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**TERMS REFERRING *CHILD OF AN UNMARRIED WOMAN* IN GALICIA:  
DIATOPIC VARIATION AND MOTIVATIONAL STUDY**

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*O home é un animal que substituíu as pautas instintivas por normas culturais, máis flexibles e que permiten unha máis rápida adaptación a condicións cambiantes. Tamén na conducta sexual. De aí que non exista ningunha sociedade humana absolutamente promiscua; e tampouco exista unanimidade nas normas sexuais, porque en cada sociedade están adaptadas ás circunstancias, propias, diferentes.<sup>1</sup>*

X. R. Mariño Ferro, *Antropoloxía de Galicia*

**Abstract**

This paper is the outcome of a study of the Galician forms collected in response to the item *hijo ilegítimo* ('illegitimate child') in the *Atlas Lingüístico de la Península Ibérica*. The linguistic/geographic distribution of each of the variant forms will be charted, bearing in mind the reasons why speakers chose these variants, i.e. how different names are motivated. The main objective of the paper is to contribute to studies of kinship terms from a linguistic point of view, although it may be of anthropological interest too.

The following analysis was performed after having checked and sorted the *ALPI* data for Galicia, Asturias and Portugal, although in the end it was decided only to use the Galician data. The classification and subsequent grouping was developed taking into account the motivation that led to the choice of one or another way of referring to the notion of *illegitimate son* or *son of an unmarried woman*.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Man is an animal who replaces instinctive tendencies with cultural norms, which are more flexible and capable of faster adaptation to changing conditions. The same happens in sexual behaviour. That is why no completely promiscuous human society exists; and yet there is no unanimity about what the sexual norms are, because in each society they are adapted to particular, different circumstances.'

### Keywords

Illegitimate son or son of an unmarried woman, variant, motivation, dialectology, Galician dialects

## AS DENOMINACIÓNS PARA *FILLO DE SOLTEIRA* EN GALICIA: VARIACIÓN DIATÓPICA E ESTUDO MOTIVACIONAL

### Resumo

A presente comunicación é o resultado dun estudo sobre as formas galegas que aparecen recollidas no *Atlas Lingüístico de la Península Ibérica* para a pregunta *hijo ilegítimo*. Por un lado preséntase a distribución lingüístico-xeográfica das variantes existentes e por outro téntase coñecer a causa pola que se orixinaron esas variantes, é dicir, a motivación das diferentes designacións. O obxectivo principal que se persegue con este traballo é contribuír, na medida do posible, ós estudos do léxico do parentesco desde un punto de vista lingüístico, aínda que suscite tamén un interese antropolóxico.

A análise realizouse unha vez revisados e clasificados os datos do *ALPI* correspondentes a Galicia, Asturias e Portugal, aínda que finalmente só se utilizaron os primeiros. A clasificación e posterior agrupación fíxose tendo en conta o motivo que determina a elección dunha formas ou outras para se referir ó referente: *fillo ilexítimo* ou *fillo de solteira*.

### Palabras chave

Fillo ilexítimo ou fillo de solteira, variante, motivación, dialectoloxía, dialectos galegos

## 1. Introduction

The items in ALPI pertaining to the semantic field of kinship terms (of which there are twelve, numbers 655 to 658b in Booklet IIE) elicited answers that display both uniformity and diversity; and the responses to the question that will concern us in this study, concerning *illegitimate child*, are likewise both uniform and diverse.

