

**The struggle to belong**  
***Dealing with diversity in 21st century urban settings.***

Amsterdam, 7-9 July 2011

**Youth and neighbourhood effect on the periphery of  
Barcelona and Milan:**

**A comparative case study between Trinitat Nova, Ciutat Meridiana,  
Comasina and Sant'Ambrogio**

**Ana Belén Cano Hila**  
Universitat de Barcelona  
[anacano@hotmai.com]

Paper presented at the International RC21 conference 2011

*Session 30: Youth geographies and spatial identities*

## Abstract

The interest in the influence of the neighbourhood in the life-chances of young people has increased, especially after some important youth riots in some European southern cities like Paris, Athens, etc.

My Ph.D. thesis analyzes the neighbourhood influence on planning, configuration and development of young people careers, especially regarding training, employment and leisure. Whether there are or not genuine contextual effects of area deprivation on social exclusion in the career of young people is the main objective of this paper. In addition, this research studies how this influence is and which the mechanisms of transmission are. In other words, we analyze if living in a deprived area contributes to the disadvantage experienced by its youth residents, and up to what extent the neighbourhood contribute to social exclusion.

## Introduction

Fighting against social exclusion, and social exclusion of young people in particular, as well as promoting social cohesion on European cities, are key issues in the analysis of cities. Likewise, they are present in the political agendas of the countries of the European Union.

The evidence of urban and residential processes of segregation coupled with evidence of segregation in the school, exacerbate the ethnic-racial divisions and tensions that occur in depressed neighbourhoods. Problems regarding urban marginality are an issue increasingly present in European political agendas. These problems are in the political agenda (and in social policies) because they threaten to be chronic, questioning traditional modes of citizenship (Wacquant (2007: 19, 292, 293) and Langrage & Oberti (2006).

Works concerning the effect of the neighbourhood are based on the assumption that the neighbourhood is the place where many people define their social world, especially young people, people with reduce mobility, and those with limited access to employment and leisure opportunities (Musterd et al, 2006) However, there is no unanimous consensus regarding to what extent the neighbourhood is an influence (it is not clear which effects are specific to the territory or which ones are individual and/or familiar effects), or through which mechanisms the neighbourhood exerts its influence, or in which variables receive the greatest impact. But, despite these disagreement, all works show that the analysis of the neighbourhood, linked to the transnational economic process, plays an increasingly relevant role in the study of social exclusion, in general, and the social exclusion of young people, in particular.

The study of neighbourhood effects has focused primarily on the influence of family and school, but very few works have tackled the influence of the institutions belonging to the third sector (religious organizations, public, private or state-subsidized schools, cooperatives, informal groups...), mainly in the area of leisure time. Therefore, the work I develop and I am presenting in this article aims to fill this gap.

A short review of the most relevant theories and theoretical discussion on this matter is to be found in the next section. Hypotheses about the impacts of neighbourhood effects are also presented. This is followed by the empirical section of the article, which begins with a discussion of methodological

considerations as well as a presentation of the dataset and the variables used. After that, there is a presentation of the results. Finally, the article ends with a discussion and concluding remarks.

## **Theoretical Discussion about the Impacts of Neighbourhood effect**

Investigations regarding the influence of the neighbourhood have been mostly North American. Such works have been primarily focused on teenagers, being considered one of the groups most likely to be influenced by the neighbourhood effect.

In the United States, during the 1980s and 1990s and since the publication of books like *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987), by William Julius Wilson, we have witnessed the emergence of works such as Jencks and Mayer (1990), Brooks-Gunn (1993 y 1997), Ellen and Turner (1997), Sampson et al. (2002), Bauser (2002)..., which have been aimed to examine how living on a ghetto influences on the development of children, their academic results, as well as the development of delinquent behaviour among young people. This emergence coincides with the increasing concern of national political institutions, faced with the constant configuration of ghettos, as well as its reproduction and extension in different areas of the city (Lupton, 2003).

American studies, mainly using statistical sources and methods, have shown that the effect of the neighbourhood essentially influences the academic results of young people (Ellen and Turner, 1997); Gephart, 1997); Kohen, Leventhal, Dahinton and McIntosh, 2008), and their behaviour. However, there is no unanimous opinion regarding the results of some investigations, which do not clearly discern which effects are specific to the territory and which ones are individual and/or familiar influences. Likewise, there is no agreement concerning how to tackle the existing problems in those urban contexts (focusing specifically in one neighbourhood, incorporating the analysis of exogenous variables, educative variables, variables related to the socio-economic position, home, etc. (Sampson et al 2002).

This is understandable, given the differences in regard to welfare policies, social security systems, municipal supports, etc.

Sampson et al. (2002: 473, 474) add other constraints to this lack of consensus such as: the obsession to quantify the neighbourhood effect without comprehending it; the exclusive use of surveys, census and official databases to measure and quantify the neighbourhood effect; failure to consider the external mechanisms on the neighbourhood (welfare state, social policies...), which influence its characteristic and internal dynamics; nor to pay enough attention to the social networks, the social capital or the connection between the neighbourhood dynamics and the processes related to the school (school segregation, fleeing of middle-class from the public school, etc.). In addition to these limitations, it is worth noting one of the most important: the difference between the reality in Europe and North America, which are not comparable situations due to the multiple and relevant differences between the *American ghetto* and the

*sensitive urban areas* or *depressed areas* (Paugam, 2007 and Wacquant, 2007). This is understandable, given the differences in regard to welfare policies, social security systems, municipal supports, etc.

