

The young people of Puerto Rico: description from a social and cultural perspective

Los jóvenes de Puerto Rico: descripción desde una perspectiva social y cultural

GONZÁLEZ-GIJÓN, Gracia¹

MARTÍNEZ-HEREDIA, Nazaret²

AMARO AGUDO, Ana³

SORIANO DÍAZ, Andrés⁴

Abstract

This study aims to analyse the opinions of young Puerto Ricans regarding the social and cultural aspects which affect their daily lives and shape their value systems. A quantitative descriptive methodology was used by applying a questionnaire –prepared ad hoc– to a representative sample of 1,740 secondary students attending state schools in Puerto Rico, ranging in age from 11 to 19 years old. The results show the opinions of young people regarding institutions, family, social groups and leisure.

key words: young people, puerto rico, secondary education, quantitative research

Resumen

Este estudio tiene como objetivo analizar las opiniones de los jóvenes puertorriqueños con respecto a los aspectos sociales y culturales que afectan su vida cotidiana y dan forma a sus sistemas de valores. Se utilizó una metodología descriptiva cuantitativa mediante la aplicación de un cuestionario, a una muestra de 1,740 estudiantes de secundaria, con edades comprendidas entre los 11 y 19 años. Los resultados muestran las opiniones con respecto a las instituciones, la familia, los grupos sociales y el ocio.

Palabras clave: jóvenes, puerto rico, educación secundaria, investigación cuantitativa

1. Introduction

According to the latest Human Development Report, published in 2016 in Puerto Rico, and prior to the devastation caused by hurricanes Irma and María, the Puerto Rican population, which is characterised by good levels of education and health, is, nevertheless, living under a stagnant economy (Informe sobre desarrollo humano. Puerto Rico 2016). Regarding young people, the index of well-being in children and youth, investigated by the Institute for the Development of Youth in 2015, has a poor score when Puerto Rico is compared to the United States. Key data reveal that 57% of children and young people in Puerto Rico live below the poverty line, and 51% live in single-parent families, with women being heads of household in 82% of cases.

¹ PhD in Education Sciences. Department of Pedagogy. University of Granada. graciag@ugr.es

² PhD in Education Sciences. Department of Pedagogy. University of Granada. nazareth@ugr.es

³ PhD in Education Sciences Department of Pedagogy. University of Granada. anaamaro@ugr.es

⁴ PhD in Education Sciences. Department of Pedagogy . University of Granada. asoriano@ugr.es

Another aspect that characterises the current situation of Puerto Rican youth is the increase in criminality. This focuses on two factors: the recruitment of minors by drug traffickers and an educational system which is unappealing to them (Herrán et al. 2016). According to Rey and Hernández-Angueira (2014), Puerto Rico is the country in its hemisphere where there are more drug outlets than schools: 1,600 drug outlets and 1,388 schools respectively. In Puerto Rico, the Department of Education's budget is higher than that of the eleven other Caribbean countries. Even so, there is a clear deterioration of a social and structural nature, which has a number of implications such as those mentioned above (Mckinsey 2003).

Of all the transformations experienced by Puerto Rico in the last decade, the migration phenomenon has been the key element in its current situation. As in previous years, young people predominate in this group, but, unlike the emigration of the 1950s, about half of the emigrants have a university degree (Fry and Taylor 2013). This migratory dimension has an impact on the socio-demographic characteristics of the country, on the degree of the economic growth and its capacity to achieve a sustainable future. In fact, more than 4 million Puerto Ricans currently live in the US diaspora. This number is higher than the number of those people living in the national territory: 3.6 million, according to the 2013 Puerto Rico Community Survey (Junta de Planificación de Puerto Rico 2013).

If we perceive the individual from a social and cultural perspective, the socialisation process guarantees that the individual participates and integrates into the social environment in which he/she must live. In this sense, the influence of the family is fundamental, as well as that of human groups and institutions, especially the school. It also points to the relationship between human beings and nature, with its modification and with communication with a transcendent dimension.

