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Doctoral Dissertation:

The orientation towards the common good:  
an exploratory study.

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## Abstract

The objective of this dissertation is to analyse what kind of orientation/guidance in relation to the common good people express in public ethics contexts, what kind of individual differences there may be in those orientations and other individual aspects which may be connected to the different orientation expressed.

To do that in the first study it is presented a **practical method for assessing the different orientations to the common good in social situations**, through the construction of the Orientation to the Common Good Questionnaire (OCGQ). The instrument is based on story dilemmas – designed to elicit moral judgment and to invoke a conflict between the different orientations to the common good hypothesised – using a mixed-method that links quantitative and qualitative data – matching recognition and production measure. **The questionnaire displays an high inter-rater reliability**, showing an efficiency of the coders training system used and proving the questionnaire to be a practical measure that can be scored reasonably quickly and reliably.

The second study, in order to explore the validity of the instrument, explored the relations of the orientation to the common good with **socio-moral reasoning** – intended as the main reference construct for the measurement – and some **demographic theoretically relevant variables**. The OCGQ achieves acceptable association with Socio-moral Reflection Measure-Short Form (SRM-SF) and it was found a difference in orientation to the common good in favour of women. The findings underline socio-economic status as a prerequisite for the development of a more mature orientation to the common good, but not sufficient for the development of a higher level of common good.

The third study – referring to both positive moral functioning and negative moral functioning – tested the relationships between different kinds of value, civic participation and civic moral disengagement and orientation to the common good expressed.

Relying on Schwartz's theory on basic human values, the results confirm **as key personal values both self-transcendence** (universalism and benevolence) and **self-enhancement values** (power and hedonism). The findings related to **civic moral disengagement** – consistent with the expectations based on Bandura's moral disengagement theory – confirm the more people deactivated their internal moral control the more they denied high level orientations towards the common good. Finally, also **civic engagement** showed a positive correlation with orientations to the common good.

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## **CHAPTER I**

# **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

### **a. CONTEXT AND ISSUES.**

This dissertation project stems from the author's experience as a psychologist in the Guardia di Finanza, referring to two crucially important aspects for the institutional purposes of such a police organization. On one hand, the soldiers' moral understanding of the complex situations they are called upon to manage, and on the other the ability of officers to constantly direct their actions for the good of the whole community. In the selection process, the Organization is strongly aware of the need that new entry human resources are driven by a strong intrinsic orientation towards the common good, evidencing an ability to "perceive that the collective identity predominates over that individual".

The central point of such issues is the importance, for society and for each individual, that adults – especially those who hold specific institutional roles – be morally concerned about public social questions, not only in their immediate environment, but everywhere else in the world, when events, decisions, and policies carry moral consequences.

It is possible to start with two converging concerns (Blasi, 2009).

First, in addition to the domain of family and friends, people are also engaged in the world of work and in the public issues of their communities and of the entire planet. The person's field of action is of crucial

importance. While there is too much attention paid to daily human interaction (frequent kindness within the family and with friends; courtesy with strangers; charity towards the beggar; mutual help, honesty, and trust) there seems to be widespread indifference or inattention to the moral implications of the ways society at large and social institutions operate, and of the ways each of us functions in society. From this point of view, it seems undeniable that there is an excessive restriction of morality to one's private world or to strictly interpersonal issues. In the present work, therefore, the focus is on people compared "not – exclusively – with groups of people who know and care for one another", but with the "more faceless group of which we are all members – our community, our nation, even our species" (Batson, 1994) (**Figure 1**).

**Figure 1.**





Second, many such situations, from a moral perspective are complex, ambiguous, cognitively and motivationally difficult. Therefore, the daily life of ordinary mature adults is filled with situations and encounters within the public sphere (related to the world of work, and social, legal, and political institutions) that present opportunities, and sometimes the necessity, to make moral judgments and engage in moral choices.

Consequently, the following interrelated aspects are of fundamental importance in such situations (Blasi, 2009):

- **awareness of the moral implications of one's adult roles** – in one's employment and profession (including issues of professional ethics), in one's community (as a citizen), in one's society and in the world, the mature adult must be able to abstract social roles and their functions from the individual characteristics (including the moral views) of those who occupy such roles (and from the personal relationships one has with such people);
- **understanding of the common good, and of its primacy over individual interests** - the person (within the broad shared social context) is steadily called to "common good" reasoning, reflecting on the dialectical relationship between diverse co-existing interests and establishing what is the most important belief.

**The concept of the "common good" and what people identify as the "common good" is, in fact, of central importance** for this doctoral dissertation. There is no clear cut definition. Rather, **the concept requires that a person not only sees that there is "good", but that such good is "common" or rather "good also for the other" (more or less proximate), and therefore represents a good "also for himself" as a participant in the group or society.** In this sense, then, the concept of common good is closely connected with the **awareness (or not) of the person in his playing a role, as a citizen, in the broad social context.** So, as has been explained in detail in the following

sections, **the concept of “common good” expands and restricts considerably in relation to the social structures to which the person refers and which includes himself** (his family, his restricted community, his nation and, in a broader sense, the global supranational community). From such an understanding of common good and from the awareness of participation in the large public good as a moral responsibility (Narvaez, 2010) derives part of the sense of citizenship and relative civic obligations.

#### **b. SIGNIFICANCE.**

The identification of these issues is reflected in a multiplicity of reasons present in the wider debate and are essentially due to three main aspects. **First, the evidence of an increasingly complex world which requires the individual to constantly deal with increasingly diverse “public” situations. This involves the making of increasingly more difficult and articulated choices at the individual level and therefore requires a “morally mature” subject.** The understanding of public ethics situations collides with this great complexity resulting from the effects of both modern technology and globalization. It is true in fact that *“the world*

*faces unprecedented challenges that require mature moral responses if widespread death and destruction are to be avoided, never before has the world faced global peril of the complexity and magnitude of today including climate instability, unsustainable population growth, economic systems, and resource use” (Narvaez, 2010). Now we live in a globalized society in which the action of one group affects that of another group on the other side of the world. Consequently, the defining of a mature moral functioning for today’s world may require incorporating not only the effective moral practices of the majority of traditionalist societies around the world (Fry, 2006), but also skills required for global citizenship (Cogan, 1997), to ensure that humanity continues to flourish (Korten, 2006).*

**Bauman (2001) is the author who more than anyone has tried to analyse this complexity**, underlining that nowadays people are faced with increasing identity issues related to the different social levels and contexts in which they, as individuals, are simultaneously inserted at an individual, local and global level. Moving from the well-known studies of Hans Jonas, he (Bauman, 1993) pointed out that *“the range of every consequences of the actions have exceeded by far the moral imagination of the authors (...) the morality we have inherited from the pre-modern time is a morality of proximity and so unfit in such a society in which every important action is a distance action”*.

**Second, the peculiarity of the Italian situation:** sociological analysis (and others) seem to indicate a general lack of public ethics that highlights, in particular, the primacy of the familistic and the individual over community logic; reference is made to “amoral familism” as “*the inability of the villagers to act together for their common good or, indeed, for any end transcending the immediate, material interest of the nuclear family*” (Banfield, 1958) – and to the recent studies of Paul Ginsborg that, from the point of view of historical and sociological reflection, focused on the institution of the family in relation to the state and civil society, in which he stresses that “in Italy today” we see the “prevalence of vertical organization between patron and client over the horizontal between citizens. In this way the relationship with the “powerful” becomes fundamental as it is this which guarantees some form of access for you and your children; hence a bond of gratitude and servitude. All this has nothing to do with citizenship, rights and democracy” (Ginsborg, 1998);

**Third, the increasingly explicit social demand for an “ethic of the common good” and, in particular, the training and orientation of young people to the common good in their daily activities.** Halstead and Pike (2006) emphasize the centrality of morality to citizenship and Bull (2006) clearly states this interrelationship of morality and citizenship: “*civic education is certainly a kind of moral education in that it promotes and supports a public morality, that is, agreement about the principles*

*governing citizens' relationships and obligations to one another".* Plus there are differences in emphasis, as citizenship educators tend to be less interested in personal morality and more in public morality (Sehr, 1997; Bull, 2006). Furthermore, it is clear that character education includes methods compatible with the need for promoting autonomous critical thinkers (Halstead & Pike, 2006) who feel a moral obligation to serve the common good (Bull, 2006). By the time the broad social issues become relevant to the adult, his formal and informal moral education has already terminated, and many adults are unprepared to acknowledge new moral responsibilities (Blasi, 2009).

### **c. QUESTIONS.**

Starting from the context and the issues further identified, the dissertation is addressed to an important challenge concerning the questions: *“How do people respond to, evaluate, and attempt to resolve the moral issues that arise in such public contexts?. How do people perceive complex public ethics situations that involve the common good?”, “What is important for people in such situations?.*

Moving from these more overarching questions, the specific goal of this research is to **study what kind of orientation/guidance in relation to the common good people express in these public ethics contexts, what kind of individual differences there may be in those orientations, and other individual aspects which may be connected to the different orientation expressed.**

#### **d. THEORETICAL ASSUMPTION AND METODOLOGICAL CHOICES.**

##### **1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.**

In dealing with such issues it was necessary to make some starting choices.

First, it is clear that in complex public ethics situations the orientation to the common good can derive from two main characteristics: a) structural aspect, that supposes the person builds fundamental concepts, such as social relationships, society, and the moral criteria used to orientate in such circumstances; these social and moral criteria are organized, for each person, according to a logic, or a mental structure (Piaget, 1965; Kohlberg, 1976); b) **specific aspect**, based on the internalization of prevailing cultural norms, opinions, etc.; the social-learning perspective (Torney-Purta, 2010).

**These characteristics, of course, are not incompatible.** All people have a logic but it is not the only one, since people are constantly exposed to beliefs (through internet, TV, newspapers, etc). In this sense, then, not all decisions are based on logic but are often based on beliefs used automatically by the individual. The choice made for the present work has been pretty clear, deciding to refer specifically to the structural aspects.

A second fundamental assumption – strictly consequential to the first – is relative to **the active role of the person in building his own internal logic, having regard to the fundamental interaction of the person with reality.** The structural approach, in fact, looks at the person composed of several structures – differing from the “**elementaristic**” **approach** that refers to the single disconnected element – with a cohesion and internal



logic. One could not make sense of, or even imagine, this complex development process of internal structures, without recognising **the essential role of society and culture**. It is incontrovertible that individuals are born into an already constituted culture characterised by specific moral beliefs and values. What is not obvious is **how the role of sociocultural factors should be understood, how does a person typically end up adopting his or her society's values or how does society use its power on its members**. Such questions are relevant from the present work and for the comprehension of the common good in public ethics situations. It is necessary to start from a clear idea of **the active role of the person in such a process of internalization**, having an idea about the relations between roles and cultural norms and self-concepts. In relation to that question it is possible to refer to three different approaches:

- the anthropological and sociological point of view (Vygotsky, 1978), according to which **the logic and the structures of the person fully reflects the structure of society, being an ideal isomorphism between individual consciousness and culture** – society provides all of the contents (cultural benefits and values) and the impetus (educational efforts in various forms). Internalization does not simply consist of transferring external meanings into a pre-existing individual consciousness; rather,

**internalization is conceived as the very formation of individual consciousness, its form and contents, reflecting the form and structure of society, without an active involvement by the person;**

- the **constructive perspective** of Piaget and Kohlberg that underlined an **active intervention of the person in external experience assimilation processes**. According to this approach each person builds his own structures (so that each one builds them in a different way from the other) but such **construction is unconscious**, so that it is not possible to think of freedom of the people beyond the structures. Such an understanding of internalization and assimilation, too, have rendered socialized individuals incapable of engaging in any real social critique and therefore incapable of being autonomously motivated to pursue social and moral projects;
- finally, there is a point of view that looks to morality as a characteristic of the person rather than reasoning (Taylor, 1989) and that looks to **the sense of self as essential to explain moral commitment and the translation of moral beliefs into action** (Blasi, 1980; 1983; 1993). From such a perspective, **over the unconscious activity there is a conscious reflection that consists – substantially – in the option for the person to question their own structures and logic** (Blasi, 2001).

**The present dissertation refer to the importance of the last theoretical option.** Following Blasi (2001), in fact, it is argued that a critical autonomous morality is only possible when a person has, to some extent, his own grasp of moral reality and the capacity to defend it against external pressures. The mature capacity of appropriating the moral values of his culture, of responsibly taking them over, and investing his life in them necessarily implies the capacity of distancing himself from his society, the possibility of being critical, and of even rejecting the values of his culture. These two related capacities require in the person the sense of an individual self, experienced as different from the society to which he belongs and to some extent autonomous with respect to socialization pressures. **Such abilities are fundamental and depend on the chances and the degree of reflection that people have with respect to their assumptions, their own logic.** Many people (probably the majority of individuals) do not reflect on their moral assumptions. So that when they are asked what they think about their own beliefs, they can only offer an obvious unreflected answer. In contrast, others, are able to justify them, being able to express a reasoning. This differentiation is of fundamental relevance for the purposes of the current study.

## **2. THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS.**

Those general theoretical perspectives have determined, therefore, both the theoretical assumptions of departure and the resulting methodological choices adopted.

**The theoretical framework is based on “Cognitive developmentalism”** (Mead, Baldwin, Piaget, Kohlberg and Selman). The differences between the various versions and detailed aspects of the different authors are not so important for the present work. However, it is essential to refer to the **fundamental theoretical principles that are accepted by the various versions** and that constitute the general framework for the present work: (a) **construction by any person of fundamental concepts, such as social relationships, friendship, society, moral criteria;** (b) **these social and moral criteria are organized for each person depending on a logical, or a mental structure;** (c) **these mental structures develop and change gradually with development, thus forming a hierarchy of stages or level;** (d) the main stimulus for social and moral development is the need to understand, to make sense of the reality and experience encountered; that is, to solve the cognitive problem, rebalance one’s understanding; (e) if the human reality, in its essence, is similar in the various societies, the hierarchy of levels of understanding social and moral should be universal.

According to this perspective, therefore, **the person’s understanding, his logic, his basic criteria, are indicated by reasons he gives for his**

**opinions, judgments, decisions, etc. and then by reasoning.** This group of theories, then, provides ideas and data on the development of social and moral understanding, offering a way to address the issue of the common good.

The starting **theoretical assumptions** are as follows:

- **situations and decisions relating to the common good can be very often the subject of moral judgment;**
- common good behaviour does not always reflect elevated moral reasoning – a person could respect national norms in order to avoid punishment, for example – but what is important is the reasons and judgments connected to the orientation to the common good expressed;
- **these moral judgments depend on what people believe to be the common good, the value that is given to the common good compared to other values;**
- orientation towards the common good of people in social public ethics situations **can have various levels, from the lowest and specific to the highest and universal;**
- the expression of a certain orientation is connected with the ability to take the perspective of others, i.e. with “other” different social groups for extension; the framework is that there are social groups (the family, the small community, the state, the whole of humanity) **that refer to**

**objective social structures that are “subjectively” and only gradually understood by each individual, with the understanding of the rules governing the various interactions and determining the role of each person in the group;**

- **the various orientations are not mutually exclusive but overlap and coexist in the same person**, so a particular level is not reached once and for all but the person can express simultaneously orientations more or less elevated, resulting, however, characterized by a prevailing attitude.

The understanding of the common good, as it is understood in the study, therefore, seems to be a result of the individual understanding of the “social structure” in which the person is located, as well as the position of the person within such social structures.

It is assumed that there are **four basic types of common good**. This hypothesis is based on **various types of “social structure” and the way in which an individual participates in the same**. For “social structure” it is meant, in a nutshell, the articulation of status, roles and institutions in which individuals live in groups, creating relations and systems of varying complexity. The social structure is, in a few words, the frame within which – and thanks to which – social actions take place.

The four main orientations hypothesized in the perception of the common good:

- a. **personal and familiar interest** – the reference is to the good of himself, to a concrete norm of reciprocity, which gives rise to a strictly personal sense of responsibility. Even if a purely personal egocentric orientation is very different from a family orientation, for reasons of simplicity, the interest of the individual and the family are treated as a single interest. The reasons for keeping them together in this study are: (a) the close identification of personal and family interest based on emotional relationships etc., (b) the difficulty of distinguishing in practice when family interest is used as real reason or as rationalization for one's own interest. Family interest, covering the family and close circle of friends (assimilated to the family), refers to social structures characterized by strictly personal and emotional relationships, with history and memories in common, so much to be heard effectively and affectively as well personally;
- b. **group interest** – refers to groups limited in extension (the small country, the association, etc.,) or competence (the company for which one works, parish, etc.,) that are characterized by the absence of deep "face-to-face" interpersonal relationships, but that are often the principle of felt and perceived identity;; what matters is the limitation of interests and not the face-to-face aspect
- c. **national interest** – refers to the state, the country as a whole, made up of laws and structures that operate in an abstract and anonymous mode,

so that what matters is the role and not the person that covers it; we are no longer into the concrete interactions, but rather in the context of abstract institutions, defined according to relations based on equity and justice, duties and responsibilities, all of which are related to the belonging to the broader social structure of the nation, and hence our participation in order to contribute to the benefit of all; the main idea is that a nation is the largest social structure, encompassing all the others, regulated by general norms and laws and institutions, which is not the case of global interests.

- d. **global interest** – characterized by a basic difference compared to previous orientations, not being linked to groups and, therefore, to social structures in the strict sense: there is not a specific supranational reality that forms a real supranational society covering all nations; in this sense, there is orientation to global concerns, i.e. universal goods, some of which are really universal and others which respond to the principle of ideal reciprocity; supranational reality comprises all people, purely on the basis of their belonging to the human race; often, sensitivity to the needs of the world and of the human community as such do not receive impetus from the concept of the common good, but rather from a sense of humanity, altruism and compassion, indeed, it is crucial to keep these aspects separate.



In sum, there is a hierarchy of expanding interests, at each step underlined by a wider good that is truly common. There are two important transitions: from egocentrism to perspective taking; from a concrete perspective taking (face-to-face) to an abstract perspective-taking; in steps two and three there are social structures with roles, norms, expectations, each time the structure encompassing the lower ones.

**The differences can be the understanding of the concept and in the understanding of the common good as the object of moral obligation.**

A person may also understand that there is a common good exceeding his own individual interests or those of his family but such a “transcendent good” does not produce a sense of moral obligation. Or, it may well be that the moral obligation is understood and accepted at the level of the family or small group, but not at the level of the nation. So people could be differentiated on the basis of these two dimensions, **the understanding of the concept or the understanding of moral obligation.**

**In order to choose the common good in a specific situation, one must not only understand it, but must be able to apply in the specific case, and must also understand the importance and personal obligation to do so.** From such a standpoint, one thing is to understand some “common good”, another issue is to be able to express it, and quite another thing still is to express it in such a way that those who observe the person (or interprets what the person says) realize that the object of which

he speaks is a common good for him. Essentially, complete comprehension of the common good is the outcome of a **mature capacity to appropriate the moral values of one's social group, and of being able to sense it** autonomously with respect to socialization pressures. The apex of moral commitment to the common good is to desire the morally good in the same way one desires what satisfies one's most intimate and deepest needs. For example, it is not enough to understand that the law is good for a given society or community, it is also necessary to understand that the law, in itself, is good for the person; or to talk about "common good", it is not enough to understand that peace in the family is an objective good, or (for a child) that the tranquillity of his father is good for the father, they become "common good" within the sphere of the family if the person understands that peace in the family and the tranquillity of his father are common goods, and therefore goods for himself. In this sense, then, the idea is that only if the person understands this aspect can he really want them, recognizing the same as a common good.

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## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW: THE FIELD OF RESEARCH RELATED TO THE COMMON GOOD**

## INTRODUCTION

Before presenting the current research work, it is appropriate to provide the **psychological research context for this dissertation**. As highlighted in the previous chapter, starting from the most general theoretical assumptions it is developed the concept of common good, and suggested several possible orientations to the common good in public ethic situations. These basic assumptions also led the methodological approach used in formulating the questionnaire, as explained in the following three studies. From this standpoint, **a difficulty arose** in dealing with these issues **given the absence of psychological studies directly addressed to the common good**. It was not possible to move from an object of study, definitions, much less instruments already clearly delineated. Rather, the study started from the identification of concrete

examples in everyday situations and then move to translate the starting questions and observations into theoretical and methodological choices.

The fundamental hypothesis of this work is that **awareness of the moral implications of our adult roles plays a crucial role in orientation towards the common good.** Such a mature consciousness is directly connected to **the ability to take the perspective of others, referring not only to the “other” that is more or less known but to different and progressively broader social groups through extension** (the family, the small community, the state, the whole of humanity). In developing, **the person takes part in this social group and matures such an understanding of the rules, governing the various interactions, and the role of each person in the group.** **The different orientations to the common good are, essentially, nothing more than different social group perspectives** – that refer to different values, principles and rules – **acquired by people in different ways, more or less reasoned and actively appropriated.** These differences are reflected in the diverse ways of expressing the same orientations to the common good.

