the obligation to work and the proliferation of youth culture markets, the subjects can be the object of questioning alternatively or at the same time by the industries of moral and control (*youth as a problem*) and by the industries of cultural consumption and leisure (*youth as a style*).

Much of the expert literature in the 1990s is devoted to overcoming the old *substantialism of youth*, by giving the brush strokes of a new *culturalism of youth*: catalogues of styles and aesthetics which are now depicted at times as the effervescence of social changes and at other times as a dangerous challenge of the adults' moral order. It is possible to identify two fields of discourse production that proliferated during the 1990s: on the one hand, the recurring listing of a number of youth cultures and urban *tribes* (a media phenomenon as well as one of the scientific doxa that we will get to in the next section), on the other hand, the parallel emergence and sedentarisation of migration as an imposed fact and as a problem perceived and propagated in the Spanish society.

But only very recently did a Youth Report (IJE, 2004) give migrant youth the category of a measuring object, and did a monographic work settle the deficit relationships of this group with training and employment as an object of study (Chacón, 2003). As Chacón himself puts it, in the first years of the new Millennium there was not yet a category around the criteria of nationality or ethnicity of youth or an imaginary around the existence and probable social turbulence of these subjects, thus transforming an object into a social problem. A symbolic impact similar to the events of El Ejido in 1999 – the first major social conflict getting media attention that gave rise to an expression of the radical tensions around the migrant condition as class condition - had not yet materialised in the first State and academic reports, that only put migrant youth on the agenda and formulated it in public as an object for further study and action³.

Spanish youth is outlined in the specialised literature, according to the Mediterranean model: in the framework of an expanding school system

³ By the way, all the problems enumerated by Chacón (2003, p. 345-351) are still on the table after ten years: school failure, the difficult appraisal of degrees by the labour market, discrimination and assignation of socially unwanted jobs, the segregation of leisure and socialising time.

(and expanding selective drop out) biographies and trajectories, opportunities and links crystallise around a long lasting permanence in the household (the cliché of *emancipation* that Injuve reports often measure⁴) and around the consequent family economic dependence, low birth rates and a global reduction of the young layers in the population pyramid, hardly any intervention from the State in terms of social transfers and entitlements and the big impact of unemployment and informal work. Spain, Italy, Portugal, Greece place young people in what Esping Andersen (1990) among others, has called *family welfare*. These traits have deepened turning the family into the main safe box at the breach between education and employment, and at the structural precariousness imposed by the neo-liberal discourse and the logic of the new post-Fordist production regimes. Of course, the family is a homogenizer category that, just like the discourse of *youth*, makes invisible the vast and differentiated range of capacities to become viable as a welfare institution, and to guarantee the symbolic and material reproduction and heritage, i.e.: capital accumulation in its different forms and generational transmission (Bourdieu, 1997).

In the INJUVE 2008 report, for example, the invisibility of social classes is clearly stated. Following the typology introduced by Zarriaga (1985, p. 18) two aggregates are constructed in function of the economic dependence/independence. Thus, in 2008 we would have half of the sample of interviewed young people totally or partially independent (50,6%) and the other half (49,5%) totally or partially dependent. The tendency in the last three surveys would also reveal an increase of independent young people. See how by analysing the relationship with the economic resources through the aggregate – *dependence / independence* – the class cleavages are hidden. The meaning of dependence is indeed very different between those who have it through a family stable economic capital and follow a successful trajectory in accordance with the educational trends, and those who have to survive among unemployment, precarious work and informal work, thus contributing to a reciprocal mutualization of risk and resources within the working class families. In other words, within the same category (economic *dependence* or *independence*) there is a field of positions and

⁴ Today, under the blows of the crisis, experts, media and public administrations introduce the category of *disemancipation*, that is: the emancipated children moving back into their family home.

representations which are differentiated and at the same time hidden. But the issue of classes and the different youths will be seen obliquely under the emergence and the construction of new criteria of distinction.

The visibility of a migrant youth topic in the official surveys in 2004 and successively in 2008, allows us to give evidence of the new devices that become mechanisms of vision and division of the youth social space; of new legitimate, relevant and productive narratives. As the data from the 2010 municipal census reveal (tab. 1), almost one out of five young people is of immigrant origin, and the proportion increases in large urban areas. In summary, it can be asserted that *the young issue* is largely a phenomenon tightly related to the incorporation of migrants at the national level, and especially in urban areas, as well as one of the most significant transformations that such flows generate in the receiving society.

Table 1. Distribution of the young population in Spain per nationality and age group. 2010

Age groups	1. Total	2. Nationals	3. Foreigners	4. South and Central America	5. Percentage 3/1	6. Percentage 4/3
1. 15-19	2.303.428	2.008.604	294.824	123.391	12,7	41,8
2. 20-24	2.695.223	2.204.637	490.586	162.680	18,2	33,1
3. 25-29	3.444.435	2.673.768	770.667	277.103	22,3	35,9
4. Subtotal 15-29	8.443.086	6.887.009	1.556.077	563.174	18,4	36,1
5. Whole of the population	47.021.031	41.273.297	5.747.734	1.791.554	12,2	31,1
% 4 out of 5	17,9	16,6	27,1	31,4		

Source: Municipal census on 1-1-2010. INE

The Youth reports expose some structural characteristics of this migrant youth. Ironically, in terms of *residential emancipation*, migrant young people are more similar to Scandinavian than to Spanish young people, that is, a greater number of them live on their own, in couples, get married and are parents; according to the working population survey in 2007, “65 percent of them are emancipated in Spain, versus 21,4 percent of Spanish young people. In direct relationship with their degree of emancipation, the percentage of married immigrant young people is almost one third of all the

immigrant young people (31,5 percent). Thus, young people who do not come from an immigrant family tend to extend further their family dependency (at the parental household), hence delaying their entry into the labour market” (Carpo and Riezco, 2011, p. 198).

