

A PSYCHOSOCIAL PROFILE OF SPANISH ADOLESCENTS

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This paper summarises the findings of research on adolescents in Spain. Its aim is to describe the general and differential behavioural patterns in the principal spheres of social life, such as the relationship between adolescents and their peer groups, the factors that lead to antisocial behaviour and, in general terms, their perception of social reality. The sample, from the Spanish population, consisted of 7580 subjects. Several relevant social and demographic variables have been taken into account, and a large number of questionnaires and scales have been used to measure the psychological and social dimensions under examination.

El artículo presenta de modo resumido las conclusiones de una investigación sobre la adolescencia en España. Se pretende establecer los patrones conductuales, generales y diferenciales, en las principales áreas de la vida social, la relación de los adolescentes con sus grupos, los factores determinantes de sus conductas antisociales y, en general, su percepción de la realidad social. La muestra, representativa de la población española, ha sido de 7580 sujetos. Se ha tenido en cuenta un conjunto de variables sociales y demográficas relevantes y se ha utilizado un gran número de cuestionarios y escalas para medir las dimensiones psicológicas y sociales estudiadas.

The growing protagonism of youth in social life, their increased purchasing power as consumers, as well as the impact of aspects related to delinquency and drug abuse and addiction have given rise to a renewed concern for the problems facing adolescents and youngsters.

Changes in social behaviour, the questioning of traditional values, social integration, employment prospects, and so on, are some of the problems that have become important for adolescents and for their future.

During the 1960s and 70s, the literature aimed at defining and describing this period of development was extensive (Cf. Rogers, 1962; Erickson, 1971; Grinder, 1976; etc.). There is a general consensus regarding the incidence of several issues, such as defining one's own sexuality, establishing new social relationships, intellectual development, and the internalisation of a coherent value system. Moreover, considerable attention has been paid to the "crisis" that adolescents experience and the impact of this change on psycho-social development.

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Recently, research on adolescence has taken a primarily developmental approach, and related to the socio-cultural changes that influence it. The rise of new phenomena has brought new areas of investigation, and with it social welfare programmes. These new concerns, coupled with the increasing efforts to socially integrate adolescents in all spheres of life, constitute the framework of the growing psychosocial concern for this section of society.

Currently, research has centred around three main areas of concern which, far from being mutually exclusive, are in fact closely related: socialisation processes and agents, general behavioural patterns, and problems related to social integration.

The literature concerning Spanish adolescents and youth is vast, and a wide variety of techniques and methods have been employed to assess a range of issues associated with adolescence. Some studies have emphasised the influence of psychological factors, while others have stressed the impact of sociological variables. The surveys carried out by the *Encuestas Nacionales a la Juventud*, and the work of the *Fundación Santa María* are just examples, and there is much regional and local research dealing with specific issues, such as drug abuse, values, religion, leisure, and so on (see bibliography for further reference).

The present work aims to summarise the approach and conclusions of a particular study on adolescence in Spain. In several other publications we give the results of specific thematic areas in a more detailed form. Here, for obvious reasons of space, we cannot present all the data, but we intend to give a global and integrated general perspective.

APPROACH AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this work is to identify the different profiles of Spanish adolescents in environments which, according to the sociological and psychological literature, are considered to be fundamental for adolescents. The objective is to provide a “photograph” of this period of development in order to respond to the basic and frequently-asked question: what does it mean to be an adolescent? - in terms of social relationships, leisure activities, belief systems, and in relation to those activities and areas that are considered to be most relevant to adolescents.

An objective of particular interest in this study was to determine the degree to which contexts of socialisation influence both social and antisocial behaviour. The “context of socialisation” refers here to the interactive and regulating mechanisms that define the relationship between adolescents, as well as to the socio-economic, environmental and personal conditions that influence both the socialisation process and adolescents’ behaviour.

Thus, the objectives may be summarised as follows:

- a) To determine the characteristics of the relationship between adolescents and their peer groups by analysing family relationships, peer group behaviour, the relationship between the adolescent and the school, and adolescents’ social integration in the community.
- b) To evaluate the characteristics that adolescents ascribe to leisure activities, sexual behaviour, political and religious beliefs, antisocial behaviour and drug abuse.
- c) To assess the impact of social conditions on antisocial behaviour.
- d) To evaluate the relationship between adolescent behaviour and beliefs, and sociodemographic variables such as: age, sex, social class and geographical location.

- e) In a similar way, to examine the relationship between adolescent characteristics and variables that are associated with their psychological reality, such as assertiveness, self-esteem and personal satisfaction.

MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENTS AND VARIABLES

Data was collected using a “General Questionnaire” made up of several questionnaires well-established in the literature and other questionnaires designed specifically for our work, which are proven to be reliable and valid. On the first page basic sociodemographic data is required, and this is followed by 255 items thematically arranged, and which refer to the set of aspects and dimensions relevant to the study.

A. Sociodemographic Variables

A series of sociodemographic variables, i. e. , age, sex, socio-economic and educational level and geographical location were considered, on the basis of the hypothesis that they are useful for establishing differences in the type of interaction with socialisation agents and the perceptions and behaviour of adolescents. This relationship has been frequently referred to in the literature; the problem lies not so much in its generic formulation as in the operationalisation of such variables, and in the form and degree of influence on individuals’ life and behaviour.

As regards age, the 14 to 18 (both inclusive) age cohort was adopted, since it is widely accepted as corresponding to the age of adolescence. For obvious reasons a small group of “19 year olds” was included, in order to carry out a contrastive analysis and to compare early and late periods of adolescence.

As for socio-economic and educational level, given the complexity of this variable, the simplest and most comprehensive procedure for evaluating it seemed to be to make a double distinction. The first consisted in dividing subjects according to whether they were undertaking academic (BUP or COU) or vocational (FP) studies; the second distinction was made according to whether they attended state or private, fee-paying schools. The hypothesis goes beyond a mere functional difference, and refers to a significant distinction in terms of socio-economic status. Though this correspondence is not absolutely exact and applicable to all the subjects, it serves as a good indicator of socio-economic status. FP subjects usually belong to families of a lower socio-economic status.

nomical level than BUP-COU subjects' families; and those attending state schools are, by and large, of a lower socio-economic status than those attending fee-paying schools.