Therefore, the main reference point are the studies on **Perspective taking.** This is recognized as one of the most important capabilities of individuals in interaction with their social contexts (Piaget, 1928, 1963, 1976; Piaget & Inhelder, 1963; Flavell, 1968; Light, 1979; Sarbin, 1954; Selman, 1980). Taking another person’s and, more widely, a group’s



perspective and integrating it with one's own perspective is fundamental to interpersonal and social understanding; to how one interprets and functions within the social world and to prosocial wider interaction. The construct of perspective taking was once seen to be a foundational activity for the development of self and other understanding in children (Flavell et al., 1968; Light, 1979; Piaget, 1928, 1963, 1976; Piaget & Inhelder, 1948/1963; Sarbin, 1954; Selman, 1980). However, over the course of the middle to late twentieth century, it lost its top billing in developmental psychology. However, a large number of recent works on the development of self-consciousness and agency (Russell, 1996; Hobson, 2002; Gillespie, 2005, 2006; Martin, 2005, 2006) may indicate a research reappearance in perspective taking.

In particular, the focus is on the developmental theory of perspective taking originally advanced by **Robert Selman** (1974, 1975, 1980). He created a model that describes the advance of social perspective taking from early childhood to early adulthood, looking at the **qualitative transformations in people social cognition**. In dealing with Selman's it was first revisited an **earlier orientation to perspective taking** – in the pioneering work of **George Herbert Mead** (1934, 1938) and **Jean Piaget** (1928, 1976) – going through **Kohlberg's** developmental-structural approach, to **Selman's extensions taking framework to mature**

**perspective** (beyond mid-adolescence into adulthood) and to **Blasi's theory on moral character (Blasi, 1991, 1995)**.

The work especially focused on **the manner in which rules and values are appropriated, addressing the attention to the central role of the self as subject and to the forms it takes through development influencing the person's broader social exchanging**. Such theories, actually, have had the advantage of enabling to **see how the coordination of perspectives informs the ways in which individuals situate themselves in relation to their broader communities, construct their social identities, make ideological commitments (Youniss & Yates, 1997) and, ultimately, interface with the issues that have to do with the common good**. In the following paragraphs is paid attention in particular to three aspect: 1) the role assigned to the concept of perspective taking – considering the different levels/stages related to large social groups; 2) the role played by social experience in the development of perspective taking; 3) the active modes of internalization of values and rules, looking at the awareness of the moral implications of one's mature roles; 4) the method used in the development of such a social perspective taking.

#### **a. MEAD AND PIAGET.**

Selman (1969; 1975b; 1980) situates his core model as theoretically informed by the earlier work of **George Herbert Mead and Jean Piaget**.

The earlier work of **Mead** (Mead, 1932, 1934, 1938) is fundamental for the development of the perspective taking model. He (Mead, 1903) proposed a conception of reality understood as a field of **perspectives**, describing how our minds move between the perspectives within social problems. In thinking, we are seeking to **combine and integrate perspectives**. Thus, it is not only the ability to **think through a situation in terms of various perspectives**, but also **the ability to integrate and coordinate them**. With respect to those aspects, Mead focused in particular on the dynamic, constitutive relations that he believed were obtained between the **collective perspectives and coordination of particular social groups and the perspectives of individual members of those groups**. Through taking and coordinating perspectives with other social objects **in the world** the subject **emerged as a person with a social and psychological identity**, rational and moral agency, and social competence intended for **complex capabilities and understandings of perspective coordination**. Mead believed that perspective taking arises from interactive engagement with others across different perspectives in contexts of communal problem solving (Martin, 2005). For Mead, ethical practices and agentive activity involve a dynamic and reciprocal interactivity between the “first person perspectives” of individuals, the “second person perspectives” of particular others, and the “third person perspectives” existing within broader social processes and structures.

Mead argues that through interaction and cooperation with other social objects, the child develops a **reflective consciousness, the ability to make herself the object of her own attention** (Biesta, 1999). For Mead (1934), becoming aware of oneself through the perspectives of others is the foundation of both self-reflection and social competence. Mead (1947) characterized a path of normal development, in which the child begins, through imitative play, gradually to take the positions of **particular others**, and then of **the society as a whole** (Mead's "generalized other"). In particular, through symbolic interactions, one is "constituted a self-conscious member of the community to which he belongs" (Mead, 1934). Once the **self-as-group-member** is formed, **behaviour is guided by the expectations of the social group, as reflected in the conscious self**. In other words, if moral expectations are an intrinsic component of one's self-concept, and if identity carries motivational power, then motivation becomes an integral part of moral self-consciousness.

**Piaget** (Piaget, 1932) can be considered the first author who studied the development of perspective taking ability from an empirical psychological point of view. He (Piaget, 1932, 1965; Piaget & Inhelder, 1963) pioneered the **empirical investigation of perspective taking**. His main effort was to discover the spontaneous sociomoral reasoning about rules and transgression, right and wrong, through the use of the "**clinical interview**"

**technique.** He used an open-ended clinical method, which entails the **use of dilemmas to engage the child in social or moral thought.**

Piaget **established the cognitive-developmental approach**, theorizing (1932/1965) invariant stages in the overall cognitive development of children that imply changes in reasoning. From such a major theoretical framework, Piaget conceptualized the **moral development of the child as well as related facets of social development** (Lickona, 1974). He (Piaget, 1948) looked to the child's moral development as dependent on the kinds of relationship in which the child participates (Furth & Youniss, 2000). He hypothesised a progressive sequence developing from moral realism to relativistic morality. Young children understand morality in terms of obedience – thinking in concrete and egocentric ways – and the social worlds as dominated by outwardly “omniscient and omnipotent adults”. Older children look to morality in terms of cooperation among peers, being cognitively capable of comprehending the perspective of others and recognising fundamental notions such as reciprocity because their social world consist mainly in egalitarian interactions with equals (Youniss, 1992; Carpendale, 2000).

Piaget referred to **egocentrism** as the child's incapacity to differentiate between his own perspective and the perspectives of others and **perspectivism** as an increasingly acquired **capacity** to accommodate

one's behaviour to other points of view, **differentiating and coordinating among one's own and others' points of view.**

#### **b. KOHLBERG AND THE DEVELOPMENTAL-STRUCTURAL APPROACH.**

Selman was also strongly influenced by *Lawrence Kohlberg* (Selman, 2003), understanding his research works as attempting to comprehend relationships between perspective taking and moral development (Gordon, Damon, Selman, 1974; Selman, 1971, 1975). **Following the methodology approach of Piaget**, he (Kohlberg, 1969) conducted **in-depth interviews and qualitative analyses of responses**, concentrating on the way of thinking about situations (Rest, Edwards, Thoma 1997). Kohlberg was interested in the reasoning behind the answer. In practice, he analysed the spontaneous reasoning of the subjects in reply to hypothetical moral dilemmas.

**Kohlberg moved in a sort of parallel with Selman's definition of perspective taking having regard to the way the individual differentiates his perspective from another, and the mode in which he relates these perspective to one another.** This sort of social reasoning, also if closely related to moral reasoning, is on the contrary more general – since it does not deal just with fairness and with choices of right or wrong – insomuch as a judgment of fairness at a certain level is more difficult than to simply see the world at that level. **In his interpretation of**

**Piaget's theory, Kohlberg (1969) emphasised perspective taking as an underlying mechanism for social cognition, and outlined stage criteria for a structural-developmental approach.** He looked at **perspective taking as a form of social cognition intermediate between logical and moral thought**, reporting that his sequence of moral stages are not the product of maturation or the result of the direct teaching of new forms of thinking by the socializing agents ( such as parents, teachers or peers). **Kohlberg reported that there is a sort of horizontal sequence of steps in movement from logic to social perception to moral judgment.** First a person attains a logical stage which allows him to see system in the world. Next he attains a level of social perception or perspective taking, where he sees other people understanding one another in terms of the place of each in the system. Finally he attains a particular moral judgment, where the welfare and order of the total social system or society is the reference point for judging fair or right. In a few words, he looks at morality as a realm pertaining to people's thinking about how they ought to relate to each other and how social systems should be organized. Kohlberg, in order to identify a more general structural construct which underlines both role taking and moral judgment, suggested the concept of **sociomoral perspective** which refers to the point of view the individual takes in defining both social fact and sociomoral values.

**Kohlberg (Kohlberg, 1976) asserted that social experiences do promote development by stimulating the person's mental processes.**

As the person interacts with others, he finds his views questioned and tested and being driven to take more comprehensive positions. Such a change occurs through **perspective taking opportunities to consider others' viewpoints (Kohlberg, 1976)**. Interacting with others, children learn how perspectives differ and how to coordinate them in cooperative activities.

The stages emerge from a person's own thinking about moral problems. Kohlberg (Kohlber, 1969; Lapsley, 2006) believed that a stage characterization is justified when 4 criteria are in place: (1) at each stage there must be a qualitative difference in the way children reason, (2) stages must follow each other in an invariant sequence, (3) each stage is characterized by an underlying greater order of thought or structure *d'ensemble*, also known as structured wholeness, (4) each lower stage is hierarchically integrated into the following stage, Kohlberg (1969) proposed a model of moral reasoning development that involved three levels (each level then held two sub-stages): preconventional (Stage 1 and 2), conventional (Stage 3 and 4), and postconventional (Stage 5 and 6) (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2004). One way of understanding the three levels is to think of them as **three different types of relationship between self and society's rules and expectations.**



From this approach, at **preconventional level** the person looks to the same roles and social expectations as external to the self. It contained the first two stages and is the most immature level of moral reasoning because it is characterized by an egocentric emphasis and superficial reasoning. In **Stage 1 (Heteronomous morality)** an individual does what he or she is told without question and right and wrong is based on whether it coincides with an authority figure's commands. **Stage 2 (Individualism, instrumental purpose)** is acting well-behaved in exchange for rewards. At this concrete individualistic level, the sense of right and wrong is based on what will result in punishment for the individual. The perspective to follow his own interest, however, begins to open up to the recognition of a reality in which the other individuals have their own interests. The subject is aware that each person has his own interests, which may be in conflict and, therefore, what is right is relative, of course, in the concrete individual sense.

At the second level, the person is **conventional** in the sense that he has somehow internalized roles as well as the expectations of others. This is due to his focus on meeting social expectations and maintaining order and contains the middle two stages. The conventional individual subordinates the needs of the single individual to the viewpoint and needs of the group or the shared relationship. His reason for being concerned is the good of society as a whole. Clearly, he is speaking as a member of society. This

concern for the good of society arises from his taking the point of view of us members of society. So, the mutuality which first developed at stage 3 is expanded at stage 4 to subordinate the dyadic relation to the group perspective. **Stage 3 (Mutual interpersonal expectation, interpersonal conformity)** is behaving the way others want you to act. In Stage 3, an individual's sense of right and wrong is based on what will please or anger/hurt others. At this level, it becomes important to show concern for others, in the sense of developing mutual relations, developing the concepts of loyalty, trust, gratitude and respect. The person therefore needs to be a good person both in his own eyes and in those of others, while manifesting a desire to follow the roles and authority according to a stereotyped behaviour. It develops, therefore, the perspective of the individual in relation to other individuals. The person is aware of mutual expectations, which are considered prior over individual interests, being able to put himself in the shoes of others, although not yet at the level of generalized systems perspective. The societal perspective of stage 3 is still not yet aware of society's point of view, or the good of the whole of society. The stage 3 member of a group perspective is that of the average good person, not that of society or institution as a whole. The stage 3 perspective sees the things from the point of view of a shared relationship between two or more individuals rather than from the viewpoint of an institutional whole. So the stage 3 reasoning works best in two-person

relationships with family members or close friends, where one can make a real effort to get to know the other's feelings and needs and try to help.

**Stage 4 (Social system and conscience)** is abiding by the rules in order to preserve social order. In Stage 4, a sense of morality is based on the desire to follow the rules of society to maintain social harmony. In other words, right and wrong is what society says because it is for the greater good. It then develops a concept of right as something that contributes to society, to the group, the institutions in general. In this sense, the point of view of society is developed by interpersonal relations or needs. At this stage 4, the respondent becomes more broadly concerned with society as a whole. From such a perspective, society needs became a centralizing framework (Gibbs et al., 1983, pp. 140- 141) because the subjects make moral decisions from the perspective of society as a whole and they think from a fully-fledged member-of-society perspective (Colby and Kohlberg, 1983, p. 27). The people functioning at Stage 4 have a conception of the function of laws for society as a whole. The importance of this way of thinking is clear with the concept of common good expressed in the present study. What is important to underline for the purpose of this study is that at Stage 4, perspective taking is raised from the level of the dyad to the level of a general social system involving a group or a social perspective. The person at this level views the social system as a construction of conventional perspectives which all members share in

mutual relationship with his own; the subject realizes that each self considers the shared point of view of the generalized other (the social system) in order to facilitate accurate communication with and understanding of others. At this stage, conceptions such as law and morality are based upon the idea of a consensual group perspective.

Finally, at **postconventional level**, the person has differentiated himself from the roles and expectations of others, and thus defined his core values in terms of self-chosen principles. **Stage 5 (Social contract or utility and individual rights)** is following the morals of society when you believe they are applicable. In Stage 5, an individual tries to adhere to societal rules for the greater good, but believes there are exceptions to the rule. For example, he or she may view the illegal activity morally acceptable. In other words, there develops the prior-to-society perspective, the reference (prior to rules) to the welfare of all individuals. **Stage 6**, finally, is an individual moral viewpoint based on abstract ideology and values (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2004) that refers to universal ethical principles. In Stage 6, an individual creates his or her own view of right and wrong based on more abstract principles. Combining various levels of societal and personal views of morality, he or she makes individual ethical decisions for each separate dilemma. The perspective is that of morality, recognizing people as an end in itself.

### **c. SELMAN AND THE STAGE MODEL OF PERSPECTIVE**

## TAKING

**Selman** (1980) proposed a structural psychosocial model and an interview method that are equivalent to the moral reasoning development proposed by Kohlberg and that reflect the ideas of Mead and Piaget.

He used social dilemmas (Selman, 1976a) in order to study the individual's ability to reflect and report on abstract concepts, and therefore capture the mature state of a developed process and not its emergence. He focused on three main structural aspects of perspective taking: (1) the standpoint of people regarding the solution to the problem, (2) how the individual assumes alternating perspectives of the characters in the issue, and (3) how the person see such different perspectives in reciprocal relation.

Selman ( 1969, 1980, 2003) emphasised the social origins and social processes that initiate and maintain the developmental accomplishments within his model. He placed the engines of development within the social-relational activity and interactivity of the child and by which developmental accomplishments flow from an ongoing immersion and participation in the practices of families, communities, societies, and cultures.

His goal was to define a **developmental sequence in the coordination of social perspectives**. He viewed it in terms of qualitative changes in people's construction of their **understanding of the relation between the**

**perspectives of self and other** (Selman, Watts, & Schultz, 1997, Selman, 1980; Selman & Schultz, 1990).

The model suggested that as children learn to perceive other people's points of view and integrate them with their own, they are more able to show deeper understandings about other persons – such as their feelings, beliefs and motivations – and are then better able to manage relationships in their lives. Moving through the stages, the undifferentiated worldview of the child becomes connected and related to particular others, thus enabling the child to move beyond his or her subjective experience, to more objective reflections on the self, and eventually to the perspectives of generalized others, representing the views of social groups. So far, the Selman theory can be used to explain people's developing awareness of societal issues (Selman & Dray, 2003; Dray, Selman, & Schultz, 2009). Selman's reflective stages reveal an increasing ability of the individual to differentiate and abstract positions beyond immediate situations, together with the psychological orientations that are associated with them. In this way, the developing person cultivates a richer, more reflective understanding of the self, the other, and relationships between self and various others, including the ability to employ and critically analyse third-person, reflective and conventional, social perspectives. Selman (1973, 1980) presented an empirically supported, logical sequence of five descriptions of Selman's five stages of perspective taking (numbered 0-4)

of social role or perspective taking and coordination beginning at around age 4 and advancing at 2-year intervals to age 15 plus. Here, we will briefly describe each of Selman's levels in ways generally consistent with his own descriptions of them.

Selman (1974) theorized that before stage 0, the child's development displays no physical differentiation between the self as an individual and other individuals.

**Level 0** is known as **Undifferentiated/Egocentric Perspective Taking (Age 3 to 6)**. At this level, children have difficulty differentiating another's point of view from their own. They do not readily relate perspectives and tend to base their social judgments on observable actions, rather than psychological states. The child's reflective skills are dominated by his own perspective, especially in interactions that are less familiar or less material (Schofield & Kafer, 1985). This lack of differentiation between external acts and internal feelings can lead to confusion between intentional and unintentional behaviour. The child's own perspective predominates in a single perspective world. Furthermore, the child believes that others think, feel, and act with the same intention as the child.

**Level 1** is **Differentiated/Subjective Perspective Taking (Age 6 to 8)**. At this level children realize that others are subjects with perspectives of their own and can differentiate their own perspective from others. **They**

**slowly become aware that physical differentiation may also be paralleled by a psychological differentiation of the perspectives or different persons.** They **still have** difficulty in coordinating discrepant standpoints. Children at this level understand the differences between overt behaviour and covert thoughts or feelings. However, they still tend to use physical observation to ascertain internal states and they have difficulty in recognizing that internal thoughts can be mixed or contradictory. The child's understanding of the other occurs only in a unidirectional fashion. The child is unable to preserve his own perspective while simultaneously taking on the perspective of another person and vice versa. Thus, the child tends to focus on one particular perspective and does not put differing perspectives in a clear relationship to each other. One perspective dominates the other, without any attempt at integration. In Selman's terms: The child "understands the subjectivity of persons, but does not understand that persons consider each other as subjects" (Selman, 1976a, p.304).

**Level 2** is known as **Self-reflective/Reciprocal Perspective (Age 8 to 10)**. At this level, the child develops awareness that people's perspectives exist in a reciprocal relationship to each other. The child matures the ability to consider himself from the other's psychological perspective. He is able to reflect on his own actions and underlying motivations from the perspective of another particular person. Thus, the child is increasingly



able to switch between his own perspective and the other's perspective, permitting more mature, self-reflective thoughts. However, at stage 2, this taking of the other perspective in relation to one's own subjective perspective happens sequentially, not simultaneously. This sequential process prevents the child from stepping outside the relation of these two perspectives to acquire the vantage point of a third person observer. **However, at this stage, this second person understanding is limited to one or another perspective, and does not permit the simultaneous consideration of two or more different perspectives.**

The two final stages of Selman's developmental theory of perspective taking are level 3 and level 4. **Level 3 is Third Person/Mutual Perspective Taking (Age 10 to 12).** At this age the person is able to take on perspectives simultaneously, considering them all at once. The early adolescent's understanding of the mutual self-other perspective taking involved in any social situation, enables him to step outside of such situations and adopt a third-person perspective on the interpersonal exchanges taking place. This ability allows the child to take on the perspective of a generalized other, or a third person representing a particular social group. He can in fact eliminate himself from the immediate situation and use an outside perspective, considering both other's perspective and his own perspective, allowing him to take the stance of a less partial, generalized other. **Level 4**, that is the greatest

stage of Selman's model, is known as **Societal and Conventional System (Age 12 to 15+)**. It consists of **In-depth and Societal Symbolic Perspective-Taking**. It is connected to what I call common good. In fact, the individual operating at this Level examines social interactions beyond the level of the immediate interaction by expanding his perspective to the social and conventional system. At this level, the perspective taking is raised from the level of the dyad to the level of a general social system within which he operates, as a construction of the conventional perspective which all members share in mutual relationship with his own. So the subject realizes that self considers the shared point of view of generalized other (the social system) in order to facilitate accurate communication with and understanding of others. The individual, at this level, recognizes that though others are capable of self-reflection, they are not always self aware. Level 4 role-taking also considers the broader set of personality traits, beliefs, values, and personal history when attempting to understand another person's point of view. **At this perspective level, individuals, dyadic relationships, and groups are seen as operating within a larger societal, legal, and moral system.**

In the development of his research, Selman worked hard to apply his understanding of perspective taking as "an analytical tool" (Selman, 1980) to an increasingly broader social context (Elfers, Matin & Sokol, 2008).

Selman (1974) tried to apply his model to different social domains that included, but went well beyond the understanding of perspective relations between persons. Conversely, his main studies remained anchored to specific issues such as friendship, peer relations and parent-child without embarking on broader societal relationships.

#### **d. BEYOND SELMAN – EXTENDING PERSPECTIVE TAKING MODEL INTO ADULTHOOD LOOKING TO THE COMMON GOOD.**

Significant contributions to Selman's perspective taking model have been made by other researchers (Martin, Sokol, & Elfers, 2007). For the purpose of the current study it is important to focus on those efforts that tried to expand the model beyond the stages proposed by Selman taking the model into adulthood looking. Such a look to the mature perspective is important because it represents a prerequisite to applying the perspective taking model to broader domains such as public ethical reasoning.

**Diane Byrne** (1974) suggested an additional stage to Selman's stages. She hypothesized that young adults, beyond stage four, comprehend that **some conventions are insufficient in relating differing third person views to each other.** In particular, insufficient conventions mirror unrecognized attachments to a "system of analysis" of the individual (Byrne 1973), which may reflect the personal history and social context of one or more of the participants. Acknowledgement of such difficulties

allows some young adults to **critically distance themselves from their social contexts and backgrounds so as to achieve a more objective point of view**. According to Byrne (1973), this allows adults to **take a more objective stand towards their own or another's theoretical point of view, thus moving towards a more rational and universal means of ordering and coordinating social relations**.