Behind the image of *emancipation* as a neutral concept designating the cultural-national patterns for distance or permanence in the original family household, we should maybe observe the different relationships with the labour world and, therefore, the different social positions and class habitus. This dimension fades in the affirmation of a colour line (Du Bois, 2010) which, through migration statistics, constructs a native *us*, presumably homogeneous and differentiates it from the immigrant *others*, disqualified and in deficit. In table 2 (INJUVE, 2008, p. 124) the radical disparity regarding employment and education between Spanish and foreign young people becomes evident. This becomes even more polarised and exaggerated in the age range 20-24; mass incorporation to employment and unemployment, smaller salaries and greater incidence of temporariness (Carpio & Sanz, 2008), and the quick departure from the educational system would be the qualifying elements of the condition of children of migration. Moreover, if we take into account the age range 16-29 (where education is not compulsory), the distinction is even clearer: “While 50 percent of the young Spanish are in some sort of education (formal and non-formal), immigrant young people in education represent less than a quarter” (Carpio and Sanz, 2011, p. 198).

Returning to the explanation given above, first, the emergence of the youth issue makes the social stratification invisible under the sign of age and generational struggle; second, the emergence of the immigrant youth will lead to the drawing of a colour line between *the others* and *us*, which in fact is a proxy in the framework of a spurious correlation of the different capitals that differentiate youth. In other words, migration makes visible again, and at the same time, hides behind the ethnic-national issue the class stratification within the framework of youth. We could have found a very similar statistic distribution to the one on table 2 if the independent variable were the cultural capital of the family of origin or the economic capital.

We are maybe living in societies where *race*⁵ is a synonym of the term class and articulates new forms of stratification and (im)mobility. *Race* can often become an internal supplement in the construction of the labour market (Mezzadra, 2007) and migration a *de facto* labour reform. The experiences of other countries show how these processes of racialization make the attempt of contrasting the young people's rejection of their parents' subaltern integration (Gans, 1992, p. 182). Of course we need to explain the trajectories further if we want to go beyond Bourdieu's excessively rigid polarity between bourgeois student and young worker in his studies of the 1960s. The approaches of the Spanish sociology of youth that tackle the subject of transition (Casal *et al.*, 2006) can help in this matter; the two axis that draw up the space of the different modalities of transition are individuated by the celerity or delay in the family emancipation on the one hand, and by the simple (low cultural capital and unqualified work) or complex (labour success and high investment in education) character of entering the workforce. Thus, we would have six different trajectories: 1) early success; 2) attachment to family business; 3) worker; 4) precarious; 5) successive approximation; 6) erratic and blocking (Casal et alii, 2006, p. 39).

Table 2. Structure of the young population with regard to the economic activity per nationality and age group.

	15-19		20-24		25-29	
	Spanish	Foreign	Spanish	Foreign	Spanish	Foreign
Active population	22,3	32,1	63,3	79,7	87,5	87,4
<i>Working</i>	11,6	20,0	44,8	56,4	68,1	74,2
<i>Working/studying</i>	3,1	0,7	8,4	6,2	9,2	1,1
<i>Unemployed</i>	7,6	11,4	10,0	17,2	10,2	12,0
Active population in intermediate situations (studying and working)	7,7	5,0	8,6	2,6	3,6	1,7
Inactive Population	70,0	62,9	27,9	17,6	8,8	10,9
<i>Studying</i>	69,2	60,7	26,0	8,4	6,2	2,5
<i>Others</i>	0,9	2,1	1,9	9,3	2,6	8,4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: IJE, 2008

⁵ For the Spanish case, see the works by Vives and Sité about a gender approach of the blackness (2010) and by Giliberti (2011) about the construction of blackness between the migrant young people.

We could say that the first three transition models correspond to the logic of simple reproduction of the economic cultural and family cultural capital in the framework of a rapid emancipation from the family of origin; the other models present significant time mismatches between cultural capital and the valuation of educational degrees by the labour world, or more simply, are structurally conditioned by a scenario where precariousness became the rule of articulation and transformation of employment; therefore, the exit from the family nucleus became a long term project. The field of transitions, a space of construction of the different kinds of youth, presents some specific features since the end of the 1970s: long duration, fragmentation, institutionalisation of the management of mobility and precariousness (Cachón, 2003).

In the last decade the consolidation of a migrant youth has been parallel to its massive placement into precarious and erratic working trajectories, emphasizing a greater administrative, juridical and symbolic vulnerability to that of working class native young people, together with an earlier obligation to emancipate, caused by the need to economically help the family of origin⁶. In other words, we can imagine contemporary transitions of migrant young people as a space where new labour insertions, under the bias of precariousness and fragmentation, result in quick time family emancipations and the construction of new households. The distinction between working class native young people and migrant young people has to do on the one hand, with an obligation/option of a faster emancipation from the family, and on the other, with a deepening of the elements of vulnerability, that are destined to become more radical every time the economic cycle goes through a crisis, by the effects of institutional (new harder laws against the rights of settled migrant families and return policies) social and symbolic discrimination and racism, as an effect of the concurrence in the labour market with the impoverished native working classes (*the white poor*). Ahead of the resentment of the white poor –of course used as sudden political capital by significant sectors of the dominant classes- we have a symbolic territory where multiple ways of

⁶ “Greater availability for employment and shorter educational trajectories, with a big component of sacrifice and family responsibility in a context of scarce choice that often leads to joining *labour for migrants*” (Carpio & Riezco, 2008, p. 198)

discrimination take place, for being young, working class, migrant, for the name, the colour, the neighbourhood of residence, sometimes for the religion and often for some sort of cultural bias. It is important to discuss how a set of cultural tropes can articulate different mechanisms and chronologies between Spanish young people and migrant young people, establishing two different *loud and floating*⁷ discourses (Santamaria, 2002): the discourse of tribes and the discourse of (Latin) gangs.

