

A LATIN AMERICAN IN SEARCH OF EDUCATIONAL INNOVATIONS

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Abstract

The following text is about a recent experience (October 2008-January 2009) from one of my conferences, "Education and Family" in a town in Mexico. The program I designed was to take account of their personal experiences with the intention to gather thematic autobiographies, aiming toward the reflection of the influence that family background has on the development of each individual. I felt that this activity was a good way for them to begin to understand the realities of their own students as teachers of primary and secondary education. After the compilation of these stories, the students were to design a survey that they were to apply in their place of employment. I asked that they establish clear and practical objectives. I also suggested them to take into account their own thematic autobiography to identify the factors that were significant to them as adults in getting to know their own students. As the group's professor, a close reading of some of the thematic autobiographies helped me to identify the need that these post-graduate students had in the proposals in educational reforms which promote immediate democratic processes, with special attention to one of the most margined sectors of our community; women. Also, it drew certain evidence to sustain that the power of communication through internet supports a re-design of the role that new educational technologies have as a feasible element that supports such learning processes.

Key words: family, education, thematic autobiographies, subjectivity, gender, virtual context.

Introduction

This text is the synthesis of an exploratory research where the goal was to know whether a virtual forum was a favourable mean to promote a reflective dialogue about the importance of the familiar context over the students's professional project. This case study was carried out in the Seminar *Education and family* which took place in a provincial capital in central Mexico (October 2008 to January 2009), with which the students (thirteen women and eight men) would finish their studies for a master's degree in Pedagogy. The origin of this research came after learning some of the *thematic autobiographies* (Allport, 1942, quoted by Paz Sandin, 2003, p. 149) of the members of the group, focused on the binomial family/education; inside them it was identified the need this people had for innovative educational proposals that could stimulate immediate democratic processes in the form of open places for dialogue, something that in general is hard to find inside the classrooms. This need was detected mainly inside one of the marginalized groups of our societys: the women. From their perspective, to be able to talk through the electronic mean is something that favors those processes.

Being education and family both the central subjects of the program, the seminar started with the compilation of the adult students's personal experiences (thirteen women and eight men), developed inside their context of nuclear family (or blood family) and their subsequent family (or family with husband or wife, and children). Through autobiographies it was expected to set clear in what ways and how determinant their family contexts had been for their professional plans. The collected material gave place to a virtual forum where the dialogue revolved around the questions that came up after the analysis of those autobiographies.

This is a phenomenological study for it pays attention to the subjective experience of individuals in terms of the family-education relations (Paz Sandin, 2003). The procedure consisted of two parts: a) The anonymous *thematic autobiographies* were written and sent to the seminar's coordinator-researcher's e-mail. b) A virtual forum whose dialogue was based on the questions that came up when knowing and reading the *thematic autobiographies*.

The virtual conversation allowed to identify how the family influenciate the conception of education of men and women, as well as the ideas those individuals had about the roles and traditional functions culturally assigned, same as the cost it had for some of them to try to change them. The process that developed in the postgraduate group gave those individuals the chance to analyze the everyday microcosm, revealing the need for educational offers that promote the dialogue, especially inside one of the marginalized sectors of our society, the women's.

Thematic Field. Settings. Research Questions

The thematic field of this project was related with the individuals, the university educational process and the virtual context of new technologies as a place that supports the interrelations set through a dialogue that tends to ease an identification of the *I* in the sense of *itself* as well as the *I of the others*. The point of interest was to understand the subjective approach of the individuals to take or not their familiar context as a determinant factor in their professional plans, where the culmination was the postgraduate studies. There was also the possibility of finding out through the virtual conversation those elements that showed posible cultural changes, among other things.