Despite these differences, the existing problems and needs on the depressed European neighbourhoods cannot be denied (Atkinson and Kintrea, 2001 and Skifter, 2002). The number of investigations concerning the neighbourhood effect has increased dramatically since the 1990s (for example, Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Atkinson and Kintrea, 2001; Buck, 2001; Anderson and Subramanian, 2006; Weber and Butler, 2007). This coincides with the increasing concern regarding the *closure* tendency experimented in certain areas of the major European cities, which results in a deep concern that the “enclaves” (in the Chicago’s School own words) might turn into “ghettos”.

However, beyond the differences here reflected, and the debates that still remain open, Anglo-Saxon and European literatures agree that living in a disadvantaged area reduces the life quality of its residents and their vital chances; especially for those groups of young people who belong to families that are at a disadvantage or in a social vulnerable position. The main mechanisms through which the environment operates are: the school, the peer group and, to a lesser extent, local formal and informal organizations.

Both, Anglo-Saxon and European literature have used several theories to study the neighbourhood effect and, from them, a number of different interpretative models have been identified. They can be summarize as follows: a) *collective socialization model* – which stresses the importance of adults within the neighbourhood as a reference to young people, as they establish a set of norms, attitudes, behaviours and expectation regarding employment and education-; b) *transmission model* – which focuses on the influence played by the peer group, especially in adolescence and youth, the reason being that is the peer group which constitutes the capital and social network of young people, dramatically affecting their values and behaviours -; c) *social disorganization model* – which highlights the lack of positive references, as well as the absence of norms and social control, as a situation that generates behaviour problems, mainly delinquency and “uncivilized” behaviour-; and d) the *institutional model* – which points out that the institutions (school, social assistance...), services and professionals working in these contexts, play an influential role on the perceptions, self-esteem and expectations of the residents. It shows that the social assistance programs as well as the work of specific social actors, encourage (consciously and/unconsciously) the assimilation of the dominant culture, the economic and social reproduction, and the configuration of social stigma instead of promoting dynamics of ascendant social mobility and social integration. Other works have also mention this process of stigmatization, such as Atkinson and Kintrea (2001), Forrest and Kearns (2001), and Bauder (2002), who refers to it as “cultural labelling”.

The present study is to analyze and discuss which aspects of four neighbourhoods (Trinitat Nova and Ciutat Meridiana in Barcelona; and Comasina and Sant’Ambrogio in Milan), considered socially depressed, influence in a significant way on the academic, working and leisure paths of young people (16-24 years old) who live in them. Considering the precedent North-American and European studies, as well as their constrains, this work will focus on understanding the phenomenon of the neighbourhood effects on

the selected units of analysis from the institutional model of analysis, with particular emphasis on the actors that comprise the social local fabric and the way in which them and the developed projects affect the young group.

## **Methodological Considerations**

This work aims to analyze the influence of the variable territory (neighbourhood) on the transition to adulthood for young people (16-24 years old) who live on the peripheral neighbourhoods of Barcelona (Trinitat Nova and Ciutat Meridiana) and Milan (Comasina and Sant'Ambrogio).

The research questions are: how does the neighbourhood affect the life paths of young people, through which mechanisms, and which aspects of those paths are drastically affected by the neighbourhood.

## **Objectives**

Given these research questions, the objectives for this research are threefold: a) to understand the neighbourhood effect, paying special attention to which aspects of the neighbourhood are more influential on the paths of young people; through which mechanisms such influence may be exercised; and which variables are dramatically affected by it; b) to comprehend which processes and paths are developed by young people living on the working class peripheral neighbourhoods of both European cities, during the urban restructuring that is now taking place; and c) to analyze what kind of social policies and specific actions are being carried out by the administrations and the socio-educative actors of the youth sector, both in Barcelona and Milan.

## **Hypothesis**

The working hypotheses are as follow:

- A) Vulnerability to processes of exclusion or social integration of youth, are not as dependent on the neighbourhood where one lives, but on the type of experiences in the fields of education and work, and, to a lesser extent, leisure.
- B) Young people who live on working class peripheral areas have lower expectations regarding education and working promotion.
- C) Young people who live on a neighbourhood with a weak associative fabric – measured by the number of associations and social institutions on the neighbourhood, as well as the number of interventions aimed to young people – tend to have a greater risk of social exclusion.

## **Analysis model**

To address these objectives and hypotheses, we have developed the comparative case study as a methodology model, which combines historical analysis, quantitative analysis, qualitative and comparative analysis.

