

# INFORMATION



## THESIS ABSTRACT

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### ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN AMAZON REGION: A STUDY WITH SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF PEDAGOGUES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE CITY OF CASTANHAL - PARÁ (BRAZIL)

Rodrigues de Andrade, F.M.  
(2015 Universidade de Santiago de Compostela)  
(Dr José Antonio Caride Gómez y Dr. Marcos Antonio dos Santos Reigota dirs.)

Brazilian Amazon, for centuries, has been victim of a political, economical and educational standard which has strategically worked to hide an uncontrolled ownership of its natural resources. In such strategies the invisibilization of the population, the devaluation of its culture and, mostly, its knowledge disqualification are persistent. All these issues have reinforced a social network of exclusion, which is an effect of the environmental issues that have been imposed on this region. Such imposition was brought by the “colonization”, and it has continued up until today.

Since then it is recurrent in the Amazon a process of cultural “domestication” whereby the school has been used as the main tool for the reproduction of the dominant culture. However, we used to think that if the educational institution can be used to establish domination, it might also be a tool to fight against hegemony, hence a place of disruption and renovation, resistance and transformation.

In this setting raises our interest in getting into Amazon’s common reality to unveil the meanings attributed to Environmental Education, emphasized in the main goal of recognizing social representations of Environmental Education that guide pedagogical and community practices of teachers with training in Pedagogy, that work in the initial grades

of Elementary School in public schools of Castanhal-Pará-Brazil.

It’s theoretical and methodological framework was oriented by contributions of the qualitative research, more accurately by the Theory of Social Representations in its ethnographic approach. We questionnaires, supplemented by two discussion groups and observations to collect data for this study, in which 121 teachers participated. The most significant results have demonstrated the interrelationship between the three dimensions that shape Social Representations:

- a. In the first dimension, *information*, speeches broadcasted in mass media is highlighted, which are one of the main sources of accessing Environmental Education among surveyed people; the weakness in university education programs to include environmental issue and the day-to-day dimension of Amazonian peoples in teachers’ training processes; the frequent presence of Official speeches in pedagogical school practices, that are the result of the knowledge-power relation.
- b. In the second dimension, *representation field*, a comprehension of Environmental Education tied with Amazon day-to-day reality is shown, from the environmental problems that appear in it; the re-definition of the concept, based on historical and cultural elements of this region; an abstraction of the Environmental Education which reflects the identities of the subjects in this research, especially in such a way where they are defined as naturalist, integrative and anthropocentric.
- c. In the last one, *social practices*, the interest in Environmental Education is emphasized, portrayed in pedagogical and communitarian daily

practices, highlighting the different ways of accomplishing it; the relationship with Nature, as a historical and cultural product, socially built; the institutional guidelines and ideological speeches, present in the main sources of access to Environmental Education, which reveal up in their pedagogical practices and in their proposition of actions focusing on currents concepts established in social representations.

In all these dimensions we have identified the importance attributed to the Amazonian Nature and the interest, of the participants of this research, in Environmental Education. In the same way, it was possible to unveil the social representations, the symbolic elements that shape it and the manner in which these representations are materialized in their lives and daily practices. This materialization takes place through historic-cultural elements, whereby the subjects of this research aim to destabilize unequal relationships of power. In this sense, they question the production process of

knowledge and know-how, as well as social relationships that feature hidden interests and imposed truths.

Furthermore, subjects are aware of devalued condition imposed on their know-how and culture, thus they seek in their cultural stock the key elements to outline other ways of organization in order to change social structures. This intentionality to change is clearly visible in their speeches, practices and in the meanings attributed to Environmental Education.

For this and other evidences, we figure out that historic-cultural elements, truly Amazonian, have fed a series of actions that explain and specify the resistance movements towards governmental policies that go against the interests of this population. Although in many speeches it is possible to observe that this resistance has been destroyed by very subtle strategies of consensus and social control or through physical confrontation. We understand these symbolic tensions highlight the struggle of this community to keep their cultural stock and identity alive.