The concept of *illegitimate son* has evolved over the years, and so its social acceptability has also evolved. In the Galicia of the 1930s there was much social rejection, especially in the upper classes and the religious sphere,<sup>2</sup> of women who had sexual relations outside of marriage, particularly if such relations resulted in the birth of a child. Both the mother and the child were marked for the rest of their lives by labels

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<sup>2</sup> Among the lower classes it was frowned upon, but did not result in strong rejection, given that there were many single women with children, as studies have shown (Mariño Ferro 2000).

reflecting, directly or indirectly, the opinions of those who believed that it was inadmissible for a single woman to have a child. Yet in spite of such ideas in contemporary society Galicia was, according to Lisón Tolosana (1974: 237), the part of Spain with the highest proportion of illegitimate children:

Una cultura que compele al celibato a parte de los miembros que permanecen dentro de su ámbito tiene que dar salida de alguna manera a las frustraciones que lleva consigo. *El número de ilegítimos en Galicia –el mayor de España– es una, la valoración de las relaciones sexuales prematrimoniales, otra.*<sup>3</sup>

And within Galicia there are even areas with a higher percentage of illegitimate offspring than the rest; this can be related to an inheritance practice called the *mellora*:<sup>4</sup>

En Lugo, nas zonas de mellora forte, a taxa de ilexítimos aumenta; na provincia de Ourense, onde boa parte se rexe polo sistema de partillas igualitarias, non excede a media española (...) Ademais de sexo e afecto, as mulleres buscan, ou polo menos non lles preocupa demasiado, ter un fillo que as coide na vellez, confiando máis nun descendente propio que nos sobriños (Mariño Ferro 2000: 315).<sup>5</sup>

Galician society maintained strict rules about marital fidelity, which also covered premarital sexual behaviour (Mariño Ferro 2000: 313-314), given that the Church endeavoured to implant in society certain ideas about marriage and sex:

Estos dos elementos, el que atañe a la reproducción social y el doctrinal, aparecen unidos en todo momento y es el primero el que toma cuerpo a partir del

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<sup>3</sup> ‘A culture which forces celibacy on some of its members within its domain must provide an outlet somehow for the frustrations to which this inevitably leads. *The number of illegitimate children in Galicia — the highest rate in Spain — is one of these; the way premarital sex is viewed, another.*’ Italics in original.

<sup>4</sup> Defined as “parte da herdanza que se deixa a un herdeiro amais da que lle corresponde pola lei, e que supera á dos outros herdeiros” (DRAG. s.v. *mellora*). Translation: ‘Part of the inheritance bequeathed to an heir beyond the portion required by law, and which is greater than that of other heirs.’

<sup>5</sup> ‘In Lugo, in areas where the *mellora* is prevalent, the rate of illegitimate offspring is higher; in the province of Ourense, where a large proportion of cases are governed by the system of equal portions, it is not above the Spanish average... Besides sex and affection, women also seek, or at least do not mind having, a son or daughter to look after them in old age, trusting in one of their direct offspring more than in nieces and nephews.’ See also Bermejo Barrera (1989: 123).

segundo; es por eso que la Iglesia confiere al matrimonio el papel de ser instrumento que «...regula la luxuria libidinosa que quedó desordenada y desenfadada por el pecado original...», por lo que debe ser orientado hacia «...la procreación de los hijos...», no en vano «... es mejor casarse que abrazarse... dado que es mejor una llave de madera si abre una puerta que una de oro si no la abre...»<sup>6</sup> (Dubert 1992: 301)

The principles espoused by the Church strongly marked Galician society, which was Catholic (indeed the same ideas are still present today), and for a woman sex outside of marriage was seen as a sin:

Eran ellas [las mujeres] quienes daban a luz y era su sexualidad la que había que controlar socialmente puesto que, según los inferioristas, cuya interpretación se impuso, si no se ponían trabas sociales a su naturaleza perversa y débil, si no se sometía esa naturaleza al dominio del hombre en el seno del matrimonio, se corría el riesgo de que cayesen en el pecado carnal. El control de la sexualidad de las mujeres requería por lo tanto el imponerles rígidas normas de conducta moral y sexual ya que sólo así podía garantizarse que la herencia y el apellido del padre se transmitían a los descendientes legítimos y no a vástagos bastardos engendrados al margen de la institución matrimonial.<sup>7</sup> (Méndez Pérez 2004: 41)

The words that have been recorded in Galicia as responses to the *illegitimate child* item on the questionnaire speak to us about how extramarital relations were regarded. Take for instance the expressions *fillo<sup>8</sup> de moza solteira* ‘child of an unmarried girl’,

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<sup>6</sup> ‘These two elements, one concerned with social reproduction and the other with religious doctrine, appear together and it is always the former that is adapted to the latter; thus the Church assigns to marriage the role of an instrument which “regulates the lustful urge that was disturbed and unleashed by original sin...”, and should therefore be directed towards “procreation of children”, for indeed “it is better to be married than to embrace... given that a wooden key that opens a door is preferable to a golden one that does not...”.’

