

LEISURE PRACTICES AND ITS EDUCATION IN THE PROCESSES OF SOCIAL INCLUSION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY WITH YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE IN CATALONIA, GALICIA AND MADRID

LAS PRÁCTICAS DE OCIO Y SU EDUCACIÓN EN LOS PROCESOS DE
INCLUSIÓN SOCIAL: UN ESTUDIO COMPARADO CON JÓVENES (EX)
TUTELADOS EN CATALUÑA, GALICIA Y MADRID

AS PRÁTICAS DE ÓCIO E A SUA EDUCAÇÃO NOS PROCESSOS DE INCLUSÃO
SOCIAL: UM ESTUDO COMPARADO COM JOVENS (EX)TUTELADOS NA
CATALUNHA, GALIZA E MADRID

Ángela L. DE VALENZUELA BANDÍN, Rita GRADAÍLLE PERNAS
& José Antonio CARIDE GÓMEZ
Universidade de Santiago de Compostela

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ABSTRACT: Leisure, to whose most conventional practices –ludic, festive and recreational– have been added in the last decades, experiences and livings which extend and/or diversify their protagonism in people's daily life, represents an ambit of special importance for human development. Without neglecting the inherence in their realities, the main objective of our research is acquiring knowledge and analyzing what are the leisure-time activities. Involving young people (between 16 and 21 years old) with two well differentiated profiles: on the one hand, those who are being in foster care have been object of some degree of attention, protection or social insertion; on the other hand, those who have maintained their family ties

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR'S ADDRESS: Ángela L. DE VALENZUELA BANDÍN. Universidade de Santiago de Compostela. Departamento de Pedagogía y Didáctica. Grupo de Investigación en Pedagogía Social y Educación Ambiental (SEPA-interea). E-mail: angela.devalenzuela@usc.es.

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	<p>under “normal” circumstances like students of Post-compulsory Secondary Education. This research, which has as an empirical support the information obtained through the application of surveys elaborated ad hoc to two samples of both groups in Catalonia, Galicia and Madrid, highlights the coincidences and divergences in their preferences, revealing the possibilities and limitations between those preferences and the leisure time activities that both youth groups carry out. This set of circumstances demands a proper leisure education, which contributes with new perspectives in social and pedagogical code; and, along with them, new opportunities in order to build the equality and the social inclusion of youth in the society we inhabit...</p>
<p>PALABRAS CLAVE: ocio juvenil pedagogía del ocio educación social jóvenes tutelados inclusión social</p>	<p>RESUMEN: El ocio, a cuyas prácticas más convencionales –lúdicas, festivas y recreativas– se han añadido en las últimas décadas experiencias y vivencias que amplían y/o diversifican su protagonismo en la vida cotidiana de la gente, representa un ámbito de especial trascendencia para el desarrollo humano. Sin obviar las controversias inherentes a sus realidades, el objetivo principal del trabajo que presentamos reside en conocer y analizar cuáles son las actividades de ocio en las que participan jóvenes (entre los 16 y los 21 años) con dos perfiles bien diferenciados: de un lado, los que siendo tutelados o ex tutelados han sido objeto de alguna medida de atención, protección o inserción social; de otro, los que han mantenido sus vínculos familiares en condiciones de “normalidad” como alumnos de Educación Secundaria Postobligatoria. El estudio, que tiene como soporte empírico la información obtenida mediante la aplicación de cuestionarios elaborados ad hoc a dos muestras de ambos colectivos en Cataluña, Galicia y Madrid, pone de relieve las coincidencias y divergencias en sus preferencias, desvelando las posibilidades y limitaciones entre aquellas y las prácticas de ocio que unos y otros jóvenes llevan a cabo. Un conjunto de circunstancias ante las que se reivindica una educación del ocio que aporte nuevas perspectivas en clave pedagógica y social; y, con ellas, nuevas oportunidades para construir la equidad y la inclusión social de la juventud en las sociedades que habitamos.</p>
<p>PALAVRAS-CHAVE: ócio juvenil pedagogia do ócio educação social jovens tutelados inclusão social</p>	<p>RESUMO: O ócio, a cujas práticas mais convencionais –lúdicas, festivas e recreativas– se acrescentaram nas últimas décadas experiências e vivências que ampliam e/ou diversificam o seu protagonismo na vida quotidiana das pessoas, representa um âmbito de especial transcendência para o desenvolvimento humano. Sem obviar as controvérsias inerentes às suas realidades, o objetivo principal do trabalho que apresentamos reside em conhecer e analisar quais são as atividades de ócio em que participam jovens (entre os 16 e os 21 anos) com dois perfis bem diferenciados: por um lado, os que sendo tutelados ou ex tutelados foram objeto de alguma medida de atenção, proteção ou inserção social; por outro, os que mantiveram os seus vínculos familiares em condições de “normalidade” como alunos de Educação Secundária Postobrigatória. O estudo, que tem como suporte empírico a informação obtida mediante a aplicação de questionários elaborados ad hoc a duas amostras de ambos os grupos na Catalunha, Galiza e Madrid, põe de relevo as coincidências e divergências nas preferências, desvelando as suas possibilidades e limitações e as práticas de ócio que uns e outros levam a cabo. Um conjunto de circunstâncias perante as quais se reivindica uma educação do ócio que traga novas perspetivas na dimensão pedagógica e social; e, com elas, novas oportunidades para construir a equidade e a inclusão social da juventude nas sociedades que habitamos.</p>

1. Introduction

In its more conventional meanings, leisure used to be defined as a time of rest and inaction, in which the cessation of work or family obligations allowed activities considered to be rewarding and satisfying to be freely carried out, either with a ludic, festive or recreational intention. This has been reflected in dictionaries, where it is quite common for leisure to be associated with a person’s free time, to the activities that an individual performs voluntarily to release himself from their family, professional and social obligations, or in fun or restful occupation. Although it is implicitly interpreted that its practices involve experiences and livings with a special importance for human

development, through which personal and collective needs and expectations are met, we are still far from its realization as a social right, which increases and democratizes opportunities that the population as a whole has within its power, “previously reserved for certain strata of age, gender or socio-economic status” (Ruiz Olabuénaga, 1998, p. 541).