#### CONNECTED LEISURE: THE E-LEISURE EXPERIENCE OF YOUTH (16-18 YEARS) OF BIZKAIA

**Viñals Blanco, A. (2015) Instituto de Estudios de Ocio. Facultad de Ciencias Sociales y Humanas. Universidad de Deusto. (Manuel Cuenca Cabeza y Jaime Cuenca Amigo, dirs.)**

In the Digital Era habits and lifestyles have been transformed by the unstoppable and constant development of Internet technologies. The field of leisure, understood in this study as an experience of human development (Cuenca, 2000), it has not been left out. It has also noted the direct influence of digitization, leading to the creation of new types of leisure related to Internet use (denominated in the study and-leisure or leisure connected). It has also noted the direct influence of digitization, leading to the creation of new types of leisure related to Internet use (denominated in the study as e-leisure or connected leisure). These new practices in e-leisure have special rise among the young generation, who at birth surrounded by screens, feel the virtual space as another integral part of everyday life. They are young digital natives, which does not

mean they are digital competent, with its own characteristics. Young people who are different from their parents and teachers, which feel some concern about the kind of education that their children and students are receiving relate with digital subject-matter. The general aim of the thesis is to analyze, from the perspective of experiential leisure, e-leisure features of young people between 16 and 18 years of Bizkaia, belonging to educational centers of different characteristics. The purpose is to provide a vision that clarifies socially hot topic and provide the basis for the start of a future educational intervention. It argues that the leisure experience, in which the study is based, can become more valuable and mature through training. Working on the assumption that youth e-leisure is superficial and depends on ICT training received; the proposal of this research is to provide training in digital matter that not only impinge on the values of the network society, but also in leisure as a factor in human development. The thesis concludes with various contributions which refer both, to the conceptual framework as well as evidences of the empirical study. Both parts help to clarify the relationship established between e-leisure and youth

#### SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION WITH MINORS IN CHILD WELFARE. PERSONAL, ACADEMIC, AND LABOR TRAJECTORIES.

**Fernández Simo, J.D (2014). Universidad de Vigo, Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación de Ourense (Director: Xosé Manuel Cid Fernández)**

The Children's Welfare System (CWS) includes numerous entities and resources, forming a complex network that attempts to meet the individual needs of each child through systemic and coordinated action. This goal, as complex as it is relevant, can be facilitated by listening to the children who are being accompanied and who are ultimately the protagon-

nists of this process. Their opinion is therefore a key element to determine at first hand the different realities experienced and subjectively interpreted.

Based on the above premises, the *goal* of this thesis focuses, on the one hand, on the identification and analysis of the relevant factors that adolescents and youngsters in Child Welfare consider decisive in the evolution of their personal, academic, and employment itineraries; and, on the other hand, it focuses on determining their appraisal of the socio-educational action and the resources of the different entities and agencies through which they passed during their life trajectories.

For this purpose, a critical communicative *methodology* was used to gain access to an interpretation of reality that is born and ends in the participants as they overcome the role of study object to become its true actors, thereby taking control of the transformation of their own lives and realities, facilitating their empowerment. Hence, the approach to research-action turns into the intention to improve the professional practice. In a system that retains the echoes of historic assistentialism and, more recently, overprotection, the study is contextualized within the framework of a *critical and liberating* methodology. It is aimed at improving the socio-educational practice, using on a paradigm focused on the participation and empowerment of accompanied youngsters and adolescents, who take the floor at the same time as they take the reins of their own lives.

The research starts with a descriptive approach considering the contextual socio-economic indicators and the review of the resources of the CWS documentation, taking into account three typologies: residential educational center (REC), transition to adulthood program, and open environment team. Information for the comprehensive analysis of the data was obtained using three qualitative techniques: a *discussion group* in which participants were 6 youngsters who were enrolled in post-compulsory studies, constituting successful academic itineraries. These youngsters offer interesting reflections on their academic evolu-

tion, as well as that of the peers with whom they shared their trajectory in that resource; five *single-case analyses* of different socio-educational actions, with a 6-month follow-up, which included a total of 215 individualized actions providing direct information about the systemic intervention; and four *life stories* of young people who had abandoned the Child Welfare System at least 6 months prior to the completion of the work.

The *results* obtained reveal that the reality described by the participants contains conflicting paradigms that hinder the establishment of positive interpersonal relationships between participants and educators while retaining elements that are typical of paternalistic and assistential interventions that delay the minors' autonomy and emancipation. We found large differences in the forms practiced, especially with regard to establishing the accompaniment relationship, and also in facilitating training in autonomous task performance. The perception of professional involvement is positive, but there are also notable differences between the different resources of the same system. It is also striking that, according to the participants, the entities that draw on a welfare discourse and receive resources from the public administration are the ones that perform more precarious actions. Lastly, the results of the study show that the intra- and inter-system coordination is an unresolved issue that hampers and places at risk a truly integral and emancipatory socio-educational action. It is necessary and urgent to support collaborative and interdisciplinary networking, both inside and outside of the welfare structure. This would help to respond more effectively and efficiently to the needs of children, adolescents, and youngsters.