<sup>7</sup> ‘They [the women] were the ones who gave birth and it was their sexuality that needed to be controlled socially since, according to the inferiorists whose views prevailed, if their perverse, weak nature were not checked by social restraints, if that nature were not subjected to the domination of man within marriage, there was a risk of committing sins of the flesh. Hence it was necessary, in order to control women’s sexuality, to impose strict rules of moral and sexual conduct upon them, for it was the only way to ensure that the father’s inheritance and surname would be passed on to his legitimate descendants and not to bastard offspring conceived out of wedlock.’

<sup>8</sup> Out of context, the Galician word *fillo* is ambiguous, as is the Spanish translation *hijo*, between the meanings ‘son (i.e. male offspring)’ and ‘child (i.e. offspring, sex not specified)’. This ambiguity affects both the stimulus phrase for this item (*hijo ilegítimo*, or its Galician counterpart *fillo ilexítimo*) and its

*fillo do palleiro* ‘child of the haystack’, *fillo do mundo* ‘child of the world’ or *fillo de golpe lixeiro* ‘child of a thoughtless act’; some of these refer to the mother, others to the place of conception, the father or the act of conception itself. In this study these differences have been taken as criteria for a classification of the variants recorded in the ALPI booklets for Galicia.<sup>9</sup>

For this study we will adopt a dialectal approach of diatopic distribution analysis for each of the words, but will also consider the motivational approach in order to account for the huge variety of responses. To quote Alinei (2002: 17):

Qualunque lessicalizzazione in una lingua avviene con la scelta obbligatoria di una motivazione, che ha sempre le seguenti caratteristiche: (1) è sempre una forma abbreviata del significato, (2) è arbitraria; (3) si basa (A) nella stragrande maggioranza dei casi (che comprende quelli metaforici e onomatopeici) su un tratto componente della definizione concettuale del significato, e (B) in una limitatissima serie di nomi su una rappresentazione a livello fonosimbolico e inconscio.<sup>10</sup>

### 1.1. ALPI

Tomás Navarro Tomás, a prominent disciple of Menéndez Pidal, was director of the *Atlas Lingüístico de La Península Ibérica* (ALPI).<sup>11</sup> Having divided the Iberian Peninsula into three distinct survey districts, data collection commenced in 1931. Two researchers were put in charge of each of these districts: Sanchis Guarner and Moll for Catalonia, Valencia, Balearic Islands and Aragon (with 96 villages to survey); Rodríguez-Castellano and Espinosa (Junior) for Castile and Andalusia (276 places); and Aníbal Otero and Cintra for the Galicia and Portugal (156 places).<sup>12</sup> The people chosen

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responses. So as not to belabour the reader with constant reminders of this fact, *fillo* is simply rendered as ‘child’ in the English glosses in this article.

<sup>9</sup> For more information about the implementation of ALPI in Galicia, see Sousa Fernández (2008).

<sup>10</sup> ‘Any lexicalization in a language comes with the obligatory choice of a motivation, which always has the following characteristics: (1) it is always an abbreviated form of the signified, (2) is arbitrary, (3) and is based (A) in the vast majority of cases (including metaphorical and onomatopoeic ones), on a feature that forms part of the conceptual definition of the signified, and (B) in an extremely limited number of nouns, on a representation at the phonosymbolic, unconscious level.’

