LIFELONG CITIZENSHIP LEARNING:
A NARRATIVE STUDY OF LIVES

EL APRENDIZAJE DE LA CIUDADANÍA A LO LARGO DE LA VIDA:
UN ESTUDIO NARRATIVO DESDE HISTORIAS DE VIDA

A APRENDIZAGEM DA CIDADANIA AO LONGO DA VIDA:
UM ESTUDO NARRATIVO A PARTIR DE HISTÓRIAS DE VIDA

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ABSTRACT: The study has two objectives: to understand the construction of civic identity and draw some key conclusions for the interpretation of its learning as active citizens. The study was carried out through life stories, using a multiple-case design. Three biographical oriented interviews were used to prepare each of the stories. The qualitative handling of the data used dual analysis: sequential analysis, as a reflection of the identity construction processes throughout life, and categorical analysis as a connection between the "what" and the "how" people learn their civic identity. The results of the sequential analysis show life spans that, in their singularity, reflect the constant identification and desire to improve, efficiently, the immediate surroundings where people develop, as well as the continuous practice of social action. The categorical analysis produced an interpretative model split into two interrelated dimensions. On one hand the "learning results" dimension with three macro-categories: "action", defined by the possession of skills (leadership and power, empathy and dialogue, initiative and innovation); "commitment", defined by certain values (vitality and viability, sensitivity and responsibility, regeneration and transformation); and "identity" (situated, discursive and dialectic). On the other hand, the "learning processes" dimension, with the following macro-categories: "scenarios"; "life experiences" and "socialisation. The discussion of results emphasises the principles of diversification, lack of control and authorship as references for a socio-cultural action that will stimulate citizenship training. This is based on making the protagonists "do useful things" in local scenarios that offer the opportunity for improvement, on promoting actions that will encourage self-reflection, and on raising awareness about the complexity of reality itself. These are principles that can be applied in educational experiences throughout people's life spans from their beginnings.

RESUMEN: Esta investigación responde a dos objetivos: comprender la construcción de la identidad ciudadana, y extraer claves interpretativas de su aprendizaje como ciudadanos activos. El estudio se realiza a través de historias de vida, con un diseño de caso múltiple. Se utilizan tres entrevistas de orientación biográfica para elaborar cada una de las historias. El tratamiento cualitativo de los datos obedece a un doble análisis: un análisis secuencial, como reflejo de los procesos de construcción identitarios en la trayectoria vital; y otro categorial, como articulación del qué y del cómo aprenden su condición ciudadana. Los resultados del análisis secuencial arrojan trayectorias vitales que, en su singularidad, reflejan la identificación y preocupación

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constante por mejorar, de forma eficiente, el entorno próximo en el que se desenvuelven, así como la práctica continuada de acción social. Del análisis categorial emerge un modelo interpretativo distribuido en dos dimensiones interrelacionadas. De una parte, la dimensión "resultados de aprendizaje" con tres macrocategorías: la "acción", definida por el dominio de destrezas (liderazgo y poder, empatía y diálogo, iniciativa e innovación); el "compromiso", articulado desde determinados valores (vitalismo y viabilidad, sensibilidad y responsabilidad, regeneración y transformación); y la "identidad" (situada, discursiva y dialéctica). De otra parte, la dimensión "procesos de aprendizaje" con las siguientes macrocategorías: los "escenarios"; las "vivencias" y la "socialización. La discusión de resultados enfatiza los principios de la diversificación, del descontrol y de la autoría como referentes de una acción socio-cultural que estimule la formación ciudadana: Se trata de comprometer a los protagonistas para "hacer cosas" útiles, en escenarios próximos que ofrezcan la posibilidad de mejora; de promover acciones que propicien la auto-reflexión; y de concienciar sobre la complejidad de la propia realidad. Principios a aplicar en las experiencias educativas a lo largo de la trayectoria vital de las personas desde sus inicios.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE:
educação comunitária
Narrativas pessoais
Investigação qualitativa
Aprendizagem ao
  longo da vida
Educação não formal
Histórias de vida