Classification according to other criteria, such as parents' academic qualifications or profession, could be more problematic and confusing. Nevertheless, these parameters have been taken into account in order to compare with and reaffirm those used here.

Thus, the corresponding comparisons have been made between BUP-COU and FP students, on the one hand, and BUP-COU subjects in private schools and BUP-COU subjects in state schools, on the other. (From now on, BUP-COU group will be simply called "BUP").

It is worth noting that the variable *geographical location* not only served to confirm socio-economic status, but also provided information regarding the culture and community in which adolescents are immersed, as well as their future prospects. In this case only BUP schools were included in our study, and three groups were made: rural or urban in villages or small towns (population under 5,000), urban in big city centres, and big city suburbs.

This distinction was not made with FP centres since their social composition is more homogeneous, regardless of their geographical location. One must also bear in mind that the sampling for the FP group was carried out in state schools, due to the fact that statistics on private centres of this kind are quite ambiguous and unreliable.

B. Psychological and Social Variables

We are concerned here with the dimensions to be studied in adolescents. The dimensions were grouped in general areas, each comprising one or more variables. We present each of them below:

- **Family matters** includes five variables: "family relationships", "father's authority/control", "mother's authority/control", "father's support", and "mother's support".
- **Peer groups** deals with the following items: "sociability", "meeting places", and "group antinormativity".
- The **Residential or community** factor encompasses: "place of residence", "time of permanence in residence", "residence satisfaction", and "neighbourhood cohesion".
- **Social behaviour** includes: "antisocial behaviour" and "tobacco, alcohol and drug consumption".
- **School** includes: "school satisfaction", and "ideal job".

- **Leisure activities** referred to: "satisfaction with leisure activities" and "leisure activities".
- The section concerning **Sexuality** included the following variables: "age on knowledge of facts of life", "primary source of sexual information", "age of first masturbation", "frequency of masturbation", "homosexual attraction", "homosexual relationships", "age of first sexual intercourse", "heterosexual activity", "feelings about sexual experiences", "use of contraceptive methods", "information about AIDS", "fear of contracting AIDS", "attitude towards sexual equality", and "attitude towards sexual tolerance".
- **Religious beliefs** dealt with: "religious identity", "attendance at mass", "frequency of communion", "belief in God", "agreement with the Church", and "influence of religion".
- The chapter concerned with **values** included an extensive list of final and instrumental values.
- A set of dimensions that have been referred to as "**expressions of the self**" included: "personal dissatisfaction", "assertiveness", and "self-esteem".
- **Political behaviour** included: "conventional political participation", "unconventional political participation", "powerlessness", and "voting behaviour".

SAMPLE

Since the primary aim was to obtain valid conclusions for Spanish adolescents in general, the sample was taken from all over Spain, of subjects aged between 14 to 18 years old.

Adolescents not attending school were not included in the sample. Though this may imply certain limitations, it is worth noting that most adolescents in this age group attend school, and our objective was to provide a broad, global perspective on adolescence, disregarding minority groups which, though important, from a quantitative point of view hardly contribute to the adolescent reality as a whole.

Furthermore, we should point out that the autonomous communities of Andalusia and the Basque Country have been omitted from the study, since similar work has already been undertaken in these regions, e.g. "Psicosociología del adolescente vasco" (1986) and "El proceso de socialización en los/las jóvenes de Euskadi" (1994), and "Jóvenes andaluces de los 90" (1993), published by the Servicio de Publicaciones del Gobierno Vasco and the Junta de Andalucía, respectively.

Educational courses (BUP, FP) have been used as the

main strata and the different forms or years of each course constitute the corresponding substrata. The primary sampling unit was the academic institution, which has served to determine the socio-economic status of the sample as well as the geographical location, urban or rural.

Moreover, the sample is proportional in terms of the official data of the M. E. C. ("The Statistics of Schooling in Spain". Spanish Ministry of Education and Science. Madrid. June, 1992). The criteria of proportionality were: sex, age, academic level (BUP, FP), type of academic institution (state or private) and geographical location.

The sample was randomly selected, stratified and proportional, with a 95% confidence level and an error range of 2.5%. Hence, the sample selection process was based on strategies that ensure the sample is representative.

Sample data is as follows:

-Total number of subjects	7,580
-BUP	70.6 %
-BUP-State	80 %
-BUP-Private	20 %
-FP	29.2 %
-Female	53.3 %
-Male	46.4 %
-Ages:	
-14 yrs	15 %
-15 yrs	19.5 %
-16 yrs	22.6 %
-17 yrs	21 %
-18 yrs	11 %
-19 yrs	8.8 %
-Location:	
-Rural-Small town	24 %
-City centre	47.4 %
-Outskirts/suburbs of city	28.6 %

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

A descriptive analysis of all the variables was made, in order to determine the frequency distribution, mean scores and standard deviation. For the sake of clarity or con-

venience, the data has been expressed in terms of percentages.

In order to evaluate the statistical differences between the groups and the variables, a Student T test, analysis of variance and Lawsle-Baker test were carried out. Correlation analysis was used to assess the association between variables. Finally, predictive analyses were made using multiple regression and discriminant analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Family Relationships

Adolescents transmit a positive opinion regarding their family relationships. The family atmosphere is considered to be good and they find strong parental support with acceptable levels of parental control. One may say that adolescents enjoy a good family atmosphere in which they find protection and comfort.

The old stereotypical images of permanent conflict and inter-generational tension seem to be a thing of the past. Most striking was the high degree of homogeneity among the different groups. However, some differential peculiarities should be highlighted.