<sup>11</sup> Cortés Carreres and García Perales (2009: 17) describe this atlas as ‘la empresa más importante de la geografía lingüística española durante los años de la república y de la primeira posguerra’, i.e. ‘The most important undertaking in Spanish linguistic geography during the Republic and the early post-war years.’

<sup>12</sup> For more information, see Sousa Fernández (2008).

to be interviewed were mainly men, because many of the items on the questionnaire were about farming terminology. There are only six places in Galicia where women answered the questionnaire, namely localities n. 135, Fornelos de Montes (Pontevedra); n. 146, O Bolo (Ourense); n. 148, Rairiz de Veiga (Ourense); n. 149, A Gudiña (Ourense); n. 150, Entrimo (Ourense); and n. 151, Oímbra (Ourense). But in most cases female informants only responded to items in the first notebook of the questionnaire, concerned with phonetics, morphology and syntax, while men responded to questions in the second notebook which consisted of items concerning lexicon and points of ethnographical interest, including the question about *illegitimate child*. Only in Fornelos de Montes (n. 135) did a woman also respond to the items in the second booklet. Therefore it is not possible to incorporate the informant's sex as a sociolinguistic variable in our study on the basis of the available data.

It was also considered optimal for the subjects to be illiterate or to have received little schooling, and to be elderly but in control of all their mental faculties. The places in which the survey was performed were to be small villages where local speech and traditions had been preserved, escaping the influence of the regular, more standardized forms encountered in larger towns (ALPI: 1962, 5-7).

## 2. The data

Initially it was intended that the present study would cover the ALPI data for Galicia, Asturias and Portugal, but on review, analysis and selection of the data for this area it was decided to narrow down the study to just Galicia given the wealth of data for this area, whereas the data for Portugal and Asturias were found to be incomplete.

At the present time there has been no study of the Galician words for *illegitimate child* beyond an anthropological perspective. These words have merely been included in ALPI as one item among many within the semantic field of kinship terms, and likewise in ALGa<sup>13</sup> (*Atlas Lingüístico de Galicia*), but the information obtained in these atlases is still unpublished. The responses in ALPI for Galicia to the item *illegitimate child* (Item 656b in Booklet IIE) are diverse, as is shown by the dialect map (see Figure 1).

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<sup>13</sup> Data from ALGa are from the lexical volume *O ser humano II*, soon to be published as Álvarez Blanco (2012).

The ALPI survey was performed in 53 places in Galicia, in three of which no response was obtained.

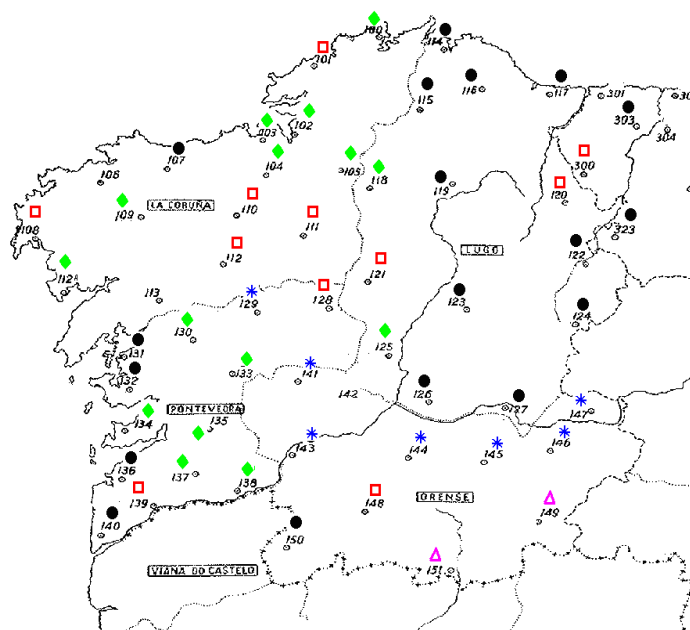


Figure 1

- *Fillo de solteira* etc.
- ◆ *Fillo do mundo* etc.
- ◻ *Fillo do paleiro* etc.
- \* *Fillo de achego* etc.
- △ *Fillo zorro*