RESUMO: A investigação responde a dois objetivos: compreender a construção da identidade cidadã e extrair pontos interpretativos da sua aprendizagem como cidadãos ativos.O estudo é realizado através de histórias de vida, com um desenho de caso múltiplo. Utilizam-se três entrevistas de orientação biográfica para elaborar cada uma das histórias. O tratamento qualitativo dos dados obedece a uma dupla análise: uma análise sequencial, como reflexo dos processos de construção identitárias na trajetória vital, e a outra categoria, como articulação do que e do como aprendem a sua condição cidadã. Os resultados da análise sequencial lançam trajetórias vitais que, na sua singularidade, refletem a identificação e preocupação constante por melhorar, de forma eficiente, o contexto próximo onde se desenvolvem, assim como a prática contínua da ação social. Da análise categorial emerge um modelo interpretativo distribuído em duas dimensões inter-relacionadas. Por um lado, a dimensão "resultados de aprendizagem" com três macrocategorias: a "ação", definida pelo domínio de destrezas (liderança e poder, empatia e diálogo, iniciativa e inovação); o "compromisso", articulado a partir de determinados valores (vitalismo e viabilidade, sensibilidade e responsabilidade, regeneração e transformação); e a "identidade" (situada, discursiva e dialética). Por outro lado, a dimensão "processos de aprendizagem" com as seguintes macrocategorias: os "cenários", as "vivências"; e a "socialização. A discussão dos resultados enfatiza os princípios da diversificação, do descontrolo e da autoria como referentes de uma ação sociocultural que estimule a formação cidadã: trata-se de comprometer os protagonistas para "fazerem coisas" úteis, em cenários próximos que ofereçam a possibilidade de melhoria; de promover ações que propiciem a autorreflexão e de consciencializar acerca da complexidade da própria realidade. Princípios a aplicar nas experiências educativas ao longo da trajetória vital das pessoas desde o seu início.

Introduction

The research, which includes the life stories, was carried out regarding the learning of active citizenship; a perspective that, by going beyond the classical individualistic conception of citizenship, promotes education as a civic practice. This is an approach that attempts to overcome the limitations and problems of previous approaches regarding citizenship education (Lawy & Biesta, 2006). The objective of the project was the preparation of effective strategies for the learning of active citizenship through the identification and analysis of the practices and experiences through which people learn to be and act as citizens[1]. The field work was connected to four research questions: "1) What is a citizen? What does being a citizen mean? 2) How is citizenship exercised and what activities does it imply? 3) Upon what principles, values and motivations is its exercise based? and 4) How is it learned and what resources, media and abilities are involved?" (Mata & Gil-Jaurena, in press). The life stories investigate this last question regarding learning, and also make it possible to compare the results related to the other three research questions. Specifically, the study has a dual objective: to understand the experiences, the meanings in the construction of civic identity, and to draw some key conclusions for the interpretation of its learning as active citizens.

The choice to use life stories follows two purposes that are intrinsic to the research project: a methodological reason and an educational interest. On the methodological level, life stories are relevant for the establishment of the categories that, in their capacity as citizens that are considered exemplary, could provide information about the learning of citizenship. This exemplary nature – in the "everyday" meaning of example – (Ferrarotti, 2009), has a very powerful illustrative nature in formal, non-formal and informal education (Josso, 2002). This dual usefulness, related to both research and education, has characterised life stories since their anthropological origin (Morin, 1980), throughout their development with symbolic interactionism (Becker, 1974), and continues in the current imprinting of the narrative method in the guidance for the personal construction of reality (Peavy, 1998).

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Citizenship learning is dynamic and ongoing, that is, it takes place throughout people's lives. It is also multi-faceted, because systemic, temporary and personal aspects that forge a particular type of learning throughout people's life spans come together. An account constructed from life stories expresses this existential journey at the intersection between research and education, learning and action (Pineau, 2006). Regarding these theoretical-epistemological statements, collective research projects that specifically investigate citizenship learning based on life stories are being set up[2]. In our case, the presented study is affiliated to this emerging research approach, confirming results from previous similar studies (Holford & Veen, 2003) and also studying the multi-referential nature of the topic and the critical voice of the informants.

1. The narrative method

1.1. Design

The study was carried out based on a narrative focus in which the life stories connect a multiple case study design (Stake, 1998). Each of the three life stories presents a case (intra) that in turn is incorporated and compared with the other two (Huberman & Miles, 1991). The methodological emphasis of the study refers to the "analytical function" of the life stories as one of the keys of a "grounded theory" (Bertaux, 1989). The principle of a "grounded theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 2002) through which a theory can "emerge" from reality (compared to a theory that is applied to the explanation of reality), is relevant because it makes it possible to investigate how and why certain citizens that are considered exemplary learn, are and behave as they do.

1.2. Informants

The critical issue regarding the scientific credibility of the life stories does not lie so much in the number of life stories, but in the way in which they were performed (Peneff, 1990; Bertaux, 1999; Villers, 2011). It is not about searching for representation through the number of informants (statistical sampling), but the informant's relevance to the research topic (theoretical sampling). In this case, after carrying out the first phase of the field work through in-depth interviews, the basic selection criterion for informants was their condition as models in their participation, both for the research group and for those interviewed in the first work phase, using clear indicators of their direct identification and connection with community intervention and improvement programmes. Three key informants participated in the multiple case study (María, Marta and Miguel)[3].

In their profiles, the informants have different qualities that, among other things, are shown in the physical scenes where they live their lives (rural/urban setting, university/private company), in their ages (from 35 to 60 years old), varying degrees of job security, training in different professional fields, and different family responsibilities. They are two women and one man.