It is important to mention that the accounts of the thematic autobiographies showed that inside the characters's social space it existed a general fear of thinking about the cultural significations as determinant elements of the personal behaviour of men and women. That omission was giving place to ignorance which led to a feeling of inability for thinking of, understanding and taking the responsibility every human being has for make changes happen. Facing that situation, looking for the individuals to assume the task of accomplish those changes, it was set as a premise that it was the education at all its levels the one who should offer formative groundings, as well as an appropriate environment where the dialogue propiciated the understanding of the personal identity, where *myself* would stand in the daily work as a promoter of the relationships with the *I of the others*, in order to give a new dimension to the familiar (social) context and a committed participation in the cultural changes the same person seemed to demand. Specially starting from an educational conception based on Piaget's approach for whom the assimilation plus the adjustment performed by the learning individual means not only a change of the cognitive structures but also the emotionals.

The virtual dialogue of the students brought the next research questions: How do these persons state the link between their own families with the decision of carrying on with the educational process that tends to consolidate a professional project? Inside their *thematic autobiographies* are there elements that explain this link with the nuclear family context (father-mother-brothers) or with the subsequent familiar context (wife or husband-children)? Which are the elements that prove that relation? Is the virtual context appropriate for a shared reflection on the relations person-family?

Methodology of Research

This research is the qualitative type. It is a phenomenological study with an hermeneutical or interpretative approach (Ray, 1994) where the goal is to understand the meaning of the experiences

lived by the adult members of a university students group about the binomial family–education. It is not in the interest of the research to explain the causes of the relationships between both spheres, but how the persons explain those relations, meaning, where they become “a way of existing/being in the world, where the fundamental dimension of human consciousness is historical and socio-cultural and is expressed through language.” (Paz Sandín, 2003, p. 63)

The knowledge that is expected to be produced prioritizes the subjective experience since the phenomenon is studied from the individual’s perspective, taking the linguistic context as a referential frame. It’s exactly this way of learning, based on how the persons experiment and explain the social world, that in this case, is built in a virtual dialogical interaction (Latorre, del Rincón & Arnal, 1996, quoted by Paz Sandín, 2003, p. 63).

An epistemological view on *subjectivity* finds its basis in that the meaning is imposed from the subject to the phenomenon, therefore that meaning doesn’t emerge from the interaction between subject and object, the last one doesn’t contribute to the production of meanings. According to Wilson (1977), this qualitative-phenomenological dimension of human practice only becomes intelligible with the access to the symbolic references that give context to the subjects when they interpret their actions and thoughts. For Apple (1986) to understand the human actions is to place oneself into the internal and subjective life of the social actors, which makes subjective life to be dynamic prior to static, and relates to the social structure until making itself constituent of both (acting subject and phenomenon). In other words, the subjects build social objective reality and, at the same time, that reality determines them. As explained in lines above, that was made through the *thematic autobiographies*, defined as documents in first person, that in this study are written accounts that deal with the specific matter (Allport, 1949, quoted by Valles, 1997 and Paz Sandín, 2003, p. 149).

Among the *thematic autobiographies* done within this research, specific cases of both men and women were selected; inside their subjective stories, it is made evident that their *gender* is assumed parting from the cultural significances given by their own social context. For such reason, in this cases, *gender* is understood as an arranging category for the social structures (Barquet, 2004, p.1), useful to explain a specific inequality among men and women.

As for the notion of virtual context, it is assumed as the place created in non real time or non synchronic (virtual forum) for a dialogical construction (Yehya, 2008), where the individuals express the relations set between their families and their professional projects. The intention is that this located activity will allow the persons to recover the notion of social representations about the binomial family–education. That notion is the set of concepts, opinions, attitudes, valuations, images and explanations produced by the daily living of a social space (identifiable and temporal) held by the communication (Moscovici, 1981). Therefore such a context is “a social world constituted by persons acting. Context and activity appear unavoidably flexible and changeable. The conclusion is that the learning is ubiquitous in the current activity, the located activity always involves changes in knowledge and action, which are central for what learning means.” (Lave, 1996, p. 133). In that virtual context the concrete social group is integrated by individuals, women and men, which are students in a postgraduate program in Pedagogy in a higher studies school of a Mexican province in the beginnings of the XXIst century. As a group it is supposed that these persons share social representations as dynamic and changeable constructions, that altogether keep a hierarchical order of dependence (Duveen & Lloyd, 1990, quoted by Meyer, 2001, p. 45).