The answers that were collected in all these localities may be classified into five basic groups based on their motivation. They all share the common structure *fillo* ‘son/child’ + *ADJECTIVE* or *fillo* ‘son/child’ + *de* ‘of’ + *NOUN*, i.e. a structure in which *fillo* is qualified by an adjective or a genitive; what varies is the descriptor, which may involve a reference to the mother (*fillo de solteira* ‘child of an unmarried woman’), the father (*fillo do mundo* ‘child of the world’), the place (*fillo do paleiro* ‘child of the haystack’), the sex act (*fillo de achego* ‘child of casual union’) or a psychological or social trait of the child (*fillo zorro* ‘sly child’). Most of these epithets carry negative connotations, and the child who was assigned them would have to “bear the burden all

its life”,<sup>14</sup> although the mother could make a fresh start after her pregnancy either with the man with whom she had conceived<sup>15</sup> or someone else.

## 2.1. An analysis of the data

### 2.1.1. The child’s mother: *fillo de moza solteira*

The most widespread forms found in the survey are *fillo de moza solteira* ‘child of an unmarried girl’, *fillo de moza* ‘child of a girl (or “young maiden”)’ and *fillo de solteira* ‘child of an unmarried [woman]’. The descriptor (*moza*, *solteira* or *moza solteira*) focuses on the mother’s situation. The society of the time stigmatized the child of an unmarried woman. This is the form most often found in the eastern part of Galicia (almost the whole of the province of Lugo and the bordering areas of Asturias to the east), and it has a substantial presence in the southwest too, besides the expression *fillo de peta á porta* ‘knock-at-the-door child’; it is the most usual form to occur as an alternative to other variants.

The words which accompany *fillo*, *solteira* ‘unmarried (woman), spinster’ (Latin SOLITARIUS; DRAG “muller que non casou”) and *moza* ‘young woman’ (DRAG “persoa que está na primeira etapa da idade adulta”), are the real carriers of information that account for the meaning of these expressions. A child born out of wedlock was not well regarded in society at the time under consideration, especially in the rural areas where most of the data in the survey was obtained, since women were not supposed to engage in sexual intercourse outside of marriage:

Non todos xulgan a perda da virxitude co mesmo rigor. En xeral non é ben vista, pero non supón un inconveniente insuperable para casar, especialmente entre os menos defavorecidos.<sup>16</sup> (Mariño Ferro 2000)

Many traditional rhymes (*cantigas*) refer to this issue, for instance:

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<sup>14</sup> Mariño Ferro (2000: 315).

<sup>15</sup> “Hai certa presión, pero non ineludible nin moito menos, para que o mozo que preña unha rapaza case con ela...” (Mariño Ferro 2000: 315), i.e. “There is some pressure, though certainly not overwhelming, on a fellow who gets a girl pregnant to marry her.”

<sup>16</sup> ‘Not everyone judges the loss of virginity with similar harshness. In general it is not approved of, but it doesn’t amount to an unsurmountable impediment to marriage, especially among the less disadvantaged.’



O Carballo da Portela  
abanea mais non cae;  
así fai a boa filla  
que se guía por seu pai.<sup>17</sup>  
(Mariño Ferro 2000: 314)

Pereira que non dá peras  
¿quen ha de ir enriba dela?  
Meniña que non ten honra,  
¿quen por noiva ha de querela?<sup>18</sup>  
(Mariño Ferro 1995: 95)

The first of these instructs girls that to be a perfect woman they should not give in to temptation and must follow their parents' advice. The second *cantiga* makes the same point by means of a comparison, which Mariño Ferro (1995: 95) explains as follows: "unha moza que entregou a súa virxitude é como unha árbore que entregou a súa froita e queda pelada".<sup>19</sup>

Sometimes a promise of marriage helps to persuade girls to consent to sex, although they have been warned that men lie to get what they want. The society of the time was somewhat tolerant of single mothers and did not punish them severely, but an unmarried woman with several children from different fathers would have been subject to serious censure (Mariño Ferro 2000: 314-315).

