

# XI<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Developmental Psychology

*under the aegis of the European Society  
for Developmental Psychology*



The European Society for Developmental Psychology

## PROGRAMME



August 27-31, 2003  
Catholic University, Milano, Italy

# 431-25°-S EMOTIONS, FEELINGS AND THOUGHTS IN RELATION TO DIFFERENT TYPES OF TRANSITION DURING ADOLESCENCE AND YOUNG ADULTHOOD

**Convenor:**

Ciairano Silvia

Department of Psychology, University of Torino, Italy

**Tap Pierre**

University of Toulouse-Le Mirail, France

**Discussant:**

Hipolito Joao

Universit  Autonome de Lisbonne, Portugal

The papers of this symposium investigated, from different point of view, the complexity of the mental states, in terms of thoughts, beliefs, projects, but also of the feelings and emotions and coping strategies related to a set of developmental transitions, from sexual activity during adolescence to the choices of the professional orientation or the academic path, to, finally, the transition from university to adult life. Both positives and negatives psychological conditions were shown in relation to the perception of a transition as more or less easy to face. At the same time the important role of external opportunities and constraints were considered. Generally speaking the adolescent and the young adult seemed to face a transition with a greater psychological well-being and less discomfort when a set of particular circumstances was realised: particularly when individual resources were available (such as the capability to adjust own affective moods to the particular situation and to individuate more precise projects for the future) or when the context offer more opportunities, such as the possibility to take part in meaningful activities. However, these factors appeared to work in interaction instead of separately one from the other. Besides, gender and age differences were shown in perceiving a transition as more ore less difficult.

## The sexual transition of the adolescents: emotions and feelings, reasons to experiment with sex and reasons to protect themselves

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## Facing the choices of school orientation: the stress of lyceum students

Esparb s-Pistre Sylvie, Lacoste Serge, Tap Pierre

Equipe Psychologie Sociale du D veloppement et de la Sant , University of Toulouse-Le Mirail, France

## Self-Esteem and Aspirations in Smokers and No-smokers' Students

Hipolito Jo o, Nunes Odete, Tap Pierre

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## To choose or not to choose: coping strategies and the choice of the university

Sestito Laura, Menna Palma, Parrello Santa

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## Transition to adulthood: the moderator role of personal beliefs, temporal definition and future projects for the current satisfaction of youth

Boggero Antonella, Rabaglietti Emanuela, De Martini Davina Paola

Department of Psychology, University of Torino, Italy

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ABSTRACTS



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## The sexual transition of the adolescents: emotions and feelings, reasons to experiment with sex and reasons to protect themselves

Molinengo Giorgia\*, Graziano Federica\*, Jackson Sandy\*\*

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The challenge of sharing with persons of the opposite sex strong affective relationships represents one of the main developmental tasks that the adolescents have to face (Coleman, 1989; Coleman & Roker, 1998). This task is related to more or less great psychological well being and social adjustment because it involves both continuity and discontinuity in the developmental paths (Schulenberg, Maggs, Hurrelmann, 1997). In particular, recent researches (Bonino, Ciairano, 1999, Brooks-Gunn, Paikoff, 1997) showed that: i) the involvement in sex might be realised through different patterns; ii) these patterns are related to specific functions (i.e. showing to be an adult, or experimenting with new sensations and feelings); iii) the involvement in sex is not always related to a greater well-being. The goal of this research was to investigate (a) the emotions and the feelings that the adolescents would have experimented within different relational settings of sex, (b) the possible reasons to have sex, and (c) the reasons to protect themselves. Data were used from a sample of 211 adolescents aged from 14 to 19 years. The questionnaire *I and my feelings about sex* (Bonino, Ciairano, Jackson, 1999) was used to collect the data. The first results showed the central role of the adolescent capability to select appropriate relational condition for sexual activity and to control his/her affective moods.