Between youth cultures and urban tribes

“...which means that urban tribes takes us back to the first settlers of the city. That is, to the savagery of those who act unbridled, without complying to any rules, where the law of the strongest holds sway”

(Donald Rivera, 1995)

The quotation comes from a monographic work in a specialised magazine (*Cuaderno de Realidades Sociales*, 1995) that attempts to build a scientific discourse about a new classificatory language appeared in the public debate: *urban tribes*. How is this signifier inserted into the processes of creation of youth? To what extent does it represent a significant antecedent to understand the symbolic construction of gangs and migrant youth from the receiving society?

As we have seen, in the 1980s the official reports and the general research on youth from the State thought presented some restricting features; the youth, part of a homogeneous collective to be measured, was outside the territory of cultural representations and significations (Feixa and Porzio, 2004). In other words, the dominant scientific discourse – functionalist and quantitative, Wright Mills would have called it abstract empiricism- placed the young person outside of all the literature from the School of Chicago to the School of Birmingham, that had put forward the issue of youth cultures in their multiple facets. It was anthropologists such as Manuel Delgado and Carles Feixa who rescued some essential categories

⁷ “A discourse from a diffuse and multiple emitter, expressed through different means, which is the product of a group practice and constructed from a thematic isotopy, which gives it coherence...” (Santamaria, 2002, p. 75)

(the style and the bricolage, the ritual resistance and the parody, the role of class, the invisibility of gender, the relationship between subaltern, hegemonic, parental and relational cultures, the caricature nature of transgression, hybridization and playing in youth micro cultures, the magical resolution of structural contradictions, and others) putting thus the basis to the need to overcome the positivist discourse of measurement. Also, some sociologists such as Martin Criado (1998, 2002) put the material and symbolic power mechanisms in the construction of youth into the stage, parting from a Bourdieusian approach.

Parallel to that, while the State thought replicated Parsons and the critical thinking applied and nuanced the approach of cultural studies, the mass media were establishing a *tribalist* referent with significant effects inside the academy. Like Isabel Gutierrez (2004) points out, the term *urban tribes*, born with the Madrid *movida* in the early 1980s, would be in its first media appearance and its consolidation essentially tied to a youth cultural and style dimension. During its peak period in the mid-1990s, this aspect would be overcome by a discourse of *violence* and *deviation* in some specific groups: the *okupas* and the *punk* as transgressors of the property order, the skinheads as paradigmatic barbarians of a total racism which was considered unacceptable and inopportune⁸. To some extent, these cultures had gone from aesthetics to shame (Delgado, 2002) hence needed a sanitizing treatment and a moral-police intervention⁹. From the 1990s until the early 2000s, while there was no irruption of a migrant young condition in the scientific and popular doxa, and thanks also to the support by Maffesoli's work (1990), the brand *urban tribe* spread and became part of

⁸ According to the report by the Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (*Observatorio Español sobre Racismo y Xenofobia*) (Oberaxe, www.oberaxe.es), in 2009 36% of interviewed people were reluctant towards immigration (D'Ancona, 2010). We could conclude that skinheads put into practice a solution to what a significant group of blameless citizens described as a main problem and the *reductio ad hitlerum* (Delgado, 2002) and the figure "racism as breakout" exerted the function of self-absolution on the receiving society (Santamaria, 2002). In this way, racism can be explained as a reaction to an excess of immigrants in an interesting process of blaming the victims.

⁹ In the 1990s many police forces at local and national level constituted "Anti urban tribe brigades". The surveys about citizen security added in some cases questions about the fear of towards groups of young people.

everyday life, having the effect of a caricaturized cultural approach to youth.

The media discourse is being reappropriated from the social sciences in books, papers and magazines in an attempt to articulate a narrative empirically based on some tropes: *savagery and primitivism*, *group narcissism*, (Aguirre and Rodríguez, 1997), *hazard, violence and sensationalism*, (Costa *et al.*, 1996), *pathologization* and, finally, *hierarchisation inside the magical*, being the tribes defined by the existence of chiefs, charismatic authorities and mythologies (Donald, 1995, p. 25).

All these elements, in different combinations, feed group and style catalogues, identikit and taxonomies that search, without irony, an empirical basis on press news. Information is gathered on each of them regarding origin, ideology, characteristics, clothing, drugs, music, religiousness, tendency to violence. Once fixed, groups become independent and dependent variables that can be statistically processed; thus, at the Institute of Applied Sociology of Madrid (*Instituto de Sociología Aplicada de Madrid*) (1995, p. 119) Spanish young people are interrogated about the positive and negative characteristics of tribes, values and counter values, attitudes to have towards those who eventually would like to be part of such groups. Of course, as with any picturesque landscape, there will be the *good and the bad Indians*, those who can be saved and those who are lost.

As Manuel Delgado states, “it is this pseudo-science that allows assigning tribal responsibilities to all sorts of crimes, aggressions, mass fights, pillage or destruction...” (2002, p. 132). An approach that gets a certain complicity from public institutions (that order and finance reports), the State repressive apparatus (that ensures safety ahead of these new hazards), the media (who create mass sellable narrations and moral panic), social scientists (who legitimate the subject and make it a problem to some extent), moral and health professionals (who spread damnation, salvation and pedagogy).

The discourse of *tribes* puts into operation different effects of reality: first, it allows an interpretation in terms of deviation of what is a conflict on the use of resources and the city, making disobedience and transgression something incomprehensible; second, the space of youth cultures becomes ethnic, expelling from the cognitive map any structural element tied to class factors. As Delgado states again, reflecting on Bourdieu’s legacy on the

power of social vision and division, “we are not classifying real objects which are unclassified, we recognize objects from reality according to the taxonomic organization to which we have previously submitted this reality. (...) Then the difference is not the cause, but the consequence of differentiation” (2002, p. 140). This mechanism of ethnification of the young issue anticipates the emergence of the young migrant and the young gang member, especially Latin. In fact, the first emergence comes after the second; in other words, it is through the young Latin gang member that the migrant youth will become visible, and by the way, deviated, pathological and violent.