Based on this analysis model, the research techniques used were the documental analysis and official sources such as the Census 1991 and 2001, statistical data provided by the City of Barcelona and the Commune di Milano, as well as other data collected in surveys conducted by official organizations on both cities. For example: *la Enquesta de la Joventut* (2007), conducted by the Observatori de Joventut de la Generalitat de Catalunya; and the *Terzo rapporto dell'Osservatorio Giovani della Provincia di Milano*, conducted by the Istituto de Ricerche Politiche e Socioeconomiche. At the micro level, a literature and statistical review of the study scenarios was undertaken – Trinitat Nova and Ciutat Meridiana in Barcelona; Comasina and Sant'Àmbrogio in Milan. To do so, we used census data and the continuous register. *Microdata* focus on very small territorial unities and collect longitudinal information and the interaction of various factors that influence individuals, such as age, genre, level of education, nationality, birthplace, etc. (Piergiorgio Corbetta (1999:310); Musterd, Ostendorf, Breebaart (1997:183); and Gordon and Monastiriotis (2006). Likewise, reports and surveys conducted by official organisms regarding youth issues on both cities have also been used in order to obtain comparative information between the young people on those neighbourhoods and the rest of the city, particularly concerning leisure and spare time. Information regarding neighbourhoods is presented around four variables of analysis – education, work, leisure and expectations for their future – regarding young people between 16 and 24, residents of those neighbourhoods.

To complement the quantitative analysis a qualitative stage has also been developed, consisting on semi-structured oral interviews with professionals<sup>1</sup>; structured written interviews with young people<sup>2</sup>, and systematic participant observation on a field diary.

### **Analysis of neighbourhood effect in Trinitat Nova, Ciutat Meridiana, Comasina and Sant'Àmbrogio**

On the European cities, problematic situations are usually connected to those neighbourhoods built on the outskirts of the city to satisfy the housing demand during the periods of economic development, as in the case of Barcelona (1960s) and Milan (1950s and 1960s). Trinitat Nova, Ciutat Meridiana, Comasina and Sant'Àmbrogio are the neighbourhoods that constitute our object of study, and they correspond to the profile of peripheral neighbourhood on a vulnerable situation, where there has been barely any integration; connection to other urban areas has been difficult; social equipments are deficient; and isolation and deprivation have been their main signs of identity. Likewise, they show more unfavourable scores than other districts on both cities, regarding key elements to social integration of young people, such as the educative level, unemployment rate, occupation sector and expectations for the future.

---

<sup>1</sup> We conducted an average of six interviews with professionals in each neighbourhood. The category of professionals includes: teachers, school directors and professionals of the education on the leisure time, as well as the heads of local social organizations. It also includes experts from the local administrations (aldermen, social assistants, etc.)

In the contemporary urban fabric, these neighbourhoods are fragile territories, and such fragility is related to the vulnerability of the social groups who live in them, along with the insufficient resources and services, the low quality of the housing and the fact that institutional intervention is not always enough or efficient.

### **The neighbourhoods**

An explanation to why the neighbourhoods in Barcelona – Trinitat Nova and Ciutat Meridiana -, and the *quartieri popolari* in Milan – Comasina and Sant’Ambrogio- have experimented an increasing vulnerability is the triggering of processes of invasion-succession. This spatial dispersion, which follows the class characteristics of the reception societies, has reinforced residential segregation and has contributed to the ethnic concentration in these neighbourhoods in relation to the average in Barcelona and Milan (Leal, and Domínguez: 2008; Bayona: 2005, and Zajczyk et al., 2005: 55). In addition to the residential and ethnic segregation, other effects of the processes of invasion-succession are, on one hand, “the escape” of people who have improved their living conditions and the encapsulating of those who are in a situation of greater social vulnerability; and, on the other hand, the increasing of a stigmatization feeling associated to living in that type of neighbourhoods and the tension, partly due to the fact that residents see the new neighbours as a threat to the limited social, economic and educative resources available (see table 1).

These four neighbourhoods do not evolve in line with the general trend of the cities to which they belong – highly competitive cities with significant international projection. Instead, they are transit areas, of invasion-succession, that so far host population in a situation of social vulnerability, which is explained by the low housing prices compared to other neighbourhoods in those cities. This concentration of disadvantage turns these neighbourhoods in urban unities vulnerable to experiment concentration process of risk and social exclusion, which also makes its residents in vulnerable subjects to live these processes, especially those collectives considered weaker, such as are young people.