**Elfers, Martin, & Sokol** (2007, 2008) proposed a review and extension (to later adulthood) of Selman's model of perspective taking. They integrated the recent neo-Meadian and neo-Piagetian approach on perspective taking and its role in the development of agency and self-consciousness (Russell, 1996; Martin, 2005, 2006; Gillespie, 2005, 2006). These authors proposed two additional pre-reflective and two supplementary meta-reflective stages. The two pre-reflective stages – categorized **Perceptual/Experiential Repetition** and **Positional Possibilities** – occur early in life and are grounded in the daily practices of children within their immediate social environment. It involves conventional and recurring exchanges of the young child with care-givers. The child's contribution in these two stages of perspective taking give to the child skills that provide developmental support for engaging in the following reflective stages proposed by Selman (1973, 1976). They reproduce some of the reflective progresses that occur in Selman's early stages, although at a level of non-reflective activity, rather than at a level of activity attended by explicit

verbalization or reflective thinking. The final two meta-reflective stages proposed by Elfers, Martin, & Sokol **move Selman's perspective taking stages into mature adulthood.** They are named respectively **Idealized** and **Dialogical Perspective Taking.** Both stages contain a significant extent of **advanced reflective thinking.** In such situations, **the mature person experiences the limits of social conventions in their aptitude to bridge disparate views that are too oppositional to yield to coordination through existing, prior practices of negotiation, compromise, and problem solving.** In the **Idealized stage of Perspective Taking,** the person involves with others, in ways that recognize and respect particular ideological commitments and social perspectives, in order to reach communicative ideals that promote broad level of consensus building and communal problem solving. In contrast, the **Dialogical stage of Engagement With Others,** is based on the assumption that the only way to come to a common understanding of profoundly divergent perspectives, is to persist in discovering possibilities of truth in each of the conflicting perspectives. They are two approaches of meta-reflective perspective taking involved in social problem solving. Consequently, only a long and continued commitment of those holding discordant perspectives will produce a wider understanding of constraints. The individual engages with others in ways that do not assume a universalistic stance towards ideological and societal conflicts, remaining

instead open to the fallibility of any and all positions, and recognizing the need to generate novel approaches to address context-specific challenges and conditions.

#### **e. BLASI AND THE INDIVIDUAL SELF OF THE MORAL ADULT.**

These approaches to mature social perspective taking are consistent with the **Blasi approach**. He (Blasi, 2008) underlined that the competencies and attitudes that would be required by a mature adult to function morally are: (a) some form of post conventional moral thinking that would allow a person to take a moral critical stance vis-à-vis his society's unjust laws and practices; (b) the ability to control an attitude of lazy acceptance with regard to his authorities, and to assume, instead, a critical attitude also toward himself, questioning his moral perceptions, his motives, and the justifications he gives for his behaviour; (c) the sense of personal obligation to act according to the norms and ideals that he has appropriated and made his own, and the attitude of accountability to himself and to others, this too based on the sense of ownership of his actions. **In a few words, Blasi (Blasi, 2001) emphasized that the capacity to appropriate the moral values of one's culture, of responsibly taking them over, and investing one's life in them necessarily implies the capacity to distance oneself from one's society, the possibility of being critical of, and even rejecting, the**

**values of one's culture.** Both require in the person the sense of an individual self, experienced as different from the society to which one belongs and to some extent autonomous with respect to socialization pressures. Such an experience of the self as subject is central, meaning it as "the immediate experience of oneself as separate from other objects, as the source of action and unified in action, present to itself in the process of acting" (Blasi, 2001). **Separateness gives origin to distance, and distance to the possibility of responsible criticism and opposition.** Further developments of the subjective self occur through two processes, dialectically related to each other, **active appropriation** and **distancing**. People are able to actively take possession of their own characteristics and also what is offered to them by the social environment in ways that differ both from learning processes and also from what is frequently understood as internalization. Blasi called "**active appropriation**" the process leading to distinctions among different aspects of ourselves. Through appropriation one selects the desires and the characteristics that one wants to have, rejects the others as not really one's own, and is thereby motivated to responsibly foster the former and inhibit the latter. Thus, it is by active appropriation that one comes to personally possess oneself. Active appropriation requires **distancing**, that is, a process by which one stands back from whatever can be appropriated, objectifies it, creates a space between it and oneself, and

therefore frees oneself, to some extent, from its grasp. As a result of distancing, a person becomes capable of applying evaluative criteria, whatever they may be, to others' expectations, rules, norms, and social values. Therefore one can, at least in principle, also engage in a rational critique of authority and society.

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## CHAPTER III

# THE ORIENTATION TOWARDS THE COMMON GOOD: ESTABLISHING A METHOD THROUGH THE CONSTRUCTION OF A QUESTIONNAIRE.

### INTRODUCTION.

Calling for a recognition of and commitment to the “*common good*” have surfaced in the wider debate. In particular it is possible to see social

demand for and “ethic of the common good” (Halstead and Pike, 2006). The individual has to constantly deal with increasingly complex “public” situations (related to the world of work, social, legal and political institutions) that necessitate a “morally mature” subject to be involved in difficult choices (Narvaez, 2010). In such situations, awareness of the moral implications of one’s adult roles and its primacy relative to individual interests becomes fundamental. From such an understanding of common good and awareness of the moral responsibility of participating in the large public good (Narvaez, 2010) there is then derived the sense of citizenship and one’s civic obligations. What emerges is the development of the citizen in relation to various coexisting interests of common good: one at local community level, another at national level and yet another at supranational or global level (Bornman, 2003). Such different orientations are closely linked to the person’s mature understanding of his own place in the world, so that having a strong sense orientation leads to a strong citizen interacting positively in his or her community.

The main aim of this first study is **to provide the reader with a practical method for assessing the different orientations to the common good in social situations**. Therefore in the present first study it is described the background and the rationale for the construction of the Orientation to the Common Good Questionnaire (OCGQ).

The methodological choices made in the construction of the analysis system fully reflect the theoretical reference, widely presented in the first two introductory chapters.

In particular, these can be grouped into three basic aspects:

- **the use of story dilemmas** designed to elicit moral judgment and to invoke a conflict between the different orientations to the common good hypothesised – referring to the Piaget clinical method, in the version then perfected by Kohlberg with the moral judgment interview (MJI);
- **the attention to the logic for the choice and not the decision** – how people interpret public ethic situations and, therefore, how individuals apply their moral concepts in such realities;
- **the use of a mixed-method that links quantitative and qualitative data – matching a recognition measure** (to evaluate the importance of the various levels of common good orientation) and a **production measure** ( to explain or justify their choice); such a mixed-system allows a triple advantage: 1) requiring the person to pay more attention to the task being called to explain his own thoughts; 2) making it possible to verify if the answer chosen is consistent with the thinking of the subject; 3) making it possible to keep the study of the spontaneous reasoning of the subject.

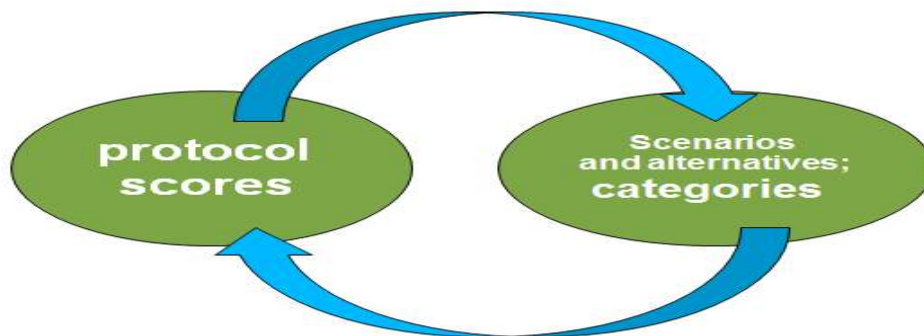
The task is to create an instrument that will allow the person to express himself so that what she/he says, such as a particular attitude to a common good, can be interpreted as clearly as possible. According to this perspective, therefore, the understanding of the individual, his logic, his basic criteria, are discovered by the reasons the person gives for his opinions, judgments, decisions, and then by his reasoning.

The main methodological value of this study shall be represented by the same **method used for the construction of the coding system for the spontaneous reasoning of the subject**. Looking at the **process proposed by Loevinger (1970)**, it affords the continuous revision and development of the theory on which the measure depends and vice versa.

The aim is **to combine theoretical principles and empirical evidence in the construction process of the coding system**. The principal idea is that theory and measurement cannot be separate from each other, but must form an integral unity and must constantly feed on each other (Blasi, 1993). It is used a “built-in feedback loop, going from protocol scores to the categories and from categories back to protocol scores” (Blasi, 1993) **(Figure 2)**.

**Figure 2.**





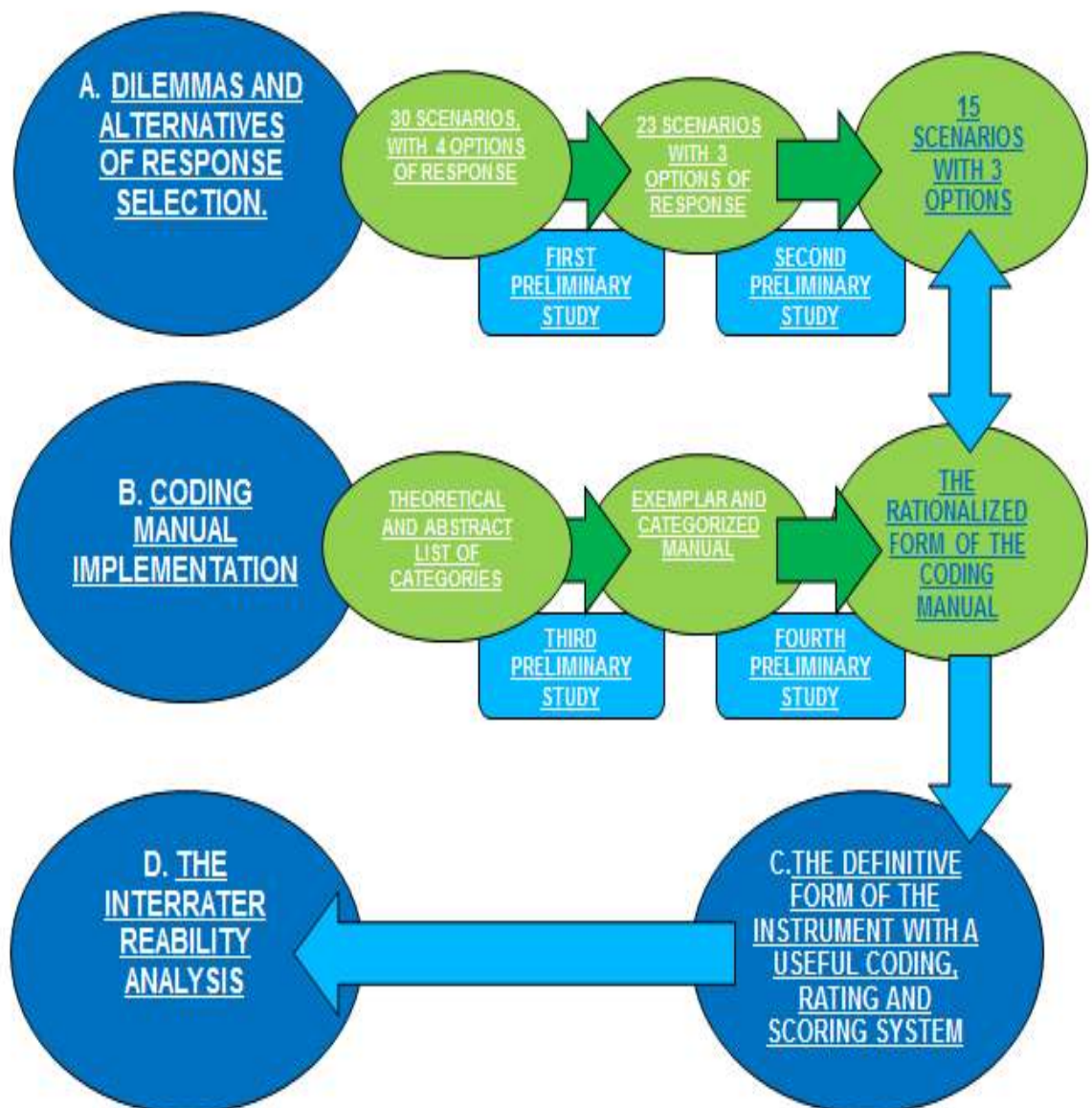
Unlike Kohlberg who in structuring his coding system for the MIJ uses substantially theoretical principles, it is followed the Loevinger approach that chose to start from the identification of stages and categories defined in general terms, leaving it to people – through empirical evidence – to define the different categories. Following such a methodological approach, the construction of the measure presented in this work begins **with the conception of common good orientations (a)**, then **the decision of placing response categories at specific levels has to be justified by both empirical and conceptual considerations (b)**, finally in revising the description of an orientation or in carving out a new level, an important requirement was that **the cluster of its characteristic makes psychological sense or suggests a degree of psychological coherence (c)**. The research method used start off by imagining the demands that people and observers may raise for themselves in dilemmas involving common good. In doing so, the reference is to the different kinds of orientation to the common good hypothesized and to how people

develop a reflective process in addressing these issues – from complete indifference to the common good, to an effort to limit one’s responsibility for the common good to a full involvement in the broad moral issues connected to the common good – felt intimately as his own. It is not make “a priori” but “a posteriori” decision about the different types of response that people could provide to our scenarios. The aim is not to impose a specific moral views in such situations but to refer to the subject’s point of view, looking at how people can arrive responsibly using their own personal judgements. It is provide then to assemble the different responses together according to semantic criteria, trying to understand their meaning in the light of the initial theoretical assumptions.

Essentially, the phases followed are the following: (a) **selection and implementation of concrete dilemmatic situations and response alternatives clearly attributable to each orientation to the common good**; (b) **development of the coding manual** for the responses autonomously provided by the subjects, (c) identification of a **definitive form of the instrument with a useful coding, rating and scoring system**; (d) **percent agreement and inter-rater correlation between two coders** for a sample of 150 subjects aged between 14 and 21 years of age. Each of these tight consequential phases is presented taking care to explain the logical process used, summarizing the preliminary studies

conducted to arrive at the final version of the instrument and the system of analysis (Figure 3).

Figure 3.



a. DILEMMAS AND ALTERNATIVE OF RESPONSE SELECTION.

## **1. THE IDENTIFICATION OF CONCRETE SITUATIONS AND PROBLEMS RELATING TO THE COMMON GOOD.**

The original idea was to present the participants with dilemmas regarding the common good structured in order to elicit reasoning response in public situations.

The followed strategy is to refer to many instances, events, or situations, which seem to have the potential to raise moral interrogations for morally attentive adults. The intent is to produce issues that replicate a sense of the moral ordinariness, complexity and urgency that occurs in our world. The moral dilemmas in fact play an essential role in the collection of valid moral judgment data (Gibbs, 1992). They make at least two contributions to moral judgement assessment: 1) they provide concrete situational details that can lead into and facilitate the process of abstract common good reflections (subjects seem to “warm up” to reasoning about moral values connected to the common good as they attend to the relevant details of the dilemma); 2) they promote the likelihood that one can elicit from the subject a moral “reflection without interference from preconceptions” (Walker, 1990) – the moral dilemmas “set the mind working” (Brown & Herrnstein, 1975) in a fresh and spontaneous way, rendering more likely the production of scorable reasoning, that is, patterns of thinking that are generic rather than idiosyncratic.

The dilemmas are designed similarly to Kohlbergian dilemmas (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987), except that each story involves situations of public ethics related to:

- **legal obligation - legal obligations** – connected, for example, to issues of corruption or bribery (such as encouraging a person in a public competition not to follow the waiting lists ), or to circumstances that involve not following the law because it is judged too costly or disadvantageous (as, for example, building on land improperly), or to evading the taxes owed to the State for the person's own business, etc. Consider the following example: *“Daniela lives in a small rented apartment with her husband and three children. Daniela owns nearby land in an environmentally protected area where it is not possible to build. The area is a tourist attraction and is located right next to a river. On the surrounding land, despite the restrictions, many owners are building, counting on the possibility of a subsequent amnesty. Daniela is considering whether to build herself a house”*;
- **not strictly normed obligations but to general rules of ethics** – the reference is, therefore, to scenarios relating to the protection of strictly “common” “goods”: *material* common goods (such as the environment, the beauty of the landscapes, water, peace) or more abstract common good such as justice, truth, etc. Consider the

following example: *“Joan, along with her husband and two daughters, owns a media company that produces parts for home appliances. She is now considering the possibility of moving the bulk of her production from her country to other countries, as a lot of competing companies have already done so, reducing costs. The cost of labour is in fact significantly lower”*.

The hypothetical moral dilemmas were constructed in order to **represent an internal value conflict between the four different orientations to the common good hypothesized and generally described in the first chapter – personal, group, national and global**. The situations refer to really **relevant matters for the subjects**, fictitious but plausible situations, which are very likely to exist in real life. Each dilemma focuses on **different issues** that were chosen in order to represent the central value conflict between personal, group, national and global orientation to the common good and to elicit different levels of reasonable response by the subjects. For example, in the previous “Daniela dilemma” (related to the decision to build a house illegally), the conflict is between the value of a) preserving the needs of her own family (giving them a home), b) or, antithetically, the safety of other known residents (who would be put at risk by building in a dangerous area), c) upholding law established for equity and justice in all the nation, d) and, finally conserving nature as a whole. Any specific, more or less “reflected” reason assignable to one of the four

specific orientations of the common good can be then understood at different levels by the subject. So, always following the above example, the person can choose in this conflict the global interest just because “nature comes first” or because “to safeguard nature is our reciprocal right and duty because we all belong to humanity and nature is essential for the life of each of us”. Both answers are based on the same assumption or moral common good, but only in the second case does there seem to be an argument that justifies the choice. The dilemmas are intended as a device for activating different orientations to the common good (to the extent that a person has developed them) and for assessing them in terms of judged importance. Thirty situations were identified, coming from different fields of expertise, substantially related to the world of work or to the widening spaces of communities – the phenomenon of migration, the widespread poverty, the social cost of public corruption, the issues related to wars, the protection of nature or the question of pollution, and so on. Particular attention was paid to making the scenarios as varied as possible, referring to different types of circumstances: a) some concern a person (the protagonist of the story), faced with a choice between different possible actions; b) others concern a situation, for which a number of people in a group (e.g. a committee) decide what direction to take; c) others where the subject is presented with an individual who has made choices, and should review these choices.

## **2. IMPLEMENTATION OF RESPONSE ALTERNATIVE ANSWERS CLEARLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO EACH ORIENTATIONS.**

The instrument, as mentioned in the preliminary chapter, has dilemmas and standard items of response, in order to link quantitative and qualitative data, matching recognition and production measure. The response alternatives were built: 1) starting from a list – initially abstract and general – of all the possible reasons attributable to the four types of orientation identified; 2) providing then to follow up each scenario with different response alternatives, each directly related to one of the 4 different interests assumed. The arguments proposed were built so that each response: is as short as possible (only one sentence, not too complex) and not too technically worded, represents clearly each of the four orientations to the common good as close as possible excluding the other (each choice being in contrast with all the others), does not sound ironical or in any way deprecating, matches the different orientation underlining the contrast between the different choices. Specifically, each response to the situation represented in the scenario was designed to include two elements: (a) what for the protagonist of the scenario is right to do, he thinks he should do, judges to be the right decision, etc.. b) the reason for his decision or his thinking. Consistent with the theoretical and methodological reference, in the articulation of responses the focus was



not put on choice but rather on the reasons, with only the first considered to show a functional justification due to one of the four hypothesised interests.

### **3. SCENARIOS AND ALTERNATIVES OF RESPONSE DEFINITION THROUGH TWO QUALITATIVE PRELIMINARY STUDIES.**

Starting from the initial thirty scenarios, with four response options each connected to one of the assumed orientations to the common good, two independent preliminary studies were carried out aimed at reaching a final version of both dilemmas and responses. The aim was questioning the answers given by the subjects (from the point of view of the orientation to common good hypothesized) providing to: analyse the concrete and semantics understanding of the scenario as well as of the different alternatives of choice (1), check if the scenario truly produced an understanding linked to the conflict of different interests vis-à-vis common good (2); verify and questioning the distribution of the frequency response of the different orientation to the common good. The two preliminary studies allowed for a definition of the stimulus for the analysis of the orientation to the common good – consisting of 15 scenarios each with three response alternatives, the instructions for the compilation of the same, as well as the overall system of analysis for the responses given by subjects.

#### **a) FIRST PRELIMINARY STUDY.**

**Participants.** 180 subjects, all students at a military school; the group consisted of 103 men and 77 women, aged between 19 and 23 years (mean age = 21.60, D.D. = 5.64). It was then divided into three different groups of 60 people each, randomly assigned.

