

RESEARCH NOTE/NOTA DE INVESTIGACIÓN

The Family Socialisation of Adolescents in Andalusia: A Category System for Analysing Parental Discourse

La percepción de los progenitores sobre la socialización familiar de los/as adolescentes en Andalucía: un sistema de categorías para el análisis del discurso

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a category system developed as an instrument for analysing qualitative data produced during research on family socialisation of adolescents in Andalusia. The research employs qualitative methodology with interviews involving parents, adolescents and experts from disciplines related to adolescence. The category system accounts for household and family types, social class, and adolescent age and gender. Results demonstrate that this system can serve as a useful analytical tool for future research seeking to understand adolescent socialisation within the parental life context.

KEYWORDS: socialisation; adolescence; category system; parental; discourses.

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RESUMEN

Este artículo presenta un sistema de categorías elaborado como instrumento para el análisis de la información cualitativa producida en el marco de una investigación que estudia la socialización familiar de los adolescentes en Andalucía. Para el acercamiento a estas realidades se emplea una metodología cualitativa con entrevistas a progenitores, adolescentes y expertos en diferentes disciplinas vinculadas con la adolescencia. Para la realización del sistema de categorías se han tenido en cuenta los tipos de hogares y familias, la clase social, y la edad y el género de los adolescentes. Los resultados muestran que para comprender la socialización de los/as adolescentes en el contexto vital de sus progenitores este sistema de categorías puede resultar útil como herramienta de análisis para futuras investigaciones.

PALABRAS CLAVE: socialización; adolescencia; sistema de categorías; parental; discursos.

1. Introduction

This research examines how Andalusian families experience the socialisation stage of their adolescent children. Based on a qualitative perspective, it contextualises adolescent socialisation at home through a broad approach encompassing the digital society, risk society, family change, work–life balance and family participation in education. This article contextualises adolescence from a sociological perspective and presents a category system developed to serve as a methodological tool for future research on adolescence and families.

Adolescence as a process (Hurrelmann and Quenzel, 2018) is a socially and psychologically complex experience (Martin, 1996) lived differently by young people from various social backgrounds (Billarri *et al.*, 2019; Chaves and Nunes, 2011; Hitlin and Johnson, 2015). Traditionally described as an identity-building process in which the peer group takes centre stage, often in conflict with parental education (Albarelló *et al.*, 2018; Fang, Galambos and Johnson, 2021), this stage is marked by identity affirmation, symbolic violence, hierarchical positioning and concern for popularity.

Adolescent reality cannot be separated from the digital society in which it unfolds, with the inherent risks and opportunities it presents. The key role played by relationship, information and communication technologies (RICTs) in adolescent life is well established (Bernal-Meneses *et al.*, 2019; Ortí *et al.*, 2025), serving as a space where young people are able to express their identity. However, recent research warns of unintended consequences of hyperconnectivity, including cyberbullying, mental health problems, internet or video game addiction and exposure to pornography, among others (Sudarto and Rizqi, 2024; Ayllón-Salas

et al., 2024; Varshakumar, 2023). In the domestic sphere, RICTs represent one of the greatest sources of intergenerational conflict (Sanmartín *et al.*, 2025)..

Adolescence is also framed within the risk society (Beck, 1992). The issue of adolescents and their risky behaviours has been, and continues to be, a constant in social research (Ciranka and Van den Bos, 2021).

Although news coverage tends to sensationalise and emphasise the worst aspects of reality (Thorbjørnsrud and Figenschou, 2022), recent reports, statistics and research in Spain warn of concerning developments: increases in mental health problems, self-harm (Mancebo, 2022) and eating disorders (EDs) appear with growing frequency. Exposure to idealised images disseminated through social networks causes body dissatisfaction that impacts eating habits. EDs are increasingly prevalent in the adolescent population, with between 11% and 27% of adolescents in Spain presenting risk behaviours for developing these disorders, most commonly anorexia and bulimia (Ruiz, 2024). Faced with this situation, only 12% of parents in 2022 reported feeling prepared to address their children's digital education (García *et al.*, 2022).