1.3. Preparation process for the life stories

The preparation of the life stories was carried out based on biographical interviews at three key times: A first round of open interviews in which the informant was encouraged to talk about his/her life connected to the topic of citizenship, and the researcher listened. After this first round and preliminary intuitive analysis there was a second, more conversational round in which the research was more focused on the topic of citizenship throughout the informants' lives, their connection to personal aspects, the contexts and actions in which their lives had developed. In a third round, the text prepared by the research group based on the interview transcripts was confirmed with the informant. This final step is decisive in terms of the validity and credibility of the life stories: The analysis process was carried out based on the text constructed jointly by researchers and informants; that is, based on the narrative socially constructed by the people involved.

1.4. Analysis process for the life stories

We carried out the analysis from an interpretive perspective (Marie-Claude, 2014) and with a qualitative treatment of the life stories under two aspects, diachronic and synchronic (Villers, 2011): The first, which is sequential, provides information about the existential changes of the person who narrates his/her life story; the second organises, defines and connects the categorical system emerging from the three life stories. The sequential aspect documents the construction of the identity of each person and shows the particular learning processes; the system of categories refers to processes and products that were common to the learning of our informants. This inter/intra case approach (Huberman & Miles, 1991) strengthens the intersubjective validity[4] of the emerging categories. We carried out the categorisation process by following the "constant comparative method" applied to the transcription and encoding of each of the texts about the respective life stories, using NVivo software to do this (Richards, 2011). The en-

coding process was performed by two members of the research team who, separately, first constructed the topics and then the pre-categories, the initial categories and the final resulting categories. The inter-categorical relationship was established by cross-referencing the content of the final categories with each of the narratives of the life stories. The validation process concluded with a comparison with both the informants and the members of the research team that had collected the life stories.

2. Results: the learning of emerging citizenship in three life stories

We present the results in two ways: Based on sequential analysis, as a reflection of the identity construction processes in the life spans of our informants, thereby fulfilling the research objective, and based on categorical analysis, as a connection of what and how the informants learned to be active and participative citizens, thereby fulfilling the objective of identifying interpretive keys.

2.1. Sequential analysis of the life stories: civic identity

Marta was the first informant. From her narratives, a construction of identity is deduced that developed, in a cyclical and dialectical way, from inside-to-outside and from outside-to-inside, in a permanent search to *feel more at ease*. Reflection about realities, compared with readings, information and observations, represents the stimulation for action; network action through horizontal participation as a strategy to promote a change in reality. The experience of the actions made her question the limitation of networks and opened up possibilities for her to develop and grow with other networks: *Let's see who I can join together with to do this…* The driving force is communication with others, criticism and self-criticism: *I did one of those things, visiting the elderly…I imagine that I too have been processing these things. I then left that group. There comes a time when you have got what you needed.* The meaning of action is to change surroundings, in an spiral that begins from local surroundings and opens up into a wider environment, to then close down again towards the more local: *I had to do something to change things.* It begins with the domestic organisation in the family, continues in social organisations, international political militancy to then return to local neighbourhood associations. There is also a constant proximity-distancing of herself from others, by exchanging ideas and concerns: *I realised that feelings are something very important; and that is something that I didn't understand in my first par-*

ticipative phases. I was acting from the head, and I realised that I had to complement this and act from the heart and the gut. The milestones in Marta's life owe much to her emotional aspect with others. She acts and develops through contact with others. In her life, she places a lot of importance on books. They represent ideas and communication with others: *I try to debate and suggest.* Horizontal participation is the key reference to her development. At present, she appears disenchanted with political life. She progresses from formal to more informal institutions: *That system of somebody from above ordering something and me having to do it whether I like it or not, no way.*

María was the second informant. She presents a construction of identity based on conflict and change as a search for personal fulfilment: *I went through a very personal stage of an internal search for where I wanted to go, because I came into conflict with my profession, I came into conflict with my way of dealing with life and I wanted to find a place where I would feel fulfilled.* The concern of others, professional and educational experiences all fostered her personal questioning, focused on *What am I doing? How am I doing it? Or how can I do it? And where am I doing it?* The crises that represent a moment of personal renewal and growth arise from this dialectic between her experiences with others and her questioning: *The world changes from your own space; I think it's necessary to act in a local area of development.* Crises can be focused on moments or stages in which the emotional and sometimes even the economic dependency of the informant takes precedence, and in other stages independence and the self take precedence. However, both have the same meaning, the interconnection between her own emotional development with her *mission to do things* in her dual commitment to herself and to her local surroundings: *I changed what was in my power and disappeared precisely when I believed that I had done everything that was in my power.* The great driving force in the construction of her identity is self-maieutics, the questioning of herself and of others: *I always try to pose the question. Because people are not aware of what they are like, of how they act in life until someone else asks them "Why did you just act like that?"* María's life is full of constant romantic and professional breakups when she asks herself about the reasons for her experiences: she needs to travel, to learn, to feel in order to broaden the meanings of her questioning: *You have to feel that you are the active protagonist of your life to really change something. And you need to fill your sack of experiences, of feelings, of culture and of education.* María is developing, she questions herself, she is fulfilled when taking action with and for others, in an spiral of change that advances towards the future: *So I think that there it is where I can make a*

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contribution, in questioning, in reflection and in the possibility of building with others.