It appears that women are subject to a greater degree of social control, which suggests that there are still differences in socialisation for boys and girls, in spite of the growing tendency towards a more equal education. However, the differences between males and females are not as marked as they were before in terms of parents' expectations and attitudes.

Data related to the different age groups suggest a certain independence from the family, but without altering the family relationships. The tendency seems to be that the degree of social control gradually diminishes with age, thus preparing the individual for personal independence.

The cohesive role of the mother must be emphasised. She still maintains her traditional role as the primary carer and provider of affection and emotional support to the children, in comparison to the father.

Finally, the family plays a key role in socialisation and social adjustment: good family relationships are relevant for social integration and in the adoption of norms both on an individual and social level. The expression of good family relationships is positively associated to social satisfaction in general and to favourable social and group integration. Regression analysis reveals a negative association between family integration and

antisocial behaviour and highlights the key role of the family as an agent of social control and integration.

Our findings agree with the observations reported by other authors. Studies in the Basque country show a very positive attitude towards the family, and characterise it as a place of security and confidence. Likewise, work carried out in Andalusia is indicative of the high levels of satisfaction derived from family life. Most studies show that 80-85% of subjects had a favourable opinion about family relationships and life.

Peer group, school and community

In general, positive attitudes, similar to those observed for *family relationships*, were found in these three contexts. Adolescence is an extremely interactive period, as can be seen from the peer group ties, the presence of friends and the continuous social communication that are central to adolescent life.

Importance of the peer group in determining adolescent behaviour derives from the fact that the peer group serves to create, establish and maintain norms of behaviour. The peer group gives the direct and indirect information concerning modes of behaviour that are valued in specific instances, and that are different from those provided for adolescents at home.

A key variable that was considered was "sociability", in terms of both the interaction with the peer group (the degree of difficulty the individual encounters in maintaining peer group relationships) and the degree of satisfaction that is obtained from peer group interaction.

The level of sociability was high and, in accordance with the observations of other studies, there appeared to be a significant difference in the levels of sociability of men and women, that of the latter being much higher.

However, this good social "climate" is not set in a tense social environment or particularly confrontational social context; on the contrary, psychologically speaking, it occurs within a very well-adjusted social framework. The level of what we have termed "group antinormativity" (the degree of deviant behaviour of the peer group), is seen to be quite low. By and large, adolescents declare themselves to be adapted and involved in less problematic groups, far removed from stereotyped models, frequently imported, which are presented as "pre-delinquent".

Nevertheless, significant differences were observed between males and females at the level of group antinormativity, precisely opposite to what was found for

sociability. Thus, boys show a higher tendency to interact with deviant peer groups than girls.

With regard to the school context, adolescents are generally satisfied with their educational environment. The girls and the 14 to 16 age group expressed the most positive attitudes towards teaching staff, their classmates and school regulations.

As was expected, considerable differences were observed between different school levels. BUP students are much more satisfied than FP students with regard to school resources and materials. In turn, students from state schools were less satisfied with the school than those from private schools, with the exception of their views regarding their classmates, where no significant differences were observed.

As we have seen in *family relationships*, good school integration appears to be necessary for adjustment, personal welfare and the control of undesired antisocial behaviour. Though no causal relationship can be established, our data allows the suggestion that there are probably well-established socialising domains, such as family and school, where the adolescent feels integrated and satisfied, and which can constitute powerful instruments for preventing antisocial behaviour.

Likewise, the data referring to feeling of community or "community cohesion" reveals that, though the community has less influence than the family or school, it plays an active role in socialisation and social integration.

Antisocial behaviour and drug-taking

Antisocial behaviour

Adolescence has been associated with deviant behaviour. However, the analysis of the behaviours that compose the deviant behaviour construct (behaviour against norms, vandalism, personal aggression, theft and drug-dealing) reveals that, although adolescents are frequently involved in trivial antisocial behaviour, they rarely participate in serious deviant behaviour.

Table 1 shows that, while 80% of youngsters are frequently involved in antinormative behaviour (drinking alcohol under the age of 16, running away from home, breaking traffic laws, etc), only 50% have at least once committed acts of vandalism or minor personal aggressions, less than 30% have committed theft and less than 5% have been involved with illegal drugs.

These percentages are significantly different for boys and girls. Boys report a greater involvement in all the above-mentioned types of antisocial behaviour; the differences

between the sexes were significantly greater in behaviour involving vandalism or aggression. Approximately 25% of male adolescents frequently commit acts of vandalism, and 19% exhibit aggressive behaviour, whereas the statistics for the girls were 7.5% and 4%, respectively. These differences are most probably due to the differential socialisation process in men and women, a process in which aggressive behaviour is still supported, or at least tolerated, among males, but is rejected among females.

Frequency of antisocial behaviour increases between the ages of 14 and 16. Thereafter, there is a decline in certain behaviour, such as antinormative behaviour, vandalism and aggression; other forms of behaviour are maintained or slightly increased, e. g., theft and drug-dealing. The age of 16 marks an important cut-off point with reference to deviant behaviour, much more so if we take into account that this is the age when some prohibited behaviour ceases to be so, and when, most importantly, greater criminal responsibility is assumed.

In both boys and girls, antisocial behaviour is positively associated with having deviant friends, taking part in other types of deviant behaviour, such as drug-taking, and having values centred on satisfaction (having an exciting life, emphasising the importance of sex and

lovmaking, stressing the importance of leisure and travel). In contrast, it is negatively associated with a loving and caring family environment, a satisfactory school and community environment and the adoption of values that emphasise the importance of social welfare (social equality, democracy, honesty and sincerity).

The work of other Spanish authors supports the findings of our study regarding the type and frequency of antisocial behaviour among adolescents in Spain. Research indicates that the most frequent behaviours are against norms (running away from home, driving without a licence), getting involved in fights and causing material damage (La marginación Social del Menor, 1981; Encuesta sobre la Juventud Navarra, 1983; Psicosociología del Adolescente Vasco, 1986; Los Jóvenes Andaluces de los 90, 1993). Similarly, all the studies reveal that antisocial behaviour is more common among males than females.

