

Chapter 8

Technologies for the Safety of Adolescent: The “Between School and Family Project” Case Study

Daniela Passaro

Suor Orsola Benincasa University of Naples, Italy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The focus of this paper is to describe a case concerning the key role of security technologies to observe, describe and some way record teenagers' behaviors and social action at school, at home and in the daily life as a whole. A kind of security “public eye” to protect/control them is pivotal especially according to some High School Policies in Italy aimed to cancel each “blind spot” or “black hole” from the youngsters' daily life to facilitate cross double checking among parents, relatives, social networks and teachers. In Italy the deviance of youth is increasing and the crime cases involving very young boys, like baby gangs and teenagers working for organized crime are growing rapidly. Among robberies, theft, and drug pushing the juvenile criminality in the Campania Region (an Italian Southern Region) continues to represent a critical point in this society and is unfortunately increasing. The family plays a key role and inside it often baby gangsters, whose parents are completely unaware of what is happening in their children's lives. “Between school and family” is a project that aspires at tracing a connection between the school and the family thanks to the influence of new technologies and the way in which they influence the interpersonal relationships. What will be, for example, if every school place a fingerprint reader?

SCENARIO

In the recent years, the phenomenon of child deviance increased and assumed rather severe proportions and characteristics such as the growing involvement of juveniles in criminal organizations.

The concept of deviance changes according to the changing realities in which it is contextualized.

The Italian traditional juvenile deviance has gradually experienced a “qualitative leap” with forms of exploitation and organic integration of children into criminal organizations, including those similar to the Mafia. The link that connects the attraction of criminal models of young people

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with the socio-economic deterioration and/or the lack of future perspectives has also been noted, which pushes many children to act more and more criminally in the hope of leaving the condition of marginalization and lack of identity in which they live (Boffi, 1981, p. 24).

If, as Becker says, “*the deviant is the one on which the operation of labeling was successful*” (see: Ciappi & Becucci, p. 73), then the deviance takes the substance of the attributes of a negative or marginal status.

Goffman states that the term stigma is generally associated with a purely derogatory attribute, or better, “*the attribute is a stigma when it produces profound discredit*” (Goffman, 1963, p. 3).

Crimes carried out by minors in Italy are continually rising: robberies, rocks from overpasses, rapes, beatings. In short, a real war bulletin. Most become part of gangs, when they should be in the classroom, and society does not know how to deal with this real emergency.

Particularly in Campania (an Italian Southern Region), juvenile crime continues to be a critical point of today’s society and is unfortunately growing strongly.

One might consider that behind this violence, for some young men, reigns the fear of not equaling his peers, of not being “cool.” Teens today live in groups and their appearance within these groups is essential. Money, success, the latest cell phone or PC, make them feel like they’re winners.

This is because for a teenager who is part of a gang, the sense of inferiority is unbearable. This, then, could inspire in the young man the idea of being accepted by the others at any price. In addition to the school and the family, society should give its support to make new rules and propose positive models for children.

The fact that nowadays we lost important values, such as family, respect of authority, respect for others, does not help, especially if there is also a change in the way of life: a model of individualistic life gains ground more and more,

which pursues success, money, and power. It is no longer important to be strong, but merely appear to be strong. Today’s adolescents are growing up in a society where everything is ‘owed’ to them. Perhaps they grow up too fast and are too spoiled and pampered, living under a bell of glass which keeps them far away from the outside world. Believing everything is acceptable certainly does not help young men.

Even the statistics suggest a sharp increase – in recent years – of the propensity towards violence among young people.

According to police criminal statistics between 1999 and 2006 (from <http://www.bj.admin.ch/bj/it/home/themen/kriminalitaet/jugendgewalt.html>) the number of minor suspects for crimes of violence has increased continuously and significantly (personal injury: an increase from 760 to 1525; threat: increased from 405 to 869). Also, the number of rulings (from http://www.bj.admin.ch/bj/it/home/dokumentation/medieninformationen/2007/ref_2007-06-29.html) handed down increased significantly in the same period for young people who committed violent crimes (from 1241 to 2268) (simple injuries: increased from 288 to 638; threat: increased from 148 to 317). The field experts are unanimous in believing that the number of serious acts committed by young people has increased. The problem should not be minimized: youth violence has reached a level that worries most of the population.

The causes of youth violence are many. Many factors increase the risk: a lack of supervision by parents, an incoherent educational style, school difficulties, belonging to a group of young people prone to violence, a social disadvantage, the cultural walk of life or lack of integration of young foreigners. The influence of violent images, pornography, and violent behavior by young people has not yet been clarified conclusively. To try to curb this rampant phenomenon, we must focus on prevention starting from schools and families. It is from there that the fight against juvenile delin-

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