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Self-image and Self-satisfaction: a research among southern Italian students using a battery of OSIQ items[1]

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Abstract

The paper illustrates a study on adolescents living in Golfo di Policastro, an area in a Southern Italy Region. Following the path of the youth research program promoted by Italian Institute IARD, our contribution focuses on the analysis of the Self-image dimension that was surveyed using a battery of OSIQ items. Data analysis relied on the sequential application of factor analysis and cluster analysis. The result is the identification of a self-image typology to explore the relationships with self-satisfaction in everyday life.

Keywords: Adolescents, Self-image, Self-satisfaction, multivariate analysis.

1.Introduction

Although the centrality of the self is well acknowledged, the use of self-conceptualizations is varied and often not explicitly defined. For example,

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[1] This paper is the product of joint studies; however the actual writing of the paragraphs was divided as follows: Paolo Diana wrote paragraphs 2 and 5, Gianmaria Bottoni wrote paragraphs 3, 4 and 6, while Giovannipaolo Ferrari wrote paragraph 1.

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Harré (1998) has argued that this diversity of the self-conceptualizations makes the literature difficult to interpret. A more detailed comprehension of the self is particularly important in adolescence, when multiple important changes occur in a short period of time.

The subject during the adolescence totally acquires the capability to think about himself/herself: not only about what the subject is, but also concerning what the subject could be, would be and must be. In other words, self-reflexivity capabilities are totally developed (Palmonari, 1993;2001). The elaboration of the concept of self is not an exclusive prerogative of the adolescence stage. This process is progressively going to be completed during this life stage (Diana &Marra, 2013).

The concept of Self refers to all the knowledge that the individual consciously elaborates about himself/herself in reference to his/her physical appearance, his/her capabilities, his/her relationships with others and his/her feelings in specific situations. The Self, therefore, does not depend only from oneself. In the progressive construction of Self, others play a very important role. Indeed, interpersonal relationships and the reference cultural system, where the individual acts, significantly contribute to the definition of the idea of Self. The constant questioning of oneself, of the world, in general characterizes the adolescence. In the contemporary society, the individual has to add, to all these difficulties, several chances of identifications: «In the past, identity and belonging were attributed: almost a gift that the community and the adults gave to every single subject of the group. Nowadays the appropriation, the exploration and the experimentation are signed through the line of the belonging and, more generally, of the identity achievement. This process, continually, reinventing of attributions and meanings» (Besozzi, 2009: 23). The Self is not «a private or a personal entity and not even the individual human body strictly speaking. «The self is, mostly, a point of view, which means that others are always looking at themselves from an external perspective» (Collins, 2006: 232). Therefore the Self, in any case, can be conceptualized, if not in relation with the "alter". Particularly, it is the "ego/alter" relationship that structures determinations of the Self. The self-perception defines many dimensions of existence. In fact, research evidence suggests that negative self-image is associated with various psychological problems such as psychiatric disturbance (Offer *et al.*, 1981), low self-esteem (Petersen*et al., 1*984), depression (Alfeld-Liro&Sigelman, 1998; Korhonen*et al.*, 2001), and behaviour problems in school (Hay, 2000). There is also evidence that adolescents' self-image predicts mental health in adulthood (Offer *et al.*, 1988; Palmonari, 2001).

2. Methodology, procedures and instruments

The aspects analysed in this paper are part of a research conducted in an area in South of Province of Salerno, in Campania Region (Italy). This area, called "Golfo di Policastro", includes 26 homogeneous villages for social, economic and cultural characteristics[2] (Arcangeli&Platania, 2007).Each of these districts has a very small number of inhabitants; Sapri, which is the largest country in the area, has a population of approximately 7000 people and schools involved in our investigation concentrated in its area.

The peripheral location of these areas, both geographically and politically, has caused, partially, their lack of development that can be currently explained through the Istat data about youth unemployment (over 40%) and the negative migration balance.

The Golfo of Policastro is marked by a contradictory development process that was accompanied by a lack of autonomy in the ability of the local government. The direct involvement of the residents of this area in the selection of cultural and economic development lines has been very limited over the years, threatening the identity and the collective memory of these places (Arcangeli&Platania, 2007).