**Table 1. Summary of the neighbourhoods**

Area characteristics	BARCELONA		MILAN	
	Trinitat Nova	Ciutat Meridiana	Comasina	Sant'Ambrogio
Localitation	8,1 km	10 km	4 km	4 km
History	Large Housing Estate, developed in the 1950s; recent partial demolition and construction of new public housing	Construction of private housing, between 1963-1967	City Council and INA-CASA for 1931-1952	Sant'Ambrogio I: City government and private company in 1965 Sant'Ambrogio II: public initiative and social housing Management company in 1970-1972
Social profile	8.110 inhabitants. Family structures: Mostly 1 or 2 people. Population: adult tending to aging	11.324 inhabitants. Family structures: 2 or 3 people. 16.3%: 5 or more people. Population: adult, with high presence of children and youth	6.739 inhabitants. Family structures: Mostly 1 or 2 people. Population: adult tending to aging.	5.174 inhabitants. Family structures: 1 or 2 people. Population: adult, tending to aging.
Strengths	Rehabilitation of homes and public spaces. Good communication. High levels of social cohesion and neighbours participation. Feeling of belonging to the neighbourhood. Neighbourhood movement consolidated. They are expecting new improvements with the project Urban II. Close to the hills and calm.	Initiatives carried by the City government as well as other administration on the territory. They are expecting new positive changes with Ley de Barrios 2/2004. Close to the hills. Good internal mobility and communication.	Upward trend. Significant emotional link between the neighbours and their neighbourhood. Neighbour Association: traditional and protest. Good climate of coexistence. Arrival of subway. New changes with the Progetto PublicBridge green spaces, and the oratorio	Good communication. Significant emotional link between the neighbours and the neighbourhood. Upward trend on the neighbourhood. <i>Calm and green spaces</i>
Weaknesses	Lack of service and infrastructure <i>Lack of spaces for meeting and socializing</i> <i>Weak sales network</i> <i>Lack of local services and leisure spaces and the terrain</i>	Complicated internal terrain. Lack of maintenance of public spaces. Lack of commerce and services. Low range of leisure Coexistence problems. <i>Feeling of abandonment and helplessness.</i> <i>Insecurity.</i>	Notoriety Lack of services Lack of leisure spaces for young people and seniors. <i>Lack of maintenance of public spaces.</i> <i>Insecurity.</i> <i>Distance from downtown.</i>	Lack of services and commerce Aging of population <i>Lack of leisure space for young people</i> <i>Feeling of abandonment and isolation</i> <i>Insecurity</i> <i>Dirtiness</i>

\* Note: those categories on in italics are the ones specifically mentioned by the young collective in those neighbourhoods.

### Young people

On the previous section we saw an overview of the neighbourhoods discussed here. Next, we will see how young people between 16 and 24 live in those four neighbourhoods. To do so, and following the proposed analytical framework, we analyzed the variables: education, employment, future prospects and leisure, using qualitative and quantitative techniques. These variables are analyzed from a comparative perspective between young people, professional and neighbourhoods, in order to highlight the differences

and similarities in the discourses, opinions, perceptions and behaviours of young people regarding the variables of analysis.

### *Education and academic expectations*

According to the census 1991 and 2001 the four neighbourhoods analyzed show a tendency to stagnation and decline on the level of education of young people (16-24 years old). The 2001 census shows how the observed trends in the four neighbourhoods are different, significantly lower, than the general dynamics of the correspondent cities. Major trends in Barcelona and Milan are to initiate post-compulsory studies once completed the required secondary education, as well as to attend university of first, second or third grade once the secondary post-compulsory education is finished. In contrast, in the analyzed neighbourhoods the level of education achieved by most of young people is the mandatory secondary education (*Scuola Media Inferiore*, in Milán; and EGB in Barcelona, previous to the reform introduced by LOGSE<sup>3</sup>). Once this phase is finished, it is significant the percentage of young people who abandon the school system and the reduced number of them who enters the labour market. A different formative path is professional training of higher level, a more consolidated strategy and predominant in Milan. This differs of the reality in Barcelona, where young people still prefer university studies upon completion of secondary post-mandatory education. However, data reflects how the number of students who finish university in these neighbourhoods is significantly below the average of the city, not reaching 1% of the young people between 16 and 24 who live in those neighbourhoods<sup>4</sup>.

Beyond of what data reflects, the testimony of young people collected through structured written interviews and the participant observation, reveals a diversity of perception and values showed by young people regarding education and school. These perceptions are important because they are significant elements guiding young people's choice to opt for one educational path or the other, or to abandon the educative system as discussed below.

Young people interviewed in the four neighbourhoods show different ways of understanding education, and these can be group in three broad groups: a) those who understand education as a way to design a better future in the long term (better salary, better working conditions and personal accomplishment); b) those who understand education as a medium-term preparation to go into the labour market, and c) those who see education as a waste of time that does not provide any benefit. Based on these assessments, young people imagine and decide about their academic paths.

In Trinitat Nova, 30% of the interviewees express that their first choice is to finish ESO and study a training cycle of medium grade. Meanwhile on the other three neighbourhoods the first academic choice is to finish the school phase they are currently on and go to university. In Ciutat Meridiana, this figure is 43.18% of the sample; although it should be mention that the majority of that percentage is young people from the

---

<sup>3</sup> In Nova Trinitat 43.48% and 39.96% in Ciutat Meridiana. Source: Census 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Source: Census 2001.

state-subsidized schools on the neighbourhood (66.6% of the interviewees from that school manifest their intention to go to university) and from outside the neighbourhood (where 88.8% of the interviewees express this intention). In the public high school of the neighbourhood – IES Pablo Ruiz Picasso – that percentage drops to 30.9% among the interviewees from that centre.

This data highlights a trend to school segregation between state-subsidized and public schools within the neighbourhood as well as in relation to the neighbourhoods surrounding it. The data collected in Comasina and Sant’Ambrogio show a similar situation, where the percentage of young people with high academic expectations is also concentrated in one type of institution, in this case the *liceo*<sup>5</sup> and the *oratorio*<sup>6</sup>, at the expense of those children who do not attend to that type of school or to that leisure resource. School segregation and leisure segregation are phenomena increasingly important in the analysis, especially regarding academic and work expectations.