**Measures and Procedure.** To each group was administered an equivalent form – balanced according to the different characteristics differentiating the scenarios – made up of 10 scenarios with four choices. The participants completed the measures in a quiet setting with no time constraints. Most participants took about twenty minutes to complete the materials. Each answer given by each person was a full transcript, for a total of 600 responses analysed. Two independent researchers provided then to conduct a qualitative analysis of responses.

**Results and Outcomes.** Analysing the responses provided by the subjects revealed that some of the situations proposed were too complex or not so relevant for the subject, highlighting responses that were not completely centred and not reasoned by the subject. We decided to exclude these scenarios and also the dilemmas that did not produce significant individual differences (eliminating those with one of the four alternatives > 60% of responses). Besides, in most of the scenarios one of the alternatives received a very low percentage of choice (< 5-8%), pointing out how in most of the scenarios the presence of all four alternatives of the common good was forced and not due to a real conflict

between orientations. Starting from such evidence it was modified the rationale behind some aspect of the choices making them more consistent with the ones freely produced by the subject and it was decided to opt for each situation for the presentation of three choices instead of four, in order to make the conflict most significant.

#### **b) SECOND PRELIMINARY STUDY.**

**Participants.** 60 subjects from three classes in the third and fourth year at high school: the group consisted of 23 men and 37 women, aged between 15 and 18 years (mean age = 16.02, D.S. = 8.42).

**Measures and Procedure.** A version of the instrument (derived from the findings in the first study) was given consisting of 23 scenarios with 3 options, each related to one of the 4 orientations to the common good. The participants, divided into the three classes, completed the measures in a quiet setting with no time constraints. Most participants took about forty minutes to complete the materials. Each answer given by each person was a full transcript, for a total of 900 responses analysed. Two independent researchers then provided to conduct a qualitative analysis of responses (with the same procedure for the first study) and to the

implementation of a focus-group (audio recorded and fully transcribed) with 12 subjects centred on general impressions about the questionnaire.

**Results and Outcomes.** Through the analysis of the responses provided by the subjects, it emerged that in some scenarios there was a predominance of one response alternative over the other (< 60%), so as to make it necessary to eliminate them or at least to proceed to an additional skimming of the scenarios. Furthermore, the analysis of the responses highlighted a not always complete correspondence between the alternative of choice selected and the response provided independently by the subject – sometimes attributable to a different orientation from that marked in the questionnaire. Such evidence highlighted the need to refer (in the scoring system) to the orientation re-evaluated by an encoder after the reading of the answer given by each subject. At least, the implementation of the focus-group allowed the definition of some details of the scenarios and the answer choice – in order to make them more “credible” – and to refine the instructions of the questionnaire – in order to make the task clearer.

## **b. THE CODING MANUAL DESIGN.**

The questionnaire required the subject to explain, for each dilemma, the reason for the choice selected. The faced question was that every response, in principle if not actually, was different from every other. The strategy used was first to refer to the different levels of orientation to the common good and, then, to the qualitative differences in the understanding of the same category. Every response was then matched against the sequence of different levels of orientation to the common good and to the succession of qualitative stages within the same orientation. At this point every response was assigned to the level it most closely matched (first the level of orientation – personal, group, national and global – second the level of understanding within every orientation). For every single response, the aim was to make the best estimate we could from whatever information was encoded within it.

It was proceeded mainly **following the method proposed by Loevinger and Wessler (1970)** for the analysis and construction of the coding manual of ego development, trying to adapt it to the needs of our study. In particular, as already reported in the preceding chapter one letter d, the basic idea of this method consisted in not deciding a priori categories to be used for the encoding of data, but rather to define a posteriori, by

analysing the answers given by the subjects. It was roughly followed the diverse phases that characterise this approach.

## **1. CODING MANUAL IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH TWO QUALITATIVE PRELIMINARY STUDIES.**

Moving from the general and abstract category initially used for the construction of all the possible reasons attributable to the four types of orientation, it was performed two preliminary studies aimed at the construction of an interlocutory exemplar and categorized manual. The two studies refer to the mentioned “built-in feedback loop”, providing – through going from protocol scores to the categories and from categories back to protocol scores” – to anchor the coding system to the effectively response carried out by persons.

### **a) THIRD PRELIMINARY STUDY.**

**PARTICIPANTS.** 120 subjects – sixty young adult students from a military school between 18 to 23 years of age, and sixty students in the third and fourth year of high school between the ages of 15 and 18 years. The group consisted of 71 men and 49 women.

**MEASURES AND PROCEDURE.** The 1800 responses analysed were obtained from the responses given by the subjects in the two previous studies already reported in the different form of the final 15 dilemmas.

**RESULTS AND OUTCOMES.** The procedure substantially allowed the: 1) independent collection from each scenario of a series of examples of significant response, the collection of all examples with common contents and that could be traced to the same code – exemplar manual; 2) identification of each set of responses through a statement that encapsulated the essence, the common element – categorized manual. Therefore this study allowed the recognition of categories directly connected with those expressed by the subjects without reconnecting the same to underlying reasons or, otherwise, not clearly expressed motives.

b) **FOURTH PRELIMINARY STUDY.**

**PARTICIPANTS.** 100 subject random identified from a total sample of 224 young adults students at a military school between 18 to 23 years of age (mean age = 20.43, D.S. = 13.42). The group consisted of 126 men and 98 women.

**MEASURES AND PROCEDURE.** The final version of the instrument was given consisting of 15 scenarios with 3 options, each relating to one of the 4 orientations to the common good. The participants completed the measures in a quiet setting with no time constraints. Most participants

took about 30-35 minutes to complete the materials. The data set was a random breakdown in two tranches (A and B) of 100 subjects each, working only on the first tranche (A). Each answer given by each person was a full transcript, for a total of 1500 responses analysed. Using the first draft of the manual coding (outcome of the previous study), two independent coders proceeded to score all the answers of the first 50 subjects and then of the second 50 subjects.

**RESULTS AND OUTCOMES.** Through the analysis of the responses provided by the two independent coders to the first 50 subjects, we provided a qualitative comparison of the response coded through the final version of the categorized manual, remodelling the coding system in order to be more responsive to the answers developed by subjects. Using the revised version of the manual, further coders categorization of the 50 remaining subjects was used in order to assess degree of agreement between the raters. The per cent agreement was of 85% in relation to the orientation category (between the category) and of 75% for the specific category (within the category). Further analysis of the discrepancies found between coders was used in order to improve a second version of the categorized manual.

## **2. THE ENDING RATIONALIZED FORM OF THE CODING MANUAL.**

Finally, it was analysed the categories identified starting from preliminary studies from a theoretical point of view. Through the attempt to rationalize



all empirical differences among categories in terms of theory, I got to a final version of the coding manual. The aim was to create a **rationalized form**, related to a hierarchical order within the different categories, due to a more or less “reflected” mode of understanding and orientation. Having regard to the theoretical approaches described in chapter one and two, it was re-categorised the groups of response looking at the reflective process below each one, and to the underlying investment in the moral issues. In this sense, for each of the four orientations of the common good hypothesized (A- personal; B – group; C – national; D-global), are traced responses at different levels (1 to 4) of understanding. Only for reasons of practicality have all categories been identified with this system of recognition (letter for the orientation and number for level of understanding). Clearly not all the categories could be traced back to a clear order of development and, rather, in some cases, the same sets of responses had to be considered as simple qualitative categories, without a clear theoretical coherence. In “**Appendix A**” are presented all the categories together with the rationale and examples explaining each category.

Specifically, moving from the extended list of all categories, can be identified the following main clusters of theoretically relevant responses:

- **basic and automatic responses** that demonstrate a lack of reflection respect to the choice made. Such responses, while being indicative of a certain orientation to the common good, do not indicate a person’s

- developed ability to justify their assumption of common good and to express their reasoning. These type of responses are placed at level 1 of each orientation of the common good. Specifically, this **automatic response of common good** – placed at **group level (B1)**, **national level (C1)** and **global level (D1)** – are almost entirely based on what is proposed in the response alternative or in the scenario, with no personal reflection or investment in the situation (using the same words) or referring to expressions such “*this is right*” or “*I think exactly in this way*”;
- **intermediate responses** that, while making explicit reference to the predominance of one orientation over another, are based on assumptions and specific aspects that are the outcome of having assimilated some aspects, rules or values without having fully reflected and deeply made it their own. In this sense, the person reports internalized issues of common good (clearly attributable to a certain orientation) without a reflected selfhood. These type of responses are placed at Level 2. In particular: **specific and aspecific national orientation (C2)** that express the good of the nation as prevalent compared to other orientations without a full understanding of the social structure of reference and a full moral commitment (“*the good of the nation comes first*” or “*must always place the needs of their own country*”). This interest can be divided into sub-categories that refer to particular aspects – such as economy, competitiveness, innovation and

growth of the nation (“*we must always protect the state's economy*” or “*the development of companies improves the competitiveness of their country*”); security of the nation; ethical climate in the nation; etc. – that are interiorized but not completely selfhood; **specific and specific global orientation (D2)** that refer to values or universal goods (nature, environment, water, peace, equity, justice), chosen as more important than others (due to the orientation or national group or staff) but without explaining the reason. The global reach of such goods is given by the context of the scenario or the option chosen without an active interiorization and a reflective comprehension (“*you must respect the earth*”, “*the water must be of all*” or “*peace must come first*”);

- responses that refer to a **full understanding of the common good**. These groups of responses, in fact, show an ample capacity by people in justifying their choices, showing that they are able to question their assumption and to actively internalize them. The common good, then, in addition to being actually internalized are also fully felt and understood. These categories demonstrate the ability to embrace the related moral value and to feel fully responsible for this. These type of responses are placed at level 3. Specifically: **full national orientation (C3)** that refers on the one hand to the society understood as a network of relationships defined by fairness and justice (putting the emphasis on abstract institutions and interactions that structure the society itself), on the other

hand to individual attitudes to the society that affect (1) respect for the law and the rules governing the institutions, including the meritocracy; (2) the duties and responsibilities in specific roles (doctors, journalists , etc.) for the common good; (3) the sense of responsibility, sense of civic duty, for the good of the country; **full global orientation (D3)** refers on the one hand to relations between nations made of respect, justice, equity (which included the development of specific themes such as not having other countries, helping the poorest countries; perfect equality among nations; fundamental rights of each country, the good of all is more important than the interest of a single country), and on the other to an understanding of a global humanity, with common rights and reciprocal duties (through specific topics such as the fundamental equality of persons, beyond differences in language, customs, culture, and the ideal of reciprocity; ratio of solidarity with people from other countries and culture).

In the cluster of responses presented above there are no categories related to personal and group orientation. In the first case (using an “orientation” logic, different from that of “understanding” used for the construction of all other clusters) it was proceeded to the construction of a single group comprising all fully personal categories (A1; A2; A3) that therefore have “self interest” as the common element to be focused on rather than “common” – that, as for all other categories refers to a broad

social structure. In the second case, instead, it was excluded the categories of response related to group orientation (B2, B3, B4) because these classes of response were not connected by an empirical point of view to the other constructs hypothesized as relevant from a theoretical point of view.

### **c. THE FINAL FORM OF THE INSTRUMENT WITH A USABLE RATING AND SCORING SYSTEM.**

The questionnaire was developed for administration to adolescents as well as adults (ages 14 – 21+ years). It takes approximately 30-35 minutes to complete. There are fifteen stories. Under each story, there are 3 choices listed as to what the character in the story should do and the reasons why the character should behave as specified. Each of the three choices is attributable to one of the 4 hypothesised orientations to the common good. After reading each story, subjects are asked to respond indicating which of the three choice alternatives they prefer, referring not so much to what the character in the story should do (or what he would do in the character's situation) but, rather, to reasons associated with the choice. A second task required is to explain the reasons for the choice. The full questionnaire is shown in "**Appendix B**".

As already explained in the preceding paragraphs, the fifteen stories were chosen and modified through two studies that enabled the selection of those best suited to the purpose of this PhD work. The three reasons

listed under each story were based on previous typical or common responses to the stories which correspond to a specific orientation to the common good category. These reasons were chosen to be representative of the types of reasoning responses given by subjects aged 14-21 (based on the previous studies reported in the paragraph c).

The potential conflicts between the four orientations to the common good presented in the dilemmas are attributable to three conflicts: personal vs group vs national, personal vs national vs global, group vs national vs global. These contrasts are related to six fundamental conflicts: 1) personal vs group; 2) personal vs national; 3) personal vs global; 4) group vs national; 5) global vs group; 6) national vs global.

## **1. THE CODING SYSTEM.**

The procedure for rating single responses, chosen and then freely produced by the subjects, was derived from theoretical assumptions and the evidence of preliminary studies, always following the method proposed by Loevinger and Wessler (1970). The rating process was based on some basic rules: 1) **rate every response**. There are four essential *general* possibilities in matching a response to the scoring manual (**general scoring**): the response may fit one category and be completely relevant for the common good (**R-relevant**); it may be meaningful but fit no particular category being not due to an issue of the common good (**I-**

**irrelevant**). In this case reference can be made to three different types: (a) the explanation does not apply to any of the four orientations hypothesised but is based on different aspects such as altruism or personal morality; (b) does not explain the choice made, but why other options were not chosen; (c) prevents or eliminates the conflict between the orientations; it may be omitted or too fragmentary to be meaningful (**M – missing**); it may be meaningful to the common good but fit no particular category (**U – unclassifiable**). 2) **rate the response as a whole**. The unit of measurement is the issue concerning the common good (which is indicated in the responses) rather than word choice or count. The idea is that nothing less than the whole response is a safe index of the subject's meaning. 3) **rate on the level of meaning**. In particular, what the subject meant to say, without making any inferences about what the subject really means but trying to take the meaning of the completion at its face value; 4) **rate through a careful judgment**. The classification (while being independent from the scenario) must proceed dilemma by dilemma, in order to allow the encoder the specificities of each scenario.

The task is to decide whether the response at issue shares whatever the common content of the category is. Aware that the different categories are arbitrary, **the categories serve no purpose except to aid raters in finding first the orientation to the common good the response refers to and, then, the connected level of reasoning within the same**

**orientation.** To do that the raters have to: 1) establish the orientation the response refers to, in any case the option chosen by the subject; 2) assess whether the explanation is sufficiently detached from the formulations suggested in the situations and options, in order eventually to encode the response as a minimal expression (see manual); 3) make sure that there is a category that reflects closely the explanation provided by the subject; 4) compare the category identified with others with which there might be confusion in deciding which is most appropriate (see manual); 5) finally encode the answer. One should not, however, force the a response into a category where its fit is dubious, but rather proceed to “unclassifiable” response.

## **2. THE SCORING SYSTEM.**

Entering into the scoring procedure, for reasons of conciseness and clarity the focus has been placed first on the orientation score and then to the reasoned score. Indeed the two scores are not separated from a conceptual point of view.

- **THE “ORIENTATION” SCORE.** The first scoring procedures for the responses refer to the **orientation chosen in contrast with the other.** The computation is made taking into account the **orientation re-evaluated by the rater.** It is possible to compute a **“single orientation score”** – one for each of the four types of orientation to the common good hypothesized – or an “overall



orientation score” – a single total score indicative of the general orientation specific for each subject. In each story, for all the three reasoning categories submitted as response (and referable to one of the four basic orientations), value 1 is assigned if it is chosen and 0 if it is not chosen. The subject’s ratings are then compared to the answer key (which provides the orientation to the common good category corresponding to each of the three reasons for each story) then the “assigned value” is listed under the respective orientation and the scores are added up for each category. This is the **“SINGLE ORIENTATION SCORE”**, one for each of the four orientations to the common good hypothesized – personal score, group score, national score, global score. In some cases, it is desirable to obtain an overall score rather than separate scores. There are two overall scores: **a)** the **“FREQUENCY OVERALL ORIENTATION SCORE”**, computed by considering the frequency of each orientation and **establishing the membership of each subject to one of three characteristic modes of response considered relevant to an understanding of and orientation to the common good**: strong predominance of personal (with at least 60% of responses to self-interest); high percentage of national and global responses (the sum of which is at least equal to 65% of total); finally, an intermediate group, where no interest is predominant; **b)** the **“COMPUTED OVERALL ORIENTATION**

**SCORE**", calculated by subtracting the individual category score from those related to larger structures – the group category score, national category score and global category score.

- **THE REASONED SCORE.** The scoring of the responses freely produced by the subjects are computed by followed these steps: **1) making sure that at least 10 dilemmas have yielded scorable response:** Questionnaire that fewer than 10 scorable response do not result in reliable protocol scores, and should be discarded from analysis; **2)** similarly to what is reported above with regard to the orientation score, in each story value 1 is assigned to the single category rated and then the "assigned value" is listed under the respective category and the scores are added up for each category. As reported in the previous paragraph, the **single reasoned categories** are identified by a *letter* indicating reference orientation (A – *personal*, B – *group* C – *national*, D – *global*) and by a *number* indicating the different levels of understanding each category (1 to 4). The response provided by the subject may combine parts corresponding to two or more categories. In this case ( if the rated category is qualitatively different) value 1 is assigned to each single category rated, so that every story can generate more than one score; **3)** being the scores of the single categories too fragmented, the "**REASONED SCORE**" is calculated referring to the sum of those

categories fixed at similar levels of reasoning and understanding, with a clear reference to an order of development connected to the common good. There are four broad categories: **“not qualified response of common good”** (B1 + C1 + D1). **“totally self-interest response”** (A1+A2 +A3), **“internalized but not up-reasoned response”** (C2 + D2) and finally **“full understanding response of common good”** (C3 + D3); **4)** to compute the **“OVERALL REASONED SCORE”**, I consider the frequency of each reasoned category and establish the membership of each subject to one of three characteristic modes of response relevant to an understanding of and orientation to the common good: **strong comprehension of common good** (subjects with high C3 + D3 and low A1+A2+A3); **low comprehension of common good** (subjects with low C3 + D3 and high A1+A2+A3); finally, an intermediate group, where there is **no type of comprehension predominant**.

#### **d. THE EVALUATION OF THE SCORING MANUAL: THE PERCENT AGREEMENT AND THE INTERRATER REABILITY ANALYSIS.**

An essential part of any research project using a production measure is the attainment of satisfactory inter-rater reliability. In order to carry out an analysis of the final version of the coding manual, it was collected approximately 300 protocols relating to students at three high schools in

Rome. It was proceeded then to the preparation of a detailed analysis system of 150 protocols by two independent coders. Through the study of the agreement between the evaluators and a survey of the inter-raters reliability, it was possible to obtain the identification of a single reference distribution of the score. The starting point was the final rationalized form of the scoring manual. For same sample of protocols, a list of responses, identified only by code number, was typed for each stem. The responses were thereby removed from the context of their protocols. Thus the rater had to get information solely from each response considered on its own. There was no possibility of reading a response differently according to other responses given by the same subject or according to background knowledge concerning the subject, all of which is omitted. For each stem, every response in the sample was given a category recognition score (referring to the level of reasoning connected) by two raters, each working alone. The raters rated all responses to one dilemma before going to another dilemma. After completing the ratings for one dilemma, the raters conferred where they differed and arrived at an agreed rating and recognitions/production category for each response. Each rater rated all protocols before comparing with others. The final step was decoding. Here every response was listed in the category the raters had put it, together with the protocol number. The decoding reports then formed the basis for the empirical revision of the manual.

## **1. PARTICIPANTS.**

Were collected approximately 300 protocols from as many students at three high schools in Rome, on the whole balanced by sex; 150 subjects were included in the study selected by random mode, of which 71 males (47.3%) and 79 females ( 52.7%). The age was between 14 and 21 years, with an average of 17.11 years and a standard deviation of 1.538.

## **2. CODERS TRAINING SYSTEM.**

The study involved two evaluators: the first one “**expert**” – because he had actively contributed to the setting of the theoretical study and to all subsequent stages of the methodological construction of the instrument and to the preparation of the manual coding; the second one “**non-expert**” – without expertise with the theory of reference used for the setting of the questionnaire, as well as with the instrument and with the coding system used. In this sense, I set up a system of ad hoc training, divided as follows: a) **first phase of familiarization with tool and with the manual of codes**; it consisted in a familiarization with the instrument and with the manual coding by the not expert coder, also through the study of coding examples in the manual and the subsequent discussion of the same with the expert evaluator; b) **second phase of practice evaluation**: through coding 30 protocols drawn from the 100 previously used for the structuring of the final version of the coding manual and,

therefore, already encoded by the two expert evaluators; the non-expert coder proceeded to coding in a totally independent manner (thereby avoiding any contact with the other expert evaluators) in “blind” mode (i.e. they do not have any news relating to the subject and analyse each response far removed from the general context of the individual protocol), proceeding to the scoring of responses to one scenario at a time; at the end, evaluations of all responses for each scenario were compared with those of the experts, including through further discussion with the expert evaluator in order to harmonize any discrepancies; c) **training that involved both coders:** from the 300 protocols available, 30 protocols were randomly selected and coded (in “blind” with respect to the characteristics of the subjects and the other answers provided by the same person) independently (between the two evaluators): At the end of the coding phase steps were then made to compare the encodings carried out, before proceeding to further discussion and harmonization of coding modes in discordant cases.

