

Book Review

Edited by Mario Cusinato

Gottman, J. M. (2011). *The science of trust: Emotional attunement for couples*. New York: W. W. Norton.

There is no question in my mind that Dr. Gottman is one of the best researchers on couple relationships on the planet, barred none. In this book he encompasses whatever is known and he has found about couple relationships. Trust, by no means, is a single or simple multidimensional construct to define, because there are many definitions, all reviewed critically in this book. Eventually (p. 52) Dr. Gottman arrives at a definition of "...trust by claiming that *in a trusting relationship we take as given that our partner has our best interest at heart*, rather than *just self-interest* (p. 52). From this definition springs forth the "Sound Relationship House," composed by creating a shared meaning, making life dreams come true, managing conflict, using a positive perspective, turning towards rather than away from building an emotional bank account, sharing fondness and admiration, and building love maps by knowing one another.

What is even more important, as in past publications, Gottman arrives at a mathematical description of relationships, way over the head of most mental health professionals, and certainly over the head of the general public toward which this book is oriented. The style in and of itself is "written" down to appeal to mature adults. However, it remains to be seen whether mature adults, including this reviewer, can understand it all, unless one has a background in advanced mathematics.

What Gottman calls the "trust metric" based partially on game theory is based on the interdependence of intimate relationships, where untrustworthiness and betrayal lurk always in the background. Here is where mastery of physiology, as only mastered by Gottman, provides ways that make them practically non-replicable. On the basis of his decade-long analyses of relationships, he can predict from these physiological and other verbally-recorded measures, whether a relationship will last or not. Trust is built over

time when there is emotional attunement between partners by remaining positive and avoid, i.e., “repairing” negativity.

What can one conclude about this book? It should be used as a beginning text-book in any marriage and family therapy training program. However, two issues need further debate, one theoretical and the second practical. Where and how should one insert or link “trust” to a larger theoretical framework? For instance, can attachment theory include trust in its framework? And if possible, where? Given all that Gottman has learned and known about couple relationships, can he demonstrate empirically that applications of this information to couple therapy will produce more effective and last outcome than other therapeutic approaches not based on the same empirical bases? One would be more comfortable if both questions were answered theoretically and empirically.

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Kazdin, A. E. (2009). *The Kazdin method for parenting the defiant child: With no pills, no therapy, non contest of wills*. New York: Mariner Books.

Even though by now outdated, I do have a personal, competitive interest in reviewing this book, especially after reviewing another similar book by Woody (L’Abate, in press). Both books claim to be based on “evidence” rather than on out-of-the-blue-sky opinions. Both rely on the words spoken by mental health professionals in face-to-face contacts with interested parents needy of help with their oppositionally rebellious children. Both do not deal with the importance of homework to be administered to parents as “extra-session” assignments. If and when that is done, it does not achieve the importance I have assigned to it in my past practice (L’Abate, L’Abate, & Maino, 2005).

In this book, Kazdin does not let any stone unturned to use well-known behavioral techniques, such as positive reinforcement of practice, shaping, and extinction, through reinforcing the positive opposite of (mis)behavior. He covers the majority of problems found in elementary school and pre-puberty, such as supermarket scenes, later for school, sibling rivalries, squabbling friends, homework avoidance, and involving the teacher. He then moves to preadolescence’s negative attitudes, unacceptable language, and pushing the limits among others. Separate chapters are devoted to pros and cons of punishment, special situations, and troubleshooting, among others. There is no question that this book is as good as one can get in this important area, where parenting books may very likely reach the large number of cookbooks available on the market.

Why am I critical and sceptical of both books, no matter my personal and professional high esteem I have of both authors? Both represent the best

level of professional practice that can be achieved in the present. However, I am critical and sceptical because neither book deals with how parenting is occurring in the present and is going to occur as well as in the future.

I am convinced that most, and least expensive, changes occur when parents are asked to use distance writing rather talk. This is a way to learn new skills through tailor-made specific, interactive, practice assignments about parenting, sibling rivalry, and temper tantrums, among others (L'Abate, 2011). We (L'Abate, L'Abate, & Maino, 2005) put the question of written homework assignments versus no assignments to test, and to our amazement found that individuals, couples, and families became more involved in the treatment using more sessions with homework assignments than participants who were not administered those assignments. Furthermore, I believe, and I have empirical evidence to support this belief (Smyth and L'Abate, 2001), that before engaging participants in expensive, time-undefined, face-to-face talk, we should try to help them with less expensive, structured, problem-focused written homework assignments (L'Abate, 2012).