Regarding Comasina, 43.3% of young people interviewed declared their intention to finish *scuola media superior* and enrol in university. Out of that percentage, 33.3% are young people enrol in the *liceo* and who participate regularly on the oratorio in Comasina. In Sant’Ambrogio, 46.6% of the interviewees declare their intention, like in the other neighbourhoods, of finishing *scuola media superiore* and enrol in university. In this neighbourhood, differences in expectations between those who attend the oratorio and those who don’t are not as accentuated as in Comasina. However, it still is a significant difference since the percentage mentioned above it consists of 26.7% of young people attending the Santa Bernardetta oratorio, and 20% who are not members.

Second and third most popular choices of young people in Ciutat Meridiana and Comasina are the enrolment in a formative training of high-level education (19.3% on the first one) and the incorporation to the labour market once the ESO or the *scuola media superiore* is finished (20% of interviewees in Comasina, and 4.5% in Ciutat Meridiana); while in Trinitat Nova such choices are represented by university enrolment (26.6%) and incorporation to the labour market once the ESO is finished (13.3%). Finally, in Sant’Ambrogio, 30% of the young people interviewed prefer to finish the *scuola media superiore* and start working, and 13.3% prefer to start working right away.

However, the testimony given by the professionals does not reflect this diversity of the young group regarding education. This highlights a more homogenous and generalizing discourse that revolves around the idea that there has been stagnation and a decline in the level of education of young people in those neighbourhoods. They believe that the main reasons for this decline are low motivation regarding study,

---

<sup>5</sup> The *liceo* is a category of educational institution (between 14 and 19 years of age) defined within the education system. Usually it is a type of secondary school. Among the Italian kinds of *licei* are: *liceo classico* (specializing in classical studies), *liceo scientifico* (specializing in scientific studies), *liceo artistico* (specializing in art subjects), *liceo linguistico* (specializing in foreign languages).

<sup>6</sup> It is a socio-educational youth center with a long tradition in the Lombardy region, especially in Milan. The oratorios pretend to evangelize from the leisure education and leisure.

low expectations for the future, truancy and school segregation (which entail the concentration of young people with higher educational and social difficulties in a specific type of school and, alongside the flee of students with better academic achievement and higher expectations for the future). Likewise, it shows an overwhelmingly pessimist discourse among the professionals regarding school performance and future chances for these youth.

#### *Work and expectations*

Along the same lines as the previous variable, unemployment rate for young people between 16 and 24 living in the neighbourhoods studied - Trinitat Nova, Ciutat Meridiana, Comasina and Sant'Ambrogio – is significantly higher to the unemployment rate of young people of that same age in Barcelona and Milan. According to the 2001 census, the unemployment rate of young people between 16 and 24<sup>7</sup> in Milan is 5.64%, while in Comasina is 12.848% and in Sant'Ambrogio is 13.66%. In a similar trend, in Barcelona the unemployment rate for young people in 2001 is 5.13% while in Trinitat Nova is 9.82% and 7.40% in Ciutat Meridiana.

The main sectors where young people from Milan work are: financial activities and community services (education and healthcare). In contrast, in Comasina and Sant'Ambrogio, the main employment sectors are manufacturing, commerce and construction. A similar trend can be detected in Barcelona, where young people usually work in the services sector and, eventually, in industry. However, young people in Trinitat Nova and Ciutat Meridiana work in the same sectors as the young people in the neighbourhoods in Milan: manufacturing, commerce and construction<sup>8</sup>.

Future expectations in the workplace are highly heterogeneous, as in the school. But, unlike the previous ones, in this case 100% of the young people interviewed have expressed the desire to have an occupation and a profession in the future. Of these, 16.29% expressed not know exactly what activity will they engage in the future.

In every neighbourhood, between 50 and 72% of young people interviewed prefer liberal professions over jobs in trades. The preferred liberal professions are the ones related to healthcare, education and aeronautics. Regarding the trades, the most prominent are mechanic or hairdresser.