Given this scenario, our research adopts a qualitative approach to examine whether families are prepared to face the challenge of educating their children in healthy social behaviours and attitudes (Martín-Lagos and Luque, 2020; Sánchez and Romero, 2021) and to understand parental discourse regarding adolescent socialisation through everyday practices and strategies in Andalusia, creating a category system to facilitate this analysis. The sociology of parental education and psychology have examined the impact of educational styles (González and De Pedro, 2023; Suárez-Valenzuela and Suárez, 2023); however, few studies analyse how mothers and fathers construct these educational styles through their interactions. Our aim is to open the “black box” of parental educational styles to better understand how they educate their adolescents.

This reality is also contextualised within family change. Elements to consider include the diversity of existing households (homoparental, homomarental, single-parent, blended couples, shared custody, among others) that coexist with the nuclear family composed of two parents of different sexes (Palacio, 2020; Pérez and Moreno, 2021). For example, according to Statistics on Annulments, Separations and Divorces (Spanish Institute of Statistics – INE), in Spain shared custody arrangements (48.4%) exceeded exclusive maternal arrangements (47.8%) in 2023. Other characteristics relate to values. Contemporary families are increasingly tolerant, secularised and open to new interpretations of family reality, although in Mediterranean countries they coexist with a high degree of cultural familiarity (Ayuso, 2019).

Our perspective also examines daily home life alongside parents' working life. This approach sheds light on the reality Hochschild and Manchung (2012) describe as the “second shift” – when the workday ends, caregiving and unpaid domestic work begin. Combining research on adolescents with their parents' situation is vital to understanding the process.

Finally, we turn to changes in educational styles. Since the 1990s, the sociology of education has noted an intensification of care in families. Hays (1996) particularly alluded to intensive motherhood, in which the mother focuses on child-rearing, acts as an expert guide and becomes emotionally absorbed by this intensive work. These mothers' expectations are framed by a vision of their children as vulnerable, innocent and at risk from numerous hazards. Later, Anette Lareau (2011) referred to “concerted cultivation”, focused on cultivating children through numerous activities. Skelton and Francis (2012) continued this line with the concept of the “Renaissance Child”, describing children enrolled in numerous extracurricular activities. Parents with higher levels of education are more involved in their children's educational and extracurricular activities. The middle class is highly engaged with the educational process, while schools are increasingly encouraging family participation across a range of academic and sporting activities. This represents another sphere requiring attention and balance (Obiol-Francés, 2021).

These patterns differ from the traditional educational styles of the working classes, although some authors attribute this to economic factors (Martín *et al.*, 2014) rather than cultural capital. Hence terms such as “defensive mothering” (Elliot and Bowen, 2018) and “inventive mothering” (Radles, 2021) have emerged. More recently, the importance of trial and error and the family network is emphasised, with families modifying strategies according to results (Alonso and Martín, 2022). Our qualitative methodology aims to address this class dimension in understanding socialisation and education. Alongside these factors, the research focuses on other daily activities and practices shared between household members and those specific to adolescents: consumption, food, leisure, homework and social networks.

In conducting interviews with parents, we sought to understand how family life requires managing different social, individual and family times, as their intertwining is not self-evident and requires constant adjustments between the different social activities of each member. After completing 24 parent interviews, it became essential to establish a category system to summarise the information with methodological rigour and ensure the qualities of exclusivity and completeness required for such a tool (Anguera *et al.*, 2018; Sarriá, 2019).

Category systems have been used in numerous disciplines and fields such as psychology (Alonso *et al.*, 2024) and education-related disciplines (Ortiz-De-Villate *et al.*, 2023). In sociology, coding is implicit in qualitative research for understanding discourses and presenting results. However, using categorisation as a replicable instrument for future studies – in this case on adolescence – is less common. This article therefore aims to establish a category system designed to understand Andalusian parents' perceptions of their adolescents in academic, social and emotional dimensions. A better understanding of this reality will enable more personalised responses to family needs.

The methodology section describes the category system's utility, the sample, the interview protocol and the process followed for analysis, coding and developing final dimensions. The results section presents the category system. The article ends with a series of discussion and conclusions.