The survey was conducted through the use of a standardized questionnaire on a 755 students (with a general average of 17.1 ages and standard deviation of 1.02) of the last three levels of high school, with the aim to survey representations, values and behaviours. The students interviewed represented the 93% of the total population. Therefore, we can talk about a census survey concerning adolescents in the target area[3].

About the final population: 51% of respondents are male; 16% comes from a Professional Institute; while 41.6% from a Technical Institute or a Commercial Institute or a Social Sciences Institute; the remaining 42% is

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[2] The towns involved in our research are: Sapri, San Giovanni a Piro, Vibonati, Santa Marina, Camerota, Caselle in Pittari, Torre Orsaia, Celle di Bulgheria, Sanza, Roccagloriosa, Torraca, Maratea, Ispani, Morigerati, Casaletto Spartano, Rofrano, Centola, Tortorella, Pisciotta, Montesano sulla Marcellana, Alfano, Lagonegro, Rivello, Tortora, Trecchina, Buonabitacolo.

[3] The schools included are: I.I.S., Istituto d'Istruzione Superiore "L. da Vinci", Indirizzo Geometri; I.I.S., Istituto d'Istruzione Superiore "L. da Vinci", Indirizzo Giuridico Economico Amministrativo (Ragioneria), v.o.; I.I.S., Istituto d'Istruzione Superiore "L. da Vinci", Indirizzo Turismo, n.o.; Ipaa - Istituto Professionale per l'Agricoltura (Agrario); Ipsar - Istituto Professionale Alberghiero; Ipsia - Istituto Professionale Industria e Artigianato; Liceo Classico Carlo Pisacane; Liceo delle Scienze Sociali; Liceo Scientifico Galileo Galilei.

made up of students from Secondary School focusing on Humanities or Second Level College of Science.

One of the main purposes of the paper is building a typology of Self-image to survey, subsequently, different relationships with the self-satisfaction in some aspects of daily life and the network of relationships that support individual development.

One widely used method aimed at a comprehensive assessment of the conscious self-image of the adolescents is the Offer Self-Image Questionnaire (OSIQ) (Offer *et al.*, 1989).

The Offer Self-Image Questionnaire, based on the psychodynamic developmental theory, is widely used for assessing adolescents' self-image. The use of OSIQ is built on two assumptions: a) several different functional capacities need to be measured, as great variance between them is to be expected, and b) possession by the adolescent of adequate psychological sensitivity and skills of reliable self-assessment (Offer *et al.*, 1989). The OSIQ comprises 130 items yielding the following 12 scales: Impulse Control, Emotional Tone, Body Image, Social Relationships, Morals, Sexual Attitude, Family Relationships, Mastery, Vocational and Educational Goals, Emotional Health, Superior Adjustment, and Idealism (Offer *et al.*, 1992).

In this study a revised short form of the OSIQ was constructed.

Particularly, we were inspired by IARD Institute research to build our survey tool (Buzzi *et al.,* 2002; 2007).

The items selected are the ones semantically most representative of the aspects that we considered crucial for the study.

At the end, the battery of questions built to survey the Self-image consists from 11 items (Figure 1). For each item, the students were given a score on a scale of Cantril - from 0 (max disagreement) to 10 (max agreement) - to make their score on the agreement level with each statement. The items of the battery of questions were also counterbalanced, changing the orientation of sentences than to the Self-perception, to reduce the possibility of having response set.

The scaleisintendedto measure two kinds of capabilities: coping with everyday life challenges and reaching life achievements.

3. The dimension of Self

The emotional profiles of interviewed teenagers seem balanced. Firstly, mean scores were calculated for each item. Scores described a universe of adolescents with a strong sense of connection with its relational context and with a good feeling to be able to affect their lives by carrying out a number of

commitments (Figure 1). The item with highest average (7.5) investigates the perception of the reliability of the environment, which could be a reference in times of trouble.

In relation to the emotive Self, we sub-lined a generally positive perception. Respondents declared to be able to manage their life without being overwhelmed by negative emotions as the fear (3.8), the solitude (5.7) and the boredom (5.3).