Although men and women were both responsible for the act of conceiving an illegitimate child, it was the woman who got the worst end of it: what for the man was merely mischief was in the woman's case viewed as a sin.

Cuando las niñas llegaban a edad fértil, la sociedad se ponía en guardia y la retórica religiosa y civil insistía en el control de la sexualidad femenina y de la reproducción porque así se aseguraban el buen funcionamiento de aquella sociedad y la defensa del honor familiar<sup>20</sup> (Rey Castelao & Rial García 2009: 34-35).

Another expression referring to the single mother was collected in just one locality in Galicia by ALPI, namely Entrimo: *fillo de rangalleira*. This word is defined in GDXL as "calquera cousa que se desperdicia ou estraga", and in DD as "vestido de

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<sup>17</sup> 'The Oak at the Style / sways but does not fall; / thus does the good daughter / who follows her father's guidance.'

<sup>18</sup> 'Pear tree that has no pears, / who wants to climb it? / Young lady without honour, / who shall want her as a bride?'

<sup>19</sup> 'a young woman who has surrendered her virginity is like a tree that has borne its fruit and is now bare.'

<sup>20</sup> 'When girls reached the age of fertility, society went on the alert and religious and civil rhetoric insisted on controlling feminine sexuality and reproduction because that was the way to ensure the proper working of that society and the defence of a family's honour.'

cualquier forma”. En Tràs-Os-Montes, Portugal, it is found in the expression *à rangalheira* (*à farta, à vontade, à discricção*). It is presumably by extension that a single woman who has sex without being married is called a *rangalleira*, possibly because such a woman is, metaphorically, “spoilt” by her loss of virginity, as the following *cantiga* in Mariño Ferro’s collection indicates (1995: 95-96):

¡Para que quero eu  
unha viña vendimada!  
¡Para que a quero eu,  
non me servindo de nada!<sup>21</sup>

### 2.1.2 The child’s father: *fillo do mundo*

A smaller number of colourful expressions, of the *fillo do mundo* type, refer ironically or metaphorically to the father.

*Fillo do mundo* ‘child of the world’ only occurs in two localities, both in the province of Pontevedra (Cerdedo, 133 and Arbo, 138); more widespread forms of this type are *fillo de porta aberta* ‘open-door child’ and *fillo de peta á porta* ‘knock-at-the-door child’, encountered in various clusters of places in small groups in the western half of Galicia.

Further occasional members of this same type are *fillo de grea* ‘child of [the] herd’ and *fillo de quen quixo* ‘child of the one who wanted’, recorded in Sismundi (100) and Guitiriz (118), respectively.

These designations refer to the man who participates in conceiving the *illegitimate child*, but all add the connotation of his being someone unknown, through an abstract or vague word such as *mundo* (< Lat. MUNDUS; DRAG. “a xente en xeral”), *grea* (DRAG “conxunto de animais de catro patas que viven xuntos, especialmente cabalos, etc.”; DD “manada, rebaño”), or an equally vague expression like *peta á porta* (*petar* DRAG: “dar golpes [nunha cousa ou persoa]” and *porta* < Lat. PORTA; DRAG “abertura feita nunha parede, moble, cerca, etc., para permiti-lo acceso”), or *de porta aberta* (*porta*, see above, and *aberta* < irreg. participle of *abrir* < Lat. APERTUS; GDXL “non pechado”). Speakers use these complex, abstract words or phrases knowingly to refer to a particular

<sup>21</sup> ‘What is the use / of a harvested vineyard! / What do I want it for, / when it is of no use to me!’.

entity and thereby only blame the woman (the known party) for an act that is regarded as sinful or wrong behaviour according to a way of thinking influenced by a religious or civil mentality (Rey Castelao & Rial García 2009).

