

Adolescence from a Social Science Perspective

The text examines adolescence not as a universal biological transition, but as a social construction that varies according to historical and cultural context. Originating in the complex societies of the late 19th century, it represents a multidimensional transitional stage between childhood and adulthood. In Western societies, this process is not a linear sequence, but rather the outcome of an interaction between the young person's identity transformation and the social context. Adolescence requires addressing biological, cognitive, psychological, and moral challenges, representing a process of profound metamorphosis. Scientific literature offers several interpretative lenses: the physiological approach focuses on the developmental stages of puberty; the psycho-sociological perspective emphasizes the delicate separation from the family to the peer group; symbolic interactionism, starting from Cooley's concept of the self-reflexive "Self", sees identity as a mirror of social dynamics and socialization. Ultimately, adolescence requires a unified approach, capable of integrating the various dimensions of development to fully understand the complexity of this vital stage.

Keywords: Adolescence, Identity, Socialization, Uncertainty, Self.

Introduction: Definitions of Adolescence

What adolescence is is a matter of definitions that vary from culture to culture. Generally speaking, adolescence is the stage of life between childhood and adulthood. It is a period of development in which young people move from a state of dependence to a state of independence, autonomy, and maturity, from being part of a family group to belonging to a peer group, until reaching the independent state of adulthood (Mabey and Sorensen, 1965).

In Western society, the transition from childhood to adulthood, through adolescence, is much more than a linear sequence of change. Adolescent development does not follow the same path for everyone, but is the result of an interaction between the formation of one's identity and one's social context. It is a multidimensional process that involves a gradual transformation – or metamorphosis – of the child, who, as he or she becomes an adult, transforms into a new person. It is important to note, however, that the transformations involved in adolescence vary depending on the culture: for example, in some cultures, certain childhood roles remain similar into adulthood, while in other cases, even very young children routinely perform certain work-related tasks for the well-being of the family. Furthermore, in some cultures, the number of years dedicated to education before starting work is relatively limited. In these cultures, the transition from childhood to adulthood tends to be less demanding (Mead, 2007).

We could better describe adolescence if we defined it as a "social construct", whose origins can be traced back to the late 19th century in the most complex societies. The Industrial Revolution and the profound social and economic changes that followed meant that a large number of young people found

1 themselves in a situation they had never experienced before. Particularly in the
 2 bourgeois world, the increased importance of education until advanced ages and
 3 long periods of non-productive apprenticeship created a prolonged period of
 4 preparation for adulthood. Adolescence is, therefore, a process that extends over
 5 a significant period of life, but its duration is variable, and some young people
 6 move through it much more quickly than others. It presents many challenges,
 7 requiring them to address physiological, biological, psychological, and social
 8 changes. For these challenges to be met adaptively and effectively, significant
 9 transformation processes must occur within the young person, which must be
 10 analyzed by considering a series of inevitable biological, cognitive,
 11 psychological, social, moral, and spiritual stages.

12 The literature on adolescence, particularly extensive in recent years, offers
 13 many definitions, each of which favors a particular perspective. Each theoretical
 14 model possesses a certain explanatory potential, which is not always easily
 15 integrated with others. From a physiological perspective, for example, pubertal,
 16 somatic, and neuroendocrine changes take center stage during adolescence,
 17 typically described as a succession of developmental sequences. A similar
 18 concept of developmental stages has also played a central role in psychological
 19 sciences, and most contributions focus on growth phases. Psychoanalysis does
 20 not deviate from this vision and describes adolescence as a life cycle in a
 21 maturational sequence. The psycho-sociological perspective, however, is
 22 different, having given centrality to the transition from family to peer group,
 23 highlighting the difficulties in assuming adult roles. At this stage, socialization
 24 processes and forms of peer aggregation take on a critical role in facilitating the
 25 transition or decreeing its failure (Melucci and Fabbrini, 1992).

