

Title of the paper
CULTURAL HABITS IN TEENAGERS AND YOUNG ADULTS in Galicia
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Text

The aim of this study is to establish qualitative parameters for the general behaviour of Galician teenagers and young adults with regard to their cultural habits and practices, analysing for this purpose the population concerned as a whole as well as by age group.

We were able to observe quite a high degree of uniformity of attitude taking into account the variables of sex and age, with only a few exceptions. The variables educational level and habitat showed greater variance, but nevertheless general trends can be seen amongst the group of subjects as a whole, which furthermore coincide with other observations made both in Spain and in other European states.

Firstly, a foreseeable outcome is that the majority of Galician teenagers and young adults are permanently connected by means of ICTs and available *on-line* during a large part of their leisure time. This reality also affects questions such as their personal relationships or the kind of activities they indulge in both inside and outside the home. The use of information and communication technologies gives teenagers and young adults a leading role, since they are always at the forefront of the new technological society. An increase was also detected in the customisation of the technological devices they use, such as mobile phones, video game consoles, computers or Internet connections.

On the other hand, it should also be pointed out that music plays a fundamental role in the construction of personal and collective identities, since according to the opinions expressed by the subjects in this study listening to music is a central element of their leisure time. Two different approaches to the consumption of music were observed:

- a) Music as an individual item of consumption listened to at home, in the street, on public transport, etc., but always on an individual basis. In this case music fulfils a highly relevant function of personal identification and construction in teenagers and young adults, serving to differentiate them from other age groups. Musical tastes evolve as members of this sector of society progressively identify themselves with different bands or musical styles, which highlight the value of this activity in establishing their personal references, social relationships and identity.
- b) Music listened to outside the home, such as concerts or festivals, brings a formative life experience to the group or groups of people attending the event. In

the case of some styles such as rap, hip-hop, electronic dance music (dance, house, techno) and the various forms of metal music, the fact of being a fan and the life experience related to them lead to specific kinds of lifestyle, with their particular symbols and languages that differentiate them from others.

With regard to TV and radio, these are activities that they often carry out unintentionally, and not expressly chosen, as may be the case of going to the cinema or the theatre, which imply a greater degree of volition. The type of TV programmes favoured by teenagers and young adults are series, sports events and films.

Another aspect that needs mentioning is reading. Although teenagers and young adults may seem to read less, this is not necessarily true, since although they read less in the traditional book format, except for those who are still at school, they read much more in digital format, on line. Females read more books and magazines than males, but males read more newspapers than females, although they often read the press (especially sports dailies) on line. The highest levels of readership are associated with an urban lifestyle and a medium or high educational level, with the exception of the sport press, where the predominant profile is a low educational level.

Another important aspect with regard to reading, which we have already mentioned, is access to new technologies. The low level of interest for 'traditional' reading must be analysed in a wider context developed by the users of new information and communications technologies, since we have found that those who read more are also those who make greater use of the Internet and have a higher educational level. As a result of the various possibilities afforded by new technologies, and the uses that teenagers and young adults make of them, there has arisen a wide-ranging transformation, expansion and diversification of the cultural offer available to the latter, in which greater value is placed on image, interaction and creativity.

It is also true to say that Internet use is clearly conditioned by age, since access by the younger generation is much greater than by adults, and is also related to the education received. The most common Internet activities amongst teenagers and young adults are surfing, sending and receiving e-mails and using social networks, but they also refer to using the Internet for on-line gaming and even gambling.

Another relevant area is that which includes cinema-going, theatre-going and concert-going. Generally speaking, the near-unanimous opinion is that price is a constraint on activities of this kind, which are considered to be 'cultural' in the most traditional sense of the word. This does not mean that teenagers and young adults do not enjoy them, but rather that they look for other alternatives. This is particularly true in the case of films, which many people in this age group download illegally from the Internet and watch at home, either alone or with friends.

Finally, one aspect mentioned by all the subjects in the study is the relationship teenagers and young adults establish between culture and sport. Sport fulfils the dual function of personal development and construction and interaction with others. It also has a variety of facets, which range from it being a purely personal and individual activity to a collective activity or even something to be watched. The first two of these

facets are seen as being of a more active nature, whilst the third is included in the sphere of leisure and entertainment.

We will now analyse the various aspects mentioned above, in relation to the different groups of subjects.

The concept of culture

Generally speaking, teenagers and young adults relate culture to a wide variety of concepts: learning, communication and information, training, education or extent of knowledge, amongst others, and are aware that economic growth and the modern welfare state are closely linked to greater access to culture and also provide greater opportunities for this to happen. A two-way flow is thus established between the increase in consumption and the increase in the cultural offer in its widest sense. Nevertheless, they have a negative view of an excess of these, and are very scrupulous and critical with regard to exaggerated consumerism.