Miguel is the third informant. His biography shows, like Marta's and María's, a dialectic construction of identity, under the constant movement between projection and an opening towards the outside with a counterpoint of withdrawal towards himself, in daily moments of solitude, even physical solitude. He divides his time (even his daily routine) between walks alone and activities with others. With Miguel, there is a clear action committed to his local environment, which becomes a strong commitment to his region. In this commitment, there is also a search to feel at ease: *I have suffered when others have suffered, but at the same time I have had to feel good. If I feel good, I know that the people around me do too; I have always had a certain role of leadership.* This is an emotional tie that begins with his family and that he maintains with his partners (sic) and children. In his cyclical construction of identity, there are two clear features: a consideration of the limitations of the reality that he has to accept as a stimulus for actions, and a planning for the future as an essential basis of his life. *I need to have [something] in my mind every year, to have these hopes in order to [live]. For me it has always been essential to have objectives: life objectives [that] for me have been my projects.* Miguel's identity is defined by the idea of a project, which allows him to combine his regional, social and personal commitment with his vision of opportunity in his perception of realities: *I have always wanted to anticipate events.* There is a certain degree of reflection regarding his own action and the meaning that action has in personal and local environments. This reflection is the driving force for change in the people that he involves himself with and the associations that he creates. His identity has developed based on experiences in very varied geographic scenes, which demarcate the area of belonging even more strongly (e.g. rural life takes on meaning when he goes to a city). He travels a lot. He is alert to what is happening in the world. He understands communication as an instrument of relating and learning. Miguel always *learns from others.* He rebels against what he sees as injustice. At the same time, he believes in people unconditionally: *and I worked with a lot of those rough people that I had known since I was a kid and I really had a lot of respect for them; at times they made me feel a certain tenderness, pity.* He is well reconciled with his own personal history, and the more he feels in harmony the more he plans for the future. Essentially he is a vitalist: *Live and let live and make sure they let you live.*

The *life experiences* of Marta, María and Miguel have, in their particular nature, some life milestones that are included in a summarised form (figure 1). The description reflects the constant identification and concern with improving, efficiently, the local surroundings where they develop, as well as the continuous practice of social action at all stages of their lives.

Figure 1: The life experiences of Marta, María and Miguel				
	INFANCY	ADOLESCENCE	YOUTH	MATURITY
Ecological niche	(MARTA) Born in city. Affective and supportive family environment.Her school is friendly.	Emphasises secondary school and relationship with classmates.	Combines life as a couple with volunteering.	Stay in foreign country- returns to home city- stay in a new country- return. Returns to university. Emphasises family, friends and new friends.
	(MARÍA) Born in another country. Intellectual family environment (keen readers).	Isolation in family context. Emphasises secondary school and gang.	Changes country for work. Participates in student organisations. Member of political party.	Own family Parents' associations. Neighbourhood
	(MIGUEL) Born in mountain town. Large family.	Forced family move to the city. Scouts. Becomes interested in student organisations.	Involvement in university structures (faculty). Constant returns to home town.	Return to the surroundings of infancy. Has his own family. Establishes his job in a cooperative. Joins the town council and various social organisations. Sees mountains as a scenario for planning and reflection.

Life experiences	(MARTA) Feels loved. Academic adaptation.	Failure to adapt at school. Loneliness. Wants to do big things but does not know how and has no power.	Family interdependence-dependence on partner. Financial/Professional independence. Break up and change of surroundings. Openness to others and the local environment-crisis isolation.	University driving force. Education as a need to act. Importance of feeling independent.
	(MARÍA) Observes and reflects on everyday situations. Isolation from local environment, introversion.	Existential responsibility in the face of unfair situations. Place in the gang to talk.	Political literacy from parties and organisations. Emotional commitment linked to her social commitment. Responsible development in social commitment. Importance of reading.	Disenchantment with political parties. Democratic/Horizontal participation.
	(MIGUEL) Adaptation to the environment. Amazed by things and people. Meeting people and discovering different situations.	Out of place. Concern about knowing and doing. Consequences of politics on everyday life.The power of speech.	Political/Student activism and leadership. Commitment to family needs. Academic disinterest vs. learning from people. Contradictions accepted.	Increased family responsibility. Work responsibilities as business owner.Assume power to act, never to become stagnant. Know who you are, why you are there and when you must leave.
Keys	(MARTA) Family models: responsibility to reality. Emotions as a driving force.	Lack of understanding, loneliness, distancing. Search for autonomy and independence.	Commitment to the everyday. Openness to different experiences, people and environments. Crisis, splits and projects. Learns from questioned actions.	Accepts account, thinks about, questions, acts, educates herself.
	(MARÍA) Reading: heroes as models of behaviour	Awareness of global and domestic injustices in an isolated environment. Debate as a tool for action with others.	Participative activism based on:1 Observing to learn, 2 Leadership as an initiative and stimulus for others, 3 Retreats and splits as a consequence of organisational contradictions.	Return to local environment (to school and neighbourhood). Search for horizontal participation (acting with). Emphasis on criticism and challenges. Integration of cognition and emotion into action.
	(MIGUEL) Responsibility regarding family needs.	Nostalgia for home region and rebellion. Reading to support his discourse.Positive experiences of leadership.	Responsibility to the family.Knowing and learning by arguing. Social justice. Consistency and improvement. Friendship. Family business.	Relevant value of roles and organisations for projects.The significance of people.Adherence to his region and obligation to travel to learn. His children as the key to the future. He anticipates and plans.