### SOCIOCULTURAL ANIMATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD: INITIATIVES AND LEISURE TIME PROGRAMS IN GALICIA

Ferreiro-Núñez, X. (2015). *Centro Integrado de Formación Profesional Politécnico de Lugo* (Director: Dr. José A. Caride Gómez)

The main arguments of the Thesis, directed by PH. D. José A. Caride Gómez and defended in October 2015 at the University of Santiago de Compos-

tela, take as a frame of reference the sociocultural animation (ASC-“animación sociocultural”) aimed at young children in Galicia: a field of theories and practices included in a particular conception of culture and cultural work, in a broad and comprehensive sense; a social, civic, pedagogical, political and cultural horizon which makes an appeal to cultural democracy and which goes beyond the mere cultural democratization.

From this perspective, we have studied and analyzed what is being done -and how it is being done- in

the field of sociocultural animation in early childhood (ASCI-“animación sociocultural en la infancia”), laying an emphasis on their leisure time, trying to look into the existing coherence between the aims of the initiatives and their implementation, analyzing the connection or consistency between the proposals and the conceptions of the sociocultural coordinators and the leisure time they work with, and the consistency between the initiatives that have been implemented and the legal framework governing them.

The recognition of the figure of the child, boy or girl, emerges slowly in recent decades. Nowadays, in the Western world, it is a carrier of absolute, social values, with an obvious social attraction; this does not mean we can interpret it as a purely contemporary phenomenon. It is a concept of difficult delimiting, but everyone agrees that it is socially built in each historical moment and context. Therefore, it would be appropriate to speak of “childhoods”, of boys and girls, if we do not want to deal with empty concepts.

The number of children is decreasing in Galicia, a situation common to other neighboring developed countries. This fact partly explains its social redefinition. It is estimated that, at the end of this decade, early childhood (0-4 years old) will decrease by 25% in the whole country, and Galicia will be one of the communities behaving more regressively.

One of the distinctive features of public policies aimed at children in our context is that they are still undeveloped, due to the fact that they are mainly geared toward the families.

Childhood emerges socially and gains increasing relevance as a subject of research and interest for the scientific community. With regard to the ASC, the process of democratization gave it strength enough to gain the prestige that currently enjoys, with a more defined path from other disciplines. It makes sense and acquires entity in a specific time and community, a concept of the early 21st century, arising thus its ability to activate a process of awareness-raising in order to empower it.

From a methodological point of view, we have opted for a multicase study (in the city councils of Lugo, Lalín, Oleiros, Burela and Ribadavia, together with the private entity “Fundación M<sup>a</sup> José Jove”), adjusting its

empirical development to an ethnographic analysis, harmonizing description with interpretation, diagnosis with evaluation, a quantitative approach with a qualitative one, prevailing the latter.

The social and territorial demarcation is confined to Galicia, bearing in mind its linguistic and geographical singularity and, above all, its juridical-political and administrative uniqueness. The timeframe spans four decades, from the beginning of the Transition to democracy –official end of Franco’s dictatorship, in 1975– to the present day. By analysing this period, we are able to explain the evolution and the actions carried out by the entities included in the institutional, political, normative, cultural and social dynamics. All in all, as far as the empirical work is concerned, our starting point is the year 2007: a four-year period in which we have thoroughly analysed the initiatives concerning the sociocultural animation (ASC) and sociocultural animation in early childhood (ASCI) undertaken by the entities that make up the sample, the evaluation, since the initiatives of the ASC, including those of the ASCI are hardly assessed.

In this study we have proved that the dichotomy between sociocultural and cultural animation still exists in practice, an aspect that had been supposedly overcome a decade ago. Although relative, since we have only been able to verify it in certain entities, it is significant enough so as to infer its impact in everyday realities. At the same time, we have confirmed that the show prevails over other proposals of sociocultural action, being socially blurred as they are regarded as similar.

In addition, we have also realized that some methodological aspects must be improved, for example, the evaluation, since the initiatives of the ASC, including those of the ASCI are hardly assessed. We understand that a future line of research particularly relevant will be to delve into the motives why this happens.

Finally, we have realized that it is necessary to implement the right of young children to social participation, and to encourage civic responsibility as well as an appropriate use of their leisure time. For this purpose, the leisure policy aimed at young children must be redirected. In this sense, no significant differences have been found in the analysed entities.