As we have already stated, all the subjects in this study, regardless of the variables educational level, age and gender, establish a close relationship between sport and culture; sport is seen as one more cultural activity that acts as a linking point between people and favours joint decision-making. However, the unemployed subjects in the 19-24 age range are highly critical of the financial excesses to be found in competitive sport, which they see as a disproportionate expense.

In the case of university-educated young adults the concept of culture is present in a person's life from the moment the day begins, in activities as basic as reading a newspaper, watching a film or listening to music, but they also associate culture with the spheres of education and training and family life. They see many factors as influencing people's experience of culture: country, school, tradition, the street where they live and the places they go to, society or any other element that forms part of their daily life all go to make up a person's cultural baggage. In this regard, they depart from the concept, in their view a more old-fashioned one, of associating culture solely with scientific, literary or artistic knowledge, and also value sociological, family, social or human aspects, amongst others.

All subjects, in general, believe that the culture of the future will be based on new technologies, which will pervade all spheres of daily life and be necessary for performing the majority of everyday activities such as shopping, using bank services, etc.

The cinema

A liking for films and the high price of cinema tickets are the two premises that constitute the common denominator amongst the three groups in this study, without exception.

The youngest subjects like films but are not habitual cinema-goers, basically due to the cost of cinema tickets. They therefore attach less importance to visual quality: a minority rent films from video rental shops, but the majority download them from the Internet, downloading being a tool that they also often use to obtain other forms of

entertainment such as TV series, software, games, music, etc. When they do go to the cinema they usually go in groups and always because they want to see a film they consider to be of high quality or extremely popular.

Nevertheless, undergraduates go into the features that characterise contemporary film-making in greater depth and criticise the pseudo-real world portrayed in films; a distortion that they consider as being harmful to younger members of society since it provides them with a false and deformed version of reality.

The theatre

There is a high degree of correlation between the way in which teenagers and young adults relate to this artistic activity and their educational level. Thus, for the youngest subjects in our study their relationship with the theatre goes back to their early school years, where the school itself introduced them to this form of culture. Although all of them took part in the performance of a play during this period at school, they do not now feel any particular attraction for the theatre, excepting a very few who really enjoy this art form.

Amongst the negative aspects mentioned with regard to the theatre we have on the one hand the association of the image of the theatre with older audiences. Once again, by the high price of tickets and the lack of information about plays being staged locally are the main reason for the poor or non-existent attendance at events of this kind.

On the other hand, the attitude of university students to the theatre differs substantially from that of the two groups mentioned above. They all like the theatre and believe that plays are staged in sufficient numbers and that young people are interested in going to the theatre. They make particular reference to the growing interest in varieties of stage performances such as monologues, a form of artistic expression they support because they think it is less complex than producing a play, entertaining, innovative, cheaper and takes place in the kind of space they prefer (bars and coffee-shops).

Music

As mentioned above, music is a fundamental leisure activity for teenagers and young adults. They all like music and listen to it, but we also observed some inter-generational differences. Two of the most notable features of music in this sense are:

- Music is a way of life that can be related to trends in clothing, group affinity and identity.
- Music is seen as an element of group identity that constitutes the criterion or filter that decides the place or establishment in which they meet up with friends.

The styles of music preferred by the subjects in this study vary slightly, mainly according to the variable age. Whilst generally speaking pop-rock and similar commercial styles are generally preferred, as they grow older their musical tastes become more sophisticated and clearly defined. Thus, whilst the youngest amongst them prefer above all music from the 80s and 90s and pop music, and do not in general listen to classical music, the older ones listen to a much wider variety of musical genres

such as rock, pop, rap or melodic metal, jazz, blues or folk. Generally speaking, with very few exceptions, they do not listen to classical music because they consider it to be a genre that has fallen out of use nowadays.

The way they choose to access or listen to music is through the Internet, downloading it at home in their free time. One possibly distinctive feature of Galician teenagers and young adults is that they feel highly attracted by open-air dances and traditional parish festivals, this being the only case where the kind of music they listen to is irrelevant (showband repertoires range from traditional folk styles to cover versions of current hits), as is the identity of the showband on stage. These occasions are also a meeting point and another way of relating to people. The most commonly used devices for listening to music are the mobile phone, in preference to an mp3 player, and the radio, particularly by those who make frequent use of the car for travelling.

One difference that we found with regard to the variable age was attendance at live concerts given by bands they are interested in, or new bands that appear on the scene. This possibility is hardly ever mentioned by the youngest subjects in the study, whilst undergraduates in particular, although they are not the only ones, do see it as an activity they enjoy. The only impediment they mention, once again, is cost, since when the concert is free they never think twice about going.

Finally, some mention was also made of music as an act of artistic creativity, with the occasional subject stating that they played in a group or played a musical instrument.