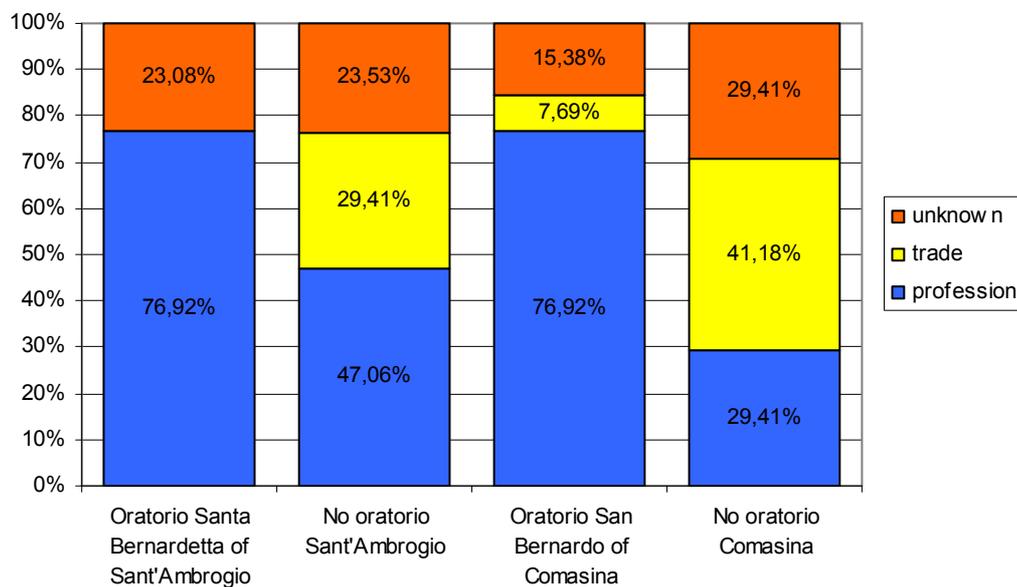
In the Milanese neighbourhoods, the tendency to prefer liberal professions over more traditional trades (carpentry, plumbing, etc.) remains, but the percentage of young people opting for these type of job is significantly higher than in the neighbourhoods from Barcelona that have been analyzed. Like in the previous variable, regarding the work expectations it also exist a tendency to concentration of young people with higher expectations (or preference for liberal professions) in the state-subsidized schools within and outside Barcelona; and in the *liceos* and *oratorios* in Milan.

---

<sup>7</sup> While interpreting this data, it is important to consider the significant number of young people of this age who are still studying and, consequently, are not part of the labour market yet.

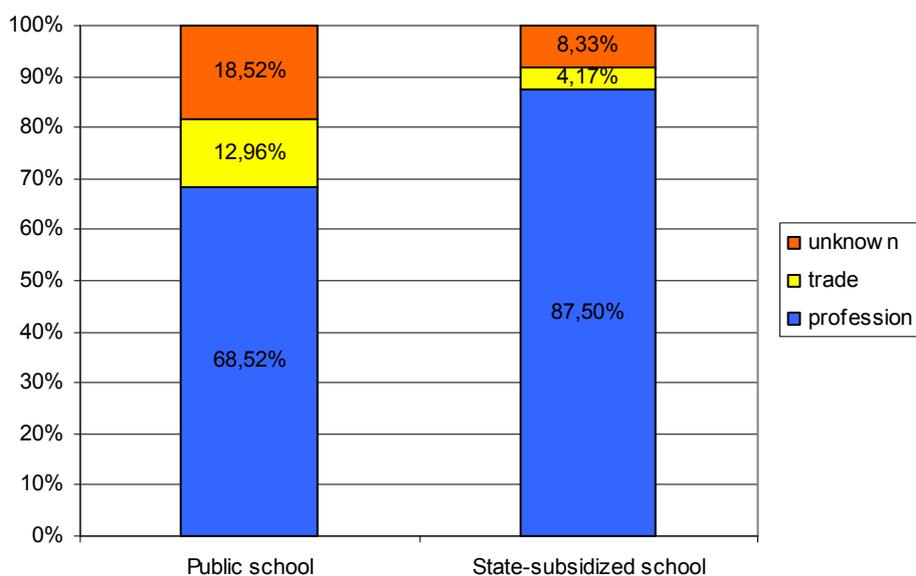
<sup>8</sup> Although since 2008 construction is one of the economic areas more affected by the economic crisis.

**Graphic 2. Expectations of young people from Comasina and Sant'Ambrogio (Milan) regarding their participation in oratorio during their leisure time**



Source: Thesis fieldwork, 2009-2010

**Graphic 3. Expectations of young people of Ciutat Meridiana regarding tipology of scholar center where they study**



Source: Thesis fieldwork, 2009-2010

The group of professionals working in the field of occupation training in the analyzed neighbourhoods express, in general, low expectations about the future for the young people living in those neighbourhoods. They are especially pessimistic regarding young people who left school without achieving the minimum level of education, with little interest to work and problems in complying with norms and schedules. From their discourses it is clear that this more vulnerable group, which worries institutions and local administrations where they work, is fairly broad in those neighbourhoods.

The analysis of data provided by this research reveals a diversity of positions and attitudes of young people towards education and work, being the group of young people with lower expectations and motivations significantly reduced in every neighbourhood. This contrasts with the homogenizing discourse expressed by the vast majority of professionals interviewed. Thus, the evidence questions the apathy and discouragement of young people to work and show that they have high career expectations.

Professionals working in the Milan suburbs show a lack of projects dealing with occupational training and job placement aimed specifically to youth. In contrast, in the context of Barcelona, many of the professionals interviewed agree that, on the one hand, the labour market projects carried out in Nova Trinitat and Ciutat Meridiana are not enough to meet the real needs of inclusion posed by young people and, on the other hand, sometimes are intended for youth groups in a situation of social vulnerability with serious problems of integration, which ends up stigmatizing the project and its receivers.