The comparison with the other's gaze does not appear to be a problem for teenagers interviewed. Indeed, items as "I cannot make my parents understand what I feel" (4.2) and "I am always afraid that others criticize me" (4.1) obtained on average a degree of agreement very low. This data is very significant because in the age of adolescence the other's gaze is of considerable importance: it becomes the measure of self-worth and social space that can be occupied.

Fig. 1 – Statements about the Self-perception (mean scoreon a scale 0 to 10).
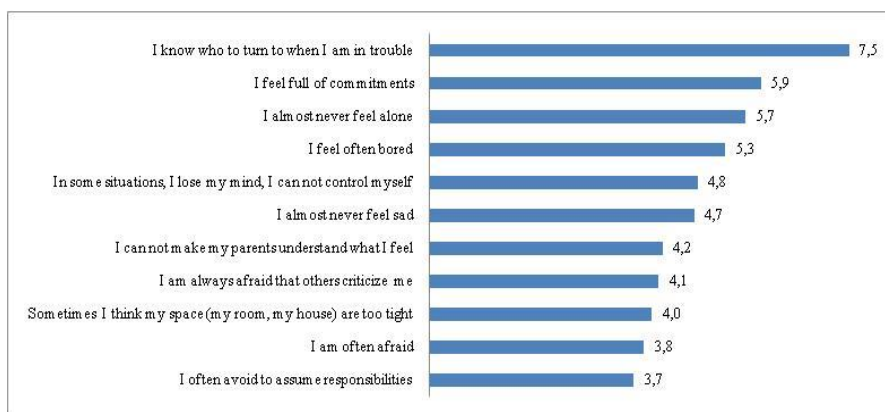
In general, the data do not reveal significant differences between men and women. We emphasize, however, that women feel a greater sense of fear (4.7 vs. 3 mean). This could be due to a greater reluctance of men to declare a feeling in opposition with their social and cultural image. Furthermore, women are more afraid about criticism than men (4.6 vs. 3,6) and they have more communication difficulties with their parents (4.7 vs. 3,6). Most significant differences arise when we consider the cultural capital of the family (calculated by combining the level of education of the parents). Indeed, the feeling of sadness reduces with the increase in the level of cultural capital.

Instead, the average value for children from families with a low cultural capital (4.3) is lower than the value recorded for the guys coming from families with a high level of cultural capital (5.3). The latter also show better communicative relationship with their parents. These results highlight the importance of cognitive and material resources, offered by the family, covering the proper development of the Self. In addition, adolescents with a high cultural capital say they feel full of commitments. This condition depends on the fact that these people, having parents with high social status, tend to be subjected to more pressures and expectations on the part of the family. In fact, the majority of these adolescents attend the most prestigious schools that require more commitment. Also in reference to the school attended, we can see a lower propensity to self-control among vocational students (5.4). The variable class attended, however, does not seem to affect the distribution of the values of the items used.

4. The construction of a typology

The descriptive analysis does not allow, however, a whole reading of the Self-perception. Therefore, we used the multiple factor analysis to obtain a framework less fragmented and dispersed. In particular, we applied the method of principal component analysis to all items of the battery. The results have revealed the presence of four components that reproduce 56% of total variance (Table 1).

Tab. 1 – Factor loadings of battery of sentences about the self-perception.

Item		Component			
	Label	1	2	3	4
I can not make my parents understand what I feel	Item_1	,695	,162	-,190	-,120
I am always afraid that others criticize me	Item_2	,567	,268	-,073	,420
I feel often bored	Item_3	,542	-,087	,336	,172
I almost never feel sad	Item_4	-,513	,497	,025	-,086
Sometimes I think my space (my room, my house) are too tight	Item_5	,501	,294	-,316	-,339
I know who to turn to when I am in trouble	Item_6	-,493	,251	,309	,372
I almost never feel alone	Item_7	-,471	,619	,045	,141
I often avoid to assume responsibilities	Item_8	,399	,502	,303	-,151
In some situations, I lose my mind, I can not control myself	Item_9	,229	,278	,582	-,464
I feel full of commitments	Item_10	-,134	,506	-,522	-,051
I am often afraid	Item_11	,526	,208	,024	,546

The first component refers to a dimension close to the concept of relationship distress, which is linked to difficulties in establishing a relationship with their family and social context. The idea of the discomfort would benefit from some negative moods such as boredom and fear.