The radio

The subjects who listen most to the radio are aged 18 and upwards, listening above all when they are in the car. For this age group the radio is an interesting source of information and, above all, one of entertainment. Occasionally, but to a lesser extent, they also listen to radio on their computers.

TV

In general TV receives a very negative appraisal. Whilst the younger subjects see it as a medium that holds no interest for them whatsoever and consider it harmful for family relationships and a source of isolation, the older ones engage in a deeper analysis of the programmes shown on TV nowadays, concluding that they do not identify with any TV programme currently being broadcast, their reason for thinking this being that, given the way in which TV listings are designed nowadays, the medium does not even fulfil its mission to inform. They only make the occasional exception in the case of a specific series that might interest them. Nevertheless, they believe that TV as such is not a negative element, but rather an excellent medium that is ruined by the poor use that producers make of it.

Reading

Once again we come across an intergenerational difference that is not necessarily negative, as has already been mentioned, due to the increasingly widespread access of

the younger generation to the Internet and new technologies, which have nowadays replaced reading through the medium of printed paper.

Thus, with the occasional exception, the majority of secondary school and sixth-form students read no books other than those that are compulsory reading. They recognise that now they prefer to spend their free time searching for information and reading on the Internet than in books. They do, however, read the newspapers bought by their parents or provided by coffee-shops and bars, and also buy magazines that deal with topics that interest them.

For the over-18s, the computer is a source of reading material just as it is for the group of sixth-form or secondary students, replacing books; however, unlike the younger subjects, they attach a more positive value to reading in printed paper format because it is easier and more convenient for them, and they feel attracted, above all, by stories and novels. With regard to the manner in which they access books, they mention libraries as a place to study and to obtain the reference books they need for their studies. On the whole, they read the newspaper every day.

Computer and Internet use

This is the tool *par excellence* used by all the focus groups involved in this study to access culture, leisure activities and entertainment. It is true to say that, with exceedingly few exceptions, Internet access has completely revolutionised the habits of modern 16-26 year-olds, although the older members of this cohort are more critical with what they see as the excessive use of the computer by their younger peers.

Secondary school and sixth-form students use the computer on average for two hours a day, basically depending on the amount of homework they have to do, and almost always at home. They think that Internet has a significant influence on young people's way of life and are concerned that their privacy may be breached, this fear being greater amongst females, who are worried that their privacy, and even their personal safety, may be seriously affected when they are on-line.

Subjects are highly sceptical of the kind of friendships that may arise through social networks, and are fully aware that the latter are a meeting place for people who only know each other through the Internet and with whom there is usually no kind of personal contact: the majority of relationships of this kind are seen as superficial and even fictitious. What is surprising is the number of cases cited by the youngest subjects of 'friends' who ask to be added to their page and who then never even say hello to them in the street. They also say that the use of social networks is above all a craze that extends to all young people, and recognise that they are useful for arranging to meet up, publishing photos or sending announcements to others in their social circle.

Video games

Gender is the variable that has a decisive influence on the use of video games, males being almost exclusively those who spend part of their leisure time on this activity (Saturday or Sunday afternoons, in particular, and almost always with friends). Females do not think video games are an attractive form of entertainment, and even criticise their male friends for the time they spend on them. Nevertheless, both males and females

coincide in considering an excessive use of video games to be bad for their personal and social life, agreeing that they should be used in moderation.

The most commonly used video game consoles are Play Station, Nintendo, PSP and Xbox, with mention being made of the increasing availability of gambling games, namely poker, and their diversification with a view to attracting a wider range of users such as girls and adults of both sexes.

1. CONCLUSIONS

1. A common characteristic amongst all teenagers and young adults is their total dependence on new technologies for accessing cultural content and activities.

2. In addition to Internet access they also have a wide range of ICT devices, principally mobile phones and computers, which they use to listen to music or download films and music, and to a lesser extent mp3 players and video game consoles.

3. The idea of 'free culture' is widespread, it being commonly thought that tickets for any kind of cultural event are expensive, this opinion also being influenced by the fact that they are able to download music and films of their choice from the Internet at zero cost.

4. They place a high value on culture as a means of identifying and bringing together members of a group, for example when going to concerts or open-air dances at village festivals. Another way of getting together with friends is watching movies at home.

5. A variable of considerable importance when analysing the ability of Galician teenagers and young adults to access culture is habitat, since cultural offer and cultural infrastructures vary widely from one place to another. Generally speaking there is more cultural offer and infrastructures in large cities than in small towns, resulting in the development of more sophisticated cultural habits in the former.

Key questions for the next future

- Is market based cultural consumption compatible with youngsters?
- Are traditional art forms in crisis?
- How can we measure cultural consumption and practices in the future?