This investigation shows the results of a research project (R&D) developed by the University of Granada (Spain) in collaboration with the Metropolitan University (Puerto Rico) and funded by the Puerto Rico Department of Education. Its purpose is to understand the opinions of young Puerto Ricans regarding social and cultural aspects that affect their daily life and configure their value system. This complex work involves a broad analytical spectrum that young people present in their social and cultural dimension. Specifically, we intended to analyse the opinions of Puerto Rican youth regarding social groups, institutions, leisure, family, ecology, material goods and religion.

2. Methodology

In order to achieve these objectives, a descriptive methodology was proposed, applying a questionnaire in schools to a representative sample of Puerto Rican youth between the ages of 11 and 19.

2.1. Instrument

The instrument used to analyse the opinions of the Puerto Rican youngsters was made ad hoc and validated by expert judgment. This questionnaire, in its final version, consisted of 27 items grouped into two dimensions: social and cultural. It ended with questions related to identification and classification data. To determine the reliability of the instrument, the Cronbach Alpha test was used, resulting in 0.92, which indicates high instrument reliability (Bisquerra 2004; Pardo and Ruiz 2002).

2.2. Population and participants

In this work, 1,740 participants (N=1,740) were considered, with a proportional representation throughout the national territory, divided into the 7 educational regions. This constituted a representative sample of the population of students in the Puerto Rican state educational system. For each educational region a proportional stratified random sampling was carried out by grade (10th, 11th, 12th), by area (urban-rural) and by gender

(male-female). The proportional representation of students was selected by region, with a 95% confidence level and a sample error of $\pm 2\%$ was as follows: Arecibo 13.9%, Bayamón 13.5%, Caguas 14.3%, Humacao 13.9%, Mayagüez 15.2%, Ponce 15.5% and San Juan 13.3%.

The age of the young people studied ranges from 11 to 19 years old, although the largest number of participants (98.4%) are between the ages of 15 and 18. The group with the greatest participation is made up of 17-year-olds. Regarding the gender of the participants, the percentages of both are almost even: 47.4% men and 52.4% women.

2.3. Data analysis

The analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics of central tendency, such as the mean, and of dispersion, as the standard deviation. We also carried out frequency analysis and percentages, and elaborated profiles based on the trend in valuation according to the sociodemographic characteristics they present. Here the statistical package SPSS-23 was used.

3. Results

For the analysis of the opinions associated with social aspects, related to groups, institutions, leisure and family, participants were asked about their relationship, and involvement in, each of them.

The opening of the individual, and his/her relational dimension, is not always carried out in a positive sense of friendship or affection. The following data show the rejection that, at certain times, individuals may suffer from other people due to nationality, gender or/and ways of life. Regarding the acceptance of some socially disadvantaged groups, the data show us that there is a moderate tendency to attributions of acceptance exceeding 2 ("little / a lot") in all cases. When analysing the variations of the general average, and although the differences are slight, the most valued group are people from a different nationality (3). The groups that follow them in scoring are gays/lesbians (2.86), nomadics (2.64) and, with the same score (2.37), people with criminal records and alcoholics. In the last place are drug addicts (2.14).

Along with attitudes of contempt or rejection, as described above, people can suffer something even more serious: abuse, which is violent behaviour that causes physical and/or emotional damage. These matters are characterised by the low frequency of responses obtained. We found that 21% of the participants have suffered abuse at school from their classmates, followed by 18% of cases that claim to have been physically assaulted by friends or acquaintances. With similar percentages (between 2.5% and 3.5%), situations related to sexual abuse and maltreatment in couple relationships appear (see Table 1). The analysis based on gender leads us to observe that more males than females claim to have been physically assaulted by friends or acquaintances and on more occasions (10.3% and 7.5% respectively). Females claim to be more mistreated in family situations with almost double the percentage of males (4.5%). They also claim to be victims of violence at the hands of their partners, by teachers and sexually abused. However, males claim to have been physically assaulted by strangers, insulted with serious threats and assaulted by a police officer more frequently than females (see Table 1).