### **3. SCORING PROCEDURE FOLLOWED.**

For the protocol scoring procedure included in the study, it was followed the subsequent steps:

a) **Data base planning:** The subjects were identified with a new reference number, proceeding to create a database, divided by scenario,

each consisting of 150 responses (for a total of 2250 responses). The material was organized to allow a “blind” assessment by the two coders, based solely on the answer given, without knowing any feature of the subject and of the other answers in the same protocol.

b) **Response codification:** The two coders proceeded to the coding of all responses of all subjects for all scenarios independently, avoiding any contact at this stage. Specifically, the following steps were followed: 1) verifying that all subjects had an encoding for all the answers, both at the level of orientation for each scenario that coding operated directly by the encoder; 2) counting, for each subject, the number of responses considered relevant for orientation to the common good, in order to identify those protocols identified as reliable based on the number of evaluable responses (at least 10) and excluding those not used by reason of the excessive number of missing answers; 3) calculating, for each subject, the individual scores and totals, referring both to the orientation (considered individually and in conflict) and to the qualitative categories (arising from coding made by each assessor).

c) **Comparison of scores:** checking the percentage of agreement between the two coders and inter-rater reliability. Inter-rater reliability was assessed using Cohen’s kappa statistics (Dunn, 2004; Kraemer et al., 2002). High kappa values indicate the ability of the investigated measure or classification to make clear distinctions between subjects (Kraemer et

al., Vach, 2005). In addition, it might reflect the ability of raters to distinguish between adjacent categories (Darroch and McCloud, 1986).

#### 4. RESULTS.

##### a) ORIENTATION RATING OF EVERY RESPONSE.

The orientation response chosen by each subject for the 15 dilemmas was re-evaluated by the two raters. The aim, as amply explained before, was to confirm the concordance of the orientation chosen (marking one of the three responses on the paper) with the quality of the response actively produced by the subject (rated as attributable as personal, group, national or global orientation). Also in this case the results highlighted a high agreement between the two raters (95%) as well as high Cohen's kappa inter-rater correlations ( $k = .93$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). A substantial agreement between the two raters was evidenced. (Table 1).

Table 1.

<b>SINGLE ORIENTATION SCORE</b> (personal, group, national and global orientation)		
N	INTERRATER CORRELATION*	PERCENT AGREEMENT
2250	.93	95,3%

\* correlation is significant ( $p < .0001$ )



### b) RATING OF SINGLE REASONED RESPONSE.

It was measured the relationship between the coding of the two evaluators for each response actively produced by all the subjects for all the 15 dilemmas. The reference being the single coding manual categories identified by a letter indicating the reference orientation (A – personal, B – group C – national, D – global) and by a number indicating the different level of understanding each category (1 to 4). The results underlined a good agreement between the two raters (93%) and high Cohen's kappa inter-rater correlations (  $k = .91$  ,  $p < .0001$ ). A substantial agreement between the two raters was evidenced (Table 2).

**Table 2.**

SINGLE REASONED SCORE (A1,A2,A3,A4; B1,B2,B3,B4; C1,C2,C3,C4; D1,D2,D3,D4)		
N	INTERRATER CORRELATION*	PERCENT AGREEMENT
2250	.91	92.6%

\* correlation is significant ( $p < .0001$ )

### c) RATING OVERALL SCORE.

In order to verify the agreement between the two coders relative to subject and not to the single response, it was analysed also the overall score, referable both to orientation and reasoned measure. Also in this case the outcomes are largely satisfactory. As underlined in the following tables, for the **overall score relative to orientation** the agreement between the

two raters was absolute (100%) as well as the Cohen's kappa inter-rater correlations ( $k = .1$  ,  $p < .0001$ ). A substantial agreement between the two raters was evidenced. Also with respect to the overall reasoned score the inter-rater correlation was high ( $k = .98$  ,  $p < .01$ ). (Table 3).

**Table 3.**

<b>OVERALL ORIENTATION SCORE – FREQUENCY</b> (strong predominance of personal; high percentage of national and global responses; no interest predominance)		
N	INTERRATER CORRELATION*	PERCENT AGREEMENT
150	.1	100,0%

\* correlation is significant ( $p < .0001$ )

<b>OVERALL REASONED SCORE</b> (strong, low and not predonminat type common good comprehension)	
N	INTERRATER CORRELATION*
150	.98

\* correlation is significant ( $p < .01$ )

## **e. DISCUSSION**

The present study was structured to render comprehensible all the methodological steps made in the construction of the instrument of analysis of the orientation to the common good. **The intention was to clarify**, starting from the theoretical assumptions presented in the two

introductory chapters, **the phases used both for the creation of dilemma stimulus and coding system for the spontaneous reasoning of the subjects.**

The constant attention paid to **combine theoretical principles and empirical evidence** has been highlighted also through the **presentation of four preliminary studies.** Those pilot investigations – characterised by the continuous “going from protocol scores to the categories and from the categories back to protocol scores” (Blasi, 1993) – point out the **strong anchorage of the questionnaire to the spontaneous mode of the subjects to interact with respect to ordinary situations of public ethics.** The study shows all the methodological choices made – with respect to *questionnaire structure* (number and composition of dilemmas and response alternative, response mode request to the subject), *rating and scoring procedure* and, especially, to the *category of coding adopted* for the response actively produced by the subjects – are the outcome of such a continuous comparison between theory and empirical findings. As evidenced, even if not all the manual categories refer to a theoretical relevant order of development, some of these were found to be consistent with the initial assumptions, highlighting the presence of different modes of reasoning with respect to the common good.

**All the methodological choices made are shown to be supported by more than encouraging reliability. The questionnaire displays in fact**

**high inter-rater reliability between two raters**, with one of the two inexperienced (respect to the theory and the analysis system). Inter-rater reliability was elevated both in relation to the coding of the type of orientation expressed in the response (orientation score) and relatively to the quality of the response produced by the subject (reasoned score). It shows the efficiency of the coders training system used, proving the questionnaire to be a practical measure that can be scored reasonably quickly and reliably even by self-trained inexperienced scorers.

According to this view, **the results of the study necessarily represent only a first interlocutory and preliminary outcome that will be later developed through further investigations**. Scenarios as well as coding categories can be developed which are more responsive to the reasoning of the subjects. In order to achieve a more and more comprehensive and general analysis system it will be useful to focus on how other categories of persons use to interface with such issues of public ethics.

In this sense, the main value of the presented study is the method that it affords in the continuous revision and development of the theory on which the measure depends and vice versa, creating a sort of virtuous circle.

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## **CHAPTER IV**

### **THE ORIENTATION TOWARDS THE COMMON GOOD: THE STUDY OF THE RELATIONS WITH SOCIOMORAL REASONING AND OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC THEORETICALLY RELEVANT VARIABLES.**

## **INTRODUCTION.**

The objective of this research is to investigate the validity of the Orientation to the Common Good Questionnaire. It was explored the extent to which different levels of **socio-moral reasoning** are connected with the level of orientation to the common good (*personal, group, national and global*) and to the different levels of understanding that characterise each orientation (*“not qualified response”, “totally self-interest response”, “internalized but not up-reasoned response” and “full understanding response of common good”*). This investigation is intended as a test of **concurrent validity**, meaning the socio-moral reasoning as the main reference construct for the measurement. It was furthermore investigated the convergent validity with respect to **demographic theoretically relevant variables as gender and socio-economic status**. It was decided to address such analysis in relation to **adolescent subjects**. As many researchers have in indeed noted, adolescence is a period of time when multiple transitions occur (Simmons, Burgeson, & Reef, 1988; Steinberg & Morris 2001). In particular it implies the **transition into large social context experiences**, where the adolescent begin to assert

greater autonomous control over his decisions, emotions and actions. As a consequence, the understanding of the self in relation to the social world increases (Coleman and Hendry, 1990) and moral life faces new challenges, opportunities, and influences. Those aspects are of fundamental importance for the development of individual differentiation in the orientation to the common good.

### **SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE-TAKING AND MORAL JUDGMENT AS CONCURRENT COSTRUCTS OF THE ORIENTATION TO THE COMMON GOOD.**

Social perspective-taking represents a central concept in relation to the comprehension and orientation to the common good in public ethic situations. The expression of a certain orientation in social issues is hypothesized to be connected with an ability to take the perspective of different social groups as an extension of the person's location, and hence his or her adoption of a different position through such ability. (see chapters one and two). It is possible to make a sort of **developmental parallel between the perspective taking level, moral judgment stages and expression of orientation to the common good.** The progressive development **from self-centred to more in-depth or reflective social perspective-taking** established in Selman's levels is directly related to the developmental structure of stages described in the Gibbs et al. (1992) revised version of Kohlberg's moral judgment theory. Such socio-moral perspective is essential for the purpose of this study because it refers to the



individual point of view taken in defining both social fact and socio-moral values.

Of particular theoretical relevance for the present study is:

- a) **the transition away from the self-reflective, reciprocal exchange perspectives of perspective-taking (Level 2) and moral judgment (Stage 2).** In both perspective-taking and moral judgment, this transition marks a fundamental shift away from an egocentric bias (Moir, 1974). **The persistence into adolescence of a strong “me-centredness”** (Lickona, 1983) **or egocentric bias represents a socio-moral delay and it was hypothesized to be related to personal orientation to the common good** and to a low reasoned level of orientation to the common good. In fact – while normally egocentric bias declines with experience, as subjects see their self-interest in the light of the welfare of others and the social groups to which they belong – of course, people continue to have some bias. Even as mature adults *“we experience our own points of view more or less directly, whereas we must always attain the other person’s view in more indirect ways”* (Flavell, Miller & Miler, 1993). As Piaget recognized, adults come to view the world less egocentrically than children, although they do not outgrow their childhood tendencies altogether. Many social judgments, even among adults, are still egocentrically biased. Such a lack of decentration (Flavell, 1985)

naturally lead to certain common good outcomes, connected to the non-emergence of equality and reciprocity in social realms (Damon, 1997);

- b) **the evolution from Stage 3 reasoning** – that works best in dyadic relationships with family members or close friends – **to that in Stage 4** – where the subject becomes more largely concerned with society as a whole. In this shift the individual emphasizes a **strong regard for societal relations** (Berk, 2003) addressing his attention on respecting authority, obeying laws and performing his duties in order to maintain the social order. It requires **extended perspective-taking experiences within more complex societal groups**, as suggested by Kohlberg (1984) and demonstrated by Mason & Gibbs (1993). It was hypothesized that **such a transformation could be related to a higher and more reasoned level of orientation to the common good.**
- c) the increase in **post-conventional moral thinking** likely to **take a moral critical of one's society's perspective and to achieve a more objective point of view** about social issues (Blasi, 2010). It was hypothesized that those reflecting on the values and norms of their social structure are discriminant of the capacity to reach a high orientation to the common good. Only through an active appropriation and the distancing from the values and rules of such a society, can the

person become really involved in such more elevated common good issues

In this context, **the analysis of the correlation between the expression of the socio-moral stages and common good** (both orientation and reasoned level of understanding) **assume an essential significance in giving theoretical strength to the central assumptions of my doctoral dissertation.** The quality of the socio-moral reasoning has to be directly related to the orientation of common good expressed in public ethic situations.

#### **THE THEORETICALLY RELEVANT DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES TO THE COMMON GOOD.**

A number of variables have been theorized and evidenced as predictors of moral reasoning (Turner et al., 2002). Such variables include: gender, age, socio-economic status and others not mentioned here. Testing the relationship between orientation to the common good and the demographic variables are central as a study of convergent validity.

**GENDER.** The issue of sex differences in moral development and social perspective-taking has been studied extensively, but with arguable and less conclusive results (Bryant, 1985; Rothenberg, 1970). **Numerous studies find sex differences to be insignificant as a determinant of moral development** (Murray, 1996; Hunter, 1997; Kanny, 1997; Likewise and

Coder, 1975; Dortzbach, 1975; Lee and Snarey, 1988; Wilson, 1995). Jaffee & Hyde 2000) conducted a meta-analysis of results from a variety of moral reasoning instruments. They reported no significant differences in either care or justice orientations in moral reasoning between males and females. Also studies examining age groups from childhood through adulthood have consistently found that females are not scored lower than males on tests of moral judgment maturity (Walker, 1984) but in these studies **women consistently score significantly higher than men** and there is no bias in favour of men, as Gilligan suggests. **Other research has found a difference attributed to gender, in favour of girls among preadolescent and adolescent youth** (Shooner-Reichi & Beaudoin, 1998; Bosacki & Astington, 1999) suggesting that **gender differences in social perspective-taking may emerge with the onset of adolescence**. Thoma's (1986) meta-analysis of fifty-six DIT studies administered to over six thousand male and female subjects reports that at every age and education level, females score significantly higher than males. More recent examples include Morris's (1977) study of 345 school psychologists, found females scored significantly higher on a measure of ethical beliefs. Wark and Krebs (1996) found that males report more stage 2 justice orientation than females, while females report more stage 3 care orientation than males do. Also Garmon, Basinger, Gregg, and Gibbs (1996) found that early adolescent females were usually at Stage 3 moral judgment, while the

males were still evidencing a substantial degree of Stage 2 thinking and that care-related and ethically ideal expressions were more prevalent in females' moral judgment. By mid- to late-adolescence, however, the males "caught up", i.e., closed the disparity in moral judgment maturity. This finding is consistent with several other studies examining gender differences in level of moral judgment (e.g., Turiel, 1976; Skoe & Gooden, 1993; Silberman & Snarey, 1993). **Such gender differences are hypothesized to be central also for the orientation and the reasoned level of understanding of common good expressed.**

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS.** Numerous studies demonstrate a **link between higher socio-economic status (SES) and higher-stage reasoning** (e.g., Kohlberg, 1963; Bhargava, 1986; Devos, 1983; Commons et al. 2000). Bandopadhyaya (1981) and Vandana (1993) established that this relationship could be attributable to specific components of SES, such as income or education. Anyhow the evidence suggests that **higher socioeconomic status is associated with greater civic involvement in adolescence** (Johnson et al. 1988; Youniss et al. 1997, 1999; Youniss & Yates 1999). **Socio-economic factors have been found to affect moral values and moral processes of evaluating situations and taking behavioural decisions.** (Sachdeva et al., 2012). For instance, the economic background of individuals helps to define the

worth that is attributable to values or rules. The process is particularly evident for rules conceivable as socio-conventional. Evaluations of what is moral seem to vary according to the **differences in the social position of individuals**, even those belonging to the same cultural context or country: for instance, the Indian social system of castes that are characterised by different standards in the conceptualization of what is morally right or wrong (Sachdeva et al. 2012). Substantially, the hypothesis is that **SES could play an important rule in the expression of common good orientation in large social situations, being connected both to different possibilities of social interaction (more or less extensive) and to different levels of individual positioning in the same social structure experimented.**

#### **AIM AND HYPOTHESES.**

As discussed earlier, even though there are no previous studies, **it was theoretically assumed a relationship between people's orientation to the common good in situations involving public ethics, moral judgment development and related relevant demographic variables in adolescent subjects.** The transition from pragmatic (stage 2) to mutualistic moral judgment (stage 3) and, then, to societal oriented moral stage 4 and post conventional reasoning during adolescence may be a key process accounting for the development of orientation to the common good. Preliminary analyses should find **different orientations to the common**

**good hypothesized and the related different reasoned level to correlate also with gender and socio-economic status.** It was also analyzed the differences between chronological ages. The assumption is that the sample is too homogeneous in terms of age to find a significant correlation. The main hypotheses of the study are the following:

1. different orientations to the common good (single orientations scores - personal, group, national and global) will correlate with moral judgment stages (global stage and SRMS) differently: **negative correlation with personal orientation (egocentric bias)** and, contrarily, **progressively positive correlations for the other three common good orientations**, related to the increasingly wider social structures;

2. the different levels of reasoning that characterize each orientation – reasoned score: “not qualified response of common good” (B1 + C1 + D1), “totally self-interest response” (A1 + A2 + A3), “internalized but not up-reasoned response” (C2 + D2) and finally “full understanding response of common good” (C3 + D3) – will correlate with moral judgment stages (global stage and SRMS): **negative correlations with the most elementary categories as “not qualified response” (B1 + C1 + D1) and “totally self-interest response” (A1 + A2 + A3)** , and **progressively positive correlations to the evolved categories as “internalized but not up-reasoned response” (C2 + D2) and “full understanding response of common good” (C3 + D3)**;

3. **females** (relative to adolescent males) will evidence **higher correlations to up levels of single orientation score and up reasoned score**;
4. low **socio-economicus status subjects will show lower correlations to high single orientation score** (personal, group, national and global) **and high reasoned score.**

## **a. METHOD**

### **1. PARTICIPANTS.**

Participants included 150 students from three high schools in Rome, balanced by sex (71 males – 47.3% and 79 females – 52.7%) and ranged in age from 14 to 21 years, with an average of 17.11 years and a standard deviation of 1.538. The socioeconomic status (SES) ratings of the families ranged from 8 to 18 , with means of 13,37 (SD = 3,1).

### **2. MESAURE.**

- a) **ORIENTATION TO THE COMMON GOOD QUESTIONNAIRE.** As previously discussed, the Orientation to the Common Good Questionnaire (OCGQ) is a measuring used to determine participant's orientation to the common good (personal, group, national and global) and the reasoned quality of response actively produced by the subject ("not qualified response", "totally self-interest response", "internalized but not up-reasoned response" and "full understanding response of common good"). It contains fifteen moral



dilemmas, each of which is followed by three statements. The participants choose one of the statement and then active explain the reasons for their choice. The scores from the OCGQ – outcome of the encoding performed by an encoder – were calculated reffering to **single orientation score** (personal, group, national and global score) and **overall orientation score** (frequency and compute) and to **reasoned score** – that fere to: (B1 + C1 + D1) “not qualified response of common good”, (A1 + A2 + A3) “totally self-interest response”, (C2 + D2) “internalized but not up-reasoned response” and finally (C3 + D3) “full understanding response” –and **overall reasoned score** – that fere to: strong comprehension (subjects with high C3+D3 and low A1+A2+A3); low comprehension (subjects with low C3+D3 and high A1+A2+A3); finally, an intermediate group, where there is no type of comprehension predominant).

- b) **SOCIOMORAL REFLECTION.** To assess the participants’ level of moral judgment, it was used the **Socio-moral Reflection Measure-Short Form**, developed by Gibbs (1992). The SRM-SF is a group administrable, pencil-and-paper production task designed to assess the stage of moral judgment. The SRM-SF is derived from Kohlberg’s Moral Judgment Interview (MJ; Colby & Kohlberg, 1987). The SRM-SF consists of 11 items that address several socio-moral values, such as saving a life, not stealing, and keeping a promise.

Each item contains a two-part question, and respondents are asked to evaluate and justify the importance of each value. The justifying responses are then scored for stage of moral reasoning. Stages 1 and 2 constitute the immature level of sociomoral reflection and are both relatively concrete or superficial, confusing morality with physical power (Stage 1) or pragmatic deals (Stage 2). Stage 3 and 4 are more mature level of sociomoral reflection in which reasoner enters through superficial or extrinsic considerations to infer the bases of interpersonal relationship (Stage 3) or society (Stage 4). The primary SRM-SF protocol score is the Socio-moral Reflection Maturity Score (SRMS), which is simply the mean of the item ratings. Scores on the SRMS range from 1.00 (a questionnaire yielding exclusively Stage 1 ratings) to 4.00 (a questionnaire yielding exclusively Stage 4 ratings). The SRM-SF does not extend beyond the fourth stage. The SRM-SF has been demonstrated to have acceptable levels of test-retest reliability and internal consistency for 4<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders, university students, adults, and a delinquent male sample (Gibbs et al., 1992). In addition, the SRM-SF evidenced acceptable concurrent validity with the MJI and convergent validity with the theoretically relevant variables of age, verbal intelligence, and SES. Also, the SRM-SF evidenced

discriminant validity by showing no correlation with a measure of social desirability.

- c) **DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION.** A questionnaire designed to collect information regarding **gender, age, family background** (i.e., family composition and education) was administered to each participant. Age of participants was given in years and subsequently reduced to three age classes. The construction of the **socio-economic indicator** was based on two aspects: employment status and level of education of parents. In this sense, the subjects defined the profession of their parents by choosing from 12 different categories of use, then aggregated into 6 groups. The qualification possessed by both parents was carried out with reference to 4 ordered categories (elementary, middle school, high school diploma, bachelor's degree). Through the sum of the four ordinal categorical variables (employment of the father and mother, educational level of the father and mother) was defined the socio-economic status of each subject.

### **3. PROCEDURES.**

Participants were recruited from three high schools in Rome. The subjects divided into classrooms, completed the measures in a quiet setting. During the session participants were first asked to read and sign an informed consent form. The signed consent forms were then collected

and placed together in a separate packet to keep the experimental material anonymous. The participants were then given a questionnaire packet and asked to read it carefully and fill it out completely, but not to put their name. Participants were told to take as much time as they needed to fill out the packet. Once completed, participants turned in their packets to the researcher who put the experimental material into an envelope separate from the consent forms.