2. Methodology

Qualitative research draws on two important approaches – interpretive social science and hermeneutics – emphasising methodological rigour in interpretive analysis. Both are essential for navigating tensions between subjective interpretation and scientific rigour, advocating an approach that balances hermeneutical understanding with objective norms and moral criteria (Arráiz *et al.*, 2019).

The qualitative methodology aims to understand how those involved experience adolescent reality and the socialisation process that occurs in the home. The research employs interviews with parents, adolescent children and professionals working with young people. This article presents the category system resulting from interviews with the parents.

Twenty-four people with adolescent children were interviewed. They belong to various family and household models – including couples with children, single parents, shared custody, same-sex parents and parents with different nationalities – and social standing (upper, middle and lower classes). New profiles not initially considered were added as the interviews progressed. The fieldwork was conducted in two phases. The first phase ran from 7 November to 22 December 2023. After reviewing and transcribing initial interviews, the research team expanded the study to include new relevant profiles in a second phase, from 20 March to 4 June 2024. Interviews lasted between 40 and 85 minutes.

Initially, the script or interview protocol was developed in collaboration with team members, selecting relevant topics highlighted in the literature and determining

the main research objective: studying family socialisation during adolescence. The interview script followed a temporal structure, beginning with the pre-adolescent stage before moving on to adolescence, focusing on topics such as educational style, daily routines and organisation, and parental context (work schedules, location, work–care balance, etc.). Parents were asked about routines with their adolescent children including meals, studies, leisure, friendships and rules on going out and curfews. Finally, they were asked to assess media coverage about adolescents and discuss their own feelings about their children's socialisation.

A semi-structured interview format was used, as this provided the flexibility to deviate from the script to respond to participants' experiences and delve into different research themes (Ander-Egg and Valle, 2013; Caïs *et al.*, 2014). Interviews were transcribed and analysed using the NVivo software package. This software was used to identify and interpret the categories, applying a socio-cognitive approach (Gee, 2014) and discourse analysis to establish a link between meaning and social dimensions (Wodak and Meyer, 2016). In-depth interviews allowed researchers to focus on participants' experiences and explore all the research themes under investigation (Ander-Egg and Valle, 2013; Caïs *et al.*, 2014). The interview protocol was analysed using the NUD*IST/NVivo software. This software was used to identify and interpret the categories, applying a socio-cognitive approach (Gee, 2014) and discourse analysis to establish a link between meaning and social dimensions (Wodak and Meyer, 2016).

The specialised literature offers various interpretations of the term “category” in qualitative research. Vasilenko *et al.* (2019) describe categories as a way of organising specific information based on its relevance to a topic. These categories represent ideas, concepts or summarised interpretations of citations. In our study, categories are understood as sets of codes that symbolise more abstract concepts. Codes – defined as words or short phrases that assign attributes to data sets, associated with a category – facilitate the establishment of relationships and can be adjusted and refined until they accurately reflect the concept being defined. Categories therefore act as containers for ideas.

The team validated and grouped codes into categories through a collaborative approach. Initially, two of the team's researchers coded and assigned codes to categories based on topics previously assigned in the interview protocol (“a priori” coding). Subsequently, two other researchers conducted coding following an analysis of the parents' discourse, adding and coding new questions (“in vivo” coding). New categories emerged that were not in the original script. These prompted modifications and recategorisations with the creation of new codes, which refined the interview protocol and enabled more precise analysis. This refinement was enabled by unanticipated topics and issues parents raised about their socialisation experiences. Codes addressing similar themes were grouped together.

3. Results

Below is the final category system developed.