Drug-taking

As can be seen in Table 2, drug-taking is quite common among youngsters, but most of the drugs that are consumed are legal, and only a small percentage of adolescents frequently take illegal drugs.

Table 1
Percentage of subjects taking part in antisocial behaviours in each of the sampled groups

	Total	Males	Females	14 years old	15 years old	16 years old	17 years old	18 years old	19 years old
Rule-breaking behaviour									
Never	17.1	13	22.2	30.3	19.1	15.7	14.2	14.3	15.5
Sometimes	33	28.3	38	36.6	33.8	33	33.1	34.8	32.9
Often	47.9	57.7	38.8	43	47	51.2	52.6	50.3	50.6
Vandalism									
Never	54.1	41.1	67.1	56.6	53.8	53.6	55.5	57.2	61
Sometimes	29	33.5	24.8	30.4	30.5	28.9	28.5	28.7	25.3
Often	15.7	24.8	7.5	16	15.6	17.3	15.7	14.1	13.4
Aggression									
Never	55.4	38	72.3	56.5	56.1	54	58.6	58.5	56.7
Sometimes	32.8	42.2	24	32.9	30	34.6	31.1	31.7	32.7
Often	10.5	19	30.2	10.4	10.8	11.3	9.9	9.6	10.5
Robbery									
Never	74.1	67	80.8	78.2	74.7	72.7	72.3	75.3	76.8
Sometimes	21.2	26.1	17.1	19	21.3	22.1	24.5	21.2	18.6
Often	3.9	6.5	1.7	2.8	3.9	5.1	3.1	5.4	4.2
Drug-dealing									
Never	96.5	95.4	97.7	98.4	97.1	96.5	95.8	96.2	95.4
Sometimes	2.3	3.1	1.7	1	2.1	2.1	3.4	2.6	3
Often	1	1.4	0.5	0.5	0.7	1.3	0.7	1.1	1.5

Most youngsters (70%) have at some time smoked and 85% have consumed alcohol. Approximately 33% smoke tobacco and 38% drink alcohol frequently.

As for illegal drugs, 25% have experimented with cannabis and over 6% take it frequently. Less than 5% consume, casually or habitually, medical drugs (tranquillisers and amphetamines), inhalants, heroine or cocaine. The least consumed drug was heroine (less than 2% had experimented with it).

Males consume more drugs than females, with the exception of tobacco, where the steady increase in the number of female smokers has meant that they outnumber males. Differences between boys and girls are significant in terms of the consumption of all types of drugs, except for medical drugs, although patterns of consumption do not vary so much as those corresponding to the production of antisocial behaviour.

With very few exceptions, drug consumption tends to progressively increase with age. 15% of 14-year-olds habitually smoke tobacco or drink alcohol, in comparison to 50% of 18-19-year-olds. Similarly, less than 2% frequently take cannabis at 14, in contrast to 11% of 19-year-olds. Heroine and cocaine consumption also increa-

ses with age, though the levels of consumption are much smaller in all the groups. The only substance that does not experience an increase with age was the sniffing of glues or solvents (in fact, a decrease can be observed after 16). Likewise, the levels of consumption of medical drugs remains static after the age of 16. These differences with regard to substances consumed as a function of age may probably be due to a higher or lower accessibility to a particular substance at a given age. The most accessible drugs are more frequently consumed among younger adolescents, while older ones may abandon these drugs as others become more accessible.

The consumption of legal drugs is positively associated with the consumption of illegal drugs, with sexual behaviour and with involvement in certain types of leisure activities, such as dancing, going to concerts, watching TV or listening to the radio; it is negatively associated with a good family relationship, satisfaction with school and leisure activities such as sport. The consumption of illegal drugs is associated with these variables and also, positively, with deviant behaviour and having deviant friends.

Once again, it is important to note that the findings

Table 2
Percentage of subjects taking drugs in each of the sampled groups

	Total	Males	Females	14 years old	15 years old	16 years old	17 years old	18 years old	19 years old
Tobacco									
Non-consumption	29	33.1	25.7	45.5	34.4	28.2	22.8	20.6	17.3
Experienced	37.3	36.4	38.4	39.4	41.2	36	37.2	36.3	36.2
Habitually	33.2	30.1	35.8	15	24.3	35.7	39.8	42.9	46.5
Alcohol									
Non-consumption	14.5	13.3	15	25.8	19.7	13.3	9.4	7.4	7
Experienced	46.2	42.8	50.9	65.4	53.4	45.4	41.6	40.1	40.1
Habitually	38.1	42.7	33.2	14.6	26.7	41	48.9	52.5	52.7
Cannabis									
Non-consumption	74.8	70.4	79.9	91.3	86.1	75	67.6	64.3	61.4
Experienced	18	20.1	15.7	6.6	9.7	18.3	24.5	26.4	27.5
Habitually	6.3	8.8	4.2	1.8	4.1	6.7	7.8	9.2	11
Heroine									
Non-consumption	97.3	97.5	98.7	99.2	98.3	98.2	98.3	98.1	97.3
Experienced	1	1.2	1	0.4	1.3	0.7	1.1	1.3	1.7
Habitually	0.5	0.8	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.7
Cocaine									
Non-consumption	95.6	94.5	97.3	99.4	98.5	97.3	96	93.2	89.3
Experienced	3.1	4.1	2.1	0.2	0.4	0.8	0.3	1	9.4
Habitually	0.7	0.9	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.8	0.3	1	1.3
Inhaling									
Non-consumption	95	93.4	97.6	96.4	95.8	95.6	95.6	95.8	95.9
Experienced	4	5.5	2.1	3.2	3.8	3.6	3.7	3.9	4
Habitually	0.4	0.7	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.1
Medical drugs									
Non-consumption	93	94.1	93.6	96.2	95.2	93.7	93.7	91.8	92.8
Experienced	4.9	4.1	5.3	3.3	4.2	5.2	4.9	7.3	5.5
Habitually	0.6	11	0.3	0.2	0.5	1.1	0.4	0.7	1.5

regarding the type of drugs consumed by adolescents, and the evolution of consumption depending on age, basically coincide with those obtained in other similar studies carried out in Spain (Juventud y Droga en España, 1980; Psicosociología del Adolescente Vasco, 1986; Jóvenes Andaluces de los 90, 1993; A Mocidade Galega, 1993).