**CODING SRM-SF PROTOCOLS.** In the current study, two independent raters coded all SRM-SF using a “blind” assessment. Before starting the encoding, the raters completed the self-training exercises contained in the coding manual and checked the score reliability (using protocols from the sample not included in the research program) scoring about ten questionnaires independently, identifying and discussing scoring discrepancies. The inter-rater reliability was then computed. The agreement between the two raters respected the minimal standard established by the author to consider the results valid. The SRMS correlation was  $r = .788$ , the global stage agreement with 1 interval was 95.9% and the exact global stage agreement was 82.9. All of the 150 students produced scorable protocols. The SRM scores ranged from 129 to 361 ( $M = 293$ ;  $SD = 0.40$ ). This means that the level of moral reasoning varied from Stage 1 (only 1 Subject) to Stage 3 (4) (26 students).

## b. RESULTS

The results are reported in two sections. In the first one, concurrent validity is examined by correlations between orientation to the common good and moral judgment measures. In the second section, the association with sex, age and socio-economic status is assessed. It was used Spearman correlations and the chi-square test.

### 1. MORAL JUDGMENT AND ORIENTATION TO THE COMMON GOOD.

In the sample, the correlations between the **OCGQ orientation score with the SRM-SF** are presented in Table 4. As shown, “**single orientation score**” relative to personal, national and global orientation correlate with SRM-SF. Personal orientation is negative related to SRM-SF ( $r = -0,20, p < .05$ ). National orientation and global orientation correlated positively with SRM-SF (respectively:  $r = 0,21, p < .01$  and  $r = 0,25, p < .01$ ). No correlation was found between the SRM-SF and the “group orientation score”. The “compute overall recognition score” show a positive correlation to SRM-SF ( $r = 0,28, p < .01$ ).

**Table 4**

ORIENTATION TO THE COMMON GOOD SINGLE ORIENTATION SCORE	SOCIOMORAL REFLECTION	
	GLOBAL STAGE	SRMS
PERSONAL	<b>-,197*</b>	<b>-,204*</b>
GROUP	-0,119	-0,101
NATIONAL	<b>,219**</b>	<b>,212**</b>

GLOBAL	<b>,225**</b>	<b>,248**</b>
COMPUTE OVERALL ORIENTATION SCORE	<b>,270**</b>	<b>,285**</b>

\*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01

A chi-square test was applied to determine whether SRM\_SF and the “**frequency overall orientation score**” were associated. Results showed that **there is significant association**. The **personal category** tends to be more present (2.3) in lower stage (stage 2.5). Beside the **national and global category** tend to be less present (-2.4) in lower stages (stage 2.5).

**Table 5.**

FREQUENCY OVERALL ORIENTATION SCORE		GLOBAL STAGE						Total
		1	1,5	2	2,5	3	3,5	
DIFFUSED	Count	1	2	3	17	40	9	72
	expected count	0,5	1	2,9	12,5	42,7	12,5	72
	Stand. residuals	0,8	1,1	0,1	1,3	-0,4	-1	
GLOBAL/NATIONAL	Count	0	0	2	3	43	16	64
	expected count	0,4	0,9	2,6	11,1	38	11,1	64
	Stand. residuals	-0,7	-0,9	-0,4	<b>-2,4</b>	0,8	1,5	
PERSONAL	Count	0	0	1	6	6	1	14
	expected count	0,1	0,2	0,6	2,4	8,3	2,4	14
	Stand. residuals	-0,3	-0,4	0,6	<b>2,3</b>	-0,8	-0,9	
Totale	Count	1	2	6	26	89	26	150
	expected count	1	2	6	26	89	26	150

$\chi^2(10) = 21.9, p < .01$ . The standard residuals greater than 2 are highlighted in bold.

The Spearman correlations between the **reasoned score** with the SRM-SF are presented in the following Table 6 and Table 7. As can be seen “**not qualified response of common good**” (B1+ C1+D1) is found to be **negatively related to SRM-SF** ( $r = -0,20, p < .05$ ), as well as “**totally self-interest response**” (A1+ A2+A3) ( $r = -0,25, p < .01$ ). Conversely, “**internalized but not up-reasoned response**” (C2+D2) and “**full**

understanding response of common good” (C3+D3) are positively related to SRM-SF with a different grade (respectively:  $r = 0,24$ ,  $p < .01$  and  $r = 0,36$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

**Table 6.**

REASONED SCORE	SOCIOMORAL REFLECTION	
	GLOBAL STAGE	SRMS
	A1	<b>-,357**</b>
A2	0,154	0,122
A3	-0,035	-0,019
A4	0,043	0,02
B1	-0,096	<b>-,169*</b>
B2	-0,152	-0,131
B3	-0,028	0,012
B4	-0,053	-0,043
B5	0,028	0,018
C1	<b>-,194*</b>	<b>-,201*</b>
C2	<b>,175*</b>	<b>,169*</b>
C3	<b>,254**</b>	<b>,258**</b>
C4	0	-0,014
D1	0,042	0,022
D2	0,123	<b>,164*</b>
D3	<b>,228**</b>	<b>,255**</b>
D4	0,117	0,062
E1	0,058	0,014
E2	0,033	0,096
NUL	-0,076	-0,093

\*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01

**Table 7.**

ORIENTATION TO THE COMMON GOOD	SOCIOMORAL REFLECTION	
	GLOBAL STAGE	SRMS
	B1_C1_D1	-0,157
A1_A2_A3	<b>-,238**</b>	<b>-,244**</b>
C2_D2	<b>,233**</b>	<b>,241**</b>
C3_D3	<b>,334**</b>	<b>,363**</b>

\*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01

A chi-square test was applied to determine whether SRM\_SF and the “overall reasoned score” were associated. Results presented in Table 8

showed that **there is significant association**. The **low comprehension subjects tend to be more present (2.4) in low stages of development (stage 2.5) and less present (-1.9) in high stages (stage 3.5)**. Furthermore, the **high comprehension subject tends to be more present (2.3) in higher stages (stage 3.5) and less present (-2.2) in lower stage (stage 2.5)**. The subjects without a predominant type of comprehension show no significant trend.

**Table 8.**

SOCIOMORAL REFLECTION		OVERALL REASONED SCORE			
		Low comprehension	Diffused comprehension	High comprehension	Total
GLOBAL STAGE					
1,0	Count	0	1	0	1
	expected count	,1	,7	,2	1,0
	Stand. residuals	-,4	,4	-,4	
1,5	Count	1	1	0	2
	expected count	,3	1,4	,4	2,0
	Stand. residuals	1,4	-,3	-,6	
2,0	Count	2	4	0	6
	expected count	,8	4,1	1,1	6,0
	Stand. residuals	1,3	,0	-1,1	
2,5	Count	8	18	0	26
	expected count	3,5	17,7	4,9	26,0
	Stand. residuals	<b>2,4</b>	,1	<b>-2,2</b>	
3,0	Count	9	62	18	89
	expected count	11,9	60,5	16,6	89,0
	Stand. residuals	-,8	,2	,3	
3,5	Count	0	16	10	26
	expected count	3,5	17,7	4,9	26,0



Stand. residuals	<b>-1,9</b>	-,4	<b>2,3</b>	
Count	20	102	28	150
expected count	20,0	102,0	28,0	150,0

$\chi^2 (10) = 26.6, p < .003.$

The standard residuals greater than 2 are highlighted in bold.

## 2. THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN ORIENTATION TO THE COMMON GOOD AND THEORETICALLY RELEVANT DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES.

In order to investigate the validity of the questionnaire, chi-square crosstabs were run to examine sex, age and socio-economic status differences in orientation to the common good.

### a) AGE.

A chi-square test was applied to determine whether age and both “orientation” and “reasoned” scores relative to were associated. Results showed that **there is no significant association.**

### b) GENDER.

A chi-square test was applied to determine whether gender and “single orientation score” were associated. Results showed that there is an association between **global orientation score** and gender ( $\chi^2 (2) = 13.4, p < .001$ ) (**Table 9**). The examination of the standardized residuals shows that there is a **higher representation of females (1.6) and a lower representation of males (-1.7) in global high score** and, contrary, a **higher representation of males (2.0) and a lower representation of females (-1.9) in global low score.** Even if the association between

**national orientation score** and gender is significant ( $\chi^2 (2) = 5.9, p < .05$ ) (Table 10), the examination of the standardized residuals dosent show relavant differentiations. In any case, it is possible to underline an **higher representation of males (1.4)** and a **lower representation of females (-1.3)** in **national high score**. There is no association between **personal orientation score and gender** ( $\chi^2 (2) = 3.6, p < .165$ ) (Table 11), however is useful to report **as the males tend to be more represented in personal high score while the females are less represented**. For the group orientation there is no association.

Table 9.

GLOBAL ORIENTATION SCORE		GENDER		
		Female	Male	Totale
Global low	Count	14	30	44
	expected count	23,2	20,8	44
	Stand. residuals	<b>-1,9</b>	<b>2</b>	
Global mid	Count	29	25	54
	expected count	28,4	25,6	54
	Stand. residuals	0,1	-0,1	
Global high	Count	36	16	52
	expected count	27,4	24,6	52
	Stand. residuals	<b>1,6</b>	<b>-1,7</b>	
Totale	Count	79	71	150
	expected count	79	71	150

$\chi^2 (2) = 13.4, p < .001$ . The standard residuals greater than 1.7 are highlighted in bold.

Table 10.

NATIONAL ORIENTATION SCORE		GENDER		
		Female	male	Totale
National low	Count	36	30	66
	expected count	34,8	31,2	66
	Stand. residuals	0,2	-0,2	
National mid	Count	28	16	44
	expected count	23,2	20,8	44
	Stand. residuals	1	-1,1	

National high	Count	15	25	40
	expected count	21,1	18,9	40
	Stand. residuals	-1,3	1,4	
Totale	Count	79	71	150
	expected count	79	71	150

$\chi^2 (2) = 5.9, p < .05$

**Table 11.**

PERSONAL ORIENTATION SCORE		GENDER		
		Female	male	Totale
Personal low	Count	33	26	59
	expected count	31,1	27,9	59
	Stand. residuals	0,3	-0,4	
Personal mid	Count	30	21	51
	expected count	26,9	24,1	51
	Stand. residuals	0,6	-0,6	
Personal high	Count	16	24	40
	expected count	21,1	18,9	40
	Stand. residuals	-1,1	1,2	
Totale	Count	79	71	150
	expected count	79	71	150

$\chi^2 (2) = 3.6, p < .165$

A chi-square test was applied to determine whether gender and “**frequency overall orientation score**” were associated. Results showed that there is no significant association ( $\chi^2 (2) = 4.95, p < .084$ ) (Table 12), even if there is a consistent trend, showing that **females are more present in global/natioal group and less in the personal group, while the males present the opposite distribution**. Looking at the association between gender and the **most frequent orientation category** ( $\chi^2 (4) = 16.20, p < .003$ ) (Table 13) the effect is more evident in particular whith respect to global orientation – **more females (1.8) and less males (-1.9)**.

**Table 12.**

GENDER		FREQUENCY OVERALL ORIENTATION SCORE			
		DIFFUSED	GLOBAL/NATIONAL	PERSONAL	Totale
FEMALE	Count	34	40	5	79
	expected count	37,9	33,7	7,4	79
	Stand. residuals	-0,6	1,1	-0,9	
MALE	Count	38	24	9	71
	expected count	34,1	30,3	6,6	71
	Stand. residuals	0,7	-1,1	0,9	
Totale	Count	72	64	14	150
	expected count	72	64	14	150

$$\chi^2 (2) = 4.95, p < .084$$

**Table 13.**

GENDER		MOST FREQUENT RECOGNITION CATEGORY				Totale
		Personal	Group	national	global	
Female	Count	8	2	16	52	79
	expected count	12,6	2,6	19,5	40,6	79
	Stand. residuals	-1,3	-0,4	-0,8	<b>1,8</b>	
Male	Count	16	3	21	25	71
	expected count	11,4	2,4	17,5	36,4	71
	Stand. residuals	1,4	0,4	0,8	<b>-1,9</b>	
Totale	Count	24	5	37	77	150
	expected count	24	5	37	77	150

$\chi^2 (4) = 16.20, p < .003$ . The standard residuals greater than 1.7 are highlighted in bold.

A chi-square test was applied to determine whether gender and “**reasoned score**” were associated. Results shows an association between gender and “**full understanding response of common good**” (C3 + D3) ( $\chi^2 (2) = 16.4, p < .0001$ ) (Table 14). The examination of the standardized residuals shows that there is a **higher representation of females (1.8)** and a **lower**

representation of males (-1.9) in C3\_D3 high score and, contrary, a higher representation of males (2.2) and a lower representation of females (-2.1) in C3\_D3 low score; for the other category there are no significant associations.

**Table 14.**

GENDER		C3_D3			Totale
		C3_D3 low	C3_D3 mid	C3_D3 high	
Female	Count	13	38	28	79
	expected count	23,2	35,8	20	79
	Stand. Residuals	<b>-2,1</b>	0,4	<b>1,8</b>	
Male	Count	31	30	10	71
	expected count	20,8	32,2	18	71
	Stand. Residuals	<b>2,2</b>	-0,4	<b>-1,9</b>	
Totale	Count	44	68	38	150
	expected count	44	68	38	150

$\chi^2(2) = 16.4, p < .0001$ . The standard residuals greater than 1.7 are highlighted in bold.

Also the overall reasoned score shows an association with gender ( $\chi^2(2) = 6.5, p < .03$ ) (Table 15). However the examination of the standardized residuals shows no significant differentiations even if it is possible to underline an higher representation of females (1.4) and a lower representation of males (-1.4) in high comprehension score and, contrary, a tendency to a higher representation of males (1.1) and a lower representation of females (-1.1) in low comprehension score.

**Table 15.**

GENDER		OVERALL_REASONED_SCORE			totale
		low comprehension	Diffused	high comprehension	
female	Count	7	52	20	79

	expected count	10,5	53,7	14,7	79,0
	Stand. residuals	-1,1	-,2	1,4	
male	Count	13	50	8	71
	expected count	9,5	48,3	13,3	71,0
	Stand. residuals	1,1	,2	-1,4	
	Count	20	102	28	150
	expected count	20,0	102,0	28,0	150,0

$\chi^2 (2) = 6.5, p < .03$

### c) SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS.

A chi-square test was applied to determine whether SES and “**orientaton scores**” were associated. Results shows an association between **socio-economic status** and **personal orientation score** ( $\chi^2 (4) = 12.9, p < .01$ ) (Table 16). The examination of the standardized residuals shows that there is a **higher representation of subject with low socio economic status (2.4)** and a **lower representation of subject with high socio-economic status (-1.9) in personal high score**. Contrary, even if the score is not significant, there is a a trend of **lower representation of subjects with low socio-economic status (-1.1)** and a **higher representation of subject with high socio-economic status (1.2) in personal low score**. For the **other category orientation scores there are no significant associations with socio-economic status**. Similar outcomes are emerged with respect to the association between socio-economic status and **overall orientation scores**; in fact, even if the overall orientation score is not significant, the analysis of the **most frequent category standardized residuals ( $\chi^2 (8) =$**

20.9,  $p < .007$ ) (Table 17) shows that low status subjects are more present in personal category (2.7) and, on the contrary, high status subjects are less present in personal category (-1.7).

Table 16.

PERSONAL		SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS			
		Low	Med	High	Totale
Low	Count	11	24	24	59
	expected count	15,3	24,8	18,9	59
	Stand. residuals	-1,1	-0,2	1,2	
Mid	Count	10	23	18	51
	expected count	13,3	21,4	16,3	51
	Stand. residuals	-0,9	0,3	0,4	
High	Count	18	16	6	40
	expected count	10,4	16,8	12,8	40
	Stand. residuals	<b>2,4</b>	-0,2	<b>-1,9</b>	
Totale	Count	39	63	48	150
	expected count	39	63	48	150

( $\chi^2(4) = 12.9$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The standard residuals greater than 1.7 are highlighted in bold.

Table 17.

SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS		MOST FREQUENT RECOGNITION CATEGORY				Totale
		personal	Group	national	Global	
Low	Count	13	2	8	15	39
	expected count	6,2	1,3	9,6	20,0	39,0
	Stand. residuals	<b>2,7</b>	,6	-,5	-1,1	
Mid	Count	8	1	20	33	63
	expected count	10,1	2,1	15,5	32,3	63,0
	Stand. residuals	-,7	-,8	1,1	,1	
High	Count	3	2	9	29	48
	expected count	7,7	1,6	11,8	24,6	48,0
	Stand. residuals	<b>-1,7</b>	,3	-,8	,9	
Totale	Count	24	5	37	77	150
	expected count	24,0	5,0	37,0	77,0	150,0

( $\chi^2(8) = 20.9$ ,  $p < .007$ ). The standard residuals greater than 1.7 are highlighted in bold.

The **reasoned scores** show an association between **“totally self-interest response” and SES** ( $\chi^2 (4) = 14.9, p < .005$ ) (Table 18). The examination of the standardized residuals shows that there is a **higher representation of subjects with low socio economic status (2.7)** and a lower representation of subject with high socio-economic status (-2) in high **“A1+A2+A3” score**. Contrary, even if the standardized residuals are not significant, it is useful to underline a trend of lower representation of subjects with low socio-economic status (-1.2) and a higher representation of subjects with high socio-economic status (1.3) in low **“A1+A2+A3” score**.

There is an association between **“full understanding response of common good”** ( $\chi^2 (4) = 11.3, p < .02$ ) (Table 19) and SES. The examination of the standardized residuals shows that there is a **higher representation of subject with low socio economic status (1.6)** in low **“C3+D3” score** and, contrary, a **lower representation of subjects with low socio-economic status (-1.9)** in high **“C3+D3” score**.

**Table 18.**

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS		A1_A2_A3			Total
		Low	Med	high	
Low	Count	12	11	16	39
	expected count	17,2	13,5	8,3	39
	Stand. residuals	-1,2	-0,7	<b>2,7</b>	
Mid	Count	27	24	12	63
	expected count	27,7	21,8	13,4	63
	Stand. residuals	-0,1	0,5	-0,4	
High	Count	27	17	4	48
	expected count	21,1	16,6	10,2	48
	Stand. residuals	1,3	0,1	<b>-2</b>	



	Count	66	52	32	150
Totale	expected count	66	52	32	150

( $\chi^2(4) = 14.9, p < .005$ ). The standard residuals greater than 1.7 are highlighted in bold.

**Table 19.**

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS		C3_D3			Total
		Low	Med	high	
Low	Count	17	18	4	39
	expected count	11,4	17,7	9,9	39
	Stand. residuals	<b>1,6</b>	0,1	<b>-1,9</b>	
Mid	Count	17	24	22	63
	expected count	18,5	28,6	16	63
	Stand. residuals	-0,3	-0,9	1,5	
High	Count	10	26	12	48
	expected count	14,1	21,8	12,2	48
	Stand. residuals	-1,1	0,9	0	
Totale	Count	44	68	38	150
	expected count	44	68	38	150

( $\chi^2(4) = 11.3, p < .02$ ). The standard residuals greater than 1.7 are highlighted in bold.

Finally **the overall reasoned score** shows an association with SES ( $\chi^2(4) = 16.2, p < .007$ ) (Table 20). The examination of the standardized residuals shows that there is a **higher representation of low status subject (2.1) in low comprehension score** and, contrary, an **lower representation of low status subject (-2.3) in high comprehension score**.

**Table 20.**

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS		OVERALL REASONED SCORE			Total
		low comprehension	Diffused	high comprehension	
Low	Count	10	28	1	39

	expected count	5,2	26,5	7,3	39,0
	Stand. residuals	<b>2,1</b>	,3	<b>-2,3</b>	
Mid	Count	7	41	15	63
	expected count	8,4	42,8	11,8	63,0
	Stand. residuals	-,5	-,3	,9	
High	Count	3	33	12	48
	expected count	6,4	32,6	9,0	48,0
	Stand. residuals	-1,3	,1	1,0	

$\chi^2(4) = 16.2, p < .00$ . The standard residuals greater than 2 are highlighted in bold.

### c. DISCUSSION

The socio-moral reflection is hypothesized to be the most important reference construct for both orientation and reasoned score. The Orientation to the Common Good Questionnaire (OCGQ) achieves acceptable association with Socio-moral Reflection Measure-Short Form (SRM-SF).

The results are consistent with the initial theoretical hypotheses, showing a satisfactory concurrent validity between the OCGQ and the SRM-SF and a consistent convergent validity with gender and socio-economic status.

The personal orientation on one side and the national and global orientations on the other side show correlations of opposite sign compared to SRM-SF.

The **personal orientation score is negatively correlated to socio-moral reflection** and the subjects characterized by a personal overall orientation are **more represented in lower socio-moral global stage (2.5 global stage)**. Such findings **confirm a strong self-centred and egocentric bias below such type of orientation to the common good**.