Category I: Parental expectations about pre-adolescence and adolescence

Category II: Educational participation in the home and its impact on daily life

Category III: Parental opinion on relationships in the home and on adolescent social reality

Repeated codes were grouped to form code groups. The following groups were identified:

Category I:

- a. Pre-adolescent expectation codes
 - 1. Pre-adolescence Expectations (PAE)
 - 2. Families (F)
 - 3. Value Transmission (VT)
- b. Adolescent stage codes
 - 1. Adolescence Experience (AE)
 - 2. Parent–Family Relations (PFR)
 - 3. Changes in Values and Expectations (CVE)

Category II:

- c. Educational style codes
 - 1. Educational Style Types (EST)
 - 2. Style Variation (SV)
 - 3. Family Emotions (FE)
- d. Homework/routine codes
 - 1. Daily Organisation (DO)
 - 2. Obligations/Responsibilities (OR)
 - 3. Conflicts and Coexistence (CE)
 - 4. Shared Moments (SM)
- e. Food-related codes
 - 1. Home Meals (HM)
 - 2. Food and Body Concern (FBC)
- f. Formal education codes
 - 1. Academic Performance (AP)
 - 2. Motivation and Obstacles (MO)
 - 3. Technology Rules and Management (TRM)

- g. Leisure activity codes
 - 1. Leisure Preferences (LP)
 - 2. Technology Use (TU)
 - 3. Sports Practice (SP)
 - 4. Outings with Friends (OWF)
 - 5. Intimate Topics Discussion (ITD)
 - 6. Money Rules and Use (MRU)
 - 7. Dress Codes (DC)
 - 8. Health Status (HS)
 - 9. Sleep Habits (SH)
 - 10. Obsessions or Concerns (OC)
 - 11. Sociability (SOCB)
 - 12. Family Activities (FA)
 - 13. Volunteering (VOL)

Category III:

- h. Parental situation codes
 - 1. Work–Life Balance Difficulties (WLBD)
 - 2. Home Environment (HE)
- i. Mass media codes
 - 1. Perception of News about Minors (PNM)
 - 2. Socialisation (SOC)

4. Discussion and conclusions

This article presents a flexible and systematic analytical tool for understanding how Andalusian parents experience their adolescents' family socialisation, and describes how it was constructed.

The category system serves as a useful tool for analytical induction in qualitative research, providing a methodological foundation for research design grounded in clear epistemological principles. Authors such as Flick (2018), Anguera *et al.* (2018) and Vasilenko *et al.* (2019) describe categorisation and coding processes in qualitative research as foundational for systematic data structuring, providing validity and reliability to findings. This contribution provides a script that identifies the steps to design a tool enabling discourse collection and analysis, facilitating interpretation. Importantly, the work was conducted collaboratively and interactively by the research team (Miles *et al.*, 2014). This joint approach was instrumental in ensuring that decisions aligned with the research objectives.

In developing the categories, both deductive and inductive approaches were used (Creswell, 2013), ensuring coherence across categories as the research progressed and enabling data segmentation and coding (Vasilenko *et al.*, 2019). To achieve the proposed objective, the different coding types used in the inductive process have been detailed, most notably “in vivo” coding, which captures what was most important for interviewees (Gibbs, 2007). Subsequently, the description and development of three broad categories selected deductively – corresponding to the work’s general objective – was prepared. Finally, through the inductive method, the dimensions were named and the subcategories composing them were defined based on the parent interviews (Blaun and Clarke, 2019), linking identified codes with each other.

The main contribution of the study is the creation of an epistemology-based instrument. All qualitative research, based on supporting theoretical frameworks, requires methodological tools that facilitate development paths in research design (Creswell, 2013). This process was interactive and dialogical. The developed category system is not conceived as a rigid tool but rather as flexible and open to new incorporations of both codes and categories.

The theoretical framework identified relevant issues including adolescent–parent relationships, intensive parenthood (Hays, 1996), educational styles (González and De Pedro, 2023; Suárez-Valenzuela and Suárez, 2023) and family change (Pérez and Moreno, 2021). Our aim was to contextualise household reality within the digital society, the role of media and the risk society. New questions emerged from the interviews beyond those contemplated in the initial script. Some show the changes that families experience in terms of values or educational styles based on each child’s needs – an issue usually studied statically in research. The socialisation process produces unexpected challenges that require parents to make decisions. They also learn from their experiences with older children, adjusting their approach with younger ones accordingly. Finally, the importance of social class, level of educational, gender and origin were incorporated through interviewee selection criteria. In short, future research must combine this tool with the nuances revealed by qualitative research, capturing the full complexity of adolescent family socialisation – in our case, in Andalusia.

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