With regard to the relationship between antisocial behaviour and drug consumption, the findings of this study suggest that both behaviours are most frequent among youngsters who have low levels of satisfaction with conventional environments of socialisation such as the family or school, and that (partly due to this) relate with deviant friends, which in turn has an incidence on the choice of leisure activity and the value system they adopt - characterised by the high priority given to personal satisfaction rather than a concern for social issues.

The fact that antisocial behaviour and the consumption of illegal drugs is significantly more frequent among males than among females, together with the greater family and school satisfaction expressed by girls, confirms the importance of these socialisation environments

in influencing the decision to participate in deviant behaviour.

Finally, it should be noted that, despite the important association between the production of antisocial activities and drug consumption, if we take into account that the evolution of production frequency in one and the other do not follow parallel courses, it seems quite likely that such an association is rather due to the presence of certain similar socio-environmental conditions than to their potential mutual determination.

Leisure activities and free time

Leisure and free time are of special significance to adolescents, since the dimensions of social behaviour are not conceived of as mere entertainment. They are both expressions and instruments for solving fundamental issues - the search for one's own identity, the establishment of independence in relation to adults, and decisions that will determine their future projects.

The varied ways that adolescents spend their free time can in fact be seen as quite similar. Despite certain differences, adolescents on the whole present quite analogous patterns. Most adolescents do not participate in cultural, religious or political activities or events. Weekends are usually spent going dancing, to concerts, the cinema, and/or doing sport. During the week, adolescents engage in social interaction, listen to music or the radio, and watch TV.

As it can be seen, nearly 60% spend more than an hour a day listening to the radio, 73% spend one to three hours daily watching TV, and 71% spend the same time listening to music. If we bear in mind that music is primarily listened to on the radio, it appears that this is the most widespread and universal leisure activity among adolescents.

From a differential perspective between sexes, the most noticeable aspect is the greater amount of time males spend watching TV and doing sports on a daily basis. With regard to week-ends, boys spend most of their time on activities related to sports, while girls prefer dancing and going to the cinema.

As expected, most adolescents positively evaluated the type of leisure activities they are involved in; nearly 92% stated that they normally had a good time, and this percentage remained stable in all the groups examined. Nevertheless, 30% expressed the need for more leisure facilities and free time, as well as their desire to participate in leisure activities different from those they normally follow.

Table 3
Percentage of responses to items about
entertainment in the total sample

	Never	Rarely	During holidays	Weekends	1-2 hours a day	2-3 hours a day
To go for a walk	7.8	36.7	14.7	27.7	11.6	1.5
To do sports	5.6	25.1	18.8	23.9	18.8	7.8
To go on excursions	9.7	43.8	34.2	11.3	0.4	0.3
To go to the cinema	11.1	41.8	9	37.4	0.4	0.3
To go to concerts	24.8	45.8	14.7	10.6	0.2	0.4
To go to museums	37.3	51.2	6.8	4.2	0.3	0.2
To watch sports	23.2	47.6	6.6	21.4	0.4	0.5
To go to lectures	62.5	34.9	1.2	1.2	0.2	0.1
To go to the theatre	55.6	37.9	3	3.1	0.2	0.1
To read books	6.8	30.9	23.3	14.4	11.7	2.7
To read magazines	5.9	32.8	7.5	27.8	24.9	1.1
To read comics	25.1	10.5	8.8	12.3	11.7	3.7
To listen to the radio	3.3	13.4	4	19.6	39.2	20.3
To watch TV	1	6.7	3.4	16.1	37.4	35.4
To go dancing	10.5	20.4	6.5	59.1	0.9	2.6
To go out for a meal	10.8	47.5	9.8	29.8	1.1	1.1
To chat with friends	0.6	3.9	3.7	21.7	32.1	38
To chat with the family	1.8	11.1	3	11.6	41.2	31.4
To listen to music	1.8	6.1	3.4	18.5	40	30.3
To go to amusement arcades	42.7	32.5	2.9	14	6.4	1.4
To play cards	24.7	48.1	11.3	11.8	3.5	0.6
Pastimes	27.4	48.2	10.4	9.7	3.7	0.5
Political meetings	87.8	10.1	0.6	1.1	0.4	0.1
Religious meetings	62	21.6	1.2	14	1	0.3
To do nothing	47.2	30.9	7.8	3	8.3	2.6

The majority of studies reviewed that are analogous to ours as far as subjects' age and questions asked are concerned, reveal quite similar behavioural trends with regard to leisure time.

The study carried out by the *Fundación Sta. María* (1984), concerning Spanish youth since the 1960s, reported the increasing number of hours spent watching TV and the decline in the amount of time spent reading books or attending religious or political events. This highlights the growing tendency of a "passive" participation in leisure. Our results support this view, though we should not overlook that new tendencies, such as participating in sports activities and going out to pubs or discos, are now becoming popular among adolescents.

Sexual behaviour

Without doubt one of the transcendental areas of adolescent life is sexuality. It is during this stage of human development that it emerges in a new and distinct manner, appearing suddenly, transforming the adolescent's personality and having important consequences, both at the personal and social levels. Due to the change it produces and the central place it occupies, sexuality presents its own particular characteristics, which must be studied. It is also true that sexuality comes to be determined by variables such as age, sex and upbringing/education, so that it is particularly important to attend to its corresponding differential expressions.