26 Attempts to synthesize the various contributions to reach a more unified
 27 approach that helps us understand a multidimensional phenomenon such as
 28 adolescence have multiplied and converge on the concept of the "Self", which
 29 Cooley (1902) conceived as the self-reflective capacity of the subject, a mirror
 30 that reflects the social dynamics of interaction. For Cooley, the "Self" is a quality
 31 that derives from the socialization process that takes place within the family.
 32 This thought gave rise to the movement of symbolic interactionism, a theoretical
 33 orientation that has established itself in sociology and social psychology,
 34 especially in the United States, since the first half of the twentieth century, which
 35 emphasizes the formation of individual identity in the process of socialization.
 36 For Mead (1967), the "Self" is a reflected entity that each person constructs by
 37 appropriating the point of view of others who are important to them, while
 38 Goffman (1961) emphasizes how the "Self" does not simply originate from the
 39 processes of interaction between the "I" and "others", but also from the type of
 40 significant structure that is organized around it, that is, from the situation. The
 41 social situation is the generative fabric of the "Self", the context within which
 42 identities are established and maintained through a process of social negotiation.

43 The English sociologist Musgrove (1964) considers adolescence as a
 44 contemporary invention similar to that of the steam engine. In 1765, Watt
 45 invented the steam engine, while Rousseau conceived adolescence in 1762. With
 46 the invention of adolescence, society found itself faced with two fundamental

problems: how and where to place it in the social structure and how to make its behavior coincide with what is expected. Melucci and Fabbrini (1992) also talk about the invention of adolescence by adults, while Berger PL and Berger B. (1975) consider the term “adolescent” to be inappropriate, since the phenomenon of youth is broader than that of adolescence, but overall this statement can also be applied to youth. In other words, the industrial revolution produced an institutional structure that gives space to youth.

Liquid Adolescence

Contemporary adolescents exhibit certain specific characteristics that scholars identify with terms such as “patchwork” personality (i.e., an artifact consisting of the sewing together of different pieces of fabric, generally but not exclusively cotton, to create a personal or household object, with or without geometric patterns), “postmodern”, “palimpsest”, or “liquid” personality. Let's examine this last definition. Among the various theories that refer to the social and psychological condition of the postmodern adolescent, we find the definition of “liquid adolescence”, derived from the various analyses of Zygmunt Bauman, a Polish sociologist, who used the concept of “liquidity” in his numerous studies. This definition has been taken up and applied to postmodern adolescence by various authors, such as Casoni (2008).

We find ourselves in an era in which theorists of social development – be they sociologists, philosophers, historians, or otherwise – signal a paradigm shift in the constitution of subjectivities, both individual and collective, which is often defined through the contrast between the terms “modern” and “postmodern”. Within the spectrum of various critical theories, which in some way reference the postmodern description of the current social and human condition, the metaphor of “liquidity” coined by Zygmunt Bauman (2003, 2006, 2009) has been chosen to relate it to adolescence. Let's see why. The sociologist compared the concepts of modernity and postmodernity to the “solid” and “liquid” states of society, respectively. According to Bauman, in modernity, morality is the coercive regulation of social action through the proposition of universal values or laws from which no reasonable person can escape. However, we cannot speak of a single postmodern morality because the end of the “grand narratives” of the twentieth century, that is, ideologies, has made the claim to absolute truth impossible. Thus, we find ourselves faced with a landscape inhabited by many coexisting moralities. Hence the metaphor of “liquidity”, contrasted with the social organization that is constituted through solid and solid principles of value. Postmodern man is deprived of a morality, a collective container, and, consequently, an absolute and unique code of social behavior. Uncertainty is his defining characteristic. Reading Bauman, it is easy to compare his description of the subject to the condition of contemporary adolescents, as the sociological specimens most indicative of the ongoing process of transformation. The condition of adolescence, due to its intrinsic characteristics of vitality and precariousness, clearly signals the impact of socio-cultural transformations on

1 individuals. In this scenario, adolescence becomes the target population for
 2 investigating future social developments in their entirety, thus a sort of indicator
 3 of the “discomfort of modernity”. The crisis regarding the certainty and solidity
 4 of social and identity organizers therefore seems to define the condition of
 5 adolescence.