The conclusion is clear to me, given the same results from two different approaches, face-to-face versus distance writing, we choose the one that is less expensive.

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Regan, P. (2011). *Close relationships*. New York: Rutledge.

The growth of the field of "relationship science" in USA is due to the theoretical and empirical confluence of psychology, communication science, and family studies departments. This newly emerged specialty has produced quite a few academically successful introductory textbooks offered in their

respective disciplines (Brehm, Miller, Perlman, & Campbell, 2002; De Genova & Rice, 2005; Wright, 1999). Regan's book is the latest, most recent, up-to-date, and best representative of this relatively new field. Each chapter in this book closes with an actual example, a summary, a list of key concepts, and exploratory exercises to assure and encourage active and interactive involvement by students.

Principles of relationship science consist of basic ingredients found in interdependent interactions, composed by lovers, family, and friends. Closeness can be subjectively felt and behaviorally shown but not always in consistent ways. Research methods and ethical procedures to undergo studies are emphasized with chapters presented according to a developmental perspective, starting at the beginning of a relationship, with initial attraction, relationship development, deepening of the relationship, mate selection and eventually: marriage.

Relationship processes are considered according to thinking and feelings, communicating, and supporting, love, and sex. In a section devoted to relationship challenges, there are chapters dealing with rejection and betrayal, aggression and violence, conflict and loss, with a concluding chapter about different types of therapy available to distressed couples. The list of references covers 60 pages in the whole book of 349 pages. No one can ask for greater or better coverage of the literature.

Comparing this to other competitive books listed below, this is, of course, more up-to-date than the others. Consequently, I would recommend this one over the others for its being scholarly without being pedantic, interesting and summarizing whatever there is to know about intimate relationships. Another more competitive introductory text that would be extremely difficult to ignore would be Gottman's (2011) recent, research-oriented contribution, that is a much more detailed and restricted coverage of couple relationship. Having students study both texts might be demanding, but if the students were already graduated, such as students in post-graduate marriage and family therapy programs, both books would put them ahead of anybody else in the field of relationship science.

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Bonanno, G. A. (2009). *The Other Side of Sadness. What the New Science of bereavement Tells Us About Life After Loss*. New York: Basic Books. New York. pp. 231. ISBN 9780465013609.

The Other Side of Sadness is a easy-to-read book both for researchers interested in grief, loss and resilience and the general public. In the first part of the book the author presents empirical evidences for a dramatic change in paradigm about grief and loss, citing his own proliferative and innovative work in the field as well as classics like Freud, Deutsch, Lindemann, Kubler-Ross, Bowlby, Ekman, and Kastenbaum.

The author challenges the predominant view of “grief work” by exploring loss across diverse patterns of adjustment and contexts. What emerges is the “*wavelike nature of grief*” (p. 41), oscillating from “loss-oriented” to “restoration-oriented” processes, and an amazing and powerful portrait of resilience as the “*marvelous human capacity to squeeze in brief moments of happiness and joy that allows us to see that we may once again being moving forward*” (p.19). The loss of loved ones is a fact of life, “*when we confront death head-on we have no choice but to embrace its meaning*” (p. 121) and it “*opens new doors*” (p. 86) for living out our dreams. It requires adjustment and recalibration but not a one-size-fit-all approach or intervention that may interfere with a natural recovery process.

In *Chapter 1* Bonanno presents a completely different picture of grieving as a normal reaction to “the worth thing that could ever happen”, the dead of a loved one. Grief is not a one-dimensional experience everyone must go through following pre-determined stages but rather “*people show different patterns or trajectories of grief reactions across time*” (p.6), they may cope effectively (resilience), experience gradual return to normal daily routines (recovery) or find impossible to deal with the pain of loss (chronic grief). According to the author, “*our reactions to grief seem designed to help us accept and accommodate losses relatively quickly so that we can continue to live productive lives*” (p.8). Despite Sadness being a big part of grief, there is also a positive side to it: bereavement is a powerful experience, dramatically shifting people’s perspective of life.