Table 1
Situations of abuse suffered depending on gender

	Males		Females	
	F	%	F	%
I have been physically assaulted by friends or acquaintances	179	10,3	132	7,5
I have suffered abuse at school from my classmates	171	9,8	193	11
I have suffered abuse in my workplace	15	0,8	13	0,7
I have suffered abuse from members of my family	38	2,1	79	4,5
My partner has abused me	15	0,8	29	1,6
I have been mistreated by my teachers	37	2,1	46	2,6
I have been forced to perform some sexual practice	23	1,3	35	1,9
I have been physically assaulted by strangers	50	2,8	33	1,9
I have been insulted and seriously threatened	150	8,6	114	6,5
A police officer has attacked me	20	1,1	2	0,1

Young people's attitudes towards institutions are closely linked to their value system. Taking this into account, the groups and social movements that receive the most approval from young people resemble those institutions in which young people place a greater trust. Analysing the average score, from the vast majority of groups and social movements (with percentages that exceed 75%), the most valued are environmental groups, groups opposed to racial discrimination, youth associations, movements for human and women's rights, and pro-life (against abortion) organisations. Political parties appear as the least valued by young people, with a percentage below 50%.

The institution in which the majority of young people place their trust, with a percentage of 75%, is the church. The rest score below it. With a percentage of above 50%, there is the teaching system and volunteer organisations, both being part of the most reliable institutions. This is probably due to their role in compensating for the system's dysfunctions. Here we find the armed forces, the social security system, the police, the United Nations, the administration of justice, as well as large companies and transnationals. Below these organisations are NATO, the Mayor's Office, the unions, the press and, lastly, the legislative body (see Table 2).

Table 2
Trust in the institutions

Weighted total average	2,29	N	Average	Stand. deviation
The church		1714	3,12	1,024
Educational system		1695	2,82	,930
Volunteer organisations		1687	2,64	,970
Armed Forces		1703	2,55	,984
Social security system		1697	2,40	,959
Police		1701	2,35	,929
United Nations		1688	2,35	1,046
Justice administration		1704	2,30	,912
Big corporations, transnationals		1701	2,08	,884
NATO		1654	1,98	,920
Mayor's Office		1692	1,91	,881
Unions		1686	1,89	,839
Press		1699	1,86	,843
Legislative body		1697	1,83	,835

Leisure is a social phenomenon that is, for young people, a primary way of socialising, carried out, in many cases, through mobile phones and the Internet. The use of mobile phones has become almost universal over the past few years. For all this, it is necessary to understand the importance they give to different media, based on the mobile phone and the Internet, as ways of communicating with their friends. Thus, mobile phones, personal communication, networks, chat, SMS and WhatsApp are, for young people the most important elements for communicating with their friends, with averages exceeding 3.35 points out of 4, the last one being postal mail.

We asked young people about their use of the Internet, and the analysis led us to create two categories with percentages above and below 50% (see Table 3). In the first group are those uses of the Internet that exceed 50% of the valuations, such as going online to prepare class assignments, exams, research, etc., download films, songs, music, chat and obtain information about cinemas, shows, trips, and so on. The second group relates to those uses that are below 50% in the valuations of Puerto Rican youth. Here we find playing network video games, reading press/media or news, and watching erotic material, look for sex...

Table 3
Internet uses by young people

	Frequency	Percentage
Preparing class assignments, exams, research, etc.	1481	85,1
Downloading films, songs, music	1280	73,6
Chatting	1240	71,3
Obtaining information about cinemas, shows, trips, etc.	1039	59,7
Playing network video games	701	40,3
Reading press or news	577	33,2
Watching erotic material, looking for sex	221	12,7

Next, we asked them about the situations they had encountered when chatting. Almost 52% chat about opinion topics, avoiding personal issues. 34.4% say they chat and identify themselves –we understand that they refer to chat with people they know. Below 15% are those who recognise that they chat about personal issues with people who they do not know, those who have had a date with someone they did not know and, lastly, those who chat about personal issues but do not identify themselves, with 12.2%.

Regarding the importance that young people give to different types of fun –and analysing the average scores– we found that spending time with friends is the most important situation when having fun (3.74). This is followed by enjoying a special atmosphere, listening to music and disconnecting from the daily routine. With intermediate values (3.02-1.85) are the options to find new friends, dance and find a partner. The lowest scores, between “none” and “unimportant”, appears to be looking for sex, drinking alcohol and using drugs (see Table 4).