6 Plebani (2003) sees the problem of constructing youth identity as closely
 7 related to the historical and cultural moment in which it is considered. In the
 8 postmodern era, in which the foundations of traditional truth are in crisis, in
 9 which reality takes on an irrepressible character of contingency, while at the
 10 same time offering a surplus of opportunities, new forms of individuation and
 11 identification emerge, with a major shift in the ethical sphere.

12 Vegetti, Finzi, and Battistin (2000) see uncertainty as the term that best
 13 defines this period of life: adolescents’ behavior is uncertain, as are parental
 14 roles, reference values, the temporal boundaries of adolescence, and even the
 15 possible psychological interpretation of it. The weakening of consolidated
 16 certainties, on the one hand, has led to an increase in the individual's sense of
 17 precariousness, but on the other, it has transformed the field of belonging, no
 18 longer characterized by exclusivity, but by plurality and mobility. This applies
 19 to belonging in both the private and social spheres. However, when uncertainty
 20 increases beyond a certain threshold and almost becomes identified with
 21 everyday life, the traditionally understood capacity for planning, that is, the long-
 22 term “life plan”, is inevitably compromised (Leccardi, 2005). The social
 23 acceleration and climate of uncertainty that characterize the “second modernity”,
 24 in addition to challenging “long-term projects”, also tend to modify the temporal
 25 structure of identity, influencing the processes of construction of the “Self”.

26 Recent research (Crespi, 2002) highlights how young people are
 27 predisposed to react to the lack of certainty by developing responses that
 28 neutralize fears about the future, clearly expressing a tendency to embrace
 29 unpredictability. The new generations, therefore, seem to take into account the
 30 possibility of even sudden changes in direction and to develop responses in “real
 31 time”, reacting to the unexpected. The speed and social rhythms of late
 32 modernity with which young people live allow them to “seize the moment” and
 33 address opportunities as they arise. For the new generations, the uncertainty of
 34 an unplanned future implies a predisposition to identify possible solutions from
 35 time to time. The innovative aspect that seems to characterize the new
 36 generations is represented by the “ability to accept the fragmentation and
 37 uncertainty of the environment as an inalienable fact, to be transformed into a
 38 resource thanks to a constant exercise of awareness and reflexivity” (Leccardi,
 39 2005, p. 57).

40 41 42 **Socialization and Adolescent Identity**

43
44 Sociology’s interest in the topic of adolescence is more recent than that of
 45 other disciplines; only recently has the term “sociology of childhood” been used,
 46 referring to the branch of sociology that deals with childhood and adolescence.

1 At least initially, sociology seemed to follow in the footsteps of psychology, but
 2 sociological studies conducted tended to separate the different phases of the life
 3 course and examine the specificities of each. Adolescence thus becomes a
 4 different and discontinuous state of life compared to adulthood, characterized by
 5 its own cultural specificity. From the earliest sociological studies, it was noted
 6 that adolescents are characterized by not having a permanent place within the
 7 structure of the social division of labor: “youth is a social entity that cuts across
 8 almost all social classes” (Cavalli, 1980, p. 520). This social entity, typical of
 9 modern societies, is made up of those who have completed compulsory
 10 schooling and are not yet firmly established within the structure of the division
 11 of labor. In this diminished tension towards adult status, adolescence thus
 12 emerges as a condition, as a situation of waiting for an unimaginable outcome in
 13 which “unpredictability depends on the practically unlimited number of possible
 14 outcomes” (Cavalli, 1980, p. 524), contrary to what happened previously, when
 15 for the majority of young people “the transition between childhood and
 16 adulthood was a gradual process without interruption, adult roles were learned
 17 and experienced early, almost always through the imitation of family or parental
 18 models” (Cavalli, 1980, p. 520). In this regard, “aside from the variability of the
 19 phenomena in which it manifests itself, the youthful condition remains a
 20 suspended process, hesitation, absence of finality and identity, but also an often
 21 erratic search for finality and identity” (Cavalli, 1980, p. 526). The consequences
 22 of the emergence of this new social entity have been assessed differently, but
 23 from the earliest studies there has been considerable agreement in emphasizing
 24 that adolescence fails to be effectively integrated, either in terms of values or
 25 social structure, in the absence of profound cultural and social transformations.
 26 Throughout the 1980s, young people and adolescents were variously defined as
 27 the “silent generation” (Inglehart, 1983), the “everyday generation” (Garelli,
 28 1984), the “generation without fathers or teachers” (Ricolfi, Sciolla, 1980). Even
 29 in the 1990s, they were still referred to as the “ecstatic” or “invisible generation”
 30 (Diamanti, 1999). Thus, this strand of literature aims to emphasize the lack of
 31 role models in which young people find themselves living and the resulting
 32 attitude of flexibility and attention to the present, along with the exploitation of
 33 social relationships.