2.2. Categorical analysis: the learning of citizenship

The emerging model is organised into six macro-categories that, using the content given by the informants, is broken down into a total of 17 categories (figure 2).

The *learning results* imply the acquisition and development of a set of components that are intrinsic to exemplary citizens. These are shown in three macro-categories: action, commitment and identity.

ACTION. This represents the acquisition and command of necessary strategies, abilities and skills to connect the intentional behaviour that represents exercising active citizenship accurately. In turn, it includes the following categories:

– *Leadership and power*: As strategies to mobilise the people, resources and media required to ensure *that action is taken*. Actions always have an effect on the good of the group. These citizens proclaim themselves to be leaders in order to carry out the task of mediation with the group. This is related to the "agency ability". This is the ability to mobilise others so that they participate, not a power associated with the imposition of someone.

– *Empathy and dialogue*: As communicative abilities that make it possible to construct a shared reality among the group. These informants, in their desire to incorporate the other, must be close to others (empathy). The capacity for leadership given by others will come from this ability, because they feel understood. This also reflects the intention to act based on the explicit or implicit needs of the group that should first be discovered. Others commit themselves to them in dialogue processes from which action emerges.

– *Initiative and innovation*: As skills that, when applied to action, enable the group to advance. These refer to the continuous planning of projects, with realistic, feasible and original objectives. The citizen agent promotes relational changes that will encourage new dynamics. Indeed, their initiatives are essentially a dynamic, mediated in the group, and their processes have this innovative relational character.

COMMITMENT. These are the prevalent values that underlie the motivation for civic action; they coexist with other values within their personal axiological scale, but are the essential ones in civic involvement. This macro-ability is broken down into three commitments:

– *Vitalism and viability*: This is the value of Life. Life experiences happen based on the possibilities and results of action itself. Vitalism, understood as the positive, the possible, the growth and change that drives human existence. Civic commitment is a personal commitment to grow and fulfil oneself; there is always a possibility to do something to benefit your life and that of others.

– *Sensitivity and responsibility*: This is the value of the Other in its diversity. Active and participative citizens are sensitive to the conditions of the other, and assume responsibility so that people, who are valuable per se, do not suffer the temporary conditions that the system might impose. They are sensitive not only to the group but are also responsible with regards to the particular nature of the people around them.

– *Regeneration and transformation*: This is the value of the World. These collect the historic baggage from the family, act in this group with others, and under a perspective of improving the world for following generations. There is a commitment that is strengthened by globalisation/localisation movements, in both economic and multicultural terms globally, and transgenerational terms locally.

IDENTITY. This is represented in the question *Who am I?* To which these informants answer: *I am the roles that I represent in my life*. This is a construction based on interdependence and communication. The profile of an identity is defined in the following categories:

– *Situated*. As a contextualised identity. This emerges from the simultaneous exercise of roles in various scenarios. This is the connection with social space, with institutions, communities and groups where they develop, and grows into physical space. They learn to play numerous interde-

Figure 2: Intra-categorical analysis: emerging categories		
Results		
ACTION – Leadership and power – Empathy and dialogue – Initiative and innovation	COMMITMENT – Vitalism and vitality – Sensitivity and responsibility – Regeneration and transformation	IDENTITY – Situated – Discursive – Dialectical
SCENES – Ecological – Institution – Community	EXPERIENCES – Profile of experiences – Involvement methods	SOCIALISATION – Literacy – Interaction – Change
Processes		

pendent roles that offer them possibilities, needs and challenges thereby creating a network that constitutes their identity.

– *Discursive*. As an identity constructed through the past, present and future meaning of their existence. These informants prepare a selective account of their experiences, accompanied by thoughts and feelings that give meaning to their own lives. In these discourses, we can perceive integration, consistency and positive interpretation. The reflected life experience is established in a structured story that confers originality and permanence to their identity.

– *Dialectical*. As identity in a permanent process of deconstruction-reconstruction based on crises, conflicts, contradictions, and the dilemmas that emerge when they relate their life experience. There are clear dialectic dynamics of openness to others/distancing, of action/reflection, of teaching/learning. Active and participative citizens are people in a permanent process of transformation.