The analysis method

The first stage, when getting the anonymous thematic autobiographies via e-mail, was about identifying those which could possibly appear in all the accounts. That made possible to establish as categories: *nuclear family* (forcefully present) and *subsequent family* (appears implicitly); *professional project*; *life project*; importance of the *virtual dialogue* for the construction of *my self* in communication with *the others*.

From the relevance some of the participants gave to the *virtual dialogue*, came out the proposal of opening a space for talking on-line about the ideas that had emerged as a result of the questions that kicked off the dialogue. The compilation of the data took the same time of the virtual forum (a week and a half), organized around the initial questions.

The process developed for the analysis of the collected materials used a pragmatic approachment, oriented to the issue by answering the questions of the research. The analytic proposals of Fairclough (1985) were followed in general.

- To center on the specific social issue from a semiotic perspective
- To identify the dominant elements that constitute the semiotic aspect. Regarding the object of the study it was considered specially the style, as for if it was innovating the traditional cultural meanings.
- To examine the range of differences and diversity of styles via the ways used to emphasize the discourse to express those meanings.
- To identify the resistance against the processes imposed from the culturally dominant styles.

Some changes were performed over the same analysis process in order to make adjustments accordingly to the aims of this research. It was important to get the subjective meanings each person was giving to the object under study, such as the relation family/s-professional project, which would happen with the meanings found in the linguistic context, but it was important too to triangulate that with the extra-linguistic level (social) or *situational context* (Wodak, 2001). It is interesting for this case to study that context in two levels: the family and the education regarded from the cultural significances of society.

Results of Research

This chapter presents how, from the drawn significances, the research subjects, men and women, give evidence about the influence that the family has over the choice and achievement of their professional project. Through semiotic analysis of the stories, we understand how does communication works in the construction of significances (Eco, 1977). The results are presented in two parts: first the obtained from the *thematic autobiographies* and afterwards, those from the participations in the virtual forum.

Significances found in the anlysis of the thematic autobiographies

The semiotic approachment, followed to learn what was the meaning the individuals gave to the matter under study, confines to Umberto Eco (1977), who explains, as a research technique, the operation of communication inside that process of significance.

It is important to mention that names listed following are fictitious as the study was planned as an anonymous academic exercise. Likewise, the selected fragments have been edited by the user following the aims of the analysis

In the thematic autobiographies it was possible to appreciate the emphasis the persons gave to the *origins* of the category *nuclear family*, set on the subsistence activities of the elders. That made possible to identify the kind of country laborers, portrayed as “producers” or “emigrants to the city” or “emigrants to the United States” –also called “the North”–, as is showned in the following passages from the virtual dialogues:

Pedro: My parents are *ejidatario* peasants. They make their rural plots produce even nowadays. That, in my opinion, it’s a miracle... It’s hard for me to understand how can they sow and harvest in such difficult conditions: It’s about rain-fed cultivations that force them to produce with less rain water each time; the difficulties for getting good quality seeds, harder now with the genetically modified seeds that come from other countrys at very high prices, the little support from the government to agricultural production, ah! well... I could not follow that way for subsistence, I preferred to study in the city!

Diego: My parents emigrated to the city by the middle of the XXth century. Here they raised their children as they could. My father was a mason and my nother helped him with

the familiar economy selling *tacos* and *quesadillas*; early in the morning she went to the construction my father was in. My grandmother was in charge of taking us to the nearest school. There I had a *luchona* teacher. If I kept studying, it was for her; she always told us: “We don’t have to be content with what we are, we have to be more... In order to get it we have to study always”. Many of her students are professionals today, when we met and talk to each other, we keep telling that we did it by following her example.

