

## Approaching the experiences of young immigrants for the citizenship learning

Alba Parareda

Thesis directors  
Dr Núria Simó  
Dr Llorenç Comajoan

GREUV Research Group

### Project abstract

This thesis seeks to answer the question: how do the participation experiences of young girl immigrant contribute to citizenship learning? Citizenship learning in youth comes from different *contexts* (family, school, friends and leisure and ambiguous) –where participation experiences take place–, combined with interpersonal relationships and personal dispositions (Biesta Lawy & Kelly, 2009). So that, I want to know which are the young girl immigrants' *contexts* and relationships and which kind of learning comes from each one. In addition, being young, girl and immigrant, are categories to take into account to understand their learnings.

### Objectives

The research question itemizes on the questions outlined below:

- Which kind of understandings come from family, school and leisure environments (*contexts*)?
- Which are the *relationships* that the young girl immigrants establish in each context?
- How the *contexts* and the *relationships* established in each one influence and contribute to the young girl immigrants' citizenship learning?
- How the *personal dispositions* and the *trajectory life* contributes to this learning?

### Methodology / Materials

- I use **narrative methodology** combined with **visual research**: the **construction of narratives** is a “process of investigation that wants to be carried out from –and also be the product of– the linkage between different subjectivities” (Biglia & Bonet-Martí, 2009, p. 7); **visual research** is a resource that allows representing the experience (Leitch, 2008).
- The research focuses on 4 cases, 4 girls from two schools that participate in the research (*R & D Demoskole: democracy, participation and inclusive education at schools. Ref: EDU 2012-39556-C02-01 i 02*).
- The field work is carried out in five meetings, focusing in one *context* (e.g. Figures 1 & 2, School context; Figures 3 & 4, Leisure context) in each one.
- The tools for collecting data are: 1) interviews or conversations, 2) images or drawings during the interviews (Figures 1, 2, 3 & 4), and 3) emails.

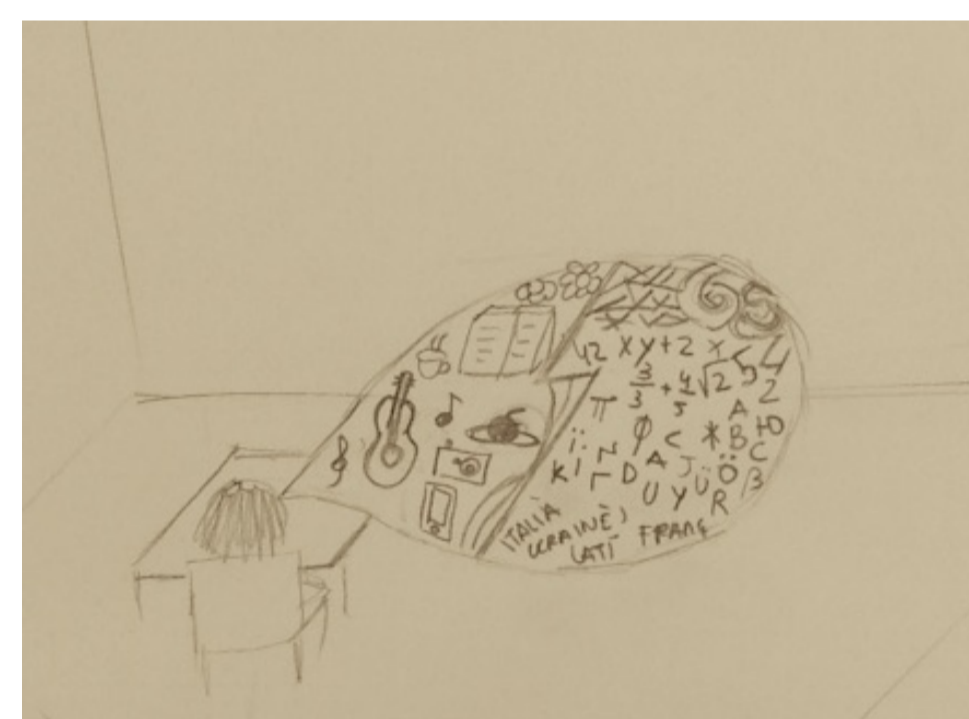


Figure 1. Maya's drawing. School context. How do you feel at school?



Figure 2. Ciara's drawing. School context. How do you feel at school?

### Findings / Research update

In regard to the first findings:

- About the family chores, whatever origin they may be, in some cases they condition more than others. This means, for example, that some have more freedom to go out with friends or do activities outside the family circle.
- The field work demonstrates how the experiences of participants vary and are not tied to family's ethnicity.
- The responsibility that all they show comes mainly through the family. When they are asked “through who do you think you learn different values such as respect for others or responsibility towards studies?” they all say “parents”.
- The family environment determines mainly the autonomy. In short, by the degree of freedom that family consider they rightful by age.



Figure 3. Mina's drawing. Leisure context. What do you do with your friends?

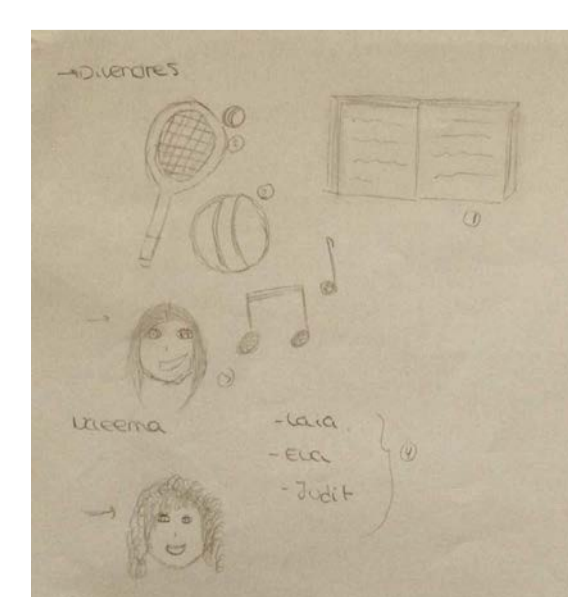


Figure 4. Sarah's drawing. Leisure context. What do you do with your friends?

### Conclusions

Even though the field work is no finished, the preliminary conclusions indicate that young girls' responsibility show comes mainly through the family. The school contributes also to the civic engagement, with small elements that facilitate it, as being member of a cooperative group. The field of friendships is perhaps the most difficult to understand because of its complexity and diversity. However, friendships are a mainstay for all young people. Despite that their way of being conditions their ability to establish new relationships and affects their leisure spaces. The field work shows that the participants' narratives overflow the clichés attributed to young immigrants due to the complexity of the knowledge that we build with them.

### Bibliography

- Biesta, G., Lawy, R., & Kelly, N. (2009). Understanding young people's citizenship learning in everyday life: The role of contexts, relationships and dispositions. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 4(1), 5–24.
- Biglia, B., & Bonet-Martí, J. (2009). La construcción de narrativas como método de investigación psico-social. *Prácticas de escritura compartida. Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 10(1), 1–25.
- Leitch, R. (2008). Children's narratives through images. In P. Thomson (Ed.), *Doing visual research with children and young people* (pp. 37–58). New York: Routledge.