In what could be a general balance of youth studies, Feixa and Porzio (2004) point out the following critical features about the previous period up to year 2000: uncritical acceptance of the concept of tribe, denial of the public conflict¹⁰, equalization of differences into homogeneous categories, stereotyped cataloguing, absence of serious ethnographies that don't fall into journalism, invisibility of gender. In more recent years a massive growth of publications has been observed (between 2000 and 2003 there were more publications than in the previous three decades) and a certain institutionalisation of research (centres, observatories, etc.)

Thus, here we attach some preliminary considerations. From 2003 onwards, migrant youth broke into the scenario of studies and debates, with their labels in terms of *gangs*¹¹. From an academic point of view, at that

¹⁰ In this sense, the *okupa* is not a pathological barbarian with affective and family detachment problems, but a subject that questions with all his ambivalence, a crucial element of the capitalist city, the real estate property.

¹¹ We need to go back to the phenomenon *Quinquis (crooks)* (Cuesta, Cuesta, Fernández Porta, Méndez, 2009) in order to locate the previous use of the term *gang* in the field of youth. Since the transition into democracy a working class youth, partly biased by the *gypsy* and the Andalusian internal migration, constructed aesthetics and criminal practices through the re-appropriation of wealth. These subjects –called *quinquis* (from the Spanish *quincalla* (junk), a business undertaken by many gypsies) or *quillos* (from the Spanish *chiquillos*, a common name to be called in Andalucía) - opened a narrative and cinematographic genre and imposed protagonists whose personal achievements took place in the news (El Vaquilla, El Torete, ...). *Gang* as a social object is a mechanism to designate forms of non-conforming socialization of the dangerous classes, often ethnical or ethnizable, of working class young people, of those who in the English industrial revolution were designated as undeserving poor and were treated through work and correction laws and the banning of vagrancy. Regarding the contemporary construction of the object *gang*, the *quinquis* generated an epic and an affirmation of protagonists, a media industry different from the one

time there was no relationship between youth studies and migration studies, even though in the tradition of the School of Chicago, the trajectories of the *street corner societies* articulated structurally the issue of *ethnic* recovery and the urban settling/succession of migrating flows. Finally, any study of youth socialization with a minimum scientific ambition cannot approach this subject without taking into account the heritage of the Birmingham School and the post-subcultural contributions (Thornton, 1996; Muggleton and Weinzierl, 2003) and the concepts of class, resistance, rituals and styles. These latter should not be romanticised into univocal belongings, but should be placed inside the logic of a bodily and hybrid performance (Butler, 1990, 1993).

We have focused on the crystallization of the *tribalist* discourse, not with the aim of questioning the existence of other perspectives in the frame of the Spanish youth studies, but in the attempt to underline the functioning of a visible language and a dictionary –as well as its scientific, institutional and media legitimacy- which can be potentially used to capture the subject of sociality of migrant young people. However, the language of *gangs* is imposed on migrant youth even when the discourse of *tribes* has all the necessary elements to be meaningfully used. Why is that? We will come back to this, but one of the keys may be on the *normative* or *latent* side of the *tribalist* discourse. The elements composing tribalism in Maffesoli's postmodernism are taken as reference (emotional communities, underground energies, disperse sociality, physical approach of the experience, breakdown of the great narratives, nomadism and collapse of political-national loyalties) but are judged and from a moral point of view (loss of values, pathology, narcissism, moral untying, affective deficit, etc.); it assumes a panorama of emergent socialities that is immediately catalogued as dysfunctional in relation to institutions. In this sense the discourse is pre-multiculturalist: the fascination by the exotic lights that these groups can shed is minimal; the issue of cultural recognition is absent, and the key concern is to denounce their transgression of the moral order. At the same time, the dark side of these subjects –*primitivism* and *cannibalism* of the urban arena- can always be acknowledged as culturally

that migrant young people have today. For a critical analysis of the social construction of gangs in Spain from academic studies, see the work by Feixa (2006), Feixa, Scandroglio, Lopez Martinez & Ferrandiz (2011), Scandroglio & Lopez (2010).

close, as a perverted child of our institutions, not a total stranger. Finally, the class issue should not be forgotten: the label *tribe* is applied to the nonconformist children of the middle class, while the label *gang* is applied to the dangerous classes (Wacquant, 2002), to the *undeserving poor*.

It is an ethnicization of youth –previous to the label of migrant youth, remember- which is therefore truncated, incapable of building a community of *us* which is not residual and nostalgic (adults bearers of the old, healthy values) and at the same time clearly distant from the *otherness* that it constructs; this otherness lies within the bowels of the adult society and is never evacuated. In spite of the words, the sign of the tribal discourse resides in this truncation, with little colonial efficacy, understood as the capacity to perform a fully subaltern and distant otherness, and at the same time asserting a new nativism culturally legitimated, naturalised as hegemonic and capable of stating a mission of civilisation. At the same time, the search for a colonial efficacy is articulated within the framework of a discourse biased by the idea of integration, of cultural selection of migration, by the polarity between the *Moorish* and the *Latin* as two great references of Spanish experience and national history.

The ballast of origin. The restless emergence of the young migrant

Let's interrogate ourselves more deeply in relation to the impact of the birth of a migrant youth condition within the field of discourses and practices. A 2001 paper by Rosa Aparicio devoted to the research literature about the children of immigrants pointed out that nearly all the available works so far had taken the school environment and primary school children as the object, as a result of the public administration concern about "the tensions occurred in some schools" (2001, p. 172). At that time research about migrant families and their influence on their children's socialization did not exist out of the educational arena. A few years later, Natalia Riba Mateos (2004) pointed out in a summary text about migration studies in Spain, that research about youth just did not exist. Youth was captured through education: curricula, access rights, concentration in certain secondary schools, performance and language learning. In other words, the object emerged under different effects: its school determination and the concern of public authorities facing a new social composition in

compulsory education, the intercultural debate that evokes the cultural conflict as the problem to manage and solve, and the impact of abundant international literature about second generations (García Borrego, 2003).