Research on the matter is ample: in the English-speaking world, from Schofield's work (1976) and McKinney's review (1982) up to more specialised research; in Spain, studies are also numerous (Fundación Santa María, 1985; Gurrea, 1985; Gobierno Vasco, 1985; Orizo, 1991, etc.).

Given the broad and global nature of our work, only the aspects of sexual behaviour considered to be most relevant to our study were selected, leaving aside those that were felt to be marginal to our main concern.

The age at which adolescents become familiar with or

acquire knowledge about pregnancy and birth is around 10 years. This does not imply that they are totally ignorant before this age.

However, the most interesting thing is the source of the information. It is obvious that teachers play a more important role than parents, since the latter often find it difficult to deal with what is typically a taboo subject in our culture. This kind of responsibility transfer must be understood as an element that facilitates access to the information.

As far as the parents are concerned, the mother plays a relevant role, especially compared to the father, which undoubtedly results from the closer presence of the mother to smaller children. The traditional role of the father is underlined in this case: he is more distant, more normative, less intimate and less expressive.

The first aspect of sexual behaviour to be examined was masturbation. There was a considerable difference between boys and girls in terms of frequency of masturbation. For the former, masturbation is frequent even in early adolescence. In the latter, masturbation is infrequent and marginal. The data shows that only 9% of boys stated they had never masturbated, while the equivalent figure for girls was much higher: 74.5%. Moreover, 70% of boys had masturbated before the age of 14, but only 17% of girls.

When asked about frequency of masturbation, where practised, we again find that it is a generalised behaviour for males. See the following table (Table 4).

Two conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, sexual initiation in males occurs earlier; secondly, from the beginning of sexual activity we already find two distinct behavioural patterns for the sexes.

Sexual tendency in adolescents is clearly heterosexual. The results from questions about homosexuality leave us in no doubt: homosexual practice is very much in a minority. If there are any sexual contacts between same sex individuals (for instance, for initiation or curiosity reasons), strictly speaking, they are not understood as homosexual. Results are clear and there are no significant differences among groups in any case, not even between boys and girls. 96.3 % declared they had never had homosexual experience.

As far as sexual behaviour is concerned, it must be noted that this does not necessarily imply coitus. From the available data, between 20 and 25% of males and 13 and 15% females have had sexual intercourse before 18. However, this does not preclude other kinds of sexual

Table 4
Responses on frequency of masturbation

	Masturbation frequency		
	Sometimes	Frequently	Daily
Males	44.3	30	13.5
Females	15.5	6.2	5.9
Note: figures in percentages			

activity. Girls' case is revealing in this sense: 70% stated they had had some kind of sexual contact.

Thus, it appears that sexual activity begins at approximately age 15, though this does not necessarily involve coitus.

Once again, the data highlights a considerable difference between the sexes. Sexual initiation occurs much earlier and is more intense in boys than in girls. This confirms the view of different socialisation patterns, particularly marked in this field.

On the whole, adolescents enjoy their sexual relationships. Nonetheless, differences between boys and girls can be observed. Boys have a more positive outlook towards their sexual experience, which is perhaps due to the fact that they feel freer and less inhibited than girls.

The data collected by regression analysis are interesting. Sexual activity is partially explained by a set of dimensions related to age, to tolerant thinking, and to the assertiveness necessary for overcoming the difficulty of inter-sexual approach. But the most weighted variables refer to tobacco and alcohol consumption. It seems as if though consumption behaviour and sexual activity were simultaneously expressing the adolescent's need to begin adult behaviour by breaking prohibitions and attaining more autonomy. We are dealing with the expression of emancipatory evolution this time of life represents.

As regards use of contraceptive methods, the data is revealing and worrying. Nearly half of the subjects maintain intimate sexual relations without using any form of contraception. This situation is not easy to explain, and may be due to lack of information, difficulty of access to contraception, or perhaps to the romantic notion that adolescents have about sexual love, which induces them to reject any contraceptive method. This is an important subject which undoubtedly merits urgent research.

No less worrying are data related to information about AIDS. Nearly 75% of the total subjects surveyed perceived themselves as in some way uninformed. If those who say they are informed are in fact not so, the matter must be seriously considered by the appropriate social institutions and agents.

Results on Attitudinal scales on Equality and Tolerance with relation to sexual behaviour are quite revealing. They perhaps place the topic of adolescents' beliefs in more balanced and, most of all, detailed terms. In general, these beliefs are not as traditional as they are often

claimed to be, nor are they manifestly radical. Adolescents are found to be in favour of both sexual equality and sexual tolerance, but in a modulated way. Secondly, we find, as in so many other cases, that the adolescent population is not a uniform and undifferentiated set. Two variables affect the attitudes dealt with here: age and place of residence.

The younger subjects (14 and 15) are less in favour of equality and tolerance than the older ones. It is logical that interaction between the sexes, which is more intense at 16 and 17, brings a change in attitudes and generates greater flexibility with regard to forming opinions on the subject.

As regards the other variable, habitat, cities contrast with towns or rural environments. This is not surprising, since cities always allow for a greater social mobility and a more intense exchange of opinions and contacts; also, social control and the weight of tradition is greater in towns and villages.

Data on regression analysis allow us to go deeper in the attitudinal aspects concerning sexual life.

Above all, there is confirmation of the close and logical relationship between equality and tolerance, and also the connection between the females and equality and the males and tolerance. On the other hand, we find ways of understanding reality that are opposed to those of conventional religion; thus, subjects scoring high on attitudinal scales describe a behavioural profile far removed from religious practice and the influence of the Church.

Finally, we should point out a differentiating detail. Tolerance is associated with alcohol consumption and sexual activity, making up a set that expresses consistency, on the one hand, and a connection with consumption behaviour and openness to new and self-affirming experiences, on the other. However, equality presents a more integrated and less "rupturist" tone, with variables such as sociability and, on the negative side, antisocial behaviour.