#### *Leisure time*

Of the sample, the 38.76% of young interviewees say that after school, they occupy free time going to a resource or socio-cultural entity and/or sports in their neighborhood. Out of this percentage, between 22.22% and 35.29% in Ciutat Meridiana, Sant'Ambrogio and Comasina state they participate in two or three different activities, while in Nova Trinitat this figure rises to 55.22%. The most repeated activities among young people in Milanese neighborhoods have been attending to the *oratorio* and sports clubs (mainly soccer). Along the same lines, youth in Nova Trinitat and Ciutat Meridiana refer to the participation in socio-cultural facilities such as the Centre Obert Ciutat Meridiana, the Casal de joves Llops of Taga, to a lesser extent the Civic Centre; and the local soccer club.

In the four neighbourhoods young people who in their free time attend to social and educational resources meet a particular profile. In the case of the Milanese neighbourhoods, young people are attending the *oratorio* are young people who are enrolled in *liceos*, who study to go to university, and have high expectations for the future. However, those young people who say they spend their time on the street are more responsive to the profile of youth who have low motivation to study, wanting to quickly enter the job market to meet their immediate financial needs, which expresses a hesitant or very low expectations for the future.

In the neighbourhoods of Barcelona we can also appreciate the tendency to segregation in the entertainment network, but in a complete different way. In Nova Trinitat and Ciutat Meridiana the facilities and the recreational and social resources are mainly used by the young people who attend public schools

in their neighbourhoods, who have learning difficulties, low motivation for study, and low academic and labour expectations. In contrast, young people who attend private schools outside the neighbourhood, experiencing upward school careers and expressing high expectations for the future are not usually part of the fabric of their neighbourhoods and neither have a significant presence in the local public space.

Those who say spend their free time at home, fit the profile of young Milanese people who study at an institute of higher professional training, with the intention of training for and get better at the job market. In Barcelona, such profile fits those students studying in public post-mandatory secondary schools in their neighbourhood with the intention of accessing university or studies of higher professional training to increase their chances for job placement.

Professionals working in the field of leisure time in these neighbourhoods, as in the other variables, express a perception and assessment of youth in these neighbourhoods highly homogeneous and generalizing. In Sant'Ambrogio and Comasina their speeches make explicit reference to segregation in the network of leisure, while in Nova Trinitat and Ciutat Meridiana they don't. According to themselves, in these neighbourhoods professionals design their offer based on the interests, concerns and needs of young people who are the users.

Beyond the differences in the social fabric in the area of leisure, in the four neighbourhoods examined there is evidence of a tendency to segregation in the after-school free time, marked mainly by the type of entity proposing the activity. This trend also shows effects of stigmatization of the equipment and its recipients and a "catapult" effect for young people with successful careers and higher educational expectations for the future.

During the weekend, there are also significant differences between the leisure patterns of some young people and others. Appreciated trends are equal in the neighbourhoods of Barcelona and Milan. Young people who often go to high schools and oratorios in the neighbourhoods of Milan, as well as those studying in state-subsidized schools outside their neighbourhoods and do not participate in local social or public space, often spend their free time downtown developing various activities (cinema, shopping ...). Those young people with learning difficulties and lower job expectations, sustain they spend the weekend in the neighbourhood, and time travelling to surrounding neighbourhoods. And finally, young people who opt for professional training because they value it as a form of insertion in the job market say they spend part of their after-school leisure time at home surfing the Internet, listening to music ....., weekends tend to go shopping with friends or relatives.

## Concluding Remarks

Considering the objectives and assumptions and the analysis model developed in this work, the main conclusions are:

Firstly, there was evidence that the young group living in these areas is highly heterogeneous and diverse, unlike what statistical analysis and the testimony of the professionals interviewed suggest. The influence of neighbourhood exists, but it is by no means decisive, nor as significant as previous studies have suggested. Instead, the effect of the neighbourhood on the analyzed sample is heterogeneous with different effects and different intensity among the young people. Therefore, we conclude that the influence of neighbourhood is an intervening contextual variable when analyzing young people and youth paths, but is not a decisive or homogenizing influence

Secondly, aspects of the neighbourhood we have found that exercise a greater influence on the neighbourhood effect are the institutions, whether formal, non formal and informal. Therefore, the results reaffirm the thesis set out by the model of institutional analysis, and corroborate the importance of school and social networks in the area of leisure and recreation in youth development, as well as the consequences of their interventions (whether intended or unintended results, as well as positive or negative).

Thirdly, the main mechanisms through which this influence is exerted through are the institutions, the professionals working in them and their offer. In other words, the trend toward segregation in schools and in leisure time is a form of concentration of disadvantage and persons in a situation of greater difficulty in certain institutions in the neighbourhoods, which also suffer similar effects due to residential segregation, processes of invasion-succession, and so on. Parallel to the concentration, flee processes of the better off groups usually take place.

When both processes take place in a neighbourhood, and therefore, its institutions, the effects of context gain a central role. They mainly undermine the perception of young people and their expectations for the future of those professionals who work with youth as well as the expectations of young people themselves. Likewise, they also play an important role in shaping the *mental barriers*, related to how to use and manage the city and the opportunities it offers, and to the construction of references and models of both adults and peers young people identify with and try to imitate.

The proposals on youth attention, especially in the context of free time, both in Barcelona and Milan neighbourhoods tend to accentuate the separation between profiles of young people, a segregation already initiated in schools. Institutional intervention, according to works such as Bauder (2002), is at risk of widening circuits of segregation and stigmatization - primarily through its programming and offer of

activities, which significantly influences the modelling, self-esteem of young people, and future expectations of young people and adults.