This means that any reference to leisure, as a privileged area of *kairos*, subjectivity and emotions, by way of a “pattern of time to evaluate other times, especially those of work” (Lasén, 2000, p. 200), in contemporary societies acquires levels of complexity, problematization and controversy that were unknown historically, largely determined by the new concepts raised around time in

the information era (Castells, 1998), projecting its meanings in aspects as diverse as the biography of each subject, the evolution of civilizations, the connectivity of the real with the virtual, the public and the private, emotional well-being or quality of life.

We refer to time as one of the most valuable realities that we have, which has increased our desire to “measure it, control it, sell it, record it, represent it, immortalize it and make sense of it... becoming a stubborn force that dominates our lives” (Garfield, 2017, p. 18). There are a lot of indications of value of time and its circumstances, either as an everyday possibility or limitation, amongst which Ma Ángeles Durán (2007, p. 18) mentions those that name leisure and its impact on social life, insisting that “the available data on leisure are many, which do not match the many sources, and nobody seems to agree on the border between the time of boredom and the real time of fun”. A time that in young people –without us going into the differences that exist between biological age, chronological age and social age– is incorporating unprecedented transformations, of flexibility, adaptability and resistance as heterogeneous as contradictory, with changing allegiances to worlds and experiences in conflict (Tabboni, 2006). Although, at times, it seems that they are a clear exponent of the presentism induced by *carpe diem*, everything indicates that ultimately they are a sign of the times that inhabit time or –as argued by Graciela Speranza (2017)– of “a time without time”, which as it is not able to be released from the tyranny of the clocks succumbs to the expansion of consumption, the accelerated pace of production and commodification, digital revolution, instant connection and the cult of speed.

1.1. Youth leisure as a subject-problem under study in the network society

Leisure offers the possibility of being studied and analyzed from different paradigms, from parameters of objectivity and subjectivity that should not be interpreted as necessarily against each other but as two complementary readings on the same reality:

From an objective paradigm this is often confused with the time dedicated to something with the resources invested, or simply with activities. From a subjective paradigm it is especially important to consider the satisfaction that each perceives in his experience. Also of interest is its experiential and the opinion and personal meaning, leisure is part of our way of being and how we appear, and therefore is one of the modes of expression of our personality. Subjectively the

word leisure is synonymous of fun, loved occupation, and therefore freely chosen. The experience of the leisure does not depend on the activity in itself, or of the time, economic level or, in some cases, the training held by the subject... [but] with the sense of each experience... for whom the experience... with the world of emotion and, consequently, with happiness (Cuenca, 1998, pp. 256-257).

That being so, leisure is a time that exists by itself, favoring a broad and diversified set of activities that people do voluntarily –once they have responded to their obligations– to rest, have fun and/or to disinterestedly develop knowledge and skills (Dumazedier, 1971). In this regard, Caride (2014, p. 38) affirms that leisure goes beyond time released or that is left over from carrying out other activities, since “more than a time, leisure is an opportunity to activate and develop human experience in all its facets”.

As we have already stated, at present, leisure times are generally considered as a fundamental area in the development of people, a key factor to understanding lifestyles in contemporary societies (Faché, 2002; Cuenca, 2009 and 2014; Caballo, Caride & Meira, 2011), invoking and demanding, before the triumph of “time is money” sponsored by capitalism and neo-liberal thinking, new links in the human and the temporary: a change of a paradigm converging with a cultural transformation, “from ethics for sustainability through solidarity and the change in our consumption patterns” (Elizalde, 2012, p. 61). New ethics of consumption and citizenship in the global-local world that we live in (Cortina, 2002). We refer to a “valuable leisure” (Cuenca, 2014), which promotes integration, cohesion, inclusion, social identity and belonging. A main support in socialization processes, being some of the aspects that are promoted *in* and *with* leisure: social relations, compliance, dialog and exchange, which must be given a great relevance in the social construction of childhood and youth (Ortega & Bayón, 2014; Uceda-Maza, Navarro-Pérez & Pérez-Cosín, 2014).

Valuable leisure, Cuenca (2014) would say, would be the scientific evolution of what this author has conceptualized as humanist leisure: a comprehensive, creative, substantial and active leisure; an experienced and experiential leisure, whose knowledge, between reflection and action, has awoken the need to take it to reality. That is, a time that being inherent to the well-being of people is projected in essential aspects of human living –health, identity, integration, coexistence, etc.– it is a time that educates, “from which we expect a decisive contribution to the improvement of people’s well-being and their quality of life” (Caride,

2014, p. 301). For this reason, educating in values, attitudes, meanings, behaviors, etc. that leisure provides to human development, is a task with which the Social Pedagogy must actively commit to, with an innovative, emancipatory and transformative vision. If so, “leisure in itself, is capable of simultaneously preventing and promoting; very few pedagogical practices achieve this facet in the key of positive growth in unison” at the same time that they favor social development (Uceda-Maza, Navarro-Pérez & Pérez-Cosín, 2014, p. 50).