The second one represents an individual wellbeing whose negative polarity represents the typical condition of adolescence emotional anxiety.

The latter is characterized by a widespread feeling of sadness, loneliness and melancholy. The third component indicates a situation of aggression and anxiety mixed with apathy, while the last one is indeed very relevant. In any case, the quantity of variables is not high and their nature does not recommend the use of an excessive number of components.

Then, to refine the extracted components and overcome some limitations inherent in the technique, we used "the two steps principal component analysis" (Di Franco &Marradi, 2003).

In practice, this is a lengthy interactive procedure, aimed at selecting baskets of variables with a semantic flow better defined. This technique allows identifying the most meaningful relationships between the variables and to produce a more refined summary of information.

The sharpening process of the first two components has led to the elimination of three variables: two on the first dimension (*relationship distress*), the other refers to the second one (*individualwellbeing*) (Figure 2).

The variables ("I feel often bored", "In some situations I lose my mind, I can not control myself", "I know who to turn to when I am in trouble") were excluded on the basis of both a statistical criterion (loaded on both components) and a semantic criterion (they were not semantically related to the dimensions to which they referred).

Fig. 2 –Principal component analysis: component 1 and 2.
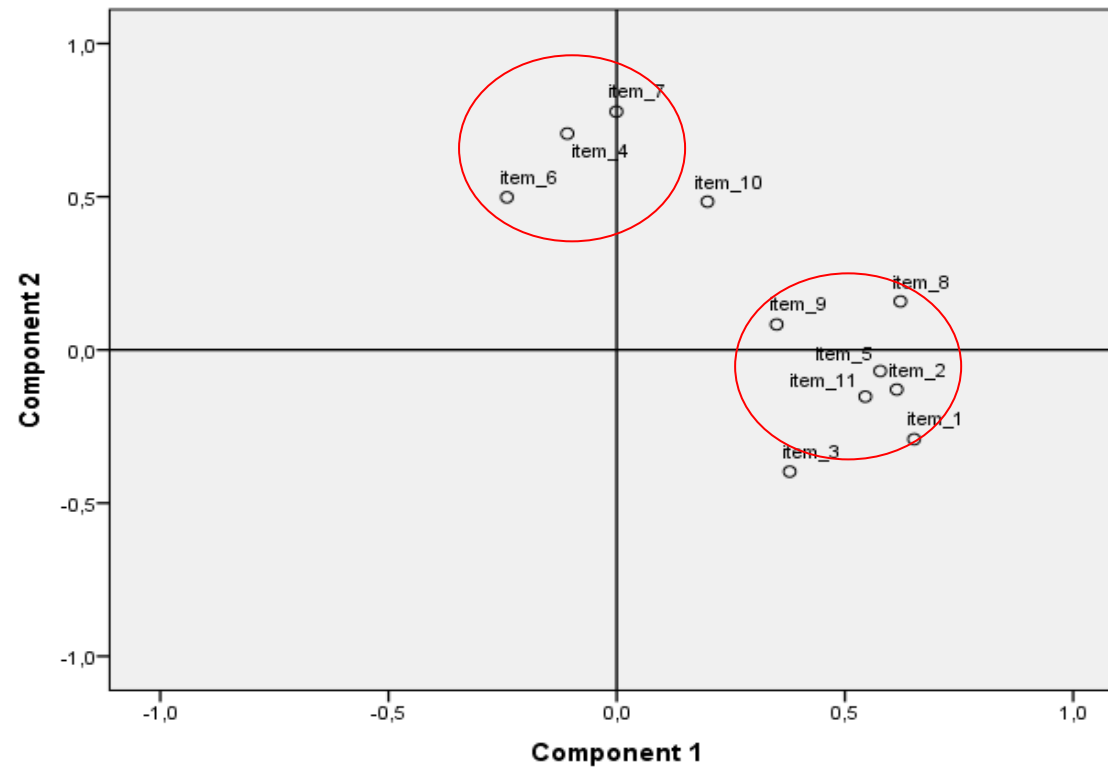
The variables thus selected are part of two clusters, which make up two baskets representatives, semantically, the two concepts of relationship distress and individual wellbeing, which was mentioned earlier. Table 2 shows the componential final weights.