In summary, the study shows that it is necessary to take into account the variable neighbourhood in the analysis of young people, as well as in the study of youth social exclusion processes. The element of the neighbourhood that seems to need more attention is the institutional network already present in these neighbourhoods, the type of initiatives that are performed as well as how to develop them and the consequences they have.

## References

- ANDERSON, E.; SUBRAMANIAN, S.V.** (2006). "Explorations of Neighborhood and educational outcomes for young Swedes". *Urban Studies*, 11 (43): 2013-2025.
- ATKINSON, R; & KINTREA, K.** (2001). "Disentangling Area Effects: Evidence from deprived and non-deprived neighbourhoods". *Urban Studies*, 12 (38): 2277-2298.
- BAUDER, H.** (2002). "Neighborhood effects and cultural exclusion". *Urban Studies*, 1 (39): 85-93.
- BAYONA, J.** (2005). "Implicaciones demográficas y especiales de la internacionalización de los flujos migratorios: El caso de la ciudad de Barcelona". Comunicación presentada al *Congreso Internacional de Joves Investigadors en Demografia, en el marco de la XXV Conferència Internacional de Població, IUSSP, Tours, 1 de julio de 2005*.
- BROOKS-GUNN, J.; DUCAN, G. J.; KLEBANOV, P.K. & SEALAND, N.** (1993). "Do neighbourhoods affect child and adolescent development?". *American Journal of Sociology*, 99: 353-395.
- BUCK, N.** (2001). "Identifying Neighbourhood effects on social exclusion". *Urban Studies*, 12 (38): 2251-2275.
- CORBETTA, P.** (1999): *Metodologia e tecniche della ricerca sociale*. Bologna, Il Mulino.
- ELLEN, I. G.,& TURNER, M. A.** (1997). "Does neighbourhood matter? Assessing recent evidence". *Housing Policy Debate*, 8 (4): 833-866.
- GEPHART, M. A.** (1997) "Neighborhoods and communities as contexts for development". In, J. BROOKS-GUNN, G. J. DUNCAN AND J. L.ABER (Eds) *Neighborhood Poverty—Volume 1: Context and Consequences for Children*, New York, Russell Sage Foundation, (pp. 1-43).
- GORDON, I.; & MONASTRIOTIS, V.** (2006). "Urban Size, Spatial Segregation and Inequality in Educational Outcomes". *Urban Studies*, 1 (43): 213-236.

- JENKS, C.; & MAYER, S. E.** (1990). "The social consequences of growing up in a poor neighbourhood". In, M. MCGEARY (ed.): *Inner-city poverty in the United States*. Washington, DC, National Academy Press (pp. 111–186).
- KEARNS, A. & FORREST, R.** (2001). "Social cohesion, social capital and neighbourhood", *Urban Studies*, 38: 2125-2143.
- KOHN, D.; DAHINTEN, S.; LEVENTHAL, T.; & MCINTOSH, C.** (2008). "Neighborhood disadvantage: Pathway of effects for young children". *Child Development*, 1 (79): 156-169.
- LAGRANGE, H; & OBERTI, M.** (2006): *La rivolta delle periferie. Precarietà urbana e protesta giovanile: Il caso francese*. Milano, Bruno Mondadori.
- LEAL, J. & DOMINGUEZ, M.** (2008). "Transformaciones económicas y segregación social en Madrid. Ciudad y Territorio. Estudios Territoriales, 158: 703-725.
- MUSTERD, S.; OSTENDORF, W.; & BREEBAART, M.** (1997). "Segregation in European Cities: Patterns and policies". *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 2 (88): 182-187.
- MUSTERD, S., MURIE, A. I KESTELOOT, C.** (eds.) (2006). *Neighbourhoods of poverty: Urban social exclusion and integration in Europe*. Palgrave. London.
- PAUGAM, S.** (2007): *Las formas elementales de la pobreza*. Madrid, Alianza Editorial.
- SAMPSON, J.; MORENOFF, J.; GANNON-ROWLEY, T.** (2002). "Assessing Neighbourhood effects": Social processes and new directions in research. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28: 443-478.
- SKIFTER, A.** (2008). "Why do residents want to leave deprived neighbourhoods? The importance of residents' subjective evaluations of their neighbourhood and its reputation". *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 23 :79–101.
- WACQUANT, L.J.** (2007): *Los condenados de la ciudad. Gueto, periferias y Estado*. Siglo XXI: Madrid.
- WACQUANT, L.J.** (2008): *Urban outcasts: A comparative sociology of advanced marginality*. Polity: Cambridge.
- WEBBER, R.; & BUTLER, T.** (2007). "Classifying pupils by where they live: How well does this predict variations in their GSCE Results?". *Urban Studies*, 7 (44): 1229-1253.
- WILSON, J.** (1987): *The Truly Disadvantaged. The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Illinois, University of Chicago Press
- WIRTH, L.** [1928]. "The Guetho". Dins, (ed) (1956): *Community life and social policy* . Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.