Table 4
Importance you give to different types of fun

Weighted average 2,62	N	Average	Std. deviation
Spending time with friends	1702	3,74	,553
Enjoying a special atmosphere	1705	3,68	,650
Listening to music	1699	3,58	,717
Disconnecting from the daily routine	1687	3,35	,889
Looking for new friends	1686	3,02	,891
Dancing	1694	2,78	1,054
Finding a partner	1657	1,85	1,001
Looking for sex	1647	1,52	,881
Drinking alcohol	1671	1,51	,852
Using drugs	1669	1,18	,583

Family relationships are of the utmost importance for young people and, in many circumstances, they can define their future. Young people's most valued element within the family is the stability and security it provides for its members (see Table 5).

Table 5
How would you rate in your current family ...?

Weighted total average 3,37	N	Average	Std. deviation
Stability and security for its members	1681	3,61	,702
Affective relationships	1678	3,44	,817
Communication between its members	1677	3,42	,786
Material care	1657	3,28	,803
The religious	1663	3,11	,998

When analysing what the nature of family relationships is and how they are perceived by the young people and regarding parent-child relationships, 60.1% think that relations with their father are "totally satisfactory", lowering those referred to their mother to 40.9%.

The individuals that young people turn to when they need advice and support say a lot about the relationships that occur in families. Because of this, the participants were asked about the person, or people, to whom they would ask for advice on different issues.

The first element analysed focused on issues related to their studies, and the major option was "One of my parents", with 44.2%, followed by friends. The second issue raised was that related to professional matters. Here almost 60%, still consult their parents. Regarding "sexual issues", there were two options with majority percentages, close to 28%, parents and nobody. This indicates that this is still a taboo subject among young people.

In "love affairs" friends unseat parents when asking for advice, but they are again the most consulted in "emotional, family, religious and economic affairs", exceeding in this last case 63% of the answers.

Young Puerto Ricans main aim in life is to start their own family. We wanted to ask the participants if they had children and only 17 of the young participants in this study answered affirmatively, which is just 1% of the sample. With respect to the possibility of having children in the future, almost 85% answered affirmatively, compared to 13% who answered negatively.

Finally, within this category of analysis, they were asked about the main conditions for deciding to have children. Among the options received, the most valued was having a stable job, with 88.1% of the answers obtained. Young Puerto Ricans prioritise stable work as an indispensable condition for starting a family. This first variable is followed by having completed their studies, with 86%. With above 80% of responses, there are options as diverse as being economically independent / having enough income, having bought an apartment/house, and getting to know their partner/husband/wife well. With percentages of 70 to 75% there is the option that both of partners want and decide, and want to have children. Between 50 and 60%, opt for having had some experience in life, and not to be too old.

For the analysis of the opinions on cultural aspects related to ecology, material goods and religion, we asked young people about the importance that each of the proposed elements acquires in their personal beliefs.

The first variable asked young people about their opinions and attitudes towards the environment. The majority response, chosen by almost 20% of participants, was "my lifestyle (consumerism, leisure, etc.) as a citizen of Puerto Rico is important for the conservation of the planet". The second option chosen was "the protection of the environment must be a political priority", with 14.4%. This was followed by the option "I am/ I feel connected to the whole community of life on planet Earth, with 9.4%. Finally, the most extreme option, "human beings have the right to use and modify the environment as they wish", was selected in only 4.8% of the responses.

The next variable analysed is related to the individual actions that participants carry out in order to contribute to a better future. After asking them about the limitation of their consumption of running water, we identified that 41% of young people say that they do not do so, but have thought about doing so. 38.9% said they do it and almost 18% do not, nor will they.

Regarding turning off lights and electrical appliances when they are not in use, the majority response was “I do it”, with 62.3% of the study cases, followed by 27.4% who do not but have thought about doing it. Finally, 8.4% said that they neither do it nor think about doing it.