34 The tendency to make reversible choices, the loss of a sense of the future,
 35 and the complicit relationship with an increasingly collaborative family during
 36 the transition to adulthood are all signs of an adaptation strategy to the uncertain
 37 situation young people find themselves experiencing. Therefore, caution is
 38 needed in negatively characterizing the condition of adolescence. Invisible,
 39 silent, and ecstatic young people are the reflection of parents and educators who
 40 don’t know how to be adults, who have lost the responsibility of their adult roles
 41 (Diamanti, 1999). Rather, the condition of adolescence is the product of the spirit
 42 of our times, incapable of valorizing and promoting adolescents’ abilities and
 43 skills, of making them social subjects (Ferrari Occhionero, 2001). These
 44 positions highlight how the lack of clear and transparent expectations lies behind
 45 the youth issue and the negative image of young people, rather than generational
 46 conflict, which is instead part of the mechanism of generational dynamics

1 whereby young people are very clear about the rules they transgress and are
2 aware of what they are getting into (Cavalli, 1985).

3 Given this interdependence, some sociological thought is geared toward
4 highlighting the positive elements inherent in adolescence. According to Moro
5 (1989), adolescents are growing citizens, individuals with developmental
6 responsibilities, but at the same time holders of rights with respect to which the
7 adult world should adopt an attitude of promoting participation.

8 Despite the observations made on the possibility of understanding children
9 as holders of subjective rights that can actually be exercised in their own right,
10 there is now a general tendency to consider the centrality of the child and the
11 adolescent in the processes of socialization through the introduction of the idea
12 of the minor as an active subject capable of proposing transformations in the life
13 of society and the vision of childhood and adolescence as social constructions
14 (Prout, James, 1997; Corsaro, 2003; Favretto, Scivoletto, 2003).

15 The renewed interest in childhood and adolescence is marked by the
16 emergence of a new approach to study. While until a few years ago, children
17 were viewed in sociological studies as objects of care or recipients of educational
18 processes, recently the landscape has been enriched by the position that
19 considers children and adolescents as active subjects. Indeed, sociological
20 thought has viewed childhood and adolescence as closely linked to the family
21 and socialization practices.

22 As highlighted in the English literature, on this topic it is now possible to
23 envision a theoretical space in which children can be positioned as active social
24 beings, capable of constructing and creating social relationships, rather than
25 cultural objects as in classical socialization theory (Prout & James, 1997). The
26 outcome of this shift is a conception of childhood and adolescence as a set of
27 actively negotiated social relationships through which the first years of human
28 life are constructed. Behind this shift lies a departure from the positions
29 expressed by functionalists and an embrace of a phenomenological perspective
30 that enables the study of society by starting from the living conditions of social
31 subjects, rather than by their division into groups or categories. The subject is
32 inserted into a broader context of social relations that conditions them but, at the
33 same time, provides meaning to their actions. The subject is therefore not the
34 direct result of social structures and roles; nor does acknowledging a social
35 character to the subject and the limits of the decision-making field within which
36 they operate mean considering them a sort of puppet manipulated by external
37 forces. Thus, socialization can be defined as “the process through which the
38 helpless child gradually becomes a self-aware, prepared person, capable of
39 effectively using the specific capabilities of the culture into which he or she was
40 born” (Giddens, 2000, p. 30). Central to this definition is the idea of considering
41 individuals’ ability to act consciously to influence their own life context, and
42 thus socialization loses its connotation of “cultural programming”, through
43 which the child passively absorbs stimuli from the surrounding world.