As a complement to the *results*, the learning *processes* include the categories that make it possible to explain how the informants learn to exercise citizenship. Such processes occur under certain space-time contexts (scenarios), involve content that gives them meaning (socialisation), and involve the mobilisation of the internal processes themselves (experiences).

SCENARIOS. These constitute the "niche" of the learning processes. These are the physical, organisational and community media where interactions and projects are developed. The life story of these informants is characterised by the broad range of scenes and their diversity. This macro-category is broken down into three emerging categories:

– *Ecological scenarios*. These refer to people's relationships with ecosystems. The informants understand this relationship in terms of balance, sustainability and regeneration. There is a positive, genuine and necessary consideration for their personal wellbeing, which serves a dual purpose: on one hand, harmony with the ecosystem and the possibilities of doing things, of feeling and thinking, and on the other hand the ecological imbalance that drives projects focused on challenges to be overcome and needs to be covered.

– *Institutional scenarios*. Represented by the organisations that assign the formal, conventional and legitimate role to each of its members. The meaning given to these roles is initially assimilated, to be later re-thought and re-constructed in light of other models (including ecological ones), in a participation exercise in the construction of social reality. The informants agree on the outstanding potential for civic learning in the family and the more limited potential at school and even in political parties. The plasticity of the role, as a margin for reconstruction, determines the relevance given by our informants.

– *Community scenarios*. These are considered to be relevant voluntary groups and organisations, and approaches that are more open in the definition of members of the above scenarios. In some cases they attempt to include the constructive debate as a way of functioning. The growing formalisation (bureaucratisation) of a priori non-formal organisation represents, for our informants, a contradiction. Despite this, these scenarios offer the possibility and viability of actions in support of horizontal participation that results in the change of established roles (vertical participation).

EXPERIENCES. These constitute the appropriation of actions that protagonists carry out. The dual meaning of responsibility is developed from both the profile of experiences and through the ways of doing and feeling the experience. Both categories are defined through three components:

– *Profile of experiences* specified in three features that are characterised as:
  • Diversified by the variety of people or groups with whom they mix and the various scenarios where they participate. Citizens construct a personal network by connecting these experiences.
  • Pragmatic, because they turn out to be useful experiences for the groups and for themselves. It should be stated that it is informants themselves who attribute and determine the meaning of the use.
  • Educational, because they represent the emergence of dilemmas and contradictions upon which they base their own reflection and that motivate the changes that characterise their life experiences.

– *Types of involvement* organised into three situations:
  • By being: Actors are essentially observers/participants. They enter the scenario through proximity and opportunity; they begin to interact and to discover the possibilities and needs that it offers them. Reflection over what is observed predominates, and projects are constructed based on this.

• By participating: Actors experience. They apply projects with the dual aim of not only doing, but also of advancing, progressing (hence the experience aspect). These are actions with innovative features.

• By distancing themselves: Actors isolate themselves and return to themselves. The evaluation and the reflection that the informants carry out about themselves is seen as positive, as self-improvement. Achievements and apparent failures are evaluated, in order to initiate actions that will help them advance in their life experiences.

SOCIALISATION. This represents the subject of the experienced processes. This is the process of enculturation in an active and participative civic society. This has an impact on the constructivist character outlined in the following continuum representing the three obtained categories: *I observe those at a demonstration, I accompany a colleague, and assume a certain prominence when encouraging the addition of others to the demonstration.*

– *Literacy*, related to the processes of instrumental learning, of those tools that enable the later development of actions. Citizens acquire languages, norms, rules, codes, customs, rites and rituals that are part of an active and participative culture.

– *Interaction*, defined as those relationships that are maintained based on reciprocity. Exchanges are proposed on an equal level; the emotional component is accentuated with explicit sentimental references. Reciprocal interaction is linked to horizontality as the central hub of active citizenship.

– *Change*, which defines the meaning of the socialisation. Citizens internalise the principle of participation, which has its meaning and *raison d'être* in society's progress. Actions are proposed for their own future and that of following generations. This future model gives a scope to their action that goes beyond motivation connected to the scenario, and gives it greater interpretive openness and a certain momentum in the permanent search for development.

The *inter-categorical relationship* appears represented by an association of the results/processes aspects by pairs of connected macro-categories (figure 3). The construction of civic *identity* is connected to the various *scenarios* through which people pass in the following relationship: *situated* in the various *ecosystems, discursive* and *dialectical* due to the contrast in the exercise of roles in institutional and community scenarios. That is, this is a dy-

namic identity as a participant in the social construction of qualitatively different scenarios.

Commitment is linked to the *experiences* that in their diverse, useful and educational *profiles* enable them to consolidate the values of participative citizenship. The *feasible* and the *vitalism* of the commitments that are assumed emerge from personal *observation*. In a second phase, our informants *experience,* through their life experiences, their *sensitivity* to others and their *responsibility* to the other; under their model of the *future* through which they *evaluate* their achievements.