Chapter 2 is a brief, and really critical, history of the notion of “grief” and “grief work”, starting from Freud’s writings the author find “*uncharacteristically unformed, almost casual*” and his idea of the “work of mourning”, “*vague and idealistic*” (p. 16). Bonanno argues that newer studies, with changed standards of evidence, have found absolutely no support for the idea that grief is a time-consuming work that must be done before full recovery is possible. Not only, the author believes that psychological problems do not have to be necessarily traced back to earlier unresolved grief reaction nor healthy responses to loss are suspect, but also that “*most bereaved people get better on their own, without any kind of professional help*” as they “*exhibit a natural resilience.*” (p. 24).

Cultural given rigid parameters for appropriate behavior in bereaved people do not match what most people actually go through. “*When grief as come and gone, that’s it*” (p. 22)”. Mostly, Bonannos’ criticism is grounded on the lack of empirical data, and sampling errors as “*four patients is small number to base such a provocative theory*” (Deutsch) (p. 19), “*grieving over the death of a loved one is not the same as facing your own death*” (Kubler-Ross) (p. 21), “*the way infant react to separation from their mothers is not necessarily the same as the reaction of an adult trying to come to terms with the death of a loved one*” (Bowlby) (p. 22).

In *Chapter 3* the author challenges the idea that the key component of grief is only an intense, plain, silent, all encompassing and bottomless sadness, like an “*inward desolation*” (p. 27). Referring to Ekman’s research showing that emotions are varied, complex and useful, the author underlines that emotions help us manage challenges in two main ways, feeling them, coming and going, and showing them to others. The function of sadness is to turn our attention inward, promote deeper and more effective reflection, become more detail-oriented, accurate (in evaluating our abilities and performances), and less biased (toward others). It’s an “*essential tool that help us accept and accommodate to the loss*” (p. 31) that “*dampens our biological systems so that we can pull back*” (p. 32) and comes “*equipped with a build-in safety mechanism*” (p.21), facial emotion expression, a “*compelling signal to others that we may need help*”. Emotion are short-terms reactions, “*personal and raw*” (p. 36) to immediate demands, and their usefulness depends on its context. The function of laughter and Duchenne smile is to “*give us a break, a temporary respite from the pain of loss (...)* *come up for air, (...) breathe*” (p. 39).

For Bonanno bereavement is essentially a non uniform or static stress reaction, “*an attempt by our minds and bodies to deal with the perception of a threat to our well-being.*” (p. 40). Grief is tolerable only because “*it comes and goes in a kind of oscillation, it moves back and forth emotionally (...)* *We temporarily lighten up and reconnect with those around us, then dive back down to continue the process of mourning*” (p. 40).

In *Chapter 3 to 6* , the author explains that Resilience in response to a “*host of potentially traumatic life events*” (p. 49) is common, abundant, prevalent, “*the norm rather than the exception*” (p. 47), but not homogeneous. Some experience a “*wondrous sense of calm, even serenity*” (p. 59) , and many manage to keep their spirit up through the use of humor, while only a few remain depressed or exhibit enduring psychiatric symptoms. Clues about resilience are the quality of the relationship that was lost, the presence of others to turn to for comfort, the ability to use avoidance and distraction as coping strategies, a broader flexibility to adjust to the shifting demands of different situation, a broader repertoire of behaviors, and emotion expression flexibility. Being flexible in expression or suppressing emotions is adaptive. The best approach to unexpected adversities seems to be “whatever gets you

through the night”, a “pragmatic coping” or a “coping ugly”, as humans are “wired to survive”, adapt, and “change gears” (p. 81).

In *Chapter 7*, the author explored cases when “grief takes over”, sadness becomes too strong, overwhelming, “*pernicious and dysfunctional*” (p. 97) and bereaved people withdraw from world, loose the focus in life, and experience confusion about their identity. They tend to ruminate on the past and repeatedly rebuff, deny access and locked out other in their lives. Although “*prolonged grief is dominated by yearning, and the repetitive and futile search for the lost one*” (p.98), that yearning brings no comfort, only deeper the pain, often fueled by illogical chain of reasoning. “*The glue that seems to bind them (yearning, emptiness and isolation) together is dependency*” (p. 102), according to the author, an overly investment and reliance on another person. Reliable criteria are needed for a diagnosis of PDG (prolonged grief disorder) that accounts for severity and time.