Matilde: My father left the *milpa* and went to the North. The first years were hard times for the family. Money was scarce. After six years, when he could get into the apple harvest in Washington state, things got better. We are nine brothers, the gap between one and other was the time gap it took him to come home to see us. The three sisters studied, five brothers went to work with my father. The eldest died, my mother says it was of starvation. Yes... the elder lived the harder times. Between he and me, I’m the eldest sister, there is a difference of six years, the ones who come after, they come in a row...

In short, these fragments illustrate a characteristic reality not only for the peasants in this province, but for many other provinces in Mexico, recognizable as *situational contexts* that go beyond the individuals and that, some of them seem to assume as situations to overcome in a not necessarily conscious idea, where the condition as individuals starts to change to a condition as persons that generate changes. The collected fragments talk about familiar origins that they lived, therefore they are true, nevertheless, through them each individual reveals the uncertainty of their beginnings as social subjects. It can be perceived in the accounts a variable family context (some emigrate to the city and others to the United States) where the education of the sons seems to be assumed as an obligation imposed from the state not as if they had the time to think of the education as a mean for social progress. Still, there are two cases that seem to be exceptions: The case of Pedro who went for a professional project so he could follow not his parent’s way of living. The case of Diego, who forcefully says he kept on studying because of the influence, the example and discourse of one of his teachers. Both fragments share the version of subjectivity as stated in the section of Methodology. So, from the perspective of Wilson’s approachment, the symbolic points of reference found in the discursive context of both, there are the interpretation they make through their actions and thoughts as in Pedro’s case when he says that his parents make “produce their rural communal plots (*parcelas ejidatarias*)”, something he considers *a miracle* given the adverse conditions he lists; or in Diego’s case when he talks of his teacher as a *luchona* person, whose example deserves to be followed. In both cases it can be observed a reality dinamized by its subjectivities, where the object itself –as family or as education- is not setting the significances, on the contrary, is the individuals who explain and bestow these significances. That makes possible to perceive a process of self identification, that is, the construction of the *I myself*, where the *I of the others* is used as a screen to identify the potentially opposite.

Other origins of the nuclear family category make possible to recognize another type. Coming from the working activity identified in the *thematic autobiographies*, is the *retailer*, characterized as “*abarrotero y changarrero*” and non formal merchants, specially when referring to women’s work.

Damián: I was the elder brother of six sons, two men and four women. My father has a little grocery store. I studied because he always told me that I had to learn about numbers to help him in business. That way I became a professor, until I got married I assisted him in the store. Now the youngest does it, he’s the other boy. The women got married.

Juan: My grandparents came from the highlands of Jalisco. It was the time of war and the supporters of the government had expropriated the lands of many countrymen like them. With the few they had left, they put a *changarro* in the central market, it was a little business, later it grew, among other things because before she got married, my mother used to make fruit juices and sold them by glass or by liter. I studied, first as an obligation, later... I liked it and I do it just because. I keep helping, it’s just that we go with my three brothers, and attend the mobile markets. Sunday is my turn because I teach in rural primary school and when I can I carry on studying. My father left when Isabel was born, the fifth daughter, the youngest; it’s almost sixteen years since we don’t know where he is, they say he went to the North...

Marcela: I don't know what my grandparents were. My mother doesn't like to talk about them, father I don't have. She raised me as a single mother, I admire her so much, She has been domestic assistant, clerk in a bakery and seamstress in a factory of trousers. With the money she earned, she raised me and studied to become a hairstylist, now she already has her beauty saloon. I study because she insists it's necessary to become someone in life..."

Roberto: My father left us when we, my brother and I, were small. My mother helps grandmother in a little stand, they sell food; besides she's always selling something: clothes, shoes, handcrafts. Even though she married again and has three other children, she keeps working hard. The five of us study, the youngest attends the secondary school already. Grandmother says we are good students because grandfather was a lawyer... We never met him, I think neither did my mother... The grandmother says those were hard times, the Revolution times... I don't know, I think my grandfather also abandoned his wife and daughter... Mom says she doesn't know, but she did know he was a lawyer.