Action is closely related to *socialisation* into civic culture. The enculturation processes are in turn defined by the *literacy* in *leadership* and the *power* to act; they are developed by the *interaction* between people through *dialogic* behaviours to conclude by defining objectives *for change* and establishing *innovative projects* to achieve them.

Figure 3: Inter-categorical analysis: the emerging connection between categories

Identity

Scenarios

Active and participative citizenship

Commitment

Experiences

Action

Socialisation
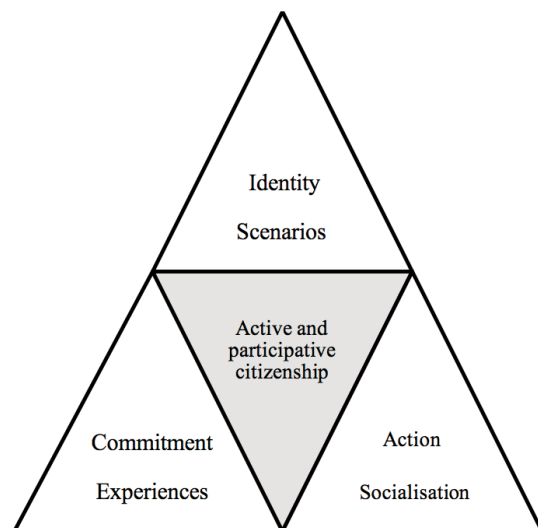
3. Discussion and conclusions: guidelines for the learning of citizenship through sociocultural animation [5]

The development of active and participative citizenship could be relevant in the new challenges of sociocultural animation compared to institutionalised practices (Letz & Pautal, 2012). In one of the most recent debates on the subject, Wildemeersch (2012) began his paper "encouragement and education" with the same statement that echoed and supported Caride (2012, p. 60) in his reply: "We are living in a different world. The least we can say is that we live in complex societies". This fact forced reconsiderations about "critical socio-educational perspectives and practices" (Caride, 2012,

p. 60) and therefore about the meaning of socio-cultural animation and about socio-educational action as a whole in the light of new scenarios (Morin, Ciurana & Motta, 2003).

The obtained results are in agreement with other studies carried out regarding the teaching of citizenship (Holford & Veen, 2003; Lawy & Biesta, 2006), in particular civic action as a constant in life spans, the potential for action itself as civic education and the active prominence of learners. Useful models have been taken from the broadest interpretation of the categorical model obtained to invigorate socio-educational initiatives:

– *The contextualised self (based on the macro-categories of identity and scenarios)*. It is clear that in collective interaction processes we construct not only our own identity but also that of others under the shared baggage of a culture. In this case, these processes have their educational model in interdependence ("connectedness") as the promoter of personal wellbeing (Townsend & McWriter, 2005). The interlocutors exemplify these processes. They construct their identity based on interaction that is reflected on in their contexts. In each context, they play specific roles and from the roles' synergy emerges the construction of their own identity. They distance themselves from instant identity as discussed by Ortega (2004), as they are not disconnected from their life experience, or blocked or alienated from themselves or from others.

Sociocultural animation could invigorate this type of learning by diversifying the various educational contexts, thereby enriching the exercise of diverse roles and encouraging reflection on its actions. By appreciating the experience of multiple roles, a person constructs an identity that makes space for others, with the critical consequences in civic participation that is not so organised by institutions, but as a shared fabric. This is a concept of identity defined by the *ethics of responsibilities* (Campillo, 2003). It is not concerned with just organising planned animation through institutionalised programmes; it is necessary to have involvement in real contexts that are local to people in order to give meaning to their existential commitment.

– *The reinterpretation of pragmatism (based on the macro-categories of action and socialisation)*. The interlocutors introduce a reinterpreted meaning that is apparently contradictory but clarified through their narrated life experiences: usefulness begins with oneself, continues with people close by and advances towards the whole. These protagonists appear to be motivated by multiple objectives (Lunenburg, 2011), in particular those of learning/control and social objectives: the first are guided by the value of the task and the satisfaction that its achievement brings to them, the second are both assertive in order to achieve self-determination and unifying based on their meaning of justice and fairness. Civic commitment is the reason that justifies the need to have power in order to do useful things, because they improve reality and open up new possibilities of acting ("agency", "empowerment" and "advocacy").

Sociocultural animation could encourage educational keys that are connected to this sense of pragmatism. This is about establishing citizenship training based on the lifestyle of a competent citizen. These interlocutors reinterpret civic meaning through a lifestyle that leads them to act with and for others; personal gain becomes an appropriate way of living. This is the Weberian meaning of competence as a relational phenomenon that, as Attewell (2009, p. 40) states, "most abilities and the honour received are for tasks that are not being performed well, where the uncertainty about the results is high due to the lack of secure routines and transferable knowledge".

