**Thesis Summary**

**“Ourense's A Casa da Xuventude as a Social Education historic experience. 1978 – 1992.”**

Ourense's “A Casa da Xuventude” is a unique institution which has, for over four decades, turned a four-story building in the peripheral neighbourhood of Las Lagunas into a social meeting point for the young people of Ourense, in Galicia, Spain and, in some cases, even from abroad.

The timing of this thesis takes into account the circumstances that surrounded the period known as “La Transición”, as well as the anticipation of change and uncertainty in which people were living at this time. This helped to create an urgent need for social and political participation and an eagerness to be heard by society.

Young people wanted to have a voice and of course, a vote. “A Casa da Xuventude de Ourense” became a platform for their demands and an example of their reliability during the democratic process. With the creation of the Board of Management, a specific group of young people took responsibility for managing material and human resources. They were tutored by Benito López Losada, who had a link with the Administration. He acted as a secretary during the meetings and was the Director of “A Casa da Xuventude” during this time.

As well as its physical resources and coherent internal structure, the success of this project can be predominantly attached to the work of informal groups. These groups developed programmes of cultural, musical, theatrical and sporting activities.

This thesis will attempt to depict the essence of life at “A Casa da Xuventude”, a place that created innovative cultural ideas and promoted critical thinking and a more proactive and participative approach for the young people of Ourense.

The main goal of this thesis is to use “A Casa da Xuventude” as an example of the Social Education’s intervention between 1978 and 1992. It will include interviews from key actors, written materials about different activities and notes about day to day life at “A Casa”. This study also aims to demonstrate the impact of the “A Casa”’s activities and democratic processes on the society of Ourense at that time, as well as its influence in promoting future political leaders from inside its political youth associations. We will analyse whether belonging to a specific group helped gain support for internal decisions, or whether these processes were in fact entitled by the majority of members.

The final section of this thesis will examine “A Casa da Xuventude” as a space of unique participatory management and as an example of Social Education and sociocultural animation. As such we can look at the internal dynamic of the Board of Management and the influence of the activities on registered and informal/independent groups.

We will also assess Benito López Losada’s role in this process, as a key part of its management and activities. We will judge whether or not he was an essential element and whether the situations would have had similar results under a different director.

This doctoral thesis will be based on qualitative research, supported by a unique case design and justified by different reasons. This is a unique context which has created a remarkable social structure.

In conclusion, we have seen the reaffirmation of innovative educational contexts, based on the responsibility of the users of “A Casa” and the participation and actions of its main actors. However because this new process was still challenged by society, a new Board of Management was created and established a system of co-management between administration and members. This was finally taken control of by political parties who saw “A Casa da Xuventude” as a way to gain votes.

The use of open spaces for social reasons and the acquisition of new material resources have allowed “A Casa” to become a unique cultural and democratic reference in Galicia.

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