Religious beliefs

The "transition phase" that adolescence represents introduces critical elements at different levels, among which is the religious dimension. Until recently, studies on adolescence confirmed that religious matters constituted one of the most problematic aspects of this developmental stage, since it implied a critical review of life and a degree of re-planning. Religious beliefs appear to be one of the primary thematic elements in the socialisation

process; they are closely related to family environment, and their relationship with morality can be so great that the two dimensions may sometimes become confused or overlap.

Throughout adolescence, a "rational review" of beliefs usually occurs; individuals cease to be passive about them, and make decisions on moral and religious issues. The relocation of models and referents outside the family, the new intellectual and cultural capacities acquired, and access to other social group environments are aspects that lead to a more personalised attitude on religious matters.

However, in order to contextualise the problem, it is not enough to attend only to the subject's psychodevelopmental dimensions - other, macro-structural elements must also be considered.

The wide review of research on Spanish youth made by the *Fundación Santa María* (1984) already confirmed a generalised opinion in relation to the increasing secularisation of Spanish society during the 1970s and 80's. This means that, alongside the majority Catholic subculture, there exists another which is secular.

It was also shown that there was a remarkable decrease in the number of individuals defining themselves as religious, which was more notable in urban than in rural areas. In addition, there was detected a rising trend of moving away from the Catholic Church, which began to lose part of the influence it had exerted for so long.

Thus, we are facing a situation which not only has

changed substantially compared to the past, but which will probably continue to change - a fact that, especially in this case, gives a provisional character to any statement on the topic.

It is possible that the "religious crisis" of adolescence is not now as dramatic as in the past. Indeed, in many cases the crisis may not even occur. Two possible explanations are, first, that religiousness among adults has significantly decreased, which leads us to suppose that many adolescents are brought up in non-religious families, and second, that links between morality and religion, and between religion as an "institution" and religion as a "personal dimension", are becoming weaker.

Results obtained in our study appear to confirm the above-mentioned dynamic.

Two cultures clearly coexist. The secular one embraces roughly one third of the adolescent population, and somewhat less in the adult population, if we accept adolescents' assessments of their parents. Hence, it is to be supposed that we are facing a consolidated, rather than episodic, situation, which reflects, at least for a part of the population, a world view that is not mediated by religious beliefs.

Religious culture and, particularly, Catholic culture, is undoubtedly the majority one. For adolescents, however, it may be that religion constitutes more of a cultural reference than a set of strictly religious beliefs and feelings. It should be noted that only 29% define themselves as practising Catholics; of these, only 18% attend church on a weekly basis, and 7.5% take communion. Thus, self-classification as a Catholic does not imply self-definition as a practitioner; the separation of religion-as-culture and religion-as-feeling is evident. Below we present a table of results related to religious self-definition in adolescents.

If we consider the results on the level of agreement with the Catholic Church, it is possible to detect another of the principal axes of religious phenomena in adolescence and, perhaps, in early adulthood: the gap between religion-institution and religion-feeling. Only 2.5% agree with the Catholic Church, and nearly 75% express null or only slight agreement.

If, as previously shown, defining oneself as Catholic does not imply committing oneself to the practices established as compulsory by the Catholic Church, we can now go one step further and state that neither does it imply substantial agreement with it.

Another interesting item is that which concerns the

Table 5 Percentage of responses on adolescents' religious self-definition					
	Religious self-definition				
	Lack of interest	Non-believer	Practising Catholic	Non-pract. Catholic	Other religions
Total females	15.5	12.5	29.2	41	1.6
Females	13.5	10.2	32.8	42.1	1.3
Males	17.8	15.1	25.1	40	2
BUP: BUP	14.6	14	30.5	39.5	1.4
FP: FP	17.7	8.9	26.2	45.2	2
State	14.2	13.6	30.1	40.5	1.5
Private	16.6	16	32.3	34.3	0.9
Rural/Town or small city	13.6	9.5	38.8	36.8	1.3
Big city centre	14.9	16.2	30.3	37.4	1.2
Big city outskirts/suburbs	15	14.1	23.7	45.2	1.9
14 years old	14.2	10.8	38.1	35.5	1.3
15 years old	15	12.3	32.1	39.6	0.9
16 years old	15.3	13.4	29.9	40.2	1.1
17 years old	14.9	13.7	27.2	42	2.2
18 years old	17.1	13.1	22.6	44.8	2.4
19 years old	18.3	11.2	20.8	48.2	1.5

existence of God. Nearly two-thirds affirm it, about a third show doubts and only 12% openly deny it. Undoubtedly, the affirmative position is in the majority, and percentages are relatively similar across groups. However, the percentage of subjects doubting (25%) indicates that belief in God is a difficult matter, even though it is one of the central beliefs in our Christian western culture. Moreover, even though the position of denial is proportionally low, it is not marginal: in male adolescents groups it rises to 14.8%.

Interestingly, considering oneself as non-religious does not necessarily imply the denial of God's existence.

Thus, we are looking at a fragmentation of the conceptualisation of religious matters. If traditionally there was an integrated perception of all aspects, it seems clear that the adolescent of today does not see things this way. The set "to believe in God-to be religious-to practice religion-to agree with the Catholic Church" does not appear to be a coherent one for the adolescent. One can believe in God without being Catholic, and define oneself as Catholic without regularly going to church, or even agreeing with the Church.

On the other hand, differential analysis indicates that adolescence does not present a homogeneous picture. There are remarkable particularities. The three most religious groups are women, rural inhabitants, and 14-year-olds: sex, habitat and age appear to be important variables in this topic. Differential upbringing/education in the first case, a more traditional mentality in the second, and the weight of primary socialisation - given the age group - in the third, may be plausible explanations for these results.

In sum, despite differences, the overall impression is of homogeneity. That is, adolescent groups may be more or less religious, but the main features we have mentioned (fragmentation, secularism, new conceptualisation of religious matters) appear to be applicable to adolescent culture as a whole.

Political participation and social values

The most remarkable result concerning voting behaviour in adolescents is the great number of subjects (32% of the total) who were unable to answer the question on the political party or group with which they feel most identified, and who would thus enlarge the number of "floating voters" and "abstentions" (this percentage holds even for those who -because of their age - have the right to vote, that is, those between 18 and 19 years old).