Such superficiality and self-centred bias are consistent with the results relative to the reasoned scores. Indeed, **“not qualified response” (B1\_C1\_D1) show negative correlations to socio-moral reflection and low common good comprehension subjects are lower represented in high socio-moral global stage (3.5 global stage) and higher in low stage (2.5 global stage).** Such findings evidence that a low understanding of common good issues are connected to a low socio-moral reflection stage. These lower levels of socio-moral reflection reflect the lack of active internalization of values and norms (connected to a full understanding of the common good) and awareness of personal moral implications as a mature adult in such public ethics situations. Conversely, the **nation and global orientation scores are positively correlated to socio-moral reflection** and the subjects characterized by an **overall global-national orientation are more represented in high socio-moral global stage (3.5 global stage) and less in low stage (2.5 global stage).** Likewise, **“full understanding response “ of common good (C3\_D3) are strongly correlated to socio-moral reflection** (more than just internalized response – C2\_D2), highlighting furthermore that **high common good comprehension subjects are more represented in high socio-moral global stage (3.5 global stage) and less in low stage (2.5 global stage).** Those results confirm that **society as a whole is correlated to orientations to the common good connected to more**

**complex societal groups** – nation, supra-national and global society. Moreover, it is evident that a more elevated level of socio-moral reflection allows the subjects to question societal values and rules reaching a higher understanding of the common good, removing egocentric bias.

The group orientation, that does not show any significant correlations, deserves a separate discussion. This finding must be analysed with subsequent empirical analysis in order to better understand if it must be brought back to the structuring of the dilemmas and response alternative or to a consistent finding relative to the sample.

Coherently with findings relative to social perspective taking and moral reasoning, **I found a difference in orientation to the common good in favour of women.** It is interesting to notice that girls show not only a higher level of global orientation with respect to boys, but that such difference is even more relevant when referring to “full understanding of common good” (C3\_D3). **The socio-economic status, instead, shows significant correlations to low level of orientation to the common good such as personal orientation, being negative related to high level of comprehension to the common good.** This finding seems to underline SES as a prerequisite for the development of a more mature orientation to the common good, but not sufficient for the development of a higher level of common good.

It will be useful, in successive findings, to study the influence of these socio-demographic variables in relation to a greater sample more distributed by age, taking into account other connected aspects such as parenting style, school experiences, and so on.

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## **CHAPTER V**

### **RELATIONS OF VALUES, CIVIC MORAL DISENGAGEMENT ,**

## **CIVIC BEHAVIOR AND THE ORIENTATION TOWARDS THE COMMON GOOD.**

### **INTRODUCTION.**

Adolescence implies more chances for the person to be engaged in the wider context of work or community activities, with increased exposure to socially regulated behaviours or significant socializing experiences (in particular with authority figures and peers), and becoming aware of his or her social roles and responsibilities. Through such experience, the adolescents gain a distinctive set of values and beliefs, looking at themselves as “autonomous, rational and moral agents in a larger society” (Moshman, 2011). These aspects explain adolescents’ understandings of

their social world, defining their moral social understanding and behaviour. In the present study, the aim was to further explore the orientation to the common good considering the correlations with other relevant dimensions of moral and perspective taking functioning in other theoretical approaches: personal values (Schwartz, 1992), moral disengagement (Bandura, 1991) and civic engagement (Younnis & Metz, 2007).

**Personal values** refer to motivational determinants of behaviour that transcend specific situations and serve as general criteria to select and evaluate our decisions and actions. According to the hypothesis, self-transcendence values direct attention to others' needs and promote orientation to the common good, whereas self-enhancement values legitimize selfish behaviours and allows individuals to avoid involvement with others in need (Schwartz, 2010; Schwartz & Howard, 1984). As amply explained in the first chapter, for "others" it is intended different social groups as an extension (family, small community, the state, the whole humanity) in which the person is included in various ways.

Conversely, **civic moral disengagement** refers to social cognitive mechanisms that allow people to perform harmful actions without experiencing feelings of guilt or denying their own moral principles (Bandura, 1991). Civic moral disengagement could promote the avoidance of moral responsibilities towards others or one's own social group, allowing people to put in the foreground their own needs.

Individual responsibility shows a central role in understanding this issue within social life and has implications for communities as a whole (Latane & Darley, 1970).

Finally, consistent with perspective taking and moral judgment theories, **civic engagement occasions** – connected to the implementation of social interaction experiences and social opportunities – are crucial with respect to the ability of the person to experiment and develop a high mature reasoning with regard to social issues.

**PERSONAL VALUES.** Basic personal values refer to the broad goals to which people attribute importance as guiding principles in their lives. There has been considerable theorizing on the important relationships among values, moral reasoning and ethical behaviour (Schwartz 2006; Ravlin & Meglino 1987, Lan et al. 2008; Weber 1993, Thoma 194; Helkama et al. 2003, Abdolmohammadi & Baker 2006). Weber (1993) advanced a theoretical connection between moral reasoning and personal values, establishing that moral reasoning is the “intermediate step whereby values were translated into action”. The present study refer to Schwartz (1992) theory of basic personal values. He (Schwartz 2006) states that people become aware of their priorities among values only when judgments or actions have conflicting implications in the light of different and important values such as establishing a priority among achieving justice, novelty or tradition. Schwartz (1992) defined values as transcending specific

situations and reflecting what is desirable, providing empirical evidence of a universal set of values in a steady and integrated relationship with one another (Rohan 2000). He proposed and provided substantial support for the universal existence of ten value types (Schwartz 1999; Schwartz & Rubel 2005; Schwartz & Boehnke, 2004; Schwartz and Sagiv, 1995) from universal requirements of the human condition: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security. Each value expresses a distinct motivational goal. The 10 values form a motivational continuum based on their pattern of compatibility and conflict. The value types exhibit internal reliability, temporal stability, external validity and are uncontaminated by social desirability (Bardi & Schwartz 2003). Schwartz clarifies the relationship of one value type with another, positioning conflicting value types opposite one another and complementary value types beside one another in a quasi-circumplex array (Schwartz 1992, Schwartz & Sagiv 1995, Schwartz & Boehnke 2004). In this study, the focus has been placed on the **contrast between self-transcendence and self-enhancement values**. The universalism and benevolence self-transcendence values imply a vision of wider perspective taking emphasizing attention to others' needs, accepting others as equals and concern for their welfare. They conflict with **power and achievement self-enhancement values** that encourage pursuing one's own relative success and dominance over others, legitimizing selfish

behaviours and allowing individuals to avoid involvement with others in need (Schwartz, 2010, Schwartz & Howard, 1984). **Hedonism** shares elements of openness to change and self enhancement. Studies highlighted that individual values like benevolence (Stolle and Hooghe, 2002) and universalism (Marta, Rossi, & Boccacin, 1999; Vecchione & Mebane, 2006) have a strong relationship with civic engagement (Caprara et al., 2009; Vecchione & Mebane, 2006; Luengo Kanacri, Rosa, & Di Giunta, 2012), referring to two aspects of the same collective core dimension. Whereas the former is related with the preservation and concern for the well-being of people in closer relationships (family, school, neighbourhood), the latter is related with helping conduct towards people and society as a whole (Schwartz, 2006). In this sense it was hypothesized that the preference for a specific typology of orientation to the common good is influenced by personal goals and values in a given context, which may eventually conflict (values emphasizing concern for the welfare and interests of different social groups in which the person is included conflict with values emphasizing the pursuit of one's own interests). In the proposed theorization of orientation to the common good, in fact, it was assumed that same individual may exhibit different typologies of reasoning, related to different levels of orientation. So, mature orientation to the common good implies the propensity to prefer, among different typologies, the one based on a sense of individual responsibility towards a larger

community. In these kinds of situations, the relative importance of different individual values system “should be reflected in the choice of moral justifications, as well as in the relative salience of various modes of reasoning”(Eisenberg, 1986). Consequently, the chosen typology of orientation to the common good could be also a function of motivational determinants, such as personal values acquired during individual development that are affected by social norms in the specific community context (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990).

**CIVIC MORAL DISENGAGEMENT.** Bandura (1991) in his theory on moral agency considered people as active agents who follow their aims in agreement with personal values. People check their comportment and consider their actions against their own moral standards and perceived circumstances, regulating their behaviour by anticipating possible consequences. People use self-pride and self-blame as regulatory capacities that keep behaviour in line with moral standards. In fact, civic moral disengagement consists in a disinhibitory cognitive distortion (Gibbs, Potter, & Goldsteing, 1995) through which people may accept their amoral act, not contradict their personal values and social norms (Bandura, 1991; Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, & Regalia, 2001; Paciello, Fida Tramontano, Lupinetti, & Caprara, 2008). Moving from such evidence, it

was hypothesized that the use of self-serving mechanisms such as civic moral disengagement play an important role in orientation to the common good. It allows the person to perceive personal interest as an appropriate orientation in the social realm, avoiding a felt assumption of individual responsibility and perseverance to follow their own aims.

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.** A growing recent trend in research (Killen and Smetana, 2010, Moshman, 2008) has evidenced that **growing up in a diverse environment** – through the exposure to numerous beliefs, values and practice – **can raise different social attitudes** (Killen & Smetana, 2010). This indicates that **adolescents can profoundly differ in their commitments and dispositions towards social issues** (Aboud, 2008; Brown & Bigler, 2005) **in relation to their different involvement and engagement in their communities and society** (Flanagan 2004b, Sherrod et al. 2002). Youniss and Yates (1997) evidenced that **participation in large social contexts** (service learning, involvement in community organizations, etc.) **contributes to moral development by producing an active and aware interest in addressing community problems.** Different studies have confirmed that involvement in a broad community influences the development of a greater feeling of interconnection between citizens (Yates and Youniss 1996), attitudes of care and attachment to the larger social order (Flanagan 2004b, Flanagan



& Faison 2002) and civic or moral identity (Hart & Fegley 1995, Youniss et al. 1997, Youniss & Yates 1999), predominantly if people have the chance to reflect on their participation in the same social context (Youniss et al. 1999). All those aspects are clearly associated with the theoretical approach to the common good used in this study, in particular with the idea that social experiences play a fundamental role in the development of social perspective taking and, consequently, of the orientation to the common good. Thus, civic engagement – intended as actions that are carried out with the aim of improving the community in a public and non-profit context (Youniss & Metz, 2007; Obradovi & Masten, 2007; Kirlin, 2002) – can be seen as a central pathway in the development of responsible citizenship.

### **AIM AND HYPOTHESES OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

Based on Schwartz's theory on basic human values, Bandura's moral disengagement theory and civic engagement evidences, it was hypothesized correlations of such constructs – personal values, civic moral disengagement and civic engagement – with orientation towards the common good. The study refer to both **positive moral functioning**, which promotes behaviours that support an orientation to high levels of orientations to the common good, and **negative moral functioning**, which promotes an orientation to the common good that protect one's own interest. The aim is to verify the relationships between different kinds of value and orientation to

the common good expressed; perform an analysis of the civic moral disengagement and of civic participation verifying the relationship with the orientation to the common good. The main hypotheses of the study are the following:

1. **self-transcendence values** have a positive correlation with higher single orientations scores (national and global scores) and more reasoned scores (“internalized but not up-reasoned response” (C2 + D2) and finally (C3 + D3) “full understanding response of common good”), since self-transcendence values prioritize the sense of responsibility and a profound concern for the others and the community; in parallel, **self-enhancement values** have a positive correlation with personal orientation score and to “not qualified response” and “totally self-interest response reasoned scores, since selfenhancement values prioritize an individual’s own interest and consequently may foster self-serving mechanisms and less mature hedonistic processes; conversely personal orientation score and low reasoned scores (that refer to: (B1 + C1 + D1) “not qualified response of common good” and (A1 + A2 + A3) “totally self-interest response”) negative correlate with self-transcendence values and positive with self-enhancement values;

2. **civic moral disengagement** will tend to negatively correlate with higher orientation scores (national and global scores) and high reasoned scores (“internalized but not up-reasoned response” (C2 + D2) and finally (C3 +

D3) “full understanding response of common good”), favouring the expression of personal orientations to the common good and “not qualified response” and “totally self-interest response;

3. **civic engagement** will positively correlate with higher single orientations scores (national and global scores) and overall orientation score, and also to the evolved reasoned score (“full understanding response of common good” – C3 + D3).

## **b. METHOD**

### **1. PARTICIPANTS.**

Participants included 150 students from three high schools in Rome, balanced by sex (71 males – 47.3% and 79 females – 52.7%) and ranged in age from 14 to 21 years, with an average of 17.11 years and a standard deviation of 1.538. The socio-economic status (SES) ratings of the families ranged from 8 to 18 , with means of 13,37 (SD = 3,1).

### **2. MEASURE.**

- a) **ORIENTATION TO THE COMMON GOOD QUESTIONNAIRE.** As previously discussed, the **Orientation to the Common Good Questionnaire (OCGQ)** is a measuring used to determine participant's orientation to the common good (personal, group, national and global) and the reasoned quality of response actively produced by the subject. It contains fifteen moral dilemmas, each of which is followed by three statements. The participants choose one of the statement and then actively explain the reasons for their choice. The scores from the OCGQ – outcome of the encoding performed by an encoder – were calculated referring to **single orientation score** (personal, group, national and global score) and **overall orientation score** (frequency and compute) and to **reasoned score** (that fere to: (B1 + C1 + D1) “not qualified response of common good”, (A1 + A2 + A3) “totally self-interest response”, (C2 + D2) “internalized but not up-reasoned response” and finally (C3 + D3) “full understanding response of common good”) and **overall reasoned score** (that fere to: strong comprehension of common good (subjects with high C3+D3 and low A1+A2+A3); low comprehension of common good (subjects with low C3+D3 and high A1+A2+A3); finally, an intermediate group, where there is no type of comprehension predominant).
- b) **VALUES.** Values was measured using the **Portrait Values Questionnaire** (PVQ: Schwartz, 2005b; Schwartz, Melech, Lehmann,

Burgess & Harris, 2001). The PVQ includes 40 short verbal portraits of different people, each describing a person's goals, aspirations, or wishes that point implicitly to the importance of a value. For example, "It is important to him to listen to people who are different from him. Even when he disagrees with them, he still wants to understand them" describes a person who holds universalism values important. The PVQ measures each of the 10 motivationally distinct types of values with from three to six items. For each portrait, respondents indicate how similar the person is to themselves on a scale ranging from "very much like me" to "not like me at all". We inferred respondents' own values from the implicit values of the people they considered as similar to themselves. Studies in seven countries supported the reliability of the PVQ for measuring the 10 values (Scwartz, 2005b). Multimethod-multitrait analyses in Germany, Israel and Ukraine compared measurements of the 10 values using the PVQ and with an earlier instrument that was validated across 70 countries. These analyses confirmed the convergent and discriminant validity of the 10 values measured by the PVQ. In the current study, the alpha reliability coefficients ranged from .61 (tradition) to .83 (achievement). Some of the values have conceptually broad definitions, encompassing multiple components (e.g., tradition includes both self-restriction and faith). Measurement of these values with only three to six items may account

for their relatively low internal consistency. The PVQ indexes have demonstrated predictive validity for numerous behaviours and attitudes (Schwartz, 2005b; Schwartz et al., 2001).

- c) **CIVIC MORAL DISENGAGEMENT.** A specific measure was developed to assess civic moral disengagement which proved internal and external validity (Caprara & Capanna, 2005; Caprara et al., 2006). **The Civic Moral Disengagement scale** (Caprara et al., 2009) contains 32 items, four for each civic moral disengagement mechanism (moral justification, euphemistic language, advantageous comparison, displacement of responsibility, diffusion of responsibility, distorting consequences, attribution of blame, and dehumanization) with a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = agree not at all, to 5=completely agree) response format. The content of the items refers to minor ethical code and norm violations in the context of daily transactions ("Evading taxes cannot be considered reprehensible considering the squandering of public money"; "When there are no efficient refuse disposal services, there is no sense reproaching citizens who leave trash on the street"). Cronbach's alpha of the 32-items CMD scale for this study was 0.95.
- d) **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.** Civic engagement was determined to be a latent variable encompassing three types of behaviour (see Sherrod et al., 2010): belonging to civic associations and involvement as an active citizen. Participants were asked to indicate their degree of involvement

in different associations (e.g., cultural and student associations) on five items (1 = never, to 5 = regular participation; alpha = .81). Self-reports on five additional items (1 = never, to 5 = often/very often) assessed involvement as an active citizen (e.g., “sign a petition to support a good cause,” “giving money to a political or social campaign” alpha = .69). Adding the two scores I calculated an overall score of civic engagement.

### **3. PROCEDURES.**

Participants were recruited from three high schools in Rome. The subject, divide into classrooms, completed the measures in a quiet setting. During the session participants were first asked to read and sign an informed consent form. The signed consent forms were then collected and placed together in a separate packet to keep the experimental material anonymous. The participants were then given a questionnaire packet and asked to read it carefully and fill it out completely, but to not put their name. Participants were told to take as much time as they needed to fill out the packet. Once completed, participants turned in their packets to the researcher who put the experimental material into an envelope separate from the consent forms.

### **c. RESULTS**

Bi-variate Spearman correlational analyses were conducted to examine(1) relations among all orientations to the common good scores and values, (2) relations among the orientations to the common good and civic moral

disengagement, and (3) relations among the different orientations to the common good scores and civic engagement scores/subscores.

### 1) RELATIONS AMONG ALL ORIENTATIONS TO THE COMMON GOOD SCORES AND VALUES.

The correlations between the orientation scores and values are reported in Table 21. **Personal orientation** is negatively correlated to **Benevolence** ( $r = -0,17, p < .05$ ). and **Universalism** ( $r = -0,20, p < .05$ )., while it is positively connected to **Hedonism** and **Power** (respectively:  $r = 0,3, p < .01$  and  $r = 0,19, p < .05$ ). The same values are associated to **global orientation**, but in the opposite direction. Global score is positively correlated to Benevolence ( $r = 0,18, p < .05$ ) and Universalism ( $r = 0,38, p < .01$ ), while is negatively related to Hedonism and Power (respectively:  $r = 0,334, p < .01$  and  $r = -0,22, p < .01$ ). Also **National orientation** is positively correlated to Universalism ( $r = 0,17, p < .05$ ) and highlights also a positive correlation to **Tradition** ( $r = 0,20, p < .05$ ) and **Stimulation** ( $r = 0,19, p < .05$ ). **No correlation was found between the group orientation and the different values score.**

**Table 21.**

VALUES	ORIENTATION TO THE COMMON GOOD			
	Personal	Group	National	Global
CONF	-0,004	-0,13	0,135	<b>,192*</b>
TRAD	-0,064	-0,079	<b>,197*</b>	0,112
BENEV	<b>-,173*</b>	-0,09	0,131	<b>,184*</b>
UNIV	<b>-,198*</b>	-0,087	,177*	<b>,376**</b>
SELFD	-0,111	-0,058	0,131	0,142
STIM	-0,01	-0,012	<b>,187*</b>	-0,008



HEDON	<b>,299**</b>	-0,009	-0,08	<b>-,239**</b>
ACHIE	0,132	-0,011	0,063	-0,09
POW	<b>,194*</b>	-0,034	0,072	<b>-,223**</b>
SECUR	0,045	-,182*	<b>,204*</b>	0,008

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01

As shown also by the following correlation with the “**compute overall orientation score**”, the most relevant positive association is to **Universalism** (  $r = 0.18$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and the most significant negative association is to **Hedonism** (  $r = 0.276$ ,  $p < .01$ ). There is also a significant positive correlation to **Benevolence** (  $r = 0.213$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and a significant negative correlation to Power (  $r = -0.16$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

**Table 22.**

VALUES	ORIENTATION TO THE COMMON GOOD
	COMPUTE OVERALL ORIENTATION SCORE
CONF	0,116
TRAD	0,153
BENEV	<b>,213**</b>
UNIV	<b>,334**</b>
SELPD	0,159
STIM	0,087
HEDON	<b>-,276**</b>
ACHIE	-0,072
POW	<b>-,163*</b>
SECUR	0,02

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01

A chi-square test was applied to determine whether values and “**frequency overall reasoned score**” were associated. In order to divide the values scores into three groups (high, medium and low) were used as cut for each group the percentiles of reference and therefore recategorized the data.

The following Table 23 confirm an association between **Universalism** ( $\chi^2(4) = 16.2, p < .007$ ) and **Benevolence** ( $\chi^2(4) = 11.7, p < .02$ ) and the “frequency overall reasoned score”. The examination of the standardized residuals shows that in **global/national category there is an higher representation of high universalism subjects (2.6) and a lower of low universalism subjects (-1.9)** and the opposite in **personal category, with higher low universalism subjects (1.7) and lower high universalism subjects (-1.8)**. The examination of the standardized residuals shows that **subjects with low benevolence are less represented in global/national category (-1.8)**. The **Selfdeterminism** show an association to the frequency overall orientation score ( $\chi^2(4) = 12.0, p < .01$ ). The examination of the standardized residuals displays that **subjects with low selfdetermination are less represented in global/national category (-1.8) and more in personal category (1.9), while subjects with high selfdetermination are more present in global/national category (1.3) and less in personal (-1.6)**.