According to Ken Roberts (2012 and 2014) skills, tastes and interests relating to leisure are developed during childhood and youth, with the “leisure capital” being formed that will substantiate the practices in this area over life; despite the fact that these may change over time or are specially conditioned by the austerity that economic and social crises bring about. That was why the study of leisure in these stages of development is of special interest to leisure researchers and the youth sociologists. In turn, Pérez Serrano, Fernández García and Poza Vilches (2015), indicate that based on a review of various documentary sources, the trend in the “forms of youth leisure” is that young people lack information on recreational activities and that their participation in their planning is not real; indicating that there are differences between boys and girls regarding the perception of free time and the activities carried out. As far as the consumption of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, they indicated that if there is a sedentary lifestyle, it is possible that the consumption of these substances will be greater; showing an increase in the consumption of alcohol among youth and a change in their consumption pattern. In addition, they identify that there is a significant correlation between going out at night, consuming substances and having unprotected sex.

1.2. Leisure as an opportunity to mediate between social exclusion and inclusion

The fact that leisure of adolescents and young people is related to their experiences and at the same time offers different opportunities to improve the socialization processes, affecting their social perceptions and representations, as well as in their subsequent habits in free time, means that what we have come to call “youth leisure” cannot be understood exclusively with age-related criteria or the social context. Without being able to evade them, there is a need for other perspectives and approaches, which take into account “the new ways in which young people relate not only among themselves, but also with the public, social and political space, belonging to a historical

moment marked by very serious problems as well as unprecedented opportunities” (Ortega & Bayón, 2014, p. 9); therefore, it is necessary to be furnished with a broad, scientific and academic, civic and social way of looking, in the analysis of the relations that are established between leisure, youth and development (Cuenca & Carreño, 2016). Young people in the network of a network society, which opens up new doors and windows for communication, interaction and social participation, to the point that “the data seem to point to the fact that, the more committed they are in the design and care processes of the spaces for shared leisure with their peers, the greater the socio-educational returns will be that young people draw from their experiences of leisure” (Ortega & Bayón, 2014, p. 11).

From this perspective, it is important to know and reflect on leisure time of youth who is in a situation of social difficulty due to the fact social-family reality, marked by lack of affection and/or materials, which has been imposed; in particular, in young fostered people or, more appropriately, former foster cared people: boys and girls who have lived under the protection of the Public Administrations until reaching legal age and that, at that moment, or shortly after, must leave the resource that had been sheltering them, having to learn to be adults long before –and with their own means– than young people of their same age whose family background is more positive and stable.

In the face of this reality, in Spain there are entities that offer projects and resources to support the emancipation process of these boys and girls in a situation of social difficulty. The *Federación de Entidades con Proyectos y Pisos Asistidos* (FEPA, Federation of Entities offering Assisted Projects and Apartments) is an organization that brings together institutions which, at national level, carry out these projects to promote the autonomy and emancipation of young people –especially those in and formerly in foster care– favoring their transition to adulthood and independence from an integral perspective; specifically, through projects in the socio-personal, residential, education and training scope, to help in job placement, as well for financial support.

Having to deal with a series of demands that are not required from youth as a whole –emancipating themselves without family support, lacking the necessary resources, without having acquired a certain level of autonomy and social emancipation– places them in a situation of “added” vulnerability. Leisure, during a time that may favor “normalization” and decrease stigma, is presented as an element of particular relevance to “equate”

this inequality and contribute to social equity and to a better quality of life for these boys and girls, either by circumstances related to migration processes, of marginalization and social exclusion, vulnerability, etc. (Alonso, Varela & Teijeiro, 2011; Navarro-Pérez, Pérez-Cosín & Perpiñán, 2015; Villa, 2015; García, De Juanas & López, 2016).

In this sense, young people who were formerly in foster care participating in the research “Young People from a Public care Background: Pathways to Education in Europe” (YIPPEE) in the Spanish context coincide in pointing out that having to carry out tasks in the home, look after their family of origin and having to juggle studies with work – especially when they get older– made them feel “different” with regard to the boys and girls of the same age. A feeling that dissipated when they were with their friends or partner and in leisure time, because, except for the fact of having less free time– in these situations they felt as if they were one more; therefore

the environment of friends and leisure programs represented, for these young people, the opportunity to experience a situation of normality and feel like other children their age. This was also a way to be freed from the situation in their homes, and a door to fun, support and learning (Montserrat & Casas, 2012, p. 160).

According to Villa (2015), having a social support network is essential in the emancipation process of young people; for this to be successful it is important to develop initiatives to expand its social context. Leisure plays a key role in this process, being essential both to know the interests and motivations of young people in this field, as well as to have their own spaces beyond the organized activities in which they participate.

The results of the research project YIPPEE evidence –according to the in-depth interviews with a life history approach made to thirty-five young people formerly in foster care in the Spanish context– that during their passage through the protection system they carried out the same leisure activities as boys and girls of their age. The participation in the same activities as their peer group, as well as having friends outside the institution (which were integrated into the school system) were two factors that helped their motivation to continue with studies; establishing the friends as a reference group and belonging helping to favor a neutralizing positive social identity of certain stigmatizing elements (Montserrat & Casas, 2012).

In the study undertaken by the *Red Jóvenes e Inclusión Social* (Youth Network and Social Inclusion) we see that “young people formerly in

foster care interviewed show difficulties in developing positive and satisfactory leisure” (Ballester, Rodríguez & De Juanas, 2016, p. 237). Some of the aspects that according to this research can limit the occupation of their free time are, on the one hand, the lack of friendships and relationship skills –identified in the records and life stories– and, on the other hand, the lack of economic resources to gain access to certain activities. Leisure has an ambivalent sense: on the one hand, it is a time inhibitor, while on the other it is a time to strengthen personal development (Cuenca & Carreño, 2016).