Margarita: The story of my family has played an important part in what I am as a woman and as a professional; however, I wouldn't like that what you read here, could be commented in the classroom. Truth is I dare tell you a complete version of my life because I understand the purpose of this academic exercise. I do it because I am confident that by these electronic means only you will read it...

In short, the activities for subsistence by means of commerce are communicated differently.

The analysis of these fragments allows to focus the attention in the *discursive emphasis* given by some of the individuals, it is possible to detect a certain malfunction within the family, characterized for the desertion of the father and the arduous work of the women, transformed in family chiefs, in general devoted to non formal work, that is, without a contract, therefore, without the mandatory benefits. Likewise the persons that give linguistic context to a *dominant discourse* give priority to the men's education, up to the point to let them think of a professional project that not necessarily supports the nuclear family, as is the case of Damian o Juan, that help in the family business always from the spaces left by the professional project of each one of them. In Damian's case, the *subsequent family* is mentioned in an implicit way as a life project consistent with the professional project. In both persons the autobiographies denote the assumption of the *I myself* from the idea of the masculine *gender* which is signified by the rules of the usage, it means, the man that doesn't question himself as one, he can stay with the family and even after he is a grown up, carry on helping it, or he can abandon it, as he says his father did, the statement there doesn't show any questions to that action.

In the cases of Marcela and Roberto –the first a daughter of a single mother, and the second, the son of an abandoned mother even though she keeps the status of a married woman–, they seem to take their mother as an example in the achievement of their respective professional projects. In both cases, the *situational context* in the family In both cases the situational context is focused on the picture of the mother and, as a mirror, she and he identify the *I myself* as a reflect of the *I of the others*. Sometimes de *I* of (the female) *them*.

Still, the *dominant discourse* is taken by Roberto's mother and grandmother, she is the one who reaffirm that the origin of this person's intelligence is in his husband (in other words, the maternal grandfather), who was a lawyer; even though it seems the grandchildren can prove it only by what the grandmother and the mother say about that man who "was a lawyer", therefore the women are impregnated with the cultural significances of a society ordered around the masculine figure, what makes them carriers of that *dominant discourse*. For that reason the selected cases according to the sense they give to the binomial family-education involve the need of been analyzed since the cultural significances assigned the *genders*. In Margarita's case is possible to identify a gap between her generation and the elder women's in her family. In this case it can be noticed for one side the use of the electronic mean as a possibility to open to the change, in other words, to construct her *myself*, what she communicates from her *subjective perspective* to the person she's talking to, the mean gives her security to express in such a way, that transforms her before herself as an advanced woman; on the other side, Margarita recognizes the *situational context* of her family does not comprehends her

from the traditional significances that identify the being woman, but it is important to stand out that in her autobiography there are no echoes of regret, because she accepts she is different because she has studied; as a consequence the construction of her identity runs parallel to the success of her professional project and her life project as a professional that has the *technology* to dialogue to other woman and that allows her to be herself, it means it also permits herself to re-signify her *gender* as a logical sequence for being younger and being a professionalist.

It is important to mention that in this selection of fragments it is also retrieved the *situational context* of a society originated within the rural environment, that emigrates from the region for historical reasons, abandoning that source of production that no longer satisfies nor the primary needs nor the expectations of giving a better life to the children (in the intelligence that a better life can be linked to their academic formation); it can also be interpreted as the parent's vision that the sons may and can study, this last can show the implicit reaffirmation of the nuclear family with a possible professional project and even the possibility of a subsequent family.

Significances found in the analysis of the contributions for the virtual forum

The analysis of the category *blood family* was the reason that led to prioritize the *situational context* in the two aforementioned levels: the family as institution, and education considered from the cultural significances of society. That carried the need of taking to the virtual forum the following questions for reflection, aiming to provoke the virtual dialogue between the individuals: How do you assume the relation of nuclear family or subsequent family with the professional project? Does this professional project defines the person's life project?