With respect to the recycling of waste and purchase of beverages with returnable or recyclable packaging, there is a high frequency –from 37% to 46%– responding the options “I do it” and “I do not do it, but have thought about doing it” in both actions. In the first action, the recycling of waste, almost 11% neither do, nor believe they will do, it. In the case of buying drinks with returnable or recyclable packaging, 16.6% also opt for not doing it now or in the future.

Another way of measuring their attitude towards caring for the environment is to ask about the use of cars. Specifically, they were asked about the option of using cars less or not using them at all. We were struck by the high percentage of response for the option “I don’t do it or think I’m going to do it”, almost 30%, with only 24.4% saying that they do it.

In order to become aware of the care of the environment, they were asked about the need to reflect on their own consumption and try to reduce it to the essential. 50% of the participants said they don’t do it, but have thought about doing it, and almost 34% now do it.

It is important to know whether young people are aware of the importance of the care of the environment and if they attend, or participate in, events (lectures, campaigns, demonstrations) in defense of the environment. More than 50% of the participants do not participate, but they have thought about doing so. On the other hand, the same percentage is shown by those who think they do it and those who neither do it nor think they will do.

Next, they were asked about their voting decisions in the elections in order to improve their environmental future. Almost 40% do not vote, but have thought about doing so, as opposed to almost 32% who said they do not vote or think they will.

Finally, they were asked about their degree of satisfaction with the Puerto Rico’s environmental situation. More than half of the young people surveyed (58.8%) are dissatisfied, but almost 20% are quite satisfied. Extreme options –that is, those that are not at all satisfied and very satisfied– are shown with the lowest percentages, 12.3% and 7.2% respectively (see Table 6).

Table 6
Degree of satisfaction about the Puerto Rico’s environmental situation

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Very satisfied	126	7,2
	Quite satisfied	340	19,5
	Little satisfied	1023	58,8
	Dissatisfied	214	12,3
	Total	1703	97,9
Lost	DK/DA	26	1,5
	System	11	,6
	Total	37	2,1
Total		1740	100,0

To analyse the opinions of Puerto Rican youth on instrumental goods, we identified different material aspects and, through the valuation of a list of goods, a list of features was compiled. These were valued based on their importance.

The most valued aspects are related to two basic goods and services, work and housing, which have the same score, close to 4 (3.76). With intermediate scores, we find savings, clothing, telephone, Internet and car. Below this comes chatting online, television and video-games and, lastly, is the motorbike.

As for the differences of appreciation among young people according to their socio-demographic profile, there are variations according to gender in terms of valuations of importance. Males place more value on materialistic and self-satisfaction dimensions, such as money, cars and motorbikes, chatting, video-games and television. As we can see, these are quite stereotypical dimensions. On the other hand, females tend to score higher in elements related to self-realisation, such as work and owning a home, savings, and other more materialistic elements like phones and the Internet, or clothing, these also subject to gender stereotypes.

In a second case, they were asked about the importance, for them, of different material aspects. We found the highest percentages in savings, housing and having at least one full meal per day, among all the elements proposed.

Lastly, we analysed the opinions of youth on religious aspects. Regarding religious self-definition and its practice, out of the 1,529 young people who responded to these questions, 61% define themselves as believers. With percentages close to 10% there are those who define themselves as practitioners and rare practitioners, and the lowest percentages correspond to non-believers, 4.2%, and those who recognise that they are not practitioners, with 3.2% (see Table 7).

Table 7
Religious self-definition and its practice

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Believer	1068	61,4
	Non-believer	73	4,2
	Practitioner	164	9,4
	Rare practitioner	168	9,7
	Non practitioner	56	3,2
	Total	1529	87,9
Lost	DK/DA	181	10,4
	System	30	1,7
	Total	211	12,1
Total		1740	100,0

4. Discussion and conclusions

Young people are a reflection of the society in which we live and are always described together with groups. The data show that young Puerto Ricans present a moderate tendency towards acceptance, with people from a different nationality being the most valued. The groups that follow them in acceptance are gays/lesbians, tramps, those with criminal records and alcoholics. The group which suffers most rejection is drug addicts, probably due to the possible violence they use. Regarding the rest of the groups, their acceptance is generally positive. Here we find similarities with the youth of Mexico in a study carried out by Campos and Rosa (2017),

where there is a double discourse about equality and otrification, reinforcing some possibility of affective proximity.