Faced with this reality, Social Pedagogy in general and Leisure Pedagogy, in particular, have a central role to play, to educate in values and meanings that leisure provides in human development is an inevitable task, which does not have to respond to a univocal pedagogical conception but a plural one... “that humanizes us in everything that is human” (Caride, 2012, p. 311). A pedagogical and social leisure that enables the acquisition of various skills and attitudes, such as: “creativity, imagination, autonomy, the ability of cooperation, responsibility, acceptance of self and others”, etc. (Suárez Sandomingo & Ingerto, 2009, p. 49). Hence Leisure Pedagogy is aimed at fostering the development and life satisfaction of people through knowledge and qualities associated with leisure (Cuenca, 2009); referring to the “art of education *in and for* the experience of a human and quality leisure” (Cuenca, 2004, p. 94) and assuming “the major challenge that involves opening the lives of people to another future, in which aspiring to happiness is not reduced simply to being entertained” (Ferreira, Pose & De Valenzuela, 2015, p. 46).

In connection with the approach of the socio-educational actions with boys and girls in social difficulty it should be noted that the *Estrategias Flexibles de Intervención Socioeducativa* (EFIS, Flexible Strategies of Educational Intervention), a methodology that bases its guidelines for action in the diversity of situations that characterize young people in social difficulty, as well as their changing nature and that, according to Melendro (2007), has provided relevant results such as, for example, that most of the young people who participate in programs and centers with this type of flexible methodology start their adult life with employment; a fundamental aspect for their future. In this line, there are authors (Bravo & Del Valle, 2009) that, owing to the diversity of circumstances, consider that there is a need for a new socio-educational intervention model that relies on a network of differentiated services adapted to the existing needs.

2. Methodology

The results presented are derived from a dissertation project which, under the title of “Leisure time in the daily life of youth at risk and in social difficulty: specific problems and social-pedagogical alternatives”, is generally aimed at knowing and analyzing how youth in a situation of vulnerability, difficulty, exclusion or social risk –in particular those in foster care and/or formerly in foster care– experience leisure on a daily basis; with the aim of providing educational alternatives that will help to ensure their inclusion and active participation in society. The reference population is boys and girls who are between the ages of 16 and 21 years old, who are under a care action for insertion, in a foster care home, assisted apartment or center for the protection of minors in the Spanish state. A dissertation that registers its theoretical, methodological and empirical framework in two research projects that have been funded by some calls of the National R+D+I Plans with the acronyms RESORTES (EDU2012-39080-Co7) and ENREDOS (EDU2015-65638-C6-1-R), both financed by the Secretary of State for Research, Development and Innovation of the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness, with contributions from the ERDF funds of the European Union.

The design of the sample attended a casual non-probabilistic approach, taking as a main reference the entities that are part of the *Federación de Entidades con Proyectos y Pisos Asistidos* (FEPA, Federation of Entities offering Assisted Projects and Apartments), using the province as a segmentation variable. However, for reasons of accessibility and in order to ensure greater reliability of the sample, institutions that do not belong to the Federation also participated in the study. The reasons why the Autonomous Communities of Catalonia, Galicia and Madrid were chosen are the following:

- *Catalonia* has a long history of collaboration between the Public Administration and social entities, as well as in the care of young people who were formerly in foster care, favoring the consolidation of a legal framework and programs in the different areas that constitute the emancipation processes (Villa, 2015). It is also characterized from having, since the 1990's, a pioneering system in the field of policies, services and programs to support the emancipation of young people formerly in foster care; with the Spanish territory having the most initiatives for this purpose (Sala-Roca, Arnau, Courtney & Dworsky, 2016).
- *Galicia* was chosen as it is the Autonomous Community that has the research group to

which this paper is ascribed to. In addition, it was considered relevant in order to represent the boys and girls belonging to a territory with less population and that differs from those that tend to have a leading role research with this group.

- *Madrid* is the community in which the majority of the references found on the transition to adult life of adolescents and young people in social difficulty are focused; usually through collaboration between the National Distance Education University (UNED), the Fundación ISOS (Institute for Social Sustainability) and Opción 3. Iniciativa Social (Option 3. Social Initiative). Hence this territory is also a leader in working with this group.

Methodologically this research is part of a descriptive survey type approach, using the questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. This was developed *ad hoc* and validated by an expert opinion and young people in foster care and formerly in foster care were sent this through postal mail (although in some cases was sent by e-mail), being a professional of the entity the person responsible for the mediation in the process. In this way, we collected a total of 149 valid questionnaires; a significant figure that allows the practices of these young people to be x-rayed, however –as it is not statistically representative– the information studied cannot be extrapolated to the whole of young Spaniards in their status as in foster care and/or formerly in foster care. All in all, this allows the opportunities and constraints with which these young people experience their leisure time on a daily basis to be seen.

The questionnaire, semi-structured in nature, is divided into different thematic blocks that try to investigate the leisure practices carried out by these young people, as well as to know the different motivations that brought them to practice them or not. Of all the issues raised, this paper presents data relating to two specific questions: on the one hand, which are the three commonly practiced leisure activities and, on the other hand, if that they would like to undertake, but do not do so; indicating, if this is the case, the two reasons –from among a list of seven– that prevents or hinders this.

Also, in order to be able to know the similarities and differences between the young people who live or have lived under the guardianship of the Public Administration and those who have not, and taking into account that the comparative studies analyzed the relationships and differences between two or more groups with respect to a variable (McMillan & Schumacher, 2005),

comparative analysis have been carried out with the data derived from the RESORTES Project – already mentioned– relating to the study of the educational and social times of boys and girls enrolled in Post-Compulsory Secondary Education in the Spanish State and who are between 16 and 18 years old; taking into account, in particular, the derivatives of the questionnaire addressed to the students of the Autonomous Communities of Catalonia, Galicia and Madrid (n=931).