Tab. 2 – Factor loadings of the two extract components.

Item	Component	
	1	*2*
I can not make my parents understand what I feel	,702	-,178
I am always afraid that others criticize me	,670	-,060
Sometimes I think my space (my room, my house) are too tigh	,595	,017
I am often afraid	,593	-,124
I often avoid to assume responsibilities	,566	,234
I almost never feel alone	-,109	,798
I almost never feel sad	-,221	,728
I feel full of commitments	,154	,530

To recap, we extracted two components. The first component (Table 3) contains items, which refer to the concept of relational Self and which concern the relationship among the adolescent, his family and the social context. This axis is called "relational distress".

Tab. 3 – Component matrix.

Item	Component "relational distress"
I cannot make my parents understand what I feel	.729
I am always afraid that others criticize me	.676
I am often afraid	.620
Sometime I think my space (my room, my house) are too tight	.578
I often avoid to assume responsibilities	.544

Instead, the second component extracted (Table 4) recalls semantically the individual dimension. The items that contribute to its definition refer, in fact, to the dimension of loneliness and sadness. The negative polarity of the axis

summarizes the stage of the emotional anxiety of the adolescence condition. This component has been called "well-being".

Tab. 4 – Component matrix.

Item	Component "Individual well-being"
I almost never feel alone	.821
I almost never feel sad	.782
I feel full of commitments	.483

On each of the dimensions described above we applied the single factor analysis in order to obtain two synthetic indices that were named: "relational distress" and "individual well-being". Then, the latter was used in a non-hierarchical cluster analysis procedure to group the students.

The objective of this analysis is specifically heuristic: we were interested by the evaluation in depth of the specific characteristics of each group compared to the two indices identified by the principal component analysis, more than the allocation of respondents in different groups.

In the Table 5 we report the final cluster centres that allow us to identify and define the four groups emerged from the analysis.

Tab. 5 – Final cluster centres.

	Relational distress	Individual well-being
Unstructured	1.2088577	-1.0396316
Individualistic	.7399550	.5120819
Socialized	-.5721054	-.8082642
Accomplished	-.8195185	.8991629

The distribution within the four groups is balanced (Figure 3). The scores allow us to nominate four groups: "Unstructured", "Individualistic", "Socialized" and "Accomplished".

Fig. 3 – Clusters.
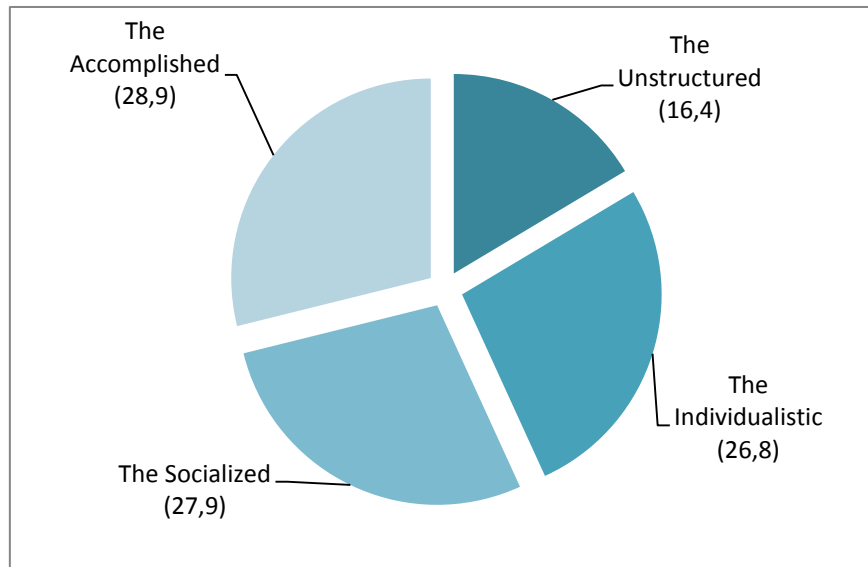
In the next part we define, in detail, the profiles emerged from the analysis with the help of some socio-demographic variables.

The Unstructured

The subjects in this group show a high social distress connected to a state of inner turmoil, characterized by fear (6.2 vs. 3.8 of the mean), sadness (2.1 vs. 4.7) and boredom (7 vs. 5.3).