– *The dialectic of chaos (based on the macro-categories of action and socialisation)*. Since Theodor Adorno outlined the principles of the "negative dialectic", the classic overcoming of the contradiction (thesis-antithesis-synthesis) has been replaced in reasoning by an emphasis on itself, with the consequent conflict in thinking and the emergence of dilemmas about the meaning of action. This learning, in the case of the informants, is constant and includes an interesting feature: it is a learning that is associated with the experiences that they have had in committed, negative and provocative situations of action-reflection. It is the "situated learning" (Lave & Wenger, 1991) that links learning with scenarios that are as real as possible. If the realities (such as life) are conflictive, imperfect or unexpected, by definition and life experience, then learning needs to take place in these situations.

Sociocultural animation could here recover the tradition of provocative learning situations in themselves by showing the deficiencies of the status quo. Learning in these scenarios is key. When reality is difficult to control, because that is what everyday life shows, learning in a context of apparent control eliminates possibilities. It is, based on the model of complexity (Nicolescu, 1998), the dialectic of chaos that, by stimulating conflict, can apply the logic of uncertainty and openness to socio-educational action through sociocultural animation.

– *The principle of diversification (based on the macro-categories life experiences and commitment)*. Dedication to redirected socio-educational action under the emerging models of life stories must encourage:

• *Doing things,* based on the initiative of the protagonists. People being educated in active and participative citizenship have to experience the power of doing things and not just the doing of things as permitted or even as suggested to them under the mantle of the numerous range of training and educational activities.

• *Doing committed things,* because they have a clear purpose and objectives. More specifically, things that have an impact on concrete commitments, in two-way processes with themselves, with others and with the world. This is the responsible involvement that Gallardo (2009) defines as the final step towards solidarity, after compassionate feeling, the rational attitude of recognition and the value of universalisation. To do this, it is necessary to encourage people to:

• *Do things in conflictive scenarios,* that reflect reality but that, at the same time, offer people in citizenship education the possibility to make community change regarding the institutional state of things. The purpose is that people can construct, deconstruct and reconstruct their *identity* based on difficult experiences including action for change (Sabirón & Arraiz, 2012); life experiences upon which people will reflect and construct their narrative.

Finally, we should indicate the potential and some of the limitations of the study:

– *The potential of the narrative method:* Few professional coping techniques and strategies are disposable, based on the self-critical pluralism referred to by Caride (2003). In this case, life experiences throughout the research process have shown a unique learning process: by listening, in dialogue with the people narrating their life story, we learned the value of people compared to any systemic imperative. In this sense, sociocultural animation could be enriched by using the narrative method that, more than being solely a historic-anthropological model, involves people in an educational dialogue. The benefit of this method, seen in its growing application to both research and to education, offers sociocultural animation professionals viable resources to be used in their work (April, 2013). The reference made by Delory-Momberger (2014, p. 703) is illustrative regarding the understanding of a life story: "I cannot (re)construct the world of experience of the narrative that I receive except by narrating it with my own biography of experience and making it enter into it, understanding it in relationships that have resonance and can be understood through my own experiences".

– The optimisation of the narrative method is not an obstacle to indicating *the limitations of the study* related to the depth of research in each of the categories constructed with the informants: A comprehensive interpretive model is provided regarding the education of active citizens. However, as the phenomenal-educational complexity is reflected, the clarifications in each category are limited. Such weakness means a need to continue with similar research studies, where other life stories will be able to provide the intrinsic development of each category. We would also indicate the relevance of studying that, based on research-action designs, will be able to confirm the usefulness of the categories resulting from this research.

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Notes

[1] "The Learning of Active Citizenship. Discourses, Experiences and Educational Strategies" (R&D&I National Plan, Sub-Directorate General of Research Projects of the Ministry of Education, reference EDU2009-09195. The INTER Group on Intercultural Research in Education coordinated the project, and the documentation and the theoretical basis of the study is available on its website (http://www.uned.es/grupointer/aprendiz_ciudadania_activa.html).

[2] We would draw attention to the project coordinated by Christian Leray "Biography and Citizenship" of the "Network of Citizenship Schools". The presentation of the project is available at: http://www.recit.net/?Atelier-thematique-RECit-et&lang=fr y en http://www.asihvif.com/1/upload/biographiecitoyenneteatelier.pdf.

[3] To protect their privacy, all names have been changed. The contribution of Marta, María and Miguel by giving us their time was essential, but especially by sharing their lives. Our sincerest thanks.

[4] In the conventional system, categories are saturated by the number of records. However, in life stories, the criterion that we have applied is that of inter-subjectivity, that is, the category is validated by the cross-referenced meaning between the person narrating, the text and the researcher (Sabirón, 2006).

[5] The sociocultural animation proposed as a comprehensive methodology of involvement follows the prevalent trend assigned by Úcar (2002).

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