## Facing the choices of school orientation: the stress of lyceum students

Esparb s-Pistre Sylvie, Lacoste Serge, Tap Pierre

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The research presented here concerned the school/vocational process of orientation (such as the choices of direction and professional projects) as a potential sources of stress for the lyceum students, attending a traditional course from the second to the final class, and considered its psychological correlates. More specifically the interest is in the stress perceived by the students facing compulsory choices of orientation. The

adolescent, confused in his/her choice and professional project with personal or external constraints, lives a condition of stress. The sample was constituted by 2184 adolescents (1194 girls and 990 boys), aged from 12 to 20 years, that were administered the Scale of Stress by the University of Toulouse (Echelle Toulousaine de Stress, ETS) and a questionnaire on the difficulties of orientation. The first analyses showed that the 86.5% of the students were stressed by orientation and were worried with one or more subject perceived as particularly difficult. More precisely 1748 were identified as perceiving a strong discomfort. Age and gender differences in relation to the characteristics and the consistency of this stress were analysed.

#### **Self-esteem and aspirations in smokers and no-smokers' students**

Hipolito João, Nunes Odete, Tap Pierre  
Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa, Portugal

Departing from Carl Rogers hypothesis that the real self esteem depends on the difference between Real Self and Desired Self (Ideal Self: aspirations), but also on the short distance between them, the authors present a research realized with an hundred university's students and based on the analysis of the distance of the Desired Self and the Real Self (using Rogers's scale proposition). It considers gender, age, smoking or not smoking, heavy smoker or not. The analysis allows the evocation of the interaction between the evaluation of the self and the tensions linked with the aspiration of realization. The authors discuss yet the methodological problems issue from the presence of both positives and negatives items in self evaluation's scales.

#### **To choose or not to choose: coping strategies and the choice of the university**

Aleni Sestito Laura, Menna Palma, Parrello Santa  
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The present study starts from previous researches exploring the problematic aspects of becoming adults, especially in relation to the temporal perspective and the difficulties in projecting (Aleni Sestito, Parrello, 2000, 2001). The modalities used by young people to face the developmental tasks are interpreted as coping strategies and the stressor is identified in the choice of the university (Zani, Cicognani, 1999). The research moves from the hypothesis that finishing high school represents a peculiar turning point in the process of transition because the passage to adulthood is demanded in an obligatory and extrinsic way: the young person is requested, rapidly and within time determined by others, to make relevant choices perceived as irrevocable, formulating a life project and redefining the self in terms of his/her future image. The research has two main goals: a) analysing the coping strategies using both the Scale of Coping by the University of Toulouse (Esparbès, Ader, Tap, 1993; Depolo, Guglielmi, 2000) and a narrative instrument (analysis of the semantic inventory, Reinert, 1986), b) investigating the dynamics of the process of choice, through an autobiographic interview (Paolicchi, 2002). 200 subjects, attending the last year at high schools of various orientation are considered. Data analysis is currently still in progress.

#### **Transition to adulthood: the moderator role of personal beliefs, temporal definition and future projects for the current satisfaction of youth**

Roggero Antonella, Rabaglietti Emanuela, De Martini Davina Paola  
Department of Psychology, University of Torino, Italy

Within contemporary western society, the transition to adulthood appeared longer and more complex than in the past (Crockett, Silbereisen, 2000), the tasks to be faced, such as acquiring economic independence and constructing a new family, are generally less clear and definite (Scabini, 1998). The main goals of the present study were: a) to describe the temporal definition of a sample of young adults (if one person defines himself/herself as still an adolescent or already an adult), the projects about different dimensions (such as academic, economical, or relational) and the life events individuated as the markers of adulthood, controlling for gender, age and type of university course; b) to investigate the relations with the satisfaction for the present condition and the personal beliefs about own capabilities to realize projects for the future. The sample is constituted by 60 young persons of both gender, aged from 19 and 35 years, and is balanced for the type of the university. Data were collected through partially structured individual interviews. Preliminary results showed a relation between satisfaction for the present condition, beliefs about own capacities, high standard projects for the future and having the possibility to experiment themselves through meaningful activities, such as a work linked to current studies. However, the transition to adulthood is generally viewed as quite far in the future.