In the second part of the book, somehow more autobiographical, personal and “spiritual”, Bonanno explored cultural differences in loss and grief practices, mixing cross-cultural research, with personal experiences, even in relation to his deceased father. Building on TMT (Terror Management Theory) he explains that global belief systems “*condense and catalog the world around us*”, reinforce our membership in groups and cultures and help us predict what is likely to happen in a given situation (p. 120). Similarly, spiritual belief systems and the ability to transcend “*existential anxieties about the impermanence of live*” (p. 123) take a more hopeful view of human nature and mourning. Here the author discusses the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism, the “*clinging to and grasping at the illusion of permanence*” (p. 123), Attachment Theory, and Chinese Bereavement Rituals. The importance of close relationships as inner resources, spiritual connections and bonds which are culturally different is emphasized. “*Continuing bonds with deceased are more adaptive in a context where they are understood and culturally supported*” (p. 180) and “*rituals are sewn into the very fabric of the culture*” (p. 181).

All chapters emphasize the importance of longitudinal research and the need for theoretical approached grounded on empiric data while recognizing that “*it is difficult and expensive to follow people over longer periods of time*” (p. 195). The author rely heavily on concrete resources but without going into too many scientific details, and thus making the book totally accessible to every reader.

The most engaging aspect of this book, is the voice given to loss “survivors” and the different challenges they had faced, while strongly underlining their opportunities for a better and more fulfilling life. “*Many bereaved people realize that the best way to pay tribute to their loved ones is not through their own pain and suffering, not through their own metaphorical death, but by living on as fully as possible.*” (p. 197).

Ultimately, the author expresses a great deal of criticism toward prior research in the area of grief and loss but elaborating and explaining his critiques and including examples of well-designed studies like the CLOC study and numerous empirical evidences to support his assertions and methodological recommendations.

Humans are equipped with a set of in-born psychological processes that help them cope with loss, while turning their attention inward, reflect and recalibrate to the reality of loss. We move in and out of sadness, to gradually return to a state of equilibrium. This kind of adaptive oscillation in and out of sadness is achieved by switching to more positive states of mind, by finding joy and laughter within pain, and making sense out of it. Positive emotions “*propel us out of sadness*”, but also connect us to others.

In the end, resilient people “*have more tools in their toolbox*” and are more flexible in the way they use emotions, using sometimes “*behavior strategies that under normal circumstances are less than perfectly healthy*” (p. 199), like self-serving biases, blaming external factors, or focusing on positive outcomes. Many aspects of bereavement fade gradually with time, because when people grieve they deal with the unknown and “*live with the dissonance*” (p. 201) powerfully evoked by death.

Advanced researchers can refer to the authors’ published research work, abundantly cited throughout the book, to verify in details how he has innovatively applied those methodologies and procedures to the field of loss and grief.

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Sapio Donatella (2010) (a cura di). *Famiglie, reti familiari e cohousing. Verso nuovi stili del vivere del convivere e dell’abitare*. Milano: FrancoAngeli, Milano, pp. 249.

The first part of the book focus on the origin of the nuclear family model, the social-affective organization of XX siècle’s consumerist society and the tendency to combine authentic models of live with more fair and consumerist models. The study of families is historical and family find collocation in a intermediate space between individual and society, having the function to regulate exchanges between the individual and his context of reference. The so-called marriage crises has lead to a great increase of family forms. The rising of needs deriving from this fragmentation has not been accompanied by a rising in family resources, on the contrary, “from a real decrease due to the exiguity of the nuclear family group, we can talk of an increase both real and relative of family needs” (p. 15).

To better understand the cohousing phenomenon we need to assume that there is an unique family model. “The true revolution is the evolution of the

concept of family itself”, Sapio, neuropsychiatrist and book editor, says. Cohousing, in fact, generates new family forms, as through it new extensive affective bonds are created that become the new point of reference. This seems to be the answer to modern society family desegregation. It’s necessary here to say that desegregation is one of the characteristic elements of post-modernity, and “social structure” itself is not strong nor permanent, the perceived order belongs to a specific historical moment, changes are a constant of society, and families have to account for a modernity without responsibilities, a society that does not offer answers and forces on the family short-term planning.

Cohousing is a phenomenon that respond to those questions that frantic city life leave unresolved and offers solutions to big social themes like eco-sustainability, solidarity, and solitude. Consequently the tendency to aggregate to share family management and household life has lead to the creation of networks of families and new forms of cohabiting and sociability according to personal criteria and different modalities. The author wonders what family-system model, in contrast with the nuclear model, will be able to “contain the impact of current changes, allow for an healthy childhood growth, guarantee the continuity of transgenerational bond and represent the symbolic place of affects elaboration” (p. 15).