Let us note that according to Mariño Ferro (González Reboredo 1990: 80-81) *fillo do mundo* or *fillo de porta aberta* could also refer to the offspring of prostitutes:

En Castrofeito (Coruña): “fillos do palleiro”; en Porto do Son –segundo información do Prof. Calo Lourido–: “fillos bravos”; lémbrese que ó porco non doméstico se lle chama “bravo”. Son expresións nas que se establece unha oposición entre os fillos da casa, os domésticos –os lexítimos– e os de fóra, ou entre os fillos dunha casa normal e os dunha casa “aberta”, é dicir, de malos costumes.<sup>22</sup>

### 2.1.3. The place of conception: *fillo do palleiro*

Under the heading *fillo do palleiro* ‘child of the haystack’, which is the most frequently occurring member of this group, we classify expressions referring to the place where the child was conceived. *Fillo do palleiro* appears in a representative cluster in central Galicia, although it also shows up in Rairiz de Veiga, Ourense (148).

The other members of this class each occur only once in the survey. They are *fillo de tras da porta* ‘behind-the-door child’ in Corcubión, A Coruña (108); *fillo de bedro* ‘child of the vacant lot’ in San Pedro de Neiro, Lugo (120), and also in Salgueiras, Asturias; *fillo do pé do toxo* ‘child of the foot of the gorse bush’ in Valdoviño, A Coruña (101); and *pito do mato* ‘gorse chick’ in Tui, Pontevedra (139).

The meaning of *fillo do palleiro* is determined by *palleiro* ‘haystack’ (< Lat. PALEA; DRAG “morea de palla ou de herba seca en forma de cono, que se fai na eira de tal xeito que non se molle coas chuvias”). Although this refers to the place where the illegitimate child might have been conceived, the point is that the child was conceived outside the home, hence out of wedlock. This is very important because at that time marriage was considered a universal institution that regulated sexual relations, and

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<sup>22</sup> ‘In Castrofeito (Coruña): “haystack children”; in Porto do Son, according to Prof. Calo Lourido: “wild children”; remember that the undomesticated pig was called “wild”. In these expressions the children of the home, the domestic (and legitimate) ones, are opposed to those from outside, or children of a normal household to those of an “open” house, that is to say, a house of ill repute.’

marriage was the only proper place for sex, a stable relationship and children. Galician society, especially in the country, maintains strict rules about marital fidelity which are also applicable to premarital sex (Mariño Ferro 2000: 314-323).

Similar considerations are applicable to the other members of this class: *de tras da porta* (< Lat. TRANS and Lat. PORTA), *fillo de bedro* (unknown origin; DD “estivada, tierra inculta”), *fillo do pé do toxo* (*pé* < Lat. PES, PEDIS; DRAG “ó lado de, xunto a, e tamén arredor de, aproximadamente” and *toxo* probably from a pre-Roman word \**toju*; DRAG “arbusto espiñoso de flores amarelas, moi común nos montes de Galicia”), *o pito do mato* (*pito* onomatopoeic; DRAG “cría das aves, en especial a da galiña” and *mato* perhaps < Late Latin MATTA, ‘estera’; DRAG “terreo con maleza e sen cultivar, e a maleza mesma”). These expressions allude both to the fact that the child was conceived outside of the house and out of wedlock, and the circumstances of the sexual act, which was furtive, far from home, in the fields, because it was consummated outside of marriage between persons not joined in matrimony. *Pito do mato* also plays on the fact that *pito* ‘chick(en)’ can refer metaphorically to the child, probably because the word also has the meaning of newly-born in the *mato*, the bush, suggesting a comparison with animals and “the wild”.

#### 2.1.4. The act: *fillo de achego*

The fourth group, consisting of expressions referring to the act of conceiving an illegitimate child, is represented by *fillo de achego* ‘child of casual union’ and *fillo de achegueiro* ‘ditto’, which were recorded in three places forming a small triangle from central Galicia towards the southeast, while *fillo de golpe lixeiro* ‘child of a thoughtless act’ occurs in Irixo (141) and Arnoia (143), in the province of Ourense, and *fillo defrutado* ‘child of pleasure’ and *fillo de erro* ‘child of accident’ are found in O Bolo (146) and Celeiros (145) respectively, also in Ourense.