The analysis of the selected cases was made out from the link between the family and the education –professional project–, where there can be detected the significances of *gender*, transmitted through the *subjectivity* and the search for *equity*.

The interpretative analysis starts with the case of Margarita since the selected fragment of her *thematic autobiography* makes possible the setting of certain questions, whose answers lead to the study if it is possible to strike a dialogue between some person's daily tasks and the theoretical projections that come along with the use of the Internet as a communication mean: How Margarita gets to understand the capacities and possibilities of the electronic mean? The fragment of this student's thematic autobiography states the the use of the electronic mean has emotional implications of confidentiality, privacy and trust.

This carries another questions: Can the electronic mean get to have othe implications for the person who uses it? How does that person imagine and interpretate that commmunication mean? Who is this person accepting as speaker through that mean? Is the electronic mean useful to give some order to the family life? Does the electronic mean give a sense of authenticity to what is there told? What projection of the person's identity exists through the electronic mean? These questions promote the need to make research of the etnografical type for the virtual mean (Hine, 2004), aiming to prove if this environment stimulates some kind of reflection about themselves as women, in a social mean where the cultural patterns support traditional conducts; that will be the subject for future works.

In an other case, Mariana's, exists a similar feeling as Margarita's when she says "This that I take as an exercise of retrieving, when I finish it and read it again, I realize that a dared to write it because I am going to send it to you, as the only addressee, through the e-mail..."

When they start to talk about the questions set in the forum, what they say makes the electronic mean to be perceived as a proper mediator to carry on with educational actions that support the construction of another perception of their families, their professional project and themselves, as women, different perception of how are valued the same elements according to the cultural tradition.

Ana: I smile to myself when I think how I have changed since I started studying the Bachelor's degree, until now that I'm finishing the Master... To think that my grandmother used to say that studying was something for men and that we should only think of marrying, having children and, to get that, we have to get a "good man" that maintain us, protect us and advise us well. It has cost me to get where I am now! And even though, the elder women in my family still think of me as "the weird"... If they don't understand

me because I wanted to study, the less they do when they see me crying and laughing at the same time, sitting in front of the computer as I write about them and me.

Ana tells about who should study, according to her familie's women, as well as how they see her, watching her communicating through a computer. This fragment raises what does *gender* means to women. Such as Ana tells, genders –male or female– in her family context, are lived and promoted as a cultural must. She refers about how elder women act, generations that go all the way to her grandmother, from the female imagery in which they have been raised, recovering the temporality of their characteristic qualities, in a specific social context. Otherwise, the understanding of the “must be” of the women in everyday's family life, recuperates the historical sense of the concept *gender* (Scott, 1985).

It has been some decades of theoretical contributions that explain such cultural significances as the rules that lead men and women roles, looking foundations over the natural differences of both sexes. Therefore, sex determines what is to be done by each gender, as well as what, whow and when they act, according to the rules imposed by tradition (Saal, 2003). It draws the atention the sinthetic way in which Ana recovers that cultural reality, transmited by her family's elders, specially when she refers what her grandmother says: “...to study is a men's question [...] we should only think of marrying, having children and for that, we should get a ‘good man’ that would maintain, protect and advice us”. Ana is one of the mexican women, from the inner country, that is beginning to question this cultural *must be* that involves women to men subjugation, though the collective imagery does not help her to consider her as a right holder. Some authors explain the origins of that situation in the physiological dependance of women towards men to procreate. Beeing fertilized, she engenders children and therefore breast-feeds them and afterwards cooks for them, keeps them warm by knitting them clothes and raises them on the basic values of family life –as the first foundation of society –, todo all within the inner limits of home. This way to understand and explain women's situation goes weaving the caracteristics that sustain female gender; for instance, women are keen to have phisical and emotional weaknes, that leads to extreme sensitivity and abrupt chances of humour that makes them non rational and, therefore with limited intelligence. These cultural significances justify and corroborate the sense of female subjugation, transforming women into decorative objects, or dedicated to several domestic services (Lopata & Thorne, 1987, quoted by Saal, 2003, p. 20).