**Table 23.**

FREQUENCY OVERALL ORIENTATION SCORE		UNIVERSALISM			
		Low	Mid	High	Totale
DIFFUSED	Conteggio	28	26	18	72
	Conteggio atteso	23	22,6	26,4	72
	Residui stand.	1	0,7	-1,6	
GLOBAL/NATIONAL	Conteggio	12	16	36	64
	Conteggio atteso	20,5	20,1	23,5	64
	Residui stand.	<b>-1,9</b>	-0,9	<b>2,6</b>	

PERSONAL	Conteggio	8	5	1	14
	Conteggio atteso	4,5	4,4	5,1	14
	Residui stand.	<b>1,7</b>	0,3	<b>-1,8</b>	
Total	Conteggio	48	47	55	150
	Conteggio atteso	48	47	55	150

$\chi^2(4) = 21.5, p < .0001$ . The standard residuals greater than 1.7 are highlighted in bold.

FREQUENCY OVERALL ORIENTATION SCORE		BENEVOLENCE			
		Low	mid	High	Totale
DIFFUSED	Conteggio	30	19	23	72
	Conteggio atteso	25,4	22,1	24,5	72
	Residui stand.	0,9	-0,7	-0,3	
GLOBAL/NATIONAL	Conteggio	14	24	26	64
	Conteggio atteso	22,6	19,6	21,8	64
	Residui stand.	<b>-1,8</b>	1	0,9	
PERSONAL	Conteggio	9	3	2	14
	Conteggio atteso	4,9	4,3	4,8	14
	Residui stand.	<b>1,8</b>	-0,6	-1,3	
Total	Conteggio	53	46	51	150
	Conteggio atteso	53	46	51	150

$X^2(4) = 11.7, p < .02$ . The standard residuals greater than 1.7 are highlighted in bold.

FREQUENCY OVERALL ORIENTATION SCORE		SELF DETERMINISM			
		Low	mid	High	Totale
Diffused	Conteggio	28	24	20	72
	Conteggio atteso	24,5	25	22,6	72
	Residui stand.	0,7	-0,2	-0,5	
global/national	Conteggio	14	24	26	64
	Conteggio atteso	21,8	22,2	20,1	64
	Residui stand.	<b>-1,7</b>	0,4	1,3	
personal	Conteggio	9	4	1	14
	Conteggio atteso	4,8	4,9	4,4	14
	Residui stand.	<b>1,9</b>	-0,4	<b>-1,6</b>	

	Conteggio	51	52	47	150
Total	Conteggio atteso	51	52	47	150

$\chi^2(4) = 12.0, p < .01$ . The standard residuals greater than 1.7 are highlighted in bold.

The correlations between the reasoned score with the PVQ are presented in Table 24. **“Totally self-interest response” (A1+ A2+A3)** is positively related to **Hedonism** ( $r = 0,30, p < .01$ ) and **Power** ( $r = 0,20, p < .05$ ), while it is negative related to **Benevolence** ( $r = 0,16, p < .05$ ) and **Universalism** ( $r = 0,19, p < .05$ ). Conversely, **“internalized but not up-reasoned response” (C2+D2)** and **“full understanding response of common good” (C3+D3)** are positively related to **Universalism** with a different grade (respectively:  $r = 0,27, p < .01$  and  $r = 0,35, p < .01$ ). **C3+D3 category is also negative correlated to Hedonism and Power** (respectively:  $r = -0,22, p < .01$  and  $r = -0,23, p < .01$ ). **The C2+D2 category present a positive correlation to Tradition** ( $r = 0,23, p < .01$ ) and **Security** ( $r = 0,23, p < .01$ ).

**Table 24.**

production score	Values									
	CONF	TRAD	BENEV	UNIV	SELFD	STIM	HEDON	ACHIE	POW	SECUR
B1_C1_D1	0,024	-0,008	0,016	-0,153	-0,016	0,069	0,054	0,057	0,155	0,008
A1_A2_A3	-0,031	-0,054	-,164*	<b>-,194*</b>	-0,106	0,05	<b>,300**</b>	0,124	<b>,202*</b>	0,06
C2_D2	<b>,191*</b>	<b>,234**</b>	0,11	<b>,275**</b>	0,127	,161*	-0,062	0,12	0,016	<b>,232**</b>
C3_D3	0,155	0,054	,178*	<b>,352**</b>	0,147	0,021	<b>-,221**</b>	-0,065	<b>-,230**</b>	0,01

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01

A chi-square test was applied to determine whether values and “**overall reasoned score**” were associated. Results showed that there is an association between “**overall reasoned score**” and **Universalism** ( $\chi^2 (4) = 13.3, p < .01$ ) (**Table 25**). Examination of the standardized residuals showed that there is a **higher representation of high universalism subjects (1.8)** and a **lower of low universalism subjects (-1.7)** in high comprehension category and, contrary, a **higher representation of low universalism subjects (1.8)** and **lower of high universalism subjects (-2.0)** in low comprehension category. The other value crosstabs relating to total overall production score are not significant.

**Table 25.**

OVERALL REASONED SCORE		UNIVERSALISM			
		low	Mid	High	Totale
LOW COMPREHENSION	Conteggio	11	7	2	20
	Conteggio atteso	6,4	6,3	7,3	20
	Residui stand.	<b>1,8</b>	0,3	<b>-2</b>	
DIFFUSED	Conteggio	33	32	37	102
	Conteggio atteso	32,6	32	37,4	102
	Residui stand.	0,1	0	0	
HIGH COMPREHENSION	Conteggio	4	8	16	28
	Conteggio atteso	9	8,8	10,3	28
	Residui stand.	<b>-1,7</b>	-0,3	<b>1,8</b>	
Total	Conteggio	48	47	55	150
	Conteggio atteso	48	47	55	150

$\chi^2 (4) = 13.3, p < .01$ . The standard residuals greater than 1.7 are highlighted in bold.

## **2) RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ORIENTATION TO THE COMMON GOOD AND CIVIC MORAL DISENGAGEMENT.**

The correlations between the orientation scores and civic moral disengagement are reported in the following Table 26. It shows a **positive correlation to Personal orientation** ( $r = -0,25, p < .01$ ) and a **negative correlation to global orientation** ( $r = -0,36, p < .01$ ). **No correlation was found between the national and group orientation and the civic moral disengagement.** Largely there is a **negative correlation to compute overall orientation score** ( $r = -0,245, p < .01$ ).

**Table 26.**

civic moral disengagement	orientation to the common good				compute overall recognition score
	Personal	Group	National	Global	
CMD5_TOT	<b>,251**</b>	-0,031	0,013	<b>-,360**</b>	<b>-,245**</b>

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$

A chi-square test was applied to determine whether civic moral disengagement and “**frequency overall reasoned score**” were associated. In order to divide the civic moral disengagement score into three groups (high, medium and low) were used as cut for each group the percentiles of reference and therefore recategorized the data. Results showed that there is an association between civic moral disengagement and **frequency overall orientation score** ( $\chi^2 (4) = 16.2, p < .007$ ) and **most frequent orientation to the common good** ( $\chi^2 (8) = 21.22, p < .007$ ). While both are relevant, the examination of the standardized residuals of the first score did not

highlight relevant differences. In the second one, the crosstab stands out, showing a tendency of subjects with high CMDS to be less (-2.1) represented in global orientation and more represented (2.3) in personal orientation. Consistently, subjects with low CMDS are more represented (2.3) in global orientation.

**Table 27.**

FREQUENCY OVERALL ORIENTATION SCORE		CMDS			
		Low	Mid	High	Totale
Diffused	Conteggio	28	11	9	48
	Conteggio atteso	23	20,5	4,5	48
	Residui stand.	1	<b>-2,1</b>	<b>2,1</b>	
global/national	Conteggio	25	21	3	49
	Conteggio atteso	23,5	20,9	4,6	49
	Residui stand.	0,3	0	-0,7	
Personal	Conteggio	19	32	2	53
	Conteggio atteso	25,4	22,6	4,9	53
	Residui stand.	-1,3	<b>2</b>	-1,3	
Total	Conteggio	72	64	14	150
	Conteggio atteso	72	64	14	150

$\chi^2(4) = 17.93, p < .001$ . The standard residuals greater than 2 are highlighted in bold.

	CMDS	MOST FREQUENT ORIENTATION TO THE COMMON GOOD			
		PERSONAL	GROUP	NATIONAL	GLOBAL
HIGH	Conteggio	12	3	16	14
	Conteggio atteso	7,7	1,6	11,8	24,6
	Residui stand.	1,6	1,1	1,2	<b>-2,1</b>
MED	Conteggio	8	1	13	24
	Conteggio atteso	7,8	1,6	12,1	25,2
	Residui stand.	0,1	-0,5	0,3	-0,2
LOW	Conteggio	4	1	8	39
	Conteggio atteso	8,5	1,8	13,1	27,2
	Residui stand.	-1,5	-0,6	-1,4	<b>2,3</b>
Totale	Conteggio	24	5	37	77
	Conteggio atteso	24	5	37	77

$\chi^2(8) = 21.22, p < .007$ . The standard residuals greater than 2 are highlighted in bold.

The correlations between the reasoned score with the CMDS are presented in Table 28. **“Totally self-interest response” (A1+ A2+A3) and “not qualified response of common good” (B1 + C1 + D1) are positively related to CMDS** (respectively:  $r = 0,28, p < .01$  and  $r = 0,24, p < .01$ ). Conversely, **“full understanding response of common good” (C3+D3) is negatively correlated to CMDS** ( $r = -0,427, p < .01$ ). The **“internalized but not up-reasoned response” (C2+D2) does not show a significant correlation to CMDS**.

**Table 28.**

ORIENTATION TO THE COMMON GOOD - REASONED SCORE	<u>CIVIC MORAL DISENGAGEMENT</u> CMDS_TOT
B1_C1_D1	<b>,240**</b>
A1_A2_A3	<b>,285**</b>
C2_D2	0,022
C3_D3	<b>-,427**</b>

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$

A chi-square test was applied to determine whether civic moral disengagement and **“overall reasoned score”** were associated. Results showed that there is an association between civic moral disengagement



and “overall reasoned score” ( $\chi^2 (4) = 21.1, p < .0001$ ) (Table 29). Examination of the standardized residuals showed that there is a **higher representation of high CMDS subjects (2.2) and a low of low CMDS subjects (-1.9) in low CMDS category** and, contrary, a **high representation of low CMDS subjects (2.6) and low of high CMDS subjects (-2.3) in high comprehension category.**

**Table 29.**

CMDS		OVERALL REASONED SCORE			
		LOW	DIFFUSED	HIGH	Totale
high	Conteggio	12	34	2	48
	Conteggio atteso	6,4	32,6	9	48
	Residui stand.	<b>2,2</b>	0,2	<b>-2,3</b>	
Mid	Conteggio	6	35	8	49
	Conteggio atteso	6,5	33,3	9,1	49
	Residui stand.	-0,2	0,3	-0,4	
Low	Conteggio	2	33	18	53
	Conteggio atteso	7,1	36	9,9	53
	Residui stand.	<b>-1,9</b>	-0,5	<b>2,6</b>	
Total	Conteggio	20	102	28	150
	Conteggio atteso	20	102	28	150

$\chi^2 (4) = 21.1, p < .0001$ . The standard residuals greater than 2 are highlighted in bold.

### **3) RELATIONS BETWEEN DIFFERENT ORIENTATIONS TO THE COMMON GOOD SCORES AND THE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT SCORES.**

The correlations between the orientation scores and civic engagement scores are reported in the Table 30. **“Belonging to civic associations” is negatively correlated to Personal orientation (r = -0,25, p < .01) while it is positively connected to Global orientation (r = 0,17, p < .05). “Involvement as active citizen” is negatively correlated to Personal orientation (r = -0,34, p < .01) and positively related to National orientation (r = 0,16, p < .05). The civic engagement complessive score show a negative correlation to Personal orientation (r = -0,29, p < .01). The overall compute orientation score show a positive significant correlation to “Involvement in different associations” (r = 0,28, p < .01), “Involvement as active citizen” (r = 0,35, p < .01) and overall civic engagement score (r = 0,28, p < .01).**

**Table 30.**

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	ORIENTATION TO THE COMMON GOOD				compute overall recognition score
	Personal	Group	National	Global	
Associations involvement	<b>-,256**</b>	0,13	0,084	,168*	<b>,276**</b>
Active citizen involvement	<b>-,342**</b>	0,118	<b>,164*</b>	0,157	<b>,354**</b>
Civic engagment_TOT	<b>-,286**</b>	0,099	0,143	0,112	<b>,281**</b>

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01

A chi-square test was applied to determine whether **civic engagement** and **“frequency overall orientation score”** were associated. In order to divide the civic engagement scores into three groups (high, medium and low) were used as cut for each group the percentiles of reference and therefore recategorized the data. Results showed that there is an association between **frequency overall orientation score** and **Associations involvement** ( $\chi^2(4) = 16.79, p < .002$ ) and **Active citizen involvement** ( $\chi^2(4) = 14.24, p < .007$ ) (**Table 31**). The examination of the standardized residuals showed that in **personal category there is an higher representation of low “Associations involvement” subjects (3.1) and “active citizen involvement” subjects (2.2) and a lower of high “Associations involvement” subjects (-2.2) and of high “active citizen involvement” subjects (-2.1).**

**Table 31.**

ASSOCIATIONS INVOLVEMENT		FREQUENCY OVERALL REASONED SCORE			
		DIFFUSED	GLOBAL/ NATIONAL	PERSONAL	Totale
LOW	Conteggio	21	16	11	48
	Conteggio atteso	23	20,5	4,5	48
	Residui stand.	-0,4	-1	<b>3,1</b>	
MID	Conteggio	24	24	3	51
	Conteggio atteso	24,5	21,8	4,8	51
	Residui stand.	0	0,5	-0,8	
HIGH	Conteggio	27	24	0	51
	Conteggio atteso	24,5	21,8	4,8	51
	Residui stand.	0,5	0,5	<b>-2,2</b>	
Total	Conteggio	72	64	14	150
	Conteggio atteso	72	64	14	150

$\chi^2(4) = 16.79, p < .002$ . The standard residuals greater than 2

are highlighted in bold.

ACTIVE CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT		FREQUENCY OVERALL ORIENTATION SCORE			
		DIFFUSED	GLOBAL/ NATIONAL	PERSONAL	Totale
LOW	Conteggio	32	19	11	62
	Conteggio atteso	29,8	26,5	5,8	62
	Residui stand.	0,4	-1,4	<b>2,2</b>	
MID	Conteggio	20	18	3	41
	Conteggio atteso	19,7	17,5	3,8	41
	Residui stand.	0,1	0,1	-0,4	
HIGH	Conteggio	20	27	0	47
	Conteggio atteso	22,6	20,1	4,4	47
	Residui stand.	-0,5	1,6	<b>-2,1</b>	
Total	Conteggio	72	64	14	150
	Conteggio atteso	72	64	14	150

$\chi^2 (4) = 14.24$ ,  $p < .007$ . The standard residuals greater than 2 are highlighted in bold.

A chi-square test was applied to determine whether **overall civic engagement score** and “**overall orientation score**” were associated. Results showed that there is significant association ( $\chi^2 (4) = 17.4$ ,  $p < .002$ ) (**Table 32**). Examination of the standardized residuals shows that **in global/national category there is a lower representation of low civic engagement subjects (-1.6)**; **in personal category there is an higher**

representation of low civic engagement subjects (2.9) and a lower figure for high civic engagement subjects (-1.7).

**Table 32.**

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT_TOT		OVERALL RECOGNITION SCORE			Totale
		DIFFUSED	GLOBAL/NATIONAL	PERSONAL	
LOW	Conteggio	25	14	11	50
	Conteggio atteso	24	21,3	4,7	50
	Residui stand.	0,2	<b>-1,6</b>	<b>2,9</b>	
MID	Conteggio	25	23	2	50
	Conteggio atteso	24	21,3	4,7	50
	Residui stand.	0,2	0,4	-1,2	
HIGH	Conteggio	22	27	1	50
	Conteggio atteso	24	21,3	4,7	50
	Residui stand.	-0,4	1,2	<b>-1,7</b>	
Total	Conteggio	72	64	14	150
	Conteggio atteso	72	64	14	150

$\chi^2 (4) = 17.40, p < .002$ . The standard residuals greater than 1.7 are highlighted in bold.

The correlations between the production score with the Civic engagement scores are presented in the Table 33. “**Totally self-interest response**” (**A1+A2+A3**) is negatively related to **Associations involvement** ( $r = -0.22, p < .01$ ), **Active citizen involvement** ( $r = -0.31, p < .01$ ) and to overall **civic engagement score** ( $r = -0.28, p < .01$ ). “**Internalized but not up-reasoned response**” (**C2+D2**) does not show any significant correlations. The “**full understanding response of common good**” (**C3+D3**) is positively related to **Active citizen involvement** ( $r = 0.24, p < .01$ ) and to overall **civic engagement score** ( $r = 0.17, p < .01$ ).

**Table 33.**

ORIENTATION TO THE COMMON GOOD - REASONED SCORE	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT		
	ASSOCIATIONS INVOLVEMENT	ACTIVE CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT_TOT
B1_C1_D1	0,038	-0,076	-0,115
A1_A2_A3	<b>-,219**</b>	<b>-,310**</b>	<b>-,282**</b>
C2_D2	0,105	0,098	0,106
C3_D3	0,057	<b>,240**</b>	<b>,172*</b>

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01

A chi-square test was applied to determine whether **overall reasoned score** and “**civic engagement complessive score**” were associated. Results showed that there is a significant association ( $\chi^2 (4) = 20.8, p < .0001$ ) (**Table 34**). Examination of the standardized residuals showed a **higher representation of high civic engagement subjects (1.9) in high comprehension category** and, **contrary, a tendency to an high representation of low civic engagement subjects (2.5) in low comprehension category**.

The other values crosstabs relative to overall reasoned score are not significant.

**Table 34.**

	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT COMPLESSIVE SCORE	OVERALL REASONED SCORE			
		low	Diffused	High	Totale
low	Conteggio	13	27	10	50
	Conteggio atteso	6,7	34	9,3	50

	Residui stand.	<b>2,5</b>	-1,2	0,2	
mid	Conteggio	4	43	3	50
	Conteggio atteso	6,7	34	9,3	50
	Residui stand.	-1	1,5	-2,1	
high	Conteggio	3	32	15	50
	Conteggio atteso	6,7	34	9,3	50
	Residui stand.	-1,4	-0,3	<b>1,9</b>	
Total	Conteggio	20	102	28	150
	Conteggio atteso	20	102	28	150

$\chi^2 (4) = 20.8, p < .0001$ . The standard residuals greater than 2 are highlighted in bold.

#### d. DISCUSSION

Growing, the adolescent becomes more independent and aware of the consequences of his own actions, interfacing with ordinary situations that

may require a broad orientation towards the common good. In public ethic situations, different common good interests can contrast with one another, suggesting that the social structure needs to which people refer, may diverge from a person's own priorities and interests, and hence high common good orientations may not be assumed. In these contexts, the experiences and the reasoning process through which people pass are central as they form the foundation for future civic engagement and foster a sense of responsibility towards society and community.

**The present study**, consistent with studies related to behaviour oriented towards others (Schwartz, 2010; Verplanken & Holland, 2002), **confirmed all the initial hypotheses, evidencing as key personal values both self-transcendence and self-enhancement values. Positive correlations** were shown **of self-transcendence** values (universalism and benevolence) **and negative correlations of self-enhancement** (power and hedonism) **with high level of orientations to common good** (national and global). **Up reasoned category of common good correlated positively only with universalism** – both “internalized” and “full understanding” response of common good – **and negatively** – only “full understanding” response – **with power and hedonism**. Conversely, again in agreement with the initial theoretical assumptions, **personal orientation to the common good showed a positive correlation with self-enhancement** (power and hedonism) **and negative correlation with**



**self-transcendence values** (universalism and benevolence). The **“totally self response”** of common good correlated negatively with universalism and positively with hedonism and power.

It was also investigated the correlation of **civic moral disengagement with orientation to the common good**, considering it as an essential variable to be taken into account. Consistent with the expectations, the more people deactivated their internal moral control the more they denied high level orientations towards the common good. In particular, **civic moral disengagement correlated positively with personal orientation and negatively with global orientation**. Relatively to reasoned score, **civic moral disengagement had high positive correlation with “full understanding response” and negative correlation with low level understanding of common good**. The “internalized response” seems to be completely uncorrelated with civic moral disengagement.

Finally, as highlighted in the second chapter, the different theoretical approach of perspective taking and moral reasoning (Mead, Piaget, Kohlberg, Selman) that was taken as a reference, believed that an important prerequisite to moral development was socio-moral experience. The findings seem to confirm this assumption. **Orientation to the common good showed a positive correlation with civic engagement**. In particular, the results show a higher positive correlation of “active citizen involvement” (i.e. activities such as: “sign a petition to support a good

cause”, giving money to a political or social campaign” and so on) compared to “associations involvement” (frequency of participation in association and group activities outside school such as cultural or artistic associations, voluntary associations, political associations and so on). **These findings seem to indicate that simple participation in terms of time spent is less relevant than the possibility to experiment the self through social experiences in the large group.** As highlighted in the previous Study 2 referring to socio-economic status, it would appear that even civic engagement seems to have greater influence in preventing lower levels of the common good. Nonetheless, such engagement does not appear sufficient to ensure high level development of common good.

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