To facilitate the comparative analysis between the two groups of young people (in foster care/ formerly in foster care, and those who have not been institutionalized), the responses have been grouped together in response to the eleven blocks that made up this question in the questionnaire of the RESORTES project, developed *ad hoc* by the research group constituted for this purpose, with the participation of the Universities of Barcelona, Burgos, Deusto, La Rioja, Santiago de Compostela and National Distance Learning University (UNED). In addition, the processing and analysis of the data was performed with the SPSS computer software (version 20.0 for Windows).

3. Results

In line with the objective that guides this work, the results obtained are articulated around two paragraphs in accordance with the typology of young people in the sample. On the one hand, we focus on the ludic preferences of young people in foster care and formerly in foster care, as well as the reasons referring to not performing them; on the other hand, we analyze the leisure activities of young people who do not live –or have lived– in an institutionalized manner. This comparative perspective will make it possible to know the different activities being carried out by the young people in their free time taking into account their “institutionalized” status.

a) Leisure activities practiced by young people in foster care and formerly in foster care and reasons for giving up from undertaking them.

To find out what leisure activities are undertaken by young people who are, or have been– in foster care, a question was raised where they were asked to indicate what three activities they carried out on a daily basis in their free time. Thus, the variety of responses were grouped into different categories, fundamentally, they were responding to a classification which brought together digital entertainment (“television and radio” and “digital entertainment”), sports activities (“sport and physical activity”), leisure in the nature (“tourism

and hiking”), cultural activities (“cultural activities or hobbies”), recreational (“parties and celebrations”, “games [that were not on the computer]”), and regarding social relations (“associations and volunteer work”, “being with their family, partner or friends”), as well as “other responses”.

The data¹ reveals that the practice of sports, being with family, partner and/or friends, and participating in cultural activities or enjoying their particular hobbies, become activities in which young people in foster care and formerly in foster care occupy most of their free time, compared to others (associations, tourism, etc.) which have a more residual presence in their daily life. Some activities in whose background a motivation to promote social relations can be hidden. Nonetheless, and perhaps as was to be expected in this group, the physical-sport activities are –by far– what they do the most in their leisure time (62%); with football (mainly boys) and going to the gym (both sexes) being the activities most in demand (see Figure 1).

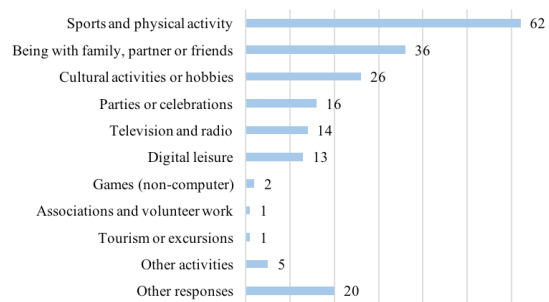


Figure 1. Leisure activities practiced by young people in foster care and formerly in foster care (%)

However, beyond practicing sport and caring for their health through exercise, the boys and girls of this age group indicate that they like to spend their free time “with their family, partner and friends” (36%), although it is more usual to be sharing these periods with their friends. Some young people that –most likely– share tastes and hobbies, so enjoy “cultural activities and hobbies” becomes the third most demanded option (26%), with music being the preferred option.

These ludic initiatives are far from those more directly linked with the enjoyment of leisure in nature (tourism and excursions, 1%), associations and volunteering (1%) or the games that are not computer (2%), where the percentage values are absolutely residual.

However, the fact that the young people carry out these activities does not mean that they are of their total preference; but –from among their possibilities– they choose those that are most appealing for them to carry out. This explains why

only 12% “always” carries out all the activities, compared to 30% that do them “almost always” or the 31% that indicates to doing them “sometimes” (see Figure 2).

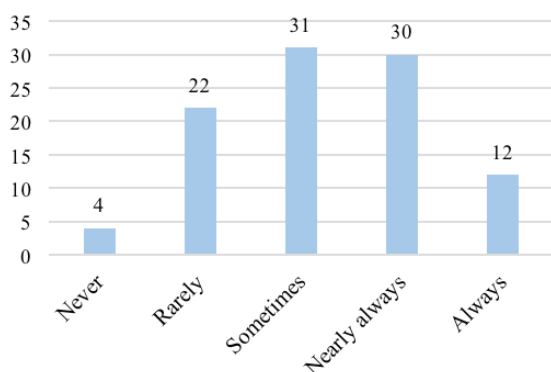


Figure 2. Do you do all the leisure activities that you like?%

On inquiring into the reasons that motivate young people in foster care and formerly in foster care not to carry out all the activities they like in their free time, it is clear that the lack of “time” (39%) and of “money” (33%) are the reasons to use to justify their abstention. To this lack of time is also linked the incompatibility of time with their training-work responsibilities and with the times and pace of the centers in which the undertake their daily life, as well as the homework and/or work overload, making it difficult for conciliation and complicating their realization; two circumstances that affect, respectively, 16% and 12% of the total. However, the reasons that these young people have for not carrying out these activities fall mainly on external factors, while some internal and/or more personal factors such as the “lack of decision, laziness” (16%) or the “not having to do it” (13%) also determine their daily practice (see Figure 3).

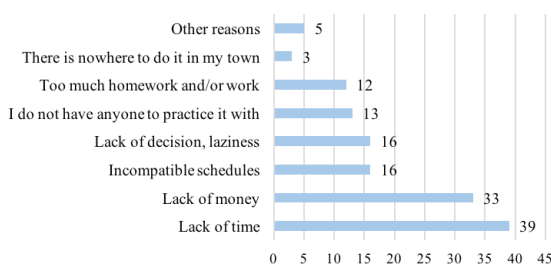


Figure 3. Reasons why they do not do all the leisure activities that they enjoy (%)

b) Leisure activities carried out by young people that do not live or have not lived in an institution from a comparative perspective with the boys and girls in foster care/formerly in foster care.