Earlier, in 2000, the events at El Ejido had turned migration into a social object seen through the lens of social problem. In 2003 the first conflicts on the use of public space by migrant young people –often called *Latin gangs*– were given public media coverage, and the first publications by Lorenzo Cachón (2003) about the subject appeared. In 2004 the object got into the surveys of Injuve, the official Youth Institute. From then on, studies and debates multiplied. How do we explain these dynamics of affirmation of a research object?

In general, research results and methods on migration, with an overwhelmingly expanding literature from the 1990s onwards, correspond to some very well identified guidelines by Sayad (2008) through his category of State thought. Migration as an object is over determined by the state interests and governed according to the financing of subjects and research lines that impose a way of thinking on a phenomenon. García Borrego (2001), Santamaría (2002), Álvarez (2002) among others, make the features of the political economy of knowledge evident in Spain – although it is not very different from other countries: a) the methodological nationalism of studying migration in terms of benefits and disadvantages for a nation; b) the fragmentation of migrants according to their national groups; c) the construction of culturally close and distant subjects in function of their nation-cultural classification; d) the division of issues parallel to the state interventions (housing, work...) and the geography of administration e) the affirmation of a problematic state and of a deficit, as an ontological condition of the migrant, that needs to be overcome when possible; f) the affirmation of the trope of integration as a primary focus in the analysis of migration.

The internalisation of the point of view of the State as the client (García Borrego, 2001), of its capacity of financing and organising the research, determines implicitly the field of studies and also damages naturally, that is without direct censorship, its autonomy. This is why Santamaría's (2002) suggestion of *unthinking* the phenomenon, of determining an epistemological rupture and “examine the mechanisms of social designation” (2002, p. 96) is so important. This includes the discourses – the tropes and the metaphors- that constitute the object of study: *Spain as a*

country of immigration (a country that has moved from being backward into the modern side), *the foreign woman as a victim* (affirming again the national cultural superiority), *the problematic character of integration* by fragile subjects in conditions of deficit, need of help and at the same time transgressive (discourse reinforced by those who denounce inequalities and by those who underline threat and danger), *the fear of a racist outbreak*, *the religious fundamentalism*, and above all, *the cultural difference between them and us*.

These tropes, in their floating and loud character, substantiated by different media in different arenas (from the press to the academy, from the cultivated to the popular, from advertising to political debates), are used as many varied metaphors: *water* metaphors, as an invitation to channel the things that can overflow; *botanical* metaphors, the garden needs pruned, arranged and we need rid of all the weeds; *medical*, we need to heal; *war*, we need to fight the enemy within. These are metaphors that articulate the discourse of civilisation, contention, protection, a public and national order perceived as violated and questioned from the outside and the inside. The discourse on integration will gain a leading role both, in science and in cultivated and popular debates. Integration seen as a voluntary and individual fact, as a demonstration and rewarding of what's a good and useful immigration, as an action going from the migrant person to the *hosting* society, as positive pole (as it assumes a certain dose of cultural difference as tolerable) in relation to the negative nuance assigned to assimilation. In parallel, the figure of the culturally not integrable will be constituted, where the *Moorish* and the *Islamic* will replace the *Gipsy* (Alvarez, 2002) and where it will be allowed to think Spain, a State of autonomies marked by linguistic plurality, as a homogeneous society ahead of the challenges threatening its social cohesion.

The construction of good and bad migration will give rise to debates and arguments towards a cultural selection of flows, which will, among other factors, determine the massive growth of Latin-American migration in the new millennium (ahead of the historical North African migration). Cultural selection anticipates the most recent discourse of *migration choisie*, where the centrality of the State is reaffirmed by choosing the volumes and characteristics of the migrants and favour some sectors according to their economic usefulness. Thus, Mikel Azurmendi (promoted during Aznar's first government as the president of the Forum for the social integration of

migrants), Herrero de Miñón (one of the fathers of today's Spanish Constitution), and other intellectuals, archbishops and of course political decision makers draw up a map of desire where *Latin* represents the pole of cultural and linguistic proximity as opposed to the *Moorish*. Those close and known (colonially) against the Islamic danger – the jihadism– as a mechanism of binding extremely heterogeneous subjects together: those who can be civilised and integrated and those who can not.

This is not about going in depth into each one of these tropes, it is rather about placing the elements that define the discourse about non-EU migration for their capacity of shaping an object –be they *young people of migrant origin, children of migration, second generations*- which is massively evoked and studied since 2004. Pedreño summarizes very clearly the two imaginaries that stage the vision of this object: on the one hand, its quality of *target of public policies* through their deficits at school or at work; on the other hand, the Latin gangs as urban dangers and the North African young people in their exhibitions of religious symbols and possible fundamentalist affiliations (Pedreño, 2007, p. 138). Moreover, the services specialized in insertion build them as fragile subjects, in need of help (Parauja, 2004) and implement the learning of cultural devices (Montenegro *et al.*, 2010) to promote their employability combining a behavior contention (*you need to be punctual*) and a correction of cultural characteristics (*you don't speak Arabic, you don't wear a hat*), while the integration plans from the youth policies and migration policies in a more abstract framework, reaffirm the need and urgency of integration.

As for the young bodies, we can see the same biases that define the discourse of non-EU migration somewhat amplified. At the same time, an interesting –and interested- sudden transformation can be seen: the perception of young Latins as problematic for their culture. *Gangs* and *jihadism*, after the 2005 insurgences in the French peripheries, become the subtexts of many discourses about migrant youth, spread by the media and academic and intellectual sectors, the worrying articulation of the *Latin* and the *Moorish*. “The question is: Will these things appear in Spain?” (Aparicio and Tornos, 2009, p. 17).

Ultimately, in Spain as in many countries of new settlement, young migrant people are often conceived as a homogeneous community, articulated on ethnic-cultural cleavages, while their presence represents a challenge to social cohesion and their vulnerability resides in being

suspended between two cultures (García Borrego, 2011; Queirolo Palmas, 2012).