The first part of the book is theoretical and talks about the etymology and the definitions of family and its different typology in the last siècle. Among the most interesting contributions, Anna Laura Zanatta considers nuclear or post-nuclear post-modern families as “complex family forms”, extensions of the original couple nucleus: extended and large families, and cohousing communities where single individuals and families freely chose their family form, in housing structures that preserve both private traditional living space and common live spaces.

Consuelo Mameli and Laura Fruggeri introduced “Cohabiting forms functional to the development and socialization during childhood: affective places for an healthy growth”. What the authors intended to analyze is child development in its growing context, starting from attachment theories and showing that in our society, where children care is a shared practice, contemporary family transformations belong to a complex context both for the type of relation between genders and generations and the quality of relations between family and social context.

It emerges the need for a social space what public services struggle to satisfy: multi-nuclear and multi-parents, single-parent with unwed mother families and so on. Those are the same families that “while waiting for social services to conform, organize themselves to re-create an informal community that cannot be replaced in the dimension of diffuse parenting, functional to the growth of single individuals” (p. 83).

Families then have to rely on form of solidarity between them: cohousing, eco-village and family communities are different experiences. In

the first case there are more familiar nucleus living together and sharing space, time and tangible goods (kitchen, daycare guest room, laundry room and so on) with a positive economic and environmental impact. Eco-villages are more inspired by rural environmentalism and like cohousing are far from the families' condition of isolation and de-accountability.

Family communities tend to emphasize family life and social bonds among its members. Family networks are very important as strategies to deal with individual life issues (Carla Facchini), especially for the elderly. In the book are also presented the practical (Donata Francescato), architectural (Orazio Carpenzano) and legal (Marco Zucchin) aspect of those organizations. The evolution of the nuclear family, derived itself from the evolution of the patriarchal model, moves towards a greater articulation of family fabric. Social-housing styles can be an indicator and an answer to the social evolution, that creates breaking-up phenomena, and lead to a better socio-relational quality of life.

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Bolis Michela (2010), *Giovani coppie e modi di abitare*. Milano: FrancoAngeli, pp. 206.

The symbolism of housing involves a great part of the individual's wellness. The book talks about the use of domestic and social spaces as reflected in different architectural types (some rooms are not used any more, kitchen becomes wider and includes convivial spaces, there is a greater focus on food) and in relation to objects. The relation between individual and space produces the experience of living the house as "a private peace of the world". The house is analyzed from a quantitative and structural point of view reflecting the modes it is enjoyed (ownership versus rental) which determines its long or short term use. Renting, compared to owning, does not necessarily indicate an economic difficulty, but rather a life style choice. The new tenants are different from the traditional ones aspiring to ownership: renting is now a way to "temporalized" the exchange, that changes the attitude toward ownership, as renting allows the access to goods without all obligations of property. Italy is the country where the majority of people live in a owned house: in 2008, 7 out of 10 families (i.e. 68,5%) owned the house they lived in. The other aspect considered in the book is the house as home. Such meaning is intimate and strong, and it determines the daily life of all of us. House is a tool to gather identity, the housing style.

Domestic culture and the meaning of home are a social identity determining more sedentary life (i.e. teleworking) and more housekeeping

help in general. Interpersonal relationships in this new conception of the house are highly selected. It's easier to meet people inside the house than outside. "Going out" is replaced by "staying home" and this new sociality requires part of the consumes and domestic spaces to be devoted to the establishment of interpersonal relations. This return to private life means, however, also a closure, a search for protection, with security measures to protect ourselves from the risk and the uncertainty of urban habitat. The house can be considered as a dynamic process centered on the housing pathways, proposed by Chaphman (2002) who defines "The concept of housing pathways as a way to put order in the field of housing such as to maintain family meanings, emphasize the dynamic nature of the house experience and its inter-relation with all other aspect of family life: the totality of relations and interactions in continuous change families experience in time in their house consumption " (p. 59). Housing pathway attempts to capture the social meaning attributed by families to their houses. The house can be an element of identity and an important lifestyle factor for the family and its members.