With the intention of portraying the reality with which young people in foster care spend their leisure time every day, it is necessary to contrast it with that do not live –or have not lived– in foster care under the Public Administration, to check if these practices are similar and in which aspects they differ fundamentally from those carried out by the boys and girls of the same age.

As well, and considering that in order to indicate a number of activities the percentage does not refer to 100%, the result shows notable differences with respect to the leisure activities practiced by some (in foster care and formerly in foster care) and others (young people of the same age who have never been institutionalized) (see Figure 4).

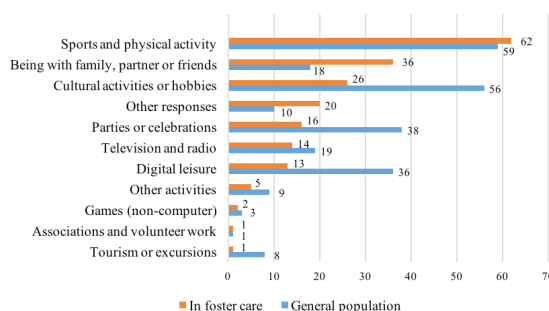


Figure 4. Leisure activities practiced (%)

The physical-sporting practice is the activity which both groups of young people most favor in their free time, regardless of the status of being in foster care or not. However, the most notable differences can be seen in other types of sporting practices that are more relational, such as for example enjoying their free time with their family and/or friends. In this sense, for young people in foster care it is essential to share time with their family, partner or friends (36%, with a significant difference of $\chi^2=24.239$; $p<0.05$), perhaps because life in a center makes it difficult to spend free time with those closest to them; a circumstance that is not as a determinant (18%) for those other young people who live daily with their families and/or friends.

Their status as foster care or formerly in foster care also conditions the participation in other activities; thus, these young people choose with a difference of 29 percentage points ($\chi^2= 44.648$; $p<0.05$) compared to those who have never lived under the foster care of the Public Administration

to participate in certain cultural initiatives or to carry out their personal hobbies; this is the category that includes the third highest percentage value of those identified by boys and girls in foster care and formerly in foster care, however, certain aspects related to the institutionalization (rules of the center, time restrictions, economic resources, etc.) determine the time for carrying them out, hence, when it is possible, they choose these types of activities. The same happens with parties and celebrations, as the young people who have never lived in care centers are the ones who come more often to this type of event (38%, $\chi^2_1 = 26.195$; $p < 0.05$); as well as enjoying digital entertainment (36%, $\chi^2_1 = 31.215$; $p < 0.05$) compared to other types of leisure activities.

As happened with the leisure practices of young people in foster care and formerly in foster care, tourism and/or hiking ($\chi^2_1 = 8.048$; $p < 0.05$) as well as the activities related to associations and volunteer work those which the youth of this age group least undertake. In the case of those who are or have been in foster care under the Administration, perhaps, as mentioned previously, the lack of money will motivate the few moments that indicate devoted to tourism; and the lack of time can hide the reason for not participating in activities related to associations and volunteer work.

4. Discussion

The data presented show that the young people in foster care/formerly in foster care like those who have not lived institutionalized carry out virtually the same leisure activities; although there are significant differences between both groups with respect to the practice and frequency with which they carry out some of them.

Therefore, and even though the activities that these young people do in their free time are varied, sports and physical exercise are converted into the activity that mainly occupies their leisure time regardless of whether or not they are under care in a center for juveniles; because they believe it brings satisfaction, enjoyment and fun, followed by an improvement of the physical shape and condition, and, thirdly, the increase of their interpersonal relationships (Valdemoros, Ponce de León & Gradaille, 2016). It is therefore an activity whose practice transcends that which is merely to do with sports and health care, since it favors social interactions and becomes a strategy to encourage the discipline and the assumption of rules and responsibilities; as has been reflected -for many years- by various authors that emphasize the importance of physical-sporting practice in foster care and reform centers (Petrus, 1999), in

extra-curricular contexts (Fraguela, Varela, Caride & Lera, 2010) or, in general, in human development (Valdemoros, Ponce de León & Gradaille, 2016).

In this regard, Pelegrín, Garcés de Los Fayos and Cantón (2010) assert that the boys and girls who practice sports manifest behaviors that are more outgoing, sensitive and respectful towards people, in addition to presenting greater compliance with rules, self-control, security and confidence in themselves; some attitudes that decrease the risk of developing aggressive and deviant behaviors.

Similarly, research carried out with young people under protection and reform of the administration (Fernández-Simo & Cid, 2017) shows the opportunities offered by sport for their development, it was found that sports activities favor -among other positive aspects- the "natural" configuration of pro-social support networks and the acquisition of skills for the transition to adult life; hence sports practices should be considered as an opportunity and pedagogical strategy of particular relevance.

In this paper, sport is the activity that the young participants listed in a higher percentage. Although its frequency or the motivations that determine its realization have not been delved into, they may only do so due to the physical-sport dimension without being really aware of the benefits of its daily practice. In any case, sport practiced on a regular basis -in generating a greater degree of involvement, commitment and attachment- favors more intense and satisfying experiences.

The research undertaken by Monteagudo (2016) confirms that family and the group of friends can have a determining role in the practice of sport, both due to the social support they provide at the beginning of this type of activity, such as the support they offer in the continuity and regularity of its development.

Outside sport, enjoying time with family and friends is an activity that virtually no young person in foster care or formerly in foster care wants to give up. This is what authors such as Montserrat and Casas (2012) confirm; when they indicate that minors who were in the protection system spent their free time with their friends and performed the same leisure activities as the boys and girls of their age.