The migrant youth plays a symbolic role that questions the temporary character of migration, that is, projects a *posterity* which is unwanted by the receiving society. Many signs (from naturalizations to mixed marriages, from educational insertion to birth) are testimonies of the force and the speed of the process of settlement in Spain (Table 3), which invites us to consider the country as a post-migrating society (Martiniello, 2000). In contrast to the 80.000 foreign students enrolled in 1998/1999, more than 770.000 have enrolled in 2010/2011 between primary and secondary school, 9,9 percent of the total of students (Mec, 2011). The autonomous communities of Madrid and Catalonia (with an incidence of 12.9% and 13.8% above the average respectively), constitute the two great poles of attraction and settlement of family migration with potential for future loading. One in every four marriages has a foreign partner and one in every four children has a foreign parent. In less than 10 years nearly half a million naturalization processes were filed, most of them Latin American citizens under the criterion of two-year residence.

We can highlight that one third of what we call migrants are children, adolescents or young people that have never migrated. This would be the strict definition of second generation; but if we observe the difference between absolute figures of foreign young people (0-19) and the number of born between 1996 and 2009 (almost 900,000), in the absence of more accurate data, we need to conclude that a great portion of this generation have accessed Spanish citizenship and for that reason is invisible to migration statistics.

If we pay closer attention to the educational statistics, the fall of registrations from compulsory to post-compulsory school, show an obvious school failure and drop-out (Serra, 2010) and the massive orientation of these young people into vocational training trajectories¹², to an extent that we could see an anticipation mechanism of what Ambrosini calls *subaltern*

¹² More than 60% of foreign students who follow education after the compulsory stage (or after having expelled from it) are oriented towards vocational training and initial qualification courses (see Tab. 3) The processes of educational segregation would be even more glaring if we took into account not only foreign students, but Spanish students from a migrant origin.

integration (Ambrosini, 2005) y Mezzadra (2004) calls *differential inclusion*. Franzé Mundanó introduces the term educational externalization of students from migrant origin, which is expressed “through a triple tendency: attributing the explanation of their trajectories and academic performance to such external factors; moving immigrant students from the ordinary classroom and/or the school towards places that slowly move them off the academic and ordinary track; and leaving the socio-educational intervention in the hands of specialized professionals” (Franzé *et al.*, 2010, p. 125).

Table 3. Some indicators of migration posterity in Spain

Total foreigners 0-19 (2011)	1,128,455
Incidence over the total resident foreign population (2010)	19.6%
Foreigners born in Spain (2011)	381,418
Absolute value and incidence of the range 0-19 over the total of foreigners	(33.8%)
Incidence of the range 0-4 born in Spain over the total foreigners (2011)	83.8 %
Incidence of the range 5-9 born in Spain over the total foreigners (2011)	35.6%
Total born with one foreign parent (1996-2009)	871,093
New born with one foreign parent (2009)	119,721
Incidence of foreigners over the total of new born (2009)	24.19
Foreign students (2010/2011)	770,384
Incidence of foreign students over the total of students (2010/2011)	9.9
Foreign students in pre-primary school	131,135
Foreign students in post-compulsory education (2010-2011)	42,833
	(6.8%)
Foreign students in Vocational Training (2010/2011)	44,760
	(7.7%)
Foreign students in PCPI (Initial Professional Qualification Courses)	14,394
	(18%)
Foreign students enrolled at university (2008/2009)	37,230
	(2.7%)
Citizenship granting (2009)	79,597
Incidence of naturalizations for 2-year residence	76%
Total amount of citizenship granting (2001-2009)	444,184
Incidence of Latin American citizen granting over the total (%)	76%
Incidence of mixed marriage over the total marriages (2009)	24%

Source: Mec 2009/2010; 2010/2011. INE 2011

If, as Bourdieu puts it, what unifies a generation is their relationship with the school, we can state here a radical difference that is built between natives and foreigners from the very educational apparatus; this inequality

of opportunities within a generation, depending on the origin, is still active, even if in 2009 some legal obstacles were overcome that had previously prevented significant groups of migrant students from following their non-compulsory education and also prevented reunited children from working legally. Franzé's work helps us interpret these issues beyond the binary logic inclusion/exclusion; it is rather a grooved space, in school as in other areas, where multiple processes of differential and subaltern integration operate. Ten years later, we can see these processes fully applied on the same subjects –the Latin American- that had been attracted and previously seen as culturally close.

Whatever their origin, the children of migrations, a stable presence in European cities, incarnate what Sayad (2002, 2008) defined as inopportune posterity, since they break the myth of the temporariness of migration and question the role of the migrant as the good, neutral and silent guest. They represent a projection towards the future, making permanent what was thought to be temporary, thus breaking the dream and the myth of their return present in the State thought and in the expectations of the first generation migrants. The children of immigrants are thus, for the nation's body and thought, the emblem of an imposed migration, the ghost of all contemporary rhetoric about the State's right to choose what migration they accept.

However, if we take as an example the case of second generations, it is not clear who should be included in this category. What is it that matters? Is it the place of birth, having foreign parents, the characteristics of socialization, school experience, a mixture of all that? As we pointed out, Rumbaut underlines the importance of the place of birth and the time of socialization in the receiving society in his proposal of decimal definition of second generations. Ambrosini (2005), in a pragmatic way, opens the limits of this category to all the children of migration.

In Spain, recent works about second generations (Portes *et al.* 2009, 2011; Aparicio, 2011) give examples about many of the limits of migration studies, as many authors have pointed out. We find paradigmatic one text by Aparicio (2011), which contains data from a statistically representative survey done in private and public schools in Madrid and Barcelona about

young people aged 13 to 15¹³: the risk of downward mobility is regretted (as if there was no class society, inside and outside the educational space, which uses massively origin as a selection mechanism) and it is linked among other things to a gang membership. It gives no description of the structural mechanisms that explain the reproduction of inequalities in the receiving society, but rather a complacent and moralist look (on the one hand discrimination would be something not perceived by the majority of students¹⁴, on the other hand, the risk of having conflictive attitudes and making up conflictive groups would depend on a dysfunctional family nucleus); a referent is individuated in gangs to explain the deterioration of relationships, expectations and quality in schools.