This result demonstrates the lack of interest on the part of adolescents in political activity, in general, and in voting, in particular. Similar results have been obtained in most studies on the subject, national and international. As far as our field is concerned, Toharia (1989), collating data from previous surveys, states that the maximal interest in politics and political groups in Spain was attained in the mid-1970's (time of the Spanish transition to democracy), since when such interest has presented a decreasing curve, leaving the percentage of young adults and adolescents manifesting no interest in politics at around 50% of the total sample in 1989. By ages, it is adolescents (15-17) that show the greatest lack of interest (60% of the total). The report on "Political Attitudes of Youth in Spain" by the *Instituto de la Juventud* (1991) confirms this trend, their results stating that only 51% of young people manifest interest in politics, while 32% declared themselves to be totally indifferent.

With regard to other forms of conventional (activities in political campaigns, contacts with governments, membership of pressure groups or political parties, etc.) and non-conventional (involvement in strikes, demonstrations, sit-ins, boycotts, etc.) political participation, there is a remarkably scarce degree of incidence of these kind of activities in the adolescent's life, especially in the case of non-conventional political participation.

As a differential feature among the groups considered throughout the study, it is interesting to note the fact that there is a significant difference in the type of political participation preferred by those subjects attending private educational centres and living in inner cities (variables which correlate highly between one another and are closely related to a high or medium-high socio-economic level). These subjects clearly choose a conventional type of political activity, in contrast to subjects attending state schools and living in big city suburbs, who show a greater trend to participate in non-conventional political activities. These data coincide with the findings of Conway (1991, p. 21), who states that "socio-economic status is most important in determining both the frequency and the type of political activity produced by U. S. citizens". This situation appears to be related to the fact that subjects living in big city suburbs (with all the socio-cultural and economic implications) appear to perceive to a greater degree than the inner city-dwellers the difficulties for making their voices heard, and for defending their inte-

rests before public institutions through conventional forms of political participation.

In this sense, results on the evaluation of perceived powerlessness are quite coherent. Adolescents, in general, present a level of perceived powerlessness that is clearly higher than that of the normal population; groups with high levels of powerlessness are those which are traditionally, either for reasons of sexual discrimination (women) or class discrimination (state school pupils, and rural or suburban inhabitants, i. e. , mostly middle or lower-middle class), more distant from the centres of political and social decision-making and control. This greater perception of distance and powerlessness with regard to such power foci results in the subjects from these groups presenting a lower level of conventional political activity.

The same trend is observed for women in the case of non-conventional political participation. This can be related to the more passive role assigned to women in traditional upbringing/education which, as we affirmed, seems still to exert a strong influence on the behaviour of a large part of adolescent females.

We observed a trend with respect to the relationship between perceived powerlessness and non-conventional political participation, whereby groups made up of suburb-dwellers and state school pupils (groups representing a higher level of powerlessness) are those most frequently involved in non-conventional political activities. Klanderman's proposal (1983) of the "hypothesis of power formation" may be useful for interpreting this result. According to Klanderman, the fact that subjects in these groups make an "external" attribution, blaming the system for the lack of effectiveness of political decisions in terms of their needs and interests, would propel them into political action to reduce their feelings of powerlessness. If, together with this proposal, we take into account adolescents' perception of the uselessness of adopting conventional behaviour, their tendency to use non-conventional political activities to defend their interests makes sense.

However, the way of understanding and coping with social life in general, and political participation in particular, can be seen as resulting from adolescents' axiological way of conceptualising reality. Values are beliefs through which reality is understood and categorised. They largely comprise the criteria by which people behave and express their own needs, and they even partially predict future attitudes and behaviours (Rokeach, 1973).

In any case, the analysis of adolescents' values aims at a better comprehension of their attitude towards public matters and their perception of personal and social reality.

The first conclusion from the study of adolescent values is the great homogeneity in their axiological profile, even though -obviously- some differential aspects can be detected among the groups composed on the basis of social variables.

In general, the set of values given most importance comprises two dimensions:

- Physical and socio-emotional welfare (Health, Friendship, Love, Family).
- Social Welfare (World peace, Freedom).

This is a quite protective axiological framework, strongly related to the self. There is a notable absence of values of a more political or hedonistic nature, or of a markedly instrumental or moral character. We are looking at a population oriented to individual, rather than social values; to immediate and specific values, rather than the more abstract and generalised ones typical of previous generations.

Neither do those values which were given less importance pose difficulties of interpretation. The fact that the value *Religion* appears to be the weakest is coherent with previous conclusions on the prevalence of immediate, specific and individual values. The same argument holds for the explanation of the rejection of the value *Patriotism/Nationalism*: its past political and ideological connotations may prevent their perception of it from being one of personal identification. Finally, the low evaluation of *To be ambitious* may be understood as a way of opposing and breaking away from the generation of adults immediately above them, oriented toward achievement and the acquisition of goods and power.

Results from the differential analysis correspond to the idea that values play a role in expressing human needs and the more central characteristics of the self. We emphasise that peculiarities are always situated within a homogeneous and shared framework.

Differences between male and female adolescents continue to underline the unequal socialisation effected by social agents according to sex: more instrumental and linked to achievement in boys; more expressive and affectively oriented in girls.

The axis of explanation for differential effects at the socio-educational level seems to be job expectation and

the instrumental values associated with it: the more this expectation becomes perceived as problematic, the more subjects consider it more valuable and desirable.

As far as age is concerned, the growing importance of "love" and "sex" means that a clear difference in the corresponding values is established between the younger and the older groups. Age 15 appears to be the turning point. From this age on, the relative importance of religious matters gives way to a valuation of "love" and "sex" matters, and achievement needs are evident.

Finally, results related to place of residence indicate a greater preference for traditional values in villages or rural areas, compared to town and city groups.

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