ICT and Knowledge Deficiency

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INTRODUCTION

The Region of Calabria (Italy), included between the Tyrrhenian and the Ionian Seas, may be considered the Peninsula of the Italian Peninsula. It is linked with the Massif of Pollino, on the borderline with the region of Basilicata.

For all its length it is crossed by a ridge of 250 Km. of mountains and it is surrounded, between the two seas, by a coastal perimeter equal to 19.1% of all the Italian one.

The Region discloses some processes of economic, social and cultural decay, together with a series of unexpressed potentialities which point out some possible development approaches. In fact, in this geographical area, there is a concentration of manpower with a high level of education (Fantozzi, 2001). On the economic plan the fragilities of the production processes are evident, especially those of the industrial sector, composed of small businesses isolated by the reference production systems (Frabboni & Pinto-Minerva, 2013). The labour market registered a long period of steady growth of the unemployment rate: in fact it went from 19% in 1994 to 28% in the year 2000 and, in those same years, there was also a decrease in the employment rate, from 36.5% to 31.6% in 2003, thus reaching the memorable record of more than 40% (ISTAT data, August 2013). This data increases further if attention is paid to the Youth aged between 15 and 34, with a leap of 5.5% if compared to 2012. Moreover, a high percentage of migrants and young people who drop out of school (25.5% of the school-age population) is observed.

Even though the Region has registered an increase in the level of education of most of the Calabrian Youth, this growth coexists with some categories of the young population who drop out of school at the end of the intermediate-level education (Licursi, 2002). And so, whereas, in some areas of the region, there is an increase in the education, in other areas a consistent social category remains in a static condition, with regard to education (Calarci, 2014).

There are numerous families, who are resident in the suburbs of the mountains of the region (such areas cover 41.8% of the territory), who do not have the economic resources for using technological devices at home and, consequently, also any Internet connection for their children. The expansion of the modernization has, actually, emphasized the problems of social and political-institutional control in a Region where the contexts of inequality multiply.

In this respect, therefore, a new educational inequality stands out inside the Youth's world, since those who live in the above mentioned areas are not part of the "digital natives," a definition which is attributed to the new generations (Isidori & Vaccarelli, 2013).

BACKGROUND

The co-existence of particular social phenomena, inside a territory which has not wide proportions, as Calabria and, more generally, the South of Italy do not have, causes a remarkable educational inequality in a framework which is already poor from an economic point of view, thus facilitating the birth of processes of cultural and social exclusion which mostly concern the new generations (Calì, 2014).

Such situations highlight how in the school new differences are looming. These differences are produced not only by the greater or minor capacity of control, the mastery or not of cultural resources, the quality of the relational resources, the exposure to processes of social decay, the level of social vulnerability, but also by the place of residence of the Youth in territories, which are economically poor and socially isolated. In these territories some families, with scarce economic resources, cannot grant the technological and information tools "necessary" for a kind of essential training to their children. The

Calabrian school lives a dual situation: on the one hand, there are the cities and the biggest towns which offer wide opportunities to the Youth to access to the technology, in order, for them, to learn and study in a cosmopolitan dimension. To the other hand, there are some wide areas of the territory, defined as areas "at a high risk of migration and social exclusion" (Council Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving, 2011), which preclude the Youth from having the possibility to access to knowledge.

The difference among the young people who have access to technology and those who are precluded the possibility to access has become so marked so as to cause a new inequality, considering that the regular access to the Network concerns more than 50% of the population in almost all the Western countries. For many authors (Di Maggio et al., 2004; Van Dijk, 2005) the diversity in the uses of the technologies represents a form of inequality which blends in those which pre-exist, thus increasing, in some cases, their range. Among the differences that the Youth show, the subject of the digital skills has emerged. The use of the expression has acquired more importance if compared to the other denominations such as digital skill, digital literacy, ICT skill, information literacy, etc., after the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (2008), in which the definition "skills," compared to that of knowledge and abilities, indicates "the proven ability to use knowledge, personal, social and/or methodological abilities and capacities, in employment or learning situations and in the professional and/or personal development; the skills are described in terms of responsibility and autonomy" (the European Parliament and the European Council, 2008: 111/4). Such skills were described as new forms of literacy (Buckingham, 2007; Eshet-Alkali & Amichai-Hamburger, 2004; Warschauer, 2002). Moreover, the European Parliament has included the digital competence among the eight key skills with which training and education in Europe have to face the challenges of globalization and gives the following definition of it: "the digital competence consists in knowing how to use, with familiarity and critical spirit, the technologies of the information society (IST) for the work, the free time and the communication" (the European Parliament, 2006). The Youth are the greatest users of the new media, therefore they represent that bracket of the population which may mainly feel the effect of the dynamics of inequality in their use (Gui & Micheli, 2001). Unlike the language-use of some trendy conceptualisations, underlining the familiarity that the Youth would have with the ICT, the case of Calabria and of the geographical areas at an intense migration process and at a risk of social exclusion (definition which is ascribable, from a geographical point of view, to the southern Regions: Campania, Basilicata, Calabria, Puglia and Sicily), disclose some remarkable gaps among the Youth, especially with regard to the critical dimension (Livingstone & Helpser, 2007; Magnini & Perrotta, 2011). The results point out that reflecting upon the digital skills of the Youth is an urgent challenge for the school.

The school which takes charge of filling this gap of the students has an educational mission; this mission is appropriate to it because of the need of preparing the most disadvantaged students to know how to understand the social complexities and the difficulties in envisaging the never consistent developments, that innovation usually implies (Bauman, 2002). The necessary recovery actions were rapidly and broadly activated by the schools of Southern Italy, in order to recover the deep changes caused in the private and professional life, in the social actors and in the contexts in which these social actors live and work. From here in the urgency for some didactic paths proposed to generations of young people who grow in a milieu which is deeply technology-soaked, in which the ICT become some instruments for thinking, representing, communicating. Adaptation does not mean a technological "transplant." It is necessary an educational pedagogical renewal of the ways of thinking and of the cultural and cognitive paradigms, capable of interpreting the transformation of the cognitive styles which the information medium is the bearer of. It is necessary to focus on a not secondary aspect, that is: what the school teaches is to be worth being taught, not for the value that it has in itself, but for the educational value which distinguishes it. The educational action must have the fundamental task of guaranteeing the development of the ability to understand, devise and disapprove arguments and proposals, in order to give relevance to one's own experience and also in order to defend from messages which are, sometimes, disguised of truth and value.

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