Therefore, what Spain has in common with other countries is confirmed: the underlying fear in the research about young people and a conception of integration as an individual voluntarism (García Borrego, 2007). This ambiguous and polysemic word *-integration-* is totally internal of the receiving society's functional logics and is articulated through a dictionary that mixes cultural and socio economic elements, like in the theory of Portes and colleagues (Portes *et al.*, 2009) amplified in Spain by Aparicio (2011) about segmented assimilation; in this perspective the *official* question -real mechanism of self-absolution of the receiving society- often turns back on the individual's capacity to *integrate* better, and rarely on how institutions need to transform to assume a new social composition of the public space.

We think that an important step in the progress of studies needs to be placed on the one hand in a radical exit from culturalism, from this restless construction of the object, and on the other hand in the capacity of constantly questioning the production of these constituting views of receiving societies under the tropes of the fear and the misery (Carasquilla Coral *et al.*, 2007). As we have pointed out in another context (Queirolo

¹³ The definition of second generations here is: having one foreign parent, having been born in Spain or having arrived before the age of 12, be aged between 13 and 15 (Aparicio, 2011, p. 119)

¹⁴ If according to Rosa Aparicio discrimination is a minor issue, from the declarations of self-perception of adolescents aged between 13.5 and 14.4 (the mean age of the sample in Barcelona and Madrid respectively), for Iñaki García Borrego (2010) and other authors (Pedreño, 2007) discrimination is the fact that sets the children of migration as a group and as an object.

Palmas, 2012), there is a plurality of cognitive effects of this culturalism: on the one hand, insisting in the migrant origin of this generation underlines a quality that seems to come from a quasi ontological definition of these subjects (*reification effect*), which makes their lives incomparable with those of their native contemporaries (*effect of removal* of a similar condition of youth), reducing a biography to an origin (*metonymic effect*) and then transforming the origin into the destiny (*effect of overdetermination*).

The category *second generation*, placing an emphasis on the conservation of the cultural distance, reminds the children of immigrant families and popular classes that, in spite of their efforts, they will always be tied to another cultural space, and therefore, their existence does not deserve full citizenship. In what logic can a past participle (migrated) be applied to people and imagine them petrified in time? And in parallel, how can we talk about migrants “using a present tense to describe an action that took place in the past?” (Delgado, 2010, p. 27). On what logic can we talk about migrant minors when many of them were born or spent their childhood in Spain? According to the citizenship regulations, shouldn't we more appropriately talk about *non migrant foreigners*, a pair of words that appear contradictory at once? And last, is the quality of migrant inherited, passed from parent to child, as the term *second generation* seems to suggest?

It seems more promising, therefore, to shift the observation plan towards the plurality of processes articulated around the definition and image of a social group, real symbolic fights between hetero-representations and self-representations. We wouldn't have to question about second generations, but rather about how certain subjects are constructed as second generations and about the effects of the discourse in terms of strategies and practices that the subjects involved put into operation in the public representation of themselves.

In the case of the children of migration, this symbolic and material operation confronts the dimension of posterity, the collapse of the myth of return, and what has been called the paradox of integration (Wrench *et al.*, 1999): the perception of a surplus of discrimination, for having been exposed to mechanisms of socialisation that operate in the receiving society, the crash between expectations and opportunities, the

internalisation of the social objectives (speaking in Merton's terms) and the difficulty of finding appropriate means to reach these shared objectives.

Coming back to the question that opens this section, these categories of people designed from the top, stop being immigrant / migrant / of immigrant origin only when they manage to access the prerogative of citizenship that using Goffman's words we could call *polite disregard*, or in words of Delgado (2007, p. 192) *right to indifference*, a condition of opacity by which some subjects “are not forced to explain or justify what they do or think, the rites they participate in, what they eat, what sexuality they have, what their religious feelings are, what their view of the world is, all the data that we, *the normals*, would not provide to people outside our intimate circles”. To claim the right of opacity for everyone is the condition to generate less asymmetric forms of encounters not subaltern to a colonial gaze (Glissant, 2007). The right to opacity or indifference incorporates the best challenge of the discourse of integration or integrability applied to youth, a discourse based on the migrant condition as material and cultural heritage (Pedreño, 2007).

Beyond the ballast of heritage. An approach in terms of agency

The heritage, seen from receiving societies, is also denounced as a deficit (*the cultural ballast*); if it is true that the socialisation of migrant families influences their children (García Borrego, 2011), we need to imagine heritage as a critical link that opens the possibility of an agency by itself. It would be necessary to constantly see among those designated *as others, by others* what the forms of resistance, effervescence and creativity are, in mimicry and in the search for the right to anonymity, in the spectacularity of transforming the stigma into an emblem (Goffman, 1963).

In the lines of Mannheim (1990), generations as age groups are defined, formed and search for their responses and claims by relating to a historical transformation of the world. The crisis and birth of a post-migrating society are the two axis of contemporaneity, at the forefront of which actors, subjects and generational segments are taking their positions. *Natives* and children of migration experiment similarities and differences. Mass education, unemployment and work precariousness, extension of the permanence with the family are structural conditions of the current youth

condition in Spain like in other countries, but they incarnate in the same age group in different ways according to class, *race*, and nationality. For young people of migrant origin, school takes place in the lesser valued forms of education and is biased by high drop-out rates, precariousness and unemployment is affected by a surplus of exploitation and a constant series of administrative irregularities imposed on their lives by the State, while the social relations inside the families push them towards a rapid entry into the adulthood and to assume a responsibility within the household economy. Therefore, there is a triple discrimination placed upon these new Spaniards: they're young, migrant, and proletarian.

The children of migration nowadays face a re-proposal of a logic of assimilation and cultural selectivity (accompanied by emphasis on the invasion and invitation to return) on the one hand, and on the other, a structural crisis affecting young people's mobility trajectories -assured by the school and the factory, training and work, during a long part of the 20th Century- that they see multiplied in their bodies by processes of illegality, imprisonment (Oddone and Queirolo Palmas, 2011) and administrative constraints of the right to exist, to live, to stay and to travel. In the framework of the crisis, the apparently contradictory mixture of desire of assimilation, culturalism, statement of the social costs of migration¹⁵ and the invitation to return is trying to define the courses of subaltern integration from the receiving society.