The analysis of the abuse variable has resulted in a complex process due to the high percentage of lost values. This is a question which requires a more detailed analysis. It should focus, above all, on the real incidence of this scourge and on the reasons for refusing to respond.

Young people exposed to violence respond, mostly, to the fact that they have suffered abuse at school from their classmates, followed by being physically assaulted by friends or acquaintances. Thirdly, they affirm that they have been abused in the family. In addition, there are significant cases in which this young population admits to having suffered abuse from their partners, as well as in sexual relations. This is especially true in the case of women. Alonso et al. (2016) proved through their research that young people, aged between 17 and 23, describe patterns of coercive interaction in their gender relationships, manifesting to a greater or lesser extent factors that make up the construct of emotional violence. This worrying data show us how violence has permeated the life of the human being, installing itself, from an early age, in our system of relationships. Especially serious is aggression in the educational and family spheres, as these are the two pillars of learning for young people. Starting from the statement that attitudes towards institutions are closely linked to the value system, young people positively value human rights groups and movements, women and pro-life organisations, but placing ecologists above them and, lastly, political parties; that is, politics and their representatives. However, the church is the institution they trust the most, followed by the teaching system, to which they give high value as a pillar of future. Muñoz et al. (2019) show how Spanish youth groups are distinguished by their appreciation of the values that promote human dignity, respect for life and the integrity of people in their fight for equality and social justice. If we do not know our own selves, our cultural identity, and our own values, we will drift out to nowhere (Sirikanchana, 2018).

They also highly value volunteer organisations, which are part of the institutions that are most trusted, influenced by their role in compensating system dysfunctionalities. Although it may not be possible to speak of a feeling of distrust towards them, there would be NATO, the mayor's office, the unions, the press and, finally, the legislative body. Therefore, it follows that they have a positive and responsible attitude towards the environment, involving political actors in the protection and conservation of nature, observing a worrisome disaffection towards politics.

This data should make politicians reflect since the welfare of society and, therefore, everything related to work, education, health, safety, etc., depends, largely, on them.

Another important aspect, which was analysed, is leisure time, which is a primary source of socialising.

The use of telephones and the Internet has become almost absolute in the past few years. For the vast majority of young people, the mobile phone has become almost an extension of themselves, a multipurpose instrument that serves to regulate the use of time, as well as listening to music, taking photos and videos, and, of course, communicating with the primary group in which their relationships occur (friends, family and acquaintances).

Young people were asked about the situations they had encountered when chatting online. Here we found that 15.9% acknowledge that they chat with people they do not know personally about personal issues and, even more serious, 14% of young people have agreed to meet someone they don't know. This is very worrying, so it is essential for the educational system and the family to implement preventive actions.

With regard to the importance that young people give to different types of fun, spending time with friends is the most popular way of having fun, followed by enjoying a special atmosphere and listening to music. However, they give little importance to seeking sex, drinking alcohol and using drugs. This could indicate an important change towards new forms of leisure and fun, leaving behind activities that may pose a risk to their health.

Returning to the Human Development Report on Puerto Rico (Informe sobre desarrollo humano. Puerto Rico 2016), it can be said that the values that predominate among these young people (14-30 years old) are, firstly, to finish their studies and, then, to be surrounded by people of great human quality.

Family relationships are of the utmost importance to these young people, but this is also a context where frequent arguments with their parents occur. The main source of arguments are some family habits and collaboration in household chores. These arguments are not always negative, because relationships and confrontations with parents are sometimes a way of growth. Young people are also aware of the benefits that families provide, highlighting, above all, stability and security for all members. In addition, females seem to be more satisfied with their family relationships than males.

The relationships with their parents is very satisfactory in most cases, although, when analysed in more detail, we can see that the relationships are less satisfactory with fathers than with mothers.