The forms with *achego* and *achegueiro* (< Lat. APPLICARE, ‘plegar’; DRAG “unión de dúas persoas que fan vida de matrimonio sen estaren casadas” or DD “arrimo”) refer to intercourse between to people from which there ensues a child considered illegitimate. *Fillo de golpe lixeiro* (*golpe* < Vulg. Lat. \*COLUPUS < Lat. COLAPHUS < Gr. κόλαφος ‘bofetón’, DRAG “efecto que resulta do choque violento entre dúas cousas, estando as dúas en movemento ou só unha delas” and *lixeiro* < Fr.

*léger*, DRAG “que se move ou se despraza con rapidez e sen dificultade, ou que amosa estas características”) refers to the same thing but with a connotation of a quick, spontaneous encounter.

In *fillo defrutado* and *fillo do erro* we find what appear, today, to be contradictory notions: on the one hand the enjoyment and pleasure of intercourse performed willingly rather than in obedience to a marital obligation, and on the other the error, that is to say the sin, because of the situation of the (single) mother, for to quote Mariño Ferro (1995, 81) “ós homes, casados ou solteiros, permíteselles andar constantemente en busca do pracer sexual, mentres que ás mulleres se lles esixe que resistan”.<sup>23</sup> Social acceptance of the concept of a woman enjoying sexual is very recent; in marriage, it was an obligation whose only purpose was to produce children, forbidden in all other cases.

#### 2.1.5. The child: *fillo zorro*

Lastly, in A Gudiña (149) and Oímbra (151), in the southeast, we find a rare form which is the first one so far with connotations bearing not on the mother, the father or the sex act, but on the child: *fillo zorro* ‘sly child’ (from Port. *zorro* ‘layabout’, in turn from *zorrar* ‘drag’; DD “hijo bastardo/hombre falso/hombre muy taimado y astuto”). The adjective *zorro* that qualifies *fillo* seems to characterize a child who is smart but sneaky, owing to its being illegitimate, since the fact that it is the outcome of a sin or an act frowned upon by society means that the child will be someone viewed as sly and mischievous.

## 2.2. Forty years on: the ALGa data

By comparing the data in (1931-1935 / 1947-1954) and ALGa (1974-1979), we can see how the expressions occurring as responses to the *illegitimate child* item in the surveys have changed and evolved, and track their distribution and the extent of their use.

The surveys of ALGa, carried out in the seventies (between 1974 and 1979), show *fillo de solteira* gaining ground; it now occurs also in the western part of Galicia. *Fillo*

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<sup>23</sup> ‘Men, both married and unmarried, were allowed to pursue a continual quest for sexual gratification, whereas women were required to resist.’

*do mundo* has also undergone expansion, spreading from the south towards the west-central region. Other expressions such as *fillo de peta a porta* have lost ground, while yet others, such as *fillo do palleiro* and *fillo de achego*, have remained fairly stable in their localities. There is also evidence for the appearance of newer expressions with pejorative nuances such as *fillo de fulana* or *fillo de puta* ‘whore’s child’.

### 3. Concluding remarks

The term whose use appears to be most widespread, with occurrences throughout much of Galicia, is *fillo de solteira* (together with the variants *fillo de moza* and *fillo de moza solteira*), possibly because it is the one that best describes the central idea to which speakers are referring, allowing them to do so with directness and transparency. It is the least marked expression and the one that is most common in dictionaries and reference works to denote the notion of *illegitimate child*.

However, the tremendous linguistic diversity surrounding this notion in Galicia is surely worthy of our attention: the numerous ways of referring to it are of different kinds and can be classified into groups according to their motivations, which refer by way of various metaphors to the child’s mother or father, the place or the act, often with an irony of which the speakers interviewed were likely fully aware.

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