But as Lydia Lo Schiavo (2011, p. 2) points out, "*the collective illusion of temporariness confronts the young migrants' emerging historicity-subjectivity*"; the key for a different approach lays on the concept of *agency*, as the capacity of protagonism, of creative transformation of social relations, of infra-political resistance to differential inclusion. The space of an agency lays between the condition of the actor (the one who plays a role within the script of social relations) and the condition of the author (the one who transforms, establishes the pace and the characters in the script). It is the dimension of improvisation that according to Bourdieu works in every field and breaks the ties between the space of positions and the space of positioning.

¹⁵ Guided by this perspective, Partido Popular's right wing government has decided in 2012 to exclude undocumented migrants from the health care system.

We can localise the threads of agency in assertive attitudes (the claim of rights) but also in the tactic, opportunistic and instrumental uses of difference, in the exhibition of bodies and presences, in the aesthetics exhibited, in the microphysical appropriations of urban spaces. Agency should also be assumed in its most embarrassing modalities: swindling, theft, predatory practices in the streets that represent, as Bourgois (2005) pointed out in a masterly ethnography, forms of agency submerged in ambivalence and mechanisms of social reproduction of the assigned destiny¹⁶.

In any case, as Colombo (2010) suggests, it is necessary to overcome the idea and the stigma of deficit and division between cultures in order to consider in a reversed way important portions of this generation, the child of immigration, as an active minority: young people affected on the one hand, by multiple processes of discrimination which are marked by the renaissance of a colour line (Du Bois, 2007) and on the other hand, capable of moving within the pores of the social space, counting on ambivalence as a resource and as a creative response to the material and symbolic tight boundaries in order to gain an advantageous position inside the becoming global of the world. To think about the different forms of agency of the children of migration means to envisage differences, not as things, but as strategies, a repertoire of practices that are used in a contingent manner, that articulate irony, mimicry, ostentation, emphasis and roaming, far from any idea of culture as specific container, essentialised and naturalised, that needs to be legitimised and organised through specific cultural policies of recognition (Colombo and Semi, 2007).

Sayad (2002) taught us that racism exists and is perceived only when one leaves the warm welcome of the ethnical-national-family circle, when one takes the first steps into the host societies. The generation we are talking about has grown within the host countries, it cannot be expelled or aborted, but it can be re-located and ethnicised as it does not accept an assigned destiny. In this perspective, the *colour line*, a control mechanism of the symbolic and material mobility of a generation, is the posthumous

¹⁶ In a recent research that we carried out in an Italian prison, several young people from immigrant origin claimed their criminal *cursus* as their only way of resistance against work exploitation and social humiliation.

reaction to *invasion*: the reaction of those who question with their own practices the heritage of the migrant condition and consider themselves, on the contrary, a child of their own life instead a of “a child of migration”.

To cope with a stigma that organises itself in a mobile way constructing race, culture, colour -inventing the white race, the black race and the many intermediate colours of races and crystallisations- the young children of migration organise different practices of resistance: from transforming the stigma into an emblem (*the mestizo pride, the blackness, the Latin race*) to mimicry, to the oblique gestures and the claim of a right to indifference. In a recent research carried out in Barcelona (Giliberti, 2011), young migrant Dominicans, used to thinking about themselves as white (compared to the Haitians as their black reference), discover that they are treated as *blacks* in the receiving society; colour and race appear in the words of one of the informers with a clear mobile label applied to exploitation “*blacks work like blacks because blacks are always working harder to live like whites...*”. To cope with racism, these young people accumulate symbolic capital claiming their pride to be *the blacks of Barcelona* on the one hand, and refusing any label, acting on the territory of indifference, on the other. On the contrary, other young people internalise the negative value of being considered *black* and try to find new objectives and new social groups on which they can project the stigma.

Therefore, to assume agency means to go beyond the debate itself about the second generation, a term that reduces the space of sociability to an origin and a descent, obliterating the creative capacities of the subjects to challenge the State thought, the inappropriate posterity, the colour line. Young people cease to be immigrants in this context, freeing themselves from the residues of the scientific and popular *doxa* that would like to enclose them in stereotyped narratives in terms of social cohesion, deficit and passiveness, ethnic communitarism and suspension between cultural universes. This dimension of agency / resistance, transversal in the generations we are talking about is, however, strongly marked by class lines and, within the crisis, is articulated between the marginalised middle class and the young proletarians: on the one hand, we have those young migrants who have tried to turn the family cultural capital into new educational investment, and on the other hand we have those who, expelled by the educational and employment circuits, resist in a creative way or

succumb to what, for North America, Loic Wacquant (2011) has called the deadly symbiosis between ghetto and jail.

Throughout this text we have identified different features that mark the academic debate: a) the ideological production of youth as a classless subject; b) the ethnification of national young people in terms of tribes and vulgarisation of a culturalist discourse; c) the oblique visualisation of class under the sign of race and ethnicity in a post-migrating society and d) the construction of differential integrability criteria by culture. The emergence of a migrant youth issue in Spain in 2003/2004 was strongly marked by the discourse of *gangs* termed *Latin*, as the children of the *undeserving poor*, judged for making a non conforming use of the city. Paradoxically, these subjects, thought initially as culturally close, could suddenly make a shift in the public representation, enacting with their memberships and behaviours the panic and the virus of imagined gangs and violent young people, not as a product of the receiving society, but rather as an imported product. This permanent mobility of the labels that define the good and the bad, the close and the distant, has also something to do with the permanent fight between posterity and *nouria*, a term that in Sayad defines the rotational character of migration and the pressure of States to make it be like that. The children of the *nouria*, even those defined as integrable, can quickly become inopportune and, therefore, distant, as they take hold of the urban space, they give it a different sense and thus overstep the established social and moral order.

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