Those individuals young people turn to when they need advice and support say a lot about the relationships that occur in families. We have found that, in almost all the important issues affecting the lives of young people, it is the parents who they come to ask for advice and support. This indicates the good relations that Puerto Rican youth have established with their parents. Urrutia et al. (2019) argue that young people are in a social context of great change, but that families remain an important base for the future where key points of their biographies are articulated. However, sexual and love issues are the topics that they consult with their parents the least. These subjects are usually discussed with friends. Sexuality is still a "taboo" issue for Puerto Rican youth. School and family should take note of this.

Regarding their projects in life, their aim is to start their own family, so we asked them about the main decisions relating to having children; here the most valued was having a steady job. Young Puerto Ricans prioritise stable work, as an indispensable condition for starting a family, and having completed studies is closely related to getting a steady job. Similarly, Thivierge and Aparicio (2014) describe how young Puerto Ricans perceive an uncertain and difficult future in their country, although they expressed that they had a promising life ahead of them and felt confident that they could meet most of their expectations.

Their opinions on ecological aspects lead us to identify a positive and responsible approach towards the environment. This involves political action focused on the protection and conservation of nature. In addition, more than half of Puerto Rican youth are dissatisfied with the environmental situation in their country. Magaña, Quiles and Benítez (2016), in their study on values in Mexican students, indicate that the young people surveyed express a greater tendency towards ecological, moral, individual, affective and bodily values. With regard to the individual actions that they carry out in order to contribute to a better future, most of them turn off the lights and electrical appliances when they are not necessary, recycle waste and buy drinks with returnable or recyclable packaging.

Young people are aware of the deterioration of our common home, even more so than the older people and politicians. This is a reason for hope for the future of Puerto Rico, and the planet.

We have analysed the instrumental aspects of Puerto Rican youth based on the assessment of a list of basic assets and services. They gave maximum importance to work and housing over other elements which are, a priori, highly valued by today's youth (mobile phones, clothing...). We identified that males value more materialistic and self-satisfaction dimensions like, for example, money, cars and motorbikes; while females tend to rate more highly those elements related to self-realisation, such as work, owning a home and savings, which conform to gender stereotypes. Urrutia et al. (2019) hold that young people give greater importance to paid work.

Almost all of Puerto Rican young people agree that housing is a necessary asset, along with a full meal at least once a day, and savings. Additionally, more than half of the young people consider the car and the telephone necessary, and, interestingly, the washing machine. However, the computer comes below these preferences.

These young people are aware of the hierarchy of needs, of the fact that everything is not equally necessary. The unequal valuation of cell phones, housing and food is significant.

Finally, the majority of them consider themselves believers, although there are very few practitioners. In the Human Development Report on Puerto Rico (Informe sobre Desarrollo Humano. Puerto Rico 2016), the vast majority expressed their belief in God and said that their behaviour is based on the teachings of their Church, on the experiences they have lived and on their upbringing by their parents. Likewise, the research found that the majority of young people perceived work and study as the instruments that will lead them to achieve their personal and professional goals.

The separation between faith and life is quite widespread. This shows a theoretical acceptance of religions, but at the same time, a lack of will to put their beliefs into practice.

Before finishing, we want to point out that this way of being, thinking, feeling and living that reflects the youth of Puerto Rico in their responses is creating a new way of life, a new culture. The current culture of young people has a singular importance in this society in which being young is a value in itself. Theron (2017) states that adolescents show very resilient values in the face of disadvantages. Almost everyone wants to be young and, when ageing prevents it, we try to emulate it. Hence the growing importance of everything related to youth: appearance, the exterior, image and beauty. We live in a culture based on youthful looks, in which the body, intelligence, affection, fashion, music, vocabulary, consumerism, etc., are, in many cases, imperative values.

Knowing the opinions of young people in Puerto Rico on social and cultural aspects has singular importance. This because it will be the reference point for an understanding of their way of thinking, feeling and living. This will permit us to establish precise objectives for Puerto Rico's educational system. Rambla, Saldanha-Pereira and Espluga (2013) have stated that it is essential to have an initial diagnosis in order to draw up a map of possible options leading to articulate and precise changes in a variety of key public policies.

