



Public Lecture Series

Friday, 24 May 2024

**‘Like Swimming in a Swimming Pool’: The Temporal Complexity of
Mobility in a Multilayered Approach**

Valentina Cuzzocrea, University of Cagliari

17:00 – 19:00

This talk will be held in person at the University of Neuchâtel, Av. Du 1er Mars 26, room B41, and on WEBEX ([link](#)).

Abstract

This presentation seeks to reconstruct the complexity through which structured mobility, namely mobility which is funded predominantly for young people within educational or employment policies, operates for young people along different dimensions for them significant.

Within certain boundaries, structural mobility is granted legitimation and receives institutional support. In certain circles, structured mobility is positively seen as a 'training', as a safe exercise which may bring outcomes eventually leading to migration, whilst offering confidence to temporarily leave one's 'comfort zone'. A mobile participant interestingly stated that structured mobility is like 'swimming in a swimming pool', pointing to the specific functions it addresses but also suggesting a difference with swimming in the wild sea (Cuzzocrea and Mandich, 2024). Not every episode of mobility, moreover, leads to further mobility, nor migration.

Drawing on and expanding from conceptualisations recently developed in looking at multiple Erasmus experiences (Krzaklewska and Cuzzocrea 2024; Cuzzocrea and Krzaklewska 2023), this presentation discusses the need to develop a more general multilayered approach to mobility, zooming out and in on several dimensions of life and showing, in particular, the temporal complexity of mobility which may or may not develop into migration. It does so playing around three different levels:

- An individual level, whereby young people exercise through mobility their need to explore and experiment as an aspect inherent to their transitions to adulthood;
- The level of lifestyles, whereby moving may be considered as a trait of youth, as opposed to migration, where the experiential element is marginal and the destination land is where adulthood (and the transitions associated with it) is supposed to reach full realization.
- An institutional level, more or less generously providing support to short term mobility.

Empirically, the paper draws on 40 interviews with visual elicitation conducted with young people who had experienced mobility through the European Solidarity Corps (ESC), in the context of the research project 'Mapping Youth Future' funded by MIUR. My attempt to develop a multilayered approach to mobility which recognizes the complexity of temporalities involved will highlight dynamics involved in the mobility- migration nexus that may otherwise remain unnoticed

About the Speaker

Cagliari, Italy, where she teaches 'Sociologia', 'Risk, Uncertainty and Social Agency', and various units in the Doctoral School 'Research and Social Innovation'. Her main interests on researching youth are articulated in several directions: youth mobility, but also youth collectivities on and off line, youth and work, youth and biographical temporalities, youth participation, youth and the future, youth policies. She has collaborated to a number of projects and networks, and coordinated the European Sociological Research Network Youth and Generation in 2015- 2017; she has also been a Marie Curie COFUND fellow at the Max Weber Kolleg in Erfurt on a project on space and time for youth. Her last books are in Italian: 'Se non qui, dove? Città, giovani e appartenenze', Egea (With E. Cois and F. Bertoni, 2023) and 'Giovani e immaginari. Rappresentazioni e pratiche', Meltemi (with E. Ilardi and A. Lovari, 2022). She has published widely internationally; her work on youth mobility in particular has appeared in Higher education, Current Sociology, Mobilities, Journal of Youth Studies, Sociological Research Online, City and Society. She has contributed with chapters looking at mobility to the collections Handbook of Children and Youth Studies (eds by J Wyn, H Cahill and H. Cuervo, Springer 2023) and The Palgrave Handbook of Youth Mobility and Educational Migration (edited by D. Cairns, Palgrave MacMillan, 2023).