These adolescents are confronted to a major risk because they live in a state of total distress. In fact, they cannot react to an inner state characterized by malaise and anxiety derived from the radical changes that the adolescent phase involves; they, indeed, cannot react by relying on the relational networks that usually act as support to the distress experienced. Social relationships are a source of anxiety and restlessness in the group of adolescent. In fact, these people say they fear the criticism of others (7 vs. 4.1), they did not have a good communicative relationship with their parents (7.3 vs. 4.1), they warn spaces attending too narrow (5.9 vs. 4). In this group, women are the majority (66%). The latter during adolescence live with insecurity human relationships and with greater sensitivity to criticism from others, especially in reference to the physical appearance (de Vito*et al.,* 1989; Wichstrom, 1998). In fact, girls

are very worried about the judgment on their body in today's society, where there is still a stereotype that linked the social prestige of women with their physical appearance (Buzzi*et al.*, 2002). It is not only a girl's problem: earlier studies (Allgood-Merten *et al.*, 1990; Nolen-Hoeksema, 1994) have suggested that having a negative body image, low levels of masculinity and ruminating coping techniques may be related to gender differences in depression (Erkolahti*et al.*, 2003). Most of those come from a family with a medium or low cultural capital. Instead, there is no relationship with the school. The chronological age influences the self-perception.

The subjects in this group are eighteen in 46.8% of the cases. This datais confirmed in other studies (Buzzi*et al.*, 2002). The eighteen is the time when the restlessness of the boys grows, because for the first time they have to make choices that will have a material impact on its future. To summarize, these individuals have difficulty in relating to the outside world, because they live social relationships with a sense of oppression and anxiety. At the same time, they have an inner distress that often leads them to feel feelings of loneliness and sadness.

The Individualistic

Students who are part of this group (27%) show significant levels of social distress accompanied, however, by high levels of individual well-being. In our opinion, the condition of these people is a conscious and aware choice: a lonely feeling which could assume the nuance of the need to do something of ourselves (Buzzi *et al.*, 2002). We can read in their answers a declaration of independence and autonomy, an affirmation of self-sufficiency. The boys who are part of this group do not live a real condition of distress in interpersonal relationships; rather they find the strength and the identification mainly in an individual dimension. In these subjects the dimension of the private Self is accentuated (Breckler & Greenwald, 1986). The individual, in fact, is able to perform evaluations on himself/herself even in the absence of others. Consequently, the Self is built and completed in the individual achievement. Self-consciousness seems to be stretched out in these individuals to a "private self-consciousness". The latter is centred on thoughts and reflections related to one's Self (Fenigestein *et. al.,* 1975). These individuals act according to what they believe is right, they are not interested in fashion, they have personal interests particularly developed and they are very aware of their emotions. Even in this case, albeit slightly, the majority of the Individualistic are women (53%). Membership of this group does not affect the cultural capital, the institution attended and the age.

The Socialized

The members of this group are mirrored to the previous group: they show an inner trouble and well being for social relations. The importance given to relationships with the peer group distinguishes these students. These give priority to methods of meeting that satisfied the need "to be in many" (Secchiaroli & Mancini, 1996). These aspects refer to the concept of "gang". They need an collective identification that provides the strength and the security for them. The adolescents in this group range from a collective Self and a public Self (Breckler & Greenwald, 1986). The former have a strong sense of the group, internalizing the rules, goals and expectations, the latter are very sensitive to the evaluations of others who play an important role in their lives. In short, they constantly seek the approval of the other with the social purpose of accreditation. The Socialized by living in a state of unease attach great importance to social relations, because they provide support and, above all, offer a collective identity more stable. The members of this group are totally projected outwards: towards the relational dimension and they find themselves in this one. The self-consciousness seems to be project towards a "public self-consciousness": in other words the most worrying concerns the appearance and the behaviour in public (Fenigestein *et al.*, 1975). These individuals perceive themselves as social objects: they become aware of one's self through the image that others could return to them (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934).42.2% of the socialized is 18 years old; the majority were men (53%) and they come from a family with a low cultural capital and a vocational school.