In essence, we refer to a form of "being" and "enjoying leisure" as an experience that promotes a sense of identity and belonging, and that consists of sharing time and space with the peer group (Uceda-Maza, Navarro-Pérez & Pérez-Cosín, 2014). In this sense, it should be noted that friends favor the intergroup confidence and self-esteem through the development of social

skills, impacting positively on the development of people; but they can also lead to deviant and unhealthy behavior, leading to situations of risk and/or social exclusion (Pérez Serrano, Fernández García & Poza Vilches, 2015).

All this explains that participation in structured leisure activities is a factor of prevention and protection from risk behaviors, in finding some correlation between the criminal trajectories (initial, moderate or consolidated) of adolescents in conflict with the law and the type of leisure activities (unstructured or wandering the streets, scheduled and solitary). Thus, as criminal behavior increases, the tendency to unstructured leisure is in a majority, while the predisposition to scheduled leisure and solitary leisure is less and, in general, is similar in the three profiles of adolescents in conflict with the law (Uceda-Maza, Navarro-Pérez & Pérez-Cosín, 2014).

In relation to cultural activities and hobbies there are significant differences between the young people in foster care/formerly in foster care and the boys and girls who are not, with the latter presenting a greater percentage value. In this sense, Ferreira, Pose and De Valenzuela (2015) note that age is a determining variable in the practice of a pedagogically active, creative and formative leisure; so that the younger the young people are the greater the frequency with which they carry out artistic, ludic and recreational activities is and going to bars and spaces of minor diversion, as this increases with age. With all this, we shall not go into the variable age here, but in the fact that young people that are institutionalized or not, in spite of the relevance this has in their daily realities.

Another of the activities linked to the free time of adolescents and young people is related with digital entertainment; a trend that has not only transformed the type of activities that youth usually undertakes, but that has changed the way of understanding and carrying them out. A few practices which, in the post-modern society in which we are immersed, are based on the immediacy of information, the culture of entertainment, make public that which is private, in the accommodation of these small fragments of leisure to the different social times that make up everyday life, etc., awarding and adding value to the fact of being connected to a network and virtual space. A new culture of virtuality that has resulted from the fear of disconnection, boredom, isolation and loneliness (Turkle, 2012).

Perhaps these arguments explain that young people increasingly make use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), since, in addition to using them to communicate and entertain,

they favor socialization and social inclusion, they serve to achieve a certain social recognition (status) and prevent isolation (Martínez-Gras & Espinar, 2012). Therefore, for these young people, social networks constitute a “way of life” that facilitates communication and social integration, in addition to constituting spaces of learning and training that serve to strengthen their social skills and increase their social network.

However, this practice has resulted in serious cracks in family dynamics, since adolescents spend more time connected to virtual environments than interacting in person with other people. Therefore, other studies (Valdemoros, Sanz & Ponce de León, 2017) show that a lower digital consumption digital in children is related to families that have a greater strength in the emotional bonding between their members; so that an abuse of this tool could be detrimental to family life. Hence, it is necessary to develop educational actions aimed at the acquisition of skills for their correct and responsible use (Pérez Serrano, Fernández García & Poza Vilches, 2015), as well as training of the parents on the digital world (Fernández-Montalvo, Peñalva & Irazabal, 2015).

If the reasons that determine which young people in foster care/formerly in foster care do not carry out all the leisure activities that they would like to, the data reveals the difficulty of balancing their activities with their study and work times (mainly as they get older) and economic problems (Montserrat & Casas, 2012), as the most pressing factors. However, the “lack of money” is –in many cases– a determining factor, since a part of the entertainment “revolves around consumption and therefore its accessibility is a key factor of social inclusion and belonging” (Uceda-Maza, Navarro-Pérez & Pérez-Cosín, 2014, p. 54). However, the measures of an economic crisis such as the one that has been experienced in the last decade and new forms of leisure have put into context this issue, because, when leisure means excessive spending– young people seek cheaper alternatives such as the practice of sports and going for a walk with friends compared to other types of activities that mean a higher economic outlay.

5. Conclusions

On the basis of a conceptualization of leisure that emphasizes its consideration as an experience where “demands or expectations are met for rest, intellectual and moral culture, strengthening of self-esteem, adaptation and integration into the group dynamics, interaction with the physical and cultural environment, for recreational tourism, cooperation and solidarity, etc.” (Caride, 2014, p.

43), these temporary fragments that occur in the everyday life of the young people acquire special relevance. But not only because of the enriching elements that favor their personal development, but also by the perception that exists in the imagination of society with regard to the manifestations of harmful youth leisure. Hence, it is necessary to promote

education on, for and of leisure, in order to promote enriching experiences that respond not only to the demands and aspirations of youth but to the new social realities they face, in order to motivate them as well as to generate the knowledge necessary to achieve greater autonomy that allows them to draw a better future (Gradañlle, Varela & De Valenzuela, 2016, p. 60).

So, in response to the diversity and complexity that characterize the contexts from which they come and in those young people in situation of social difficulty carry out their everyday life, these educational initiatives and processes must be flexible (Melendro, García-Castilla & Goig, 2015). The participation and involvement of young people in the organization, choice and/or development of the leisure activities they carry out constitutes a fundamental area, since they must be freely chosen without being mediated by the interest of adults, even where youth are in foster care under the Public Administrations.

We refer to leisure experiences or practices that must be “created” and self-managed by the people who are involved in them, favoring the establishment of times and spaces that transcend to other social areas. To do this, it is necessary that young people -in foster care and those that are not-, learn to combine the dimensions of *being* and *feeling* with regards to leisure activities. In this regard, the first refers to the identity, to aspects inherent to the person, and the second refers to a temporary and transitory situation; a few nuances that substantially change the meaning and significance that these activities have in the daily life of the people.

