

## **Abstract**

My research project is about the problems concerning young people's active citizenship competence, necessary to activate a social and cultural participation in the education of conscious and responsible citizens.

The citizenship education can contribute to the improvement at the levels of youth involvement and participation, influencing the dynamics which generate processes of alienation from public life, with a consequent indifference towards issues of general interest.

First of all, my research will describe and examine some of the most important concepts concerning the topic of participation, citizens and citizenship.

Then it will take into account the contributions about the concept of citizenship, by T. H. Marshall, and the changes related to the concept of citizenship, driven by phenomena of immigration and globalization.

In the second chapter, my research will concentrate on the school context, on the role of the school in the citizen education and the idea of education as a social life experience, as John Dewey said.

The second part is fully concentrated on the field research.

**Research title:** *“Young people, institutions and social-educational context: a research in the city of Battipaglia”*

**Research themes:** relationship between young people and institutions, the role of the school in the citizen education, forms of young people's participation

**Preliminary remarks:** For years the region Campania has been engaged in the refusal of some important principles concerning the world of youth. Among them: openness and participation, responsibility, effectiveness and coherence. In the European perspective, young people play an important role in the European Union construction process.

In this case, one of the objectives of youth politics is to involve them in the decisional processes, without overlooking their role of conscious citizens. With the law L.R. 14/2000, the territory net called Sistema Informativo Regionale Giovanile (or SIRG ) has incentivized the service *Informagiovani* to enhance young people's participation.

This participation involves organizations such as youth regional Forums, local and provincial Forums, the Regional council for young people in Campania.

Moreover, in order to improve the development in the participation of young people in the institutions, the region promotes a provincial and local youth Forum, which follows the principles expressed in the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2011 European Commission's White Paper, "A new impulse for European youth", and the European Paper guidelines about young people's participation in the local and regional life, adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the council of Europe on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2003.

These texts represent the main documents which refer to youth politics. But what are the main competences that young people should have to exercise their citizenship and to participate actively to the decision-making process for their life and future? For years a number of organizations and research institutions at national and international level have inquired about the key competences to have to favor people's integration in society at a cultural, economical and working level. Mario Castoldi said that constructing competence is central for the "redefinition of the school formation task" and this centrality is demonstrated by the attention on the key competences of active citizenship, both at national and international level. In 1997 the OCSE promoted the DeSeCo project to prevent the conceptual synthesis in which the key competences were necessary to adult life. It also provided punctual references for international investigation to verify the competences.

There are 9 competences, divided into 9 categories:

Using instruments in an interactive way, interacting in heterogeneous groups, acting in an autonomous way. With these preliminary remarks, the European council and Parliament approved on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2006 the Recommendation containing the European framework of reference to identify the key competences of permanent learning. One can find 8 competences that everyone needs for the realization and the personal development, the active citizenship, the social inclusion and occupation.

Among the most important documents at national level there are the Curriculum Indications in the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2007 DM, in which one can identify some competence development goals at the end of primary and secondary school. In the document attached to the *Regulation about compulsory school attendance laws* (22<sup>nd</sup> August 2007 decree), the citizen competences were defined at the end of primary school (learning to learn, planning, communicating, collaborating, participating, acting in an autonomous way, solving problems, identifying, connections and relationships, acquiring and interpreting information).

**Problem to face:** in spite of the guidelines expressed in the European documents, as well as in other acts concerning youth politics at regional and local level, young people's participation in the society is limited.

**Key words:** citizenship, democracy, participation, school, information, education, party, trade union, associations, local authority, civic sense, Constitution, community, membership, solidarity.

Hypothesis:

- the mistrust towards institutional structures, the lack of connection between school and institutions have shown a citizenship deficit which led many young people far away from decisional places.
- We need to strengthen the role of the school as school of active citizenship that stimulates young people's participation in a local and regional life
- The lack of an educational project affirming the right of active citizenship is caused by the lack of this sharing principle in the socialization agencies (family, schools, institutions, equal group)

**Population reference and sample:** it is constituted by pupils attending the second classes in Professional schools of the city of Battipaglia. The first sample is constituted by pupils enrolled in the second class (total: 240 pupils).

**Survey instruments:** questionnaire, form to be filled in by the teachers

**Conclusions:** young people's orientation is related to their needs, not to the common good;

Young people are interested in their interpersonal relationships in spite of the common good;

they pay more attention on their personal satisfaction with a consequent lack of social responsibility;

It is confirmed one of the hypothesis about young people's mistrust towards the institutional structures: young people feel distant from the institutions, due to their mistrust towards them. At the same time they see and feel the institutions far away from them. This generates a lack of dialogue and communication.

It is confirmed the hypothesis that a lack of an educational project, affirming the right of active citizenship, can cause a consequent lack of this sharing principle in the family.

Another important result is that boys and girls are not sufficiently informed about the European documents addressed to young people (Eurodocuments), as well as the Student Statute.

Young people do not pay attention on citizenship, they show mistrust towards political institutions, they pay more attention on their personal relationships, they live in a mistrustful atmosphere towards politics even in their family and they have no inclination towards social interactions.

The change should be social, political, cultural and educational, so schools play an important role in global politics. It is necessary to strengthen the role of the school in order to provide the younger generation with cultural and cognitive instruments to make them participate actively in the society.