The Accomplished

The group of Accomplished is the largest group (29%). These people have an emotionally profile balanced. In fact, they report no relationship or individual distress. They are fully integrated into the social and family context where they live. They are individuals where the biological, psychological and social issues, related to the adolescence, have found fulfilment leading to a full development of the personality. All the "developmental tasks" associated with adolescence have been adequately overcome. «The tasks that an individual must face (the developmental tasks of life) are the prerequisite for a healthy and satisfactory growth in our society [...]. A developmental task is a task that occurs in a period of the life of an individual and its good resolution leads to happiness and success in dealing with problems later» (Havighurst, 1948). They are, therefore, individuals who have reached the full identity that represents the culmination of the adolescence process (Erikson, 1950). In

summary, these teenagers have acquired a full self-consciousness associated with a mature representation of social context. In other words, the socialization is entirely completed. The Accomplished are mainly men (62%) and they tend to come from a family with high cultural capital and they attend a high school.

The greater cognitive, social and economic resources, which the Accomplished have at their disposal, provide better tools to tackle the tough challenges posed by adolescence.

5. The Self-image and the Self-satisfaction

The typology constructed was placed in connection with the battery of items (on a scale of 0 to 10) that detects the personal satisfaction of the subject in some spheres of his/her life (Table 6). The life spheres investigated by us are useful resources for adolescents to cope with the difficulties that they encounter in their everyday life. Thus, the level of satisfaction also indicates the assessment of the quality of the resources that these subjects hold in order to face the challenges of adolescence (Buzzi*et al.*, 2002).

Hence our hypotheses that the Self-perception and the satisfaction achieved in key life spheres are closely associated. Looking at Table 6, the Accomplished, as we expected, show higher levels of satisfaction: they are, in fact, the most satisfied about friends, the economic situation, the health, relationships in general and love. By level of satisfaction, in second place we find the Individualistic. These are very satisfied with the relationship they have with friends and others in general. They are also the most satisfied in love.So these students do not live a real situation of relationship distress but, as mentioned above, they seem to make a conscious choice individualism-oriented.This confirms our initial hypothesis that these subjects are consciously and deliberately focused on an individual and intimate dimension. In summary, the Socialized show a lower level of satisfaction than Individualistic, while the Unstructured manifest the highest levels of dissatisfaction. It is interesting to illustrate, after the daily life spheres, the results related to relational resources, which adolescents potentially can rely on.

The personal relational networks are a resource for individuals, who can rely on relational network using the resources that this network provides to achieve their goals (Di Nicola *et al.,* 2011). Social resources found in relational networks allow subjects to improve their quality of life by expanding the horizon of chance available to individuals.

"Personal network arise from the actions of individuals, but at the same

time condition these actions; so the networks represent both a constraint on and an emergent effect produced by the actions of individuals" (Di Nicola *et al.,* 2011: 1).

Tab. 6 – Satisfaction levels (mean score on a scale 0 to 10).

Activities of daily living	*Cluster*				*Mean*	*Dev. std.*
	Unstructured	*Individualistic*	*Socialized*	*Accomplished*		
Friends	7.37	8.35	7.86	8.57	8.12	2.067
Economic situation	5.64	6.84	6.40	7.20	6.62	2.275
School	5.83	6.35	6.02	6.34	6.17	2.326
Health	8.08	8.60	8.60	9.10	8.66	1.606
Familiar relationships	7.39	8.59	8.73	9.26	8.63	1.935
Spare time	7.15	7.89	7.88	8.30	7.88	2.092
Relationships with others	7.18	8.22	7.66	8.57	7.99	2.048
Love	6.32	7.79	7.26	7.75	7.39	2.846

For each relational centre (family, friends, relatives, etc.) teenagers would declare their level of confidence (Table 7).

This strong orientation to family by which the interviewed adolescents, independently from the cluster to which they belong, tend to establish a relationship of empathy and full confidence, at the expense of other relational centers, can arise in the transition to adulthood as a general strategy of adjustment that young people adopt to cope with uncertainty and instability that pervades the contemporary world and, therefore, the context in which they operate daily (Beck, 2000;Besozzi, 2009).

In terms of identity construction process, it means that they have a constant ability to adapt over time and react to the risks posed by modernity liquidity and uncertainty (Bauman, 2002).