44 We need to think of the image of the social actor as subject to social
45 demands and capable of renegotiating roles and social conventions, that is,
46 endowed with an identity that is simultaneously social, defined by recognition,

and personal, defined by the expression of individual preferences (Sciolla, 2000). In this regard, Dubar (2004) discusses social identity as the articulation of two transitions: one internal to the individual and the other external between the individual and institutions. These transitions contribute to establishing a sort of identity tension, resulting from the attribution of identity by institutions and the active incorporation of identity by the individual. In this way, identity becomes the subjective and objective outcome of the various socialization processes that, together, construct individuals and define institutions. Identity configurations, the product of strategies implemented to reduce the gap between the two transitions, constitute relatively stable but evolving forms: “social identity is not transmitted from one generation to the next; it is constructed by each generation based on the categories and positions inherited from the previous generation but also through the identity strategies implemented in the institutions that individuals experience and which they contribute to concretely transform” (Dubar, 2004, p. 148). Through this definition, social identity, while maintaining a fluid and negotiable character, demonstrates a strong anchoring that prevents individual disorientation and the loss of social ties (Favretto, 2004).

Therefore, starting from studies on socialization, it is possible to affirm that identity is the product of a strategy: it is a process of self-organization and the construction of a life plan in which the individual must fulfill two tasks. The first, cognitive, task is linked to knowing how to locate oneself within one’s social and cultural system; the other concerns the commitment to continually choosing between different alternatives in different fields of choice (Tonolo, 1999). From the individual’s perspective, the need to process the conditions of uncertainty in which one lives and transform them into resources for action is increasingly pressing, precisely because the cognitive map handed down to us by previous generations and the institutions that confirm it are completely inadequate for the new demographic structure of the population and the new needs and behaviors that derive from it. Uncertainty arises from the fact that not only can one not identify stably over time, but at any given moment one cannot completely identify with just one of the parts and, therefore, must choose (Melucci and Fabbrini, 1992). The risk, in this case, is the spread of individualistic attitudes and behaviors aimed at the pursuit of happiness through consumption, the collection of situations, the culture of self-realization with the consequent proliferation of ethical codes, behavioral pluralism and, in general, an increase in the scope of individual freedoms (Bauman, 1998). However, it is necessary to remember that identity and the “Self” arise only in part from an individual process of adaptation and are instead linked to social actions and collective practices: they are rooted within a collectively produced culture (Corsaro, 2003).

At this point, two categories emerge through which to analyze the condition of youth: that of reciprocity and that of time. As Abrams argued, in evaluating the historical and sociological relationship between the individual and society, “we must concentrate all our efforts on freeing ourselves from dualistic thinking, on escaping the allure of the belief that the individual has an essence different from that of society, or, conversely, that society and the individual constitute

separate realities” (Abrams, 1983, p. 277). If society is understood as a historically produced configuration of interdependent individuals, “socially organized time becomes the common element in which social structure and identity are mutually generated” (Abrams, 1983, p. 280). Time constitutes the dimension that traverses, connects, and unifies society and the individual, understood as different levels of a single human existential reality. Social time is a network of rules, and individuals, through the development of strategies, transform social time into individual time. The ways in which this transformation occurs are contained in individuals’ ability to manage their own time, that is, to transform social time into a living space within which to construct their own subjectivity (Cavalli, 1985). “The analytical starting point here is biographical time, understood as that unitary temporal dimension that emerges as the outcome of the processes through which individuals relate to the past, live their present, and look toward the future... Personal identity, just like life time, is in fact the outcome of the dialectical relationship between permanence and changeability, between continuity and discontinuity, between past, present, and future” (Leccardi, 2009, p. 76). Young people live their life phase in a social climate in which they have the right to choose who they become. A phase marked by the difficulty of identifying points of reference that help them escape uncertainty (Leccardi, 2009). “In any case, the choice of these paths is never separated from the history that each person has behind them and from their concrete social belonging” (Smelser, 1987, p. 67).