The second part of the book includes an empirical research based on interviews to 20 young couples. Quantitative analysis results showed that the process of starting a family for young couples is highly complex and takes place in the background of a phenomenon called "long family", due to an increasing young's education, a precarious job market and changes in the gender and intergenerational relations within families. High rental costs and the desire for a owned house slow down the forming of a new family. Paradoxically, the family of origin seems to be the privileged place youths turn to for support in exiting the family and creating one on their own. However, being helped has drawbacks too: housing styles, proximity and relational networking based on the family of origin. The book ends with the description, through interview excerpts about personalization and identification, of how the house is lived and men and women organize household space. Becoming a family implies a "becoming" of the house: from the beginning, the house follows family's internal changes (births, children ages, work changes, type of work). "The house tells about its inhabitants, tells story about who they are, how they live, what experienced they have faced and what are the their plans for the future" (p. 150).

In the end, the author synthesizes some housing styles, building on interviews (forced to rent; satisfied tourists; access house; temporary adapted; static provincials; forced inheres; pretentious protected). These styles highlight some polarities and dichotomies that well describe the Italian contemporary housing situation: ownership/rental; internal/external; continuity/changes; autonomy/independence. We believe this book to be helpful in looking at young families from an unusual perspective. The house is a symbol of family union, affects, safety and identity: it's difficult to

disentangle the meaning of family from the meaning of home. Going home means nothing more than within a family.

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Belotti Valerio (2010) (a cura di). *Costruire senso, negoziare spazi. Ragazze e ragazzi nella vita quotidiana. Questioni e Documenti, n. 50. Quaderni del Centro Nazionale di documentazione e analisi per l'Infanzia e l'Adolescenza, pp. 230.*

Making the social role of children evident has been a theme of great interest in late modernity. Starting from the acknowledgment that adults' and children' spaces are separated, the public presence of children is limited because perceived as a source of risk and increasing danger by families' and institutions' protective attitude. Consequently, children have become an increasingly private subject within families, with plenty of educational experiences within institutions to the disadvantage of those in urban contexts. This privatization could be one cause of the trait-dominant post-modern individualization, characterized by anxiety and worries. However, due to increasing family instability, the everyday serenity of childhood does not seem so guaranteed and granted, and parents who become the sole responsible for their children so often makes such investment on children their own life project. Between adults and children a power relationship is established, and in fact, the social position, rights and responsibilities of children, characteristics of a society in a specific historical time, represent a peculiar structure of hierarchical power between generations (p. IX). Daily it is decided what children can do as a function of their competences and abilities to be. Youths involvement in the planning of their life contents, means recognizing that children and youths need to be respected as subjects that "know" about their own existence and position within networks of relations. In other words, youths have knowledge of their practical experience of social being (p. XIII). Daily life spaces (family, school, free time) are also those in which generations express themselves and meet. Everyday live, even though signed by many difficulties, generally is expressed in normal spaces where relationships that give sense to our actions can be weaved, thus producing a culture between equals, interpreting and selecting information arriving from the outside and contributing to the modification and transformation of the environment around them. The challenge is the daily negotiation that generations use to avoid, circumscribe, bypass and overcome and to make more dynamic those ambivalent points of equilibrium, between children autonomy, their need for care and the

protective anxiety of adults. This ambivalence has its roots between individuality and society and must not be denied, but recognized as a social complexity trait. The research on a sample of more than 21.000 subjects, from 40 Italian cities, highlighted a body of knowledge that has its fulcrum in the youths 11 to 15 years old decision making in the different contexts of their daily life (family, peers, school, associations, sports) and in the nature and the respect for their rights as citizens. The survey used had 9 sections and 188 questions. Focus groups were organized to further discuss three specific areas of the questionnaire. It seems relevant here to present some of the results on the area “Family decision making and participation”. The prevalent (63%) family form involved a father, a mother, sons and sisters (13% is a only child). It emerged a articulated network of family household and economic support for new families by grandparents, as well as affective investments. Sense of belonging, safety, and pleasure time were reported as most important factors in family relations.

What is decided and who decides? The youths interviewed reported sharing decisions with parents and having high decisional autonomy (low only on family rules and food choices). More than a negotiation with parents, it seems to be a twenty-year old deal. Decisions made by youth mostly pertains the choice of a boy/girlfriend, books to read, clothes to wear and friends. It’s important to notice that gender as well as geographic differences are irrelevant. Children are excluded (not totally, but mostly) from decision making on important purchases (like car, furniture, house). Going on vacation is, for example, for the most a parents’ decision, but girls participate in it more than boys. In conclusion, youths perceive they belong to their families as they can influence and participate in the decision making processes within it.

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