Again, the Accomplished, in general, show the highest level of confidence. In all four clusters the trust in the family sphere is significant. However, there are some differences: the share of the Accomplished that claim to be able to rely heavily on the family is higher by about 20 percentage points compared to the Unstructured and more than 16 percentage points from the Individualistic. This analysis underlines, once again, the lack in the adolescents (belonging to the latter two groups) of social support networks compatible with Self-development.

Tab. 7 – How much can adolescent'srely on?(response rates "very", %).

Relational Centres	Cluster			
	Unstructured	Individualistic	Socialized	Accomplished
My family (parents, brother, sister)	75.0	79.7	88.6	95.9
My relatives (grandparents, uncles, etc.)	36.3	44.1	46.9	53.2
My friends	26.6	42.6	37.9	45.4
My neighbourhoods	1.6	1.5	2.4	3.7
My classmates	8.9	13.4	11.4	19.3
My teachers	7.3	6.9	6.2	8.7
The headmaster	5.6	4.0	4.7	4.6

Friends are the third relational centres on which adolescents refer in times of trouble. Also in this case we can see the relationship difficulties of the Unstructured: only one in four believes to be reliable to their friends. This share, furthermore, decreases in relation to classmates. For all groups, albeit with differences, the world of the school (classmates, teachers and headmaster) is not a reliable resource.

This last consideration confirms the hypothesis present in Di Nicola *et al.,* (2011). According to this hypothesis, very close ties, such as family and friends, are symbolic resources: such as the moral or psychological support, reassurance and understanding. The subject may appeal to these resources. The subjects, in fact, that progressively have a better self-image and show an individual and relational wellbeing, are also the same people who claim to be able to get more support from family and friendship networks.

6. Conclusions

The analysis reveals that the phenomenon of Self-perception is not a unitary process. The four adolescent types that we identified showing the Self is a phenomenon to be studied in a multidimensional perspective.

This approach allowed us to show that the resources of people influence the process of construction of the Self: the limited cognitive, relational and familiar resources have a negative impact on the process of formation of the Self. Therefore, the social context assumes a great importance, because it becomes the place where the Self develops itself and draws resources aimed at adequate growth.

These results confirm those produced by other studies about the topic (Buzzi*et al.*, 2002).

However, it is also clear that, in the same area, there are a lot of cognitive, relational and material resources that guide the Self-development in different ways. The biographical answers are different depending on the available resources provided to face the complexity of the situations and represent, therefore, an important element.

It should also be noted that, for students in the Golfo of Policastro, the Self-construction takes place in a context of social, economic and politic marginalization that makes, in general, the process of identity construction more complex, even in situations where the affective, cognitive, and material resources are available and reassuring.

In addition, the difficulties for adolescents increase in a consumer society in which the building of a Self positive image is constantly required. Models that propose happiness, satisfaction and self-realization achievement are becoming increasingly popular. They are based on consumerism and are accompanied by an increase in the sphere of individual freedom (Bauman, 1998).The Self-construction is put in relation to the resources by which the individualcan reach the goals determined by the same consumer and globalized society where it takes a continuous transformation of the social link (Diana, 2002).

The lack of integration between means and ends, as well as in Merton paradigm, can lead to deviant structuring of the Self. In this research, for example, two adolescent profiles arise. They constitute different responses, a kind of individualistic (*The Individualistic*) and the other type of anomic (*The Unstructured*), to the bias due, on the one hand, to the local context; on the other hand, to the global society.

In addition, we underlined that boys and girls living in the period of adolescence differently.

The girls, who mostly belong to the group of Unstructured, appear more restless than men who tend to belong to the group of the Accomplished. Moreover, the girls are more interested to their inner world; the men, on the contrary, that are for the majority in the group of the Socialized, are more directed towards the collective dimension of the Self. Furthermore, we have seen that even the age constitutes an important dimension: the phase of the 18 years old hasbeen accompanied by feelings of greater fear and anxiety. This period is, in fact, a bridge to adulthood: it is one of the first times when the individual makes choices that affect his future.

Finally, we pointed out that the family remains the most important agent of socialization: the family, indeed, provides extra support and trust and compensates, in many cases, the consumption of the other institutions.

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