Conclusion

In closing, looking at adolescence means pausing to listen to the irregular heartbeat of an era that can no longer tell us with certainty who we should be. The research I undertook was born not from a cold desire to classify, but from a profound urgency to better understand the often lost yet incredibly alive face of today's youth. To achieve this, I didn't seek comfort in sterile tables or arid graphs but rather let myself be guided by an approach I would call “human-scale”.

I reread the great authors – sociologists, psychologists, thinkers – as if they were speaking not to an academic audience, but to a parent, a teacher, or anyone who finds themselves looking into the eyes of an adolescent every day without fully understanding what’s happening behind that gaze. I deconstructed the definitions we were taught in school, removing the patina of time: adolescence is not a bump in the road, it is not an “illness” to be cured, nor is it an annoying antechamber to adulthood. It is, more simply, a delicate moment in which life tries to find a shape, often stumbling, just as it happens to all of us. The method I followed was to intertwine the voices, as suggested by the studies of Prout and James (1997) and Corsaro (2003) on the capacity of young people to be active social actors. I used the lens of symbolic interactionism – drawing on Cooley (1902) with his idea of the self as a mirror, on Mead (1967), and on Goffman’s (1961) ability to read the social situation – because it reminds us that none of us

1 is an island. We are the reflection of those we have encountered. The “Self” of
 2 an adolescent is not a pre-installed program, but a picture painted every day
 3 between the fear of not being enough and the burning desire to belong.

4 nalyzing Bauman's “liquid society” (2003, 2006, 2009), I tried to empathize
 5 with the vertigo these young people experience: they live where certainties slip
 6 away like sand. It’s not their fault if today they seem more precarious; it's the
 7 most honest response to a world that runs too fast to build foundations of
 8 reinforced concrete, a condition of uncertainty also highlighted by authors such
 9 as Leccardi (2005). In this analysis, I also wanted to give space to the weight of
 10 biographical time. I observed, following the work of Cavalli (1980, 1985), how
 11 for today’s youth the linearity of the past has shattered. What I found is a sort of
 12 “gentle resistance”: adolescents are not apathetic, but immersed in a constant
 13 negotiation of the present. Their way of seeking stability is an act of courage:
 14 they attempt to inhabit the moment without the safety net that previous
 15 generations took for granted. This research, which also engages with Dubar’s
 16 (2004) perspectives on identity as a tension between the individual and the
 17 institution, has taught me that fragility is the necessary condition for true growth;
 18 it is through the creaking of old structures, as recalled in the contributions of
 19 Melucci and Fabbrini (1992), that the new can germinate.

20 This reflection has led me to a heartwarming realization: we must stop
 21 looking at our children as if they were “objects” to be educated, straightened out,
 22 or protected at all costs. They are human beings undergoing their own
 23 metamorphosis. Recognizing their right to be protagonists – not because we
 24 “have to” out of civic duty, but because it is profoundly right – is the only way
 25 to lend them a helping hand, in line with Moro's (1989) argument regarding the
 26 child as a citizen. Adults are no longer the holders of an absolute truth to be
 27 handed down as a legacy. Our mission is gentler: to be witnesses, facilitators, a
 28 safe haven in a storm that they, with a strength we often don’t recognize, are
 29 learning to navigate in their own unique style.