Bibliographic references

- Alonso, M. B., Manso, J. M., Sánchez, M. E., Romero, J. M., Barona, E. G., & Fernández-De la Cruz, M. (2016). El género como variable influyente para el desarrollo de los malos tratos psicológicos en las relaciones para parejas jóvenes universitarios/as, in *Mujeres e Investigación. Aportaciones interdisciplinarias: VI Congreso Universitario Internacional " Investigación Y Género "* [Gender as an influential variable for the development of psychological abuse in the relationships of young university couples, in Women and Research]. Sevilla, 30 de Junio y 1 de Julio de 2016 (44-47).
- Bisquerra, R. (Coord.). (2004). *Metodología de la investigación educativa* [Methodology of Educational Research]. Madrid: La Muralla.
- Campos, R., & Rosa, C. (2017). La construcción y el peso del discurso racial en México. El caso de los jóvenes estudiantes en la ciudad de León, Guanajuato [The construction and weight of racial discourse in Mexico. The case of young students in the city of Leon, Guanajuato]. *Sociológica*, 32(91), 241-276.
- Fry, R., & Taylor, P. (2013). *Hispanic Highschool Graduates Pass Whites in Rate of College Enrollment*. Retrieved from: <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2013/05/09/hispanichigh-school-graduates-pass-whites-in-rate-ofcollege-enrollment/>

- Informe sobre desarrollo humano. Puerto Rico. (2016). *Instituto de Estadísticas de Puerto Rico. San Juan, Puerto Rico* [Human Development Report. Puerto Rico. 2016]. Retrieved from: https://estadisticas.pr/files/Publicaciones/INFORME_DESARROLLO_HUMANO_PUERTO_RICO_1.pdf
- Junta de Planificación de Puerto Rico. (2013). *Encuesta sobre la Comunidad de Puerto Rico (ECPR)* [Puerto Rico Community Survey (PRCS)]. Retrieved from: http://jp.pr.gov/Portals/0/Economia/Censo/PRCS_EGP_UPR.pdf?ver=2017-05-12-133648-450
- Magaña, D. Q., Quiles, O. L., & Benítez, C. A. (2016). Elección y preferencia de valores en estudiantes universitarios mexicanos [Choices and value preferences in Mexican university students. Teachers]. *Profesorado. Revista de Currículum y Formación de Profesorado*, 20(2), 18-38.
- Mckinsey, C. (2003). *Informe sobre la reingeniería del Departamento de Educación de Puerto Rico* [Report on the Reengineering of Puerto Rico's Department of Education]. Retrieved from: <http://sociales.uprrp.edu/wpcontent/uploads/sites/13/2016/06/ADPU-6580.pdf>
- Pardo, A., & Ruiz, M. A. (2002). *SPSS 11: Guía para el análisis de datos* [Youth, Values and Drugs]. Madrid: McGrawHill.
- Rambla, X., Saldanha-Pereira, R., & Espluga, J. L. (2013). La educación y las dimensiones del desarrollo humano en América Latina [Education and the dimensions of human development in Latin America]. *Papeles de población*, 19(75), 213-237.
- Rey, C. A., & Hernández-Angueira, L. (2010). *La trata de personas en Puerto Rico: un reto a la invisibilidad* [People trafficking in Puerto Rico: A challenge to invisibility]. Johns Hopkins University: Universidad de Puerto Rico, Fundación Ricky Martin.
- Sirikanchana, P. (2018). Preserving Cultural Identity in an Interconnected World: The Case of Thailand. *The Journal of International Association of Buddhist Universities (JIABU)*, 11(3), 479-485.
- Theron, L. (2017). Adolescent Versus Adult Explanations of Resilience Enablers: A South African Study. *Young & Society*, 52(1), 78-98.
- Thivierge, G. R., & Aparicio Gómez, R. (2014). *Las culturas de los jóvenes en las universidades católicas: un estudio mundial* [The cultures of young people attending Catholic universities: A worldwide study]. Paris: Federación Internacional de Universidades Católicas (FIUC).
- Urrutia, V. G., Urrizola, P. R., Figueroa, A. J., & Cubillos, M. Á. C. (2019). Trabajo y familia: expectativas en jóvenes chilenos [Work and family: Expectations of young Chileans]. *Sociologías*, 15, 25-40.