In the final analysis, to promote educational initiatives linked to the leisure activities of young people becomes a complicated task, as exciting as it is challenging. They are often experiences or initiatives that move away from the educational and relational dimension to settle in practices that occupy the free time of young people without a greater purpose than to fill a temporary void. An issue that is much more worrisome when we speak of young people in situation of vulnerability that are going onto adult life. Hence the importance of emphasizing a socio-educational

action-intervention to avoid making the integral development of future generations of young people who have to go through similar situations and that contribute to the construction of a truly sustainable and caring society (Melendro, Rodríguez Bravo, González Olivares & De Juanas, 2013).

In the *Charter for Leisure Education*, drawn up in one of his first versions by the World Leisure and Recreation Association (WLRA) and published by the Institute of Leisure Studies, now two decades ago (Gorbeña, González & Lázaro, 1997), it was stated that one of the main purposes of leisure lies in its educational potential, so as to contribute to the development of values, attitudes, knowledge and skills that will enable all persons, regardless of age, to feel more confident and gain greater enjoyment and satisfaction in life. It is no small matter for Social Pedagogy and all educations that it enables, or for public policy, international agencies and Administrations (State, Regional and Local authorities, in the Spanish case), if we really want to contribute to the education of these young people being fully aware of their civic rights and responsibilities: young people called to be fully involved in the construction of a society that recognizes their full potential, expanding their opportunities to lead their lives for a more just and equitable future, overcoming the adversities of a past of foster care and/or dependent on the decisions that deprived them of the gift of choice.

The *Manifiesto por un ocio valioso para el desarrollo humano* (Manifest for a valuable leisure for human development), promoted by the Institute of Leisure Studies within the framework of the celebration of its 25th anniversary, thus reflects it, on the basis of the research, experience and knowledge acquired during these years, in which the *Red OcioGune* (OcioGune Network) has also collaborated, in which research groups integrate into the Leisure Studies of different Spanish Universities. A manifest that as well as having an impact on the promotion of values, capacity development, the protection of cultural diversity, the promotion of the welfare or the guarantee of conviviality claimed the need for a “valuable leisure able to empower individuals and communities” (Cuenca, 2014, p. 481). A empowerment -the manifest insists- that “requires the convergence of political and educational actions aimed at encouraging the co-creation and sharing through leisure”, ensuring the “universality of access to ICT and digital literacy, which have made possible the creation of a leisure without the traditional temporal leisure barriers”; among other things, it must be said, those that in the space and time have also imposed measures for foster care for young people who have “gone through” them.

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Note

- ¹ The sum of the percentages that we reflect does not come to 100%, since each person could indicate a total of three activities.

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AUTHOR'S ADDRESS

Ángela L. de Valenzuela Bandín. Universidade de Santiago de Compostela. Departamento de Pedagogía y Didáctica. Grupo de Investigación en Pedagogía Social y Educación Ambiental (SEPA-interea). E-mail: angela.devalenzuela@usc.es

Rita Gradaílle Pernas. Universidade de Santiago de Compostela. Departamento de Pedagogía y Didáctica. Grupo de Investigación en Pedagogía Social y Educación Ambiental (SEPA-interea). E-mail: rita.gradaille@usc.es

José Antonio Caride Gómez. Universidade de Santiago de Compostela. Departamento de Pedagogía y Didáctica. Grupo de Investigación en Pedagogía Social y Educación Ambiental (SEPA-interea). E-mail: joseantonio.caride@usc.es

ACADEMIC PROFILE

Ángela L. de Valenzuela Bandín. Diplomada y habilitada al Grado en Educación Social por la Universidad de Santiago de Compostela (USC), con Premio Extraordinario de Diplomatura en el año 2010. Cuenta con dos Másteres Universitarios, de Intervención y emancipación de la juventud en conflicto social y de Investigación en educación, diversidad cultural y desarrollo comunitario. Actualmente es contratada predoctoral del programa nacional de Formación de Personal Investigador (FPI) en la USC, y está desarrollando su tesis doctoral en relación a los tiempos de ocio de los jóvenes (ex)tutelados. Sus principales líneas de investigación son: infancia y juventud en situación de riesgo y/o dificultad social, pedagogía del ocio y tiempos educativos y sociales.

Rita Gradaílle Pernas. Diplomada en Magisterio, Licenciada en Pedagogía y Doctora en Ciencias de la Educación, con Premio Extraordinario de Licenciatura y Doctorado. Completó su formación académica con un Máster en Género y Educación Social. Realizó numerosas estancias de investigación a nivel nacional e internacional. Entre otras responsabilidades académicas ha sido Secretaria de Facultad y de Departamento; y desde el año 2008 es Secretaria de la Sociedad Iberoamericana de Pedagogía Social. Miembro del grupo de investigación SEPA-interea de la USC (Grupo de referencia competitiva reconocido por la Xunta de Galicia). Sus principales líneas de investigación y publicación son: pedagogía-educación social, tiempos educativos y sociales, desarrollo comunitario, género y equidad.

José Antonio Caride Gómez. Doctor en Filosofía y Ciencias de la Educación (Pedagogía) por la Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, de la que es Catedrático de Pedagogía Social. Entre otras responsabilidades académicas ha sido Director de Departamento en varios períodos, siendo actualmente el Comisionado de su Universidad para el "Campus da Cidadanía" en las áreas de Ciencias Sociales y Jurídicas, Artes y Humanidades. Presidió entre 2002 y 2013 la Sociedad Iberoamericana de Pedagogía Social (SIPS). Es el coordinador del grupo de investigación SEPA-interea de la USC (Grupo de referencia competitiva reconocido por la Xunta de Galicia). Sus principales líneas de investigación y publicación son: pedagogía-educación social, tiempos educativos y sociales, políticas socioeducativas y derechos humanos, pedagogía del ocio, entre otras.