30 The beauty of this journey lies in understanding that there is no “lost
 31 generation”. There is only a generation that is trying, with means different from
 32 ours, to find meaning in its existence. The uncertainty that frightens us so much
 33 today becomes flexibility in them, a surprising ability to adapt to the present, to
 34 seize the moment, to transform the “I don’t know” into an opportunity to change
 35 direction. My hope, at the end of this analysis, is that we can look at adolescence
 36 with new eyes: no longer as a problem to be solved, but as a promise in the
 37 making. When we look at a teenager, we should see not what they still lack to
 38 be a “full adult”, but everything they already possess: vitality, the ability to
 39 dream against all logic, the courage to be, every day, someone new. In this sense,
 40 adolescence is the clearest mirror of our humanity: fragile, certainly, but capable
 41 of a resilience that never ceases to amaze. We are all, in some way, still
 42 adolescents in the deepest sense of the word: constantly evolving, searching for
 43 meaning, negotiating our identity, and learning how to inhabit the world.
 44 Adolescence is not merely a passage between childhood and adulthood, but a
 45 condition that reminds us that becoming is a lifelong process, and that the

possibility of change remains one of the most fundamental aspects of being human.

Bibliography

- Abrams P (1983) *Historical Sociology*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Bauman Z (1998) *La solitudine del cittadino globale*. Milano: Feltrinelli.
- Bauman Z (2003) *Liquid Love: On the Frailty of Human Bonds*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bauman Z (2006) *Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bauman Z (2009) *L'arte della vita*. Roma-Bari: Laterza.
- Berger PL, Berger B (1975) *Sociologia: un'introduzione biografica*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Casoni B (2008) *Adolescenze liquide*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Cavalli A (1980) La gioventù: condizione o situazione? *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia* 21(4): 519–534.
- Cavalli A (a cura di) (1985) *Il tempo dei giovani*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Cooley CH (1902) *Human Nature and the Social Order*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Corsaro WA (2003) *Le sociologie del bambino*. Milano: Madonini.
- Crespi F (2002) *Introduzione alla sociologia*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Diamanti I (1999) *Ha fiducia? La generazione invisibile*. Milano: Il Sole 24 Ore.
- Dubar C (2004) *La socializzazione. Sopravvivenza e costruzione dell'identità*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Favretto AR (2004) *L'incertezza del sé. Identità e socializzazione nell'epoca postmoderna*. Roma: Carocci.
- Favretto AR, Scivoletto G (2003) *Sociologia dell'infanzia*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Ferrari Occhionero G (2001) *I giovani del terzo millennio*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Garelli F (1984) *La generazione della vita quotidiana*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Giddens A (2000) *Fondamenti di sociologia*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Goffman E (1961) *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. New York: Doubleday.
- Inglehart R (1983) *La rivoluzione silenziosa*. Milano: Rizzoli.
- Leccardi C (2005) *Incerteza e nuovi stili di vita*. Roma: Donzelli.
- Leccardi C (2009) *Sociologia del tempo*. Roma-Bari: Laterza.
- Mabey R, Sorensen J (1965) *The New Radicalism*. London: Secker & Warburg.
- Mead GH (1967) *Mind, Self, and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mead M (2007) *Coming of Age in Samoa*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Melucci A, Fabbrini A (1992) *L'età dell'oro: adolescenti tra sogno ed esperienza*. Milano: Feltrinelli.
- Moro AC (1989) *Il bambino è un cittadino*. Milano: Mursia.
- Musgrove F (1964) *Youth and the Social Order*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Plebani M (2003) *Identità e postmodernità*. Roma: Carocci.
- Prout A, James A (1997) *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood*. London: Falmer Press.
- Ricolfi L, Sciolla L (1980) *Senza padri né maestri*. Bari: De Donato.
- Sciolla L (2000) *Sociologia dell'identità*. Roma-Bari: Laterza.
- Smelser NJ (1987) *Social Structure and Public Policy*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Tonolo G (1999) *Adolescenza e identità*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Vegetti Finzi S, Battistin A (2000) *L'età incerta. I nuovi adolescenti*. Milano: Mondadori.