It is clear that form this perspective there is no place to think of women as potentially free individuals, capables of having options and making decisions to build their realities. Meantime, men are defined by their fertilizing function as the opposite and, in consequence, the antagonic to female gender. Male gender is identified by his physical and emotional strength, the practice of intelligence that allows and demands the disenvolvement in the social context, while being the home's supplier, characteristic that goes back to ancient times, when as a hunter delivered food for the family. This conceptions have been present through the times, by the means of ancient conservative norms ratified by ideologies, as religious dogma, philosophical or political principles of diferent historic periods up to actual times. That is why thinking of the change of that principles and their significances is not easy nor achieved in a short period of time. Eventhough, going back to Ana's discourse, we find that it shows the *I herself*, contrasting from what she has learnt from her elders, conscious of being *the weird* in her family but knowing that it is the cost of reaching where she has reached.

Other participant that speaks about the cost of changing is María Inés, that ratifies what is told before, when she is in dialogue with her mates: “Reading the participations in the forum I made a balance of my father. At home he is who punishes, although he is in the United States, working illegally. Nevertheless, when we have trouble at home, before imposing any punishment, my mother asks by phone. That's what she does because the parish father advised her to do so. I tell mi mother that we can solve it, talking about the problem, as some authors that we have read at school say; but no, she keeps asking my father, who delays more each time he comes from *the other side*” [speaking of the North, the United States].

This corroborates the idea that, even in the beginnings of the XXI Century, the situational context is of the patriarch kind, because even without being in the family's context, the established norms –by tradition and religious dogma, through the priest–, dictate that the father's will is the law of the family.

Virtual dialogue among them transcends the academic sphere, and promotes dialogue between

brothers, as Helena tells: “In my autobiography you tell that we are five brothers, two women and three men. Since we were born, we have been raised together though we have not done the same –because some went to the university and some didn’t–; eventhough, we speak a lot between us. Lucía, the elder sister, always insist that we have to speak to each other. She has made us understand that in the family coexistence everybody has to make domestic tasks; with no distinction, men and women make the beds, wash the floors, dishes or clothes. It is not easy because there is always someone who tells my brothers that they are men, and weren’t born to do that. But Lucía is clear and answers: ‘And if I wouldn’t help you with money to be in the University, studying Graphic Design, do you think father with his pension could do it? Well, I’m the supplier for you, the youngsters. That would be a man’s role, wouldn’t it? Though is not that way, because your older sisters know that that’s going to give you opportunities to have a better future to work. We give you what you need, in exchange for you to help us in what we the women *should do*. What do you think of what I’m saying?’. What has been contributed to the forum led me to re-read what I had written and I recuperate Lucía’s figure, my elder sister, as an *avant garde*, because everything we had told between us makes me understand her as a woman that speaks with us, brothers and sisters, and see that she is not only a change promoter for herself, she is one when she speaks with my brother; she talks looking a transformation of what is understood for being a man or a woman”.

Lucía promotes a change in the state of mind, where the *gender* transforms a category among a generation itself and between generations, standing for the equality principle. What Helena tells about Lucía, expresses the importance to look for a way in which men and women can develop a form to take a self identity and share in a horizontal manner with the others. In this family context horizontal relations between men and women favor equal treatment, where exercising equality comes from the acknowledgement and respect to differences. This particular situational context, shows a family in which professional projects of both men and women are favoured as life projects, because are founded in the acknowledgement of the *I of myself* and the *I of the others*.

Conclusions

The analysis of the significances expressed by the participants about the relation of their families with the decision to go forward in their own educational processes that lead to a professional project consolidation, finds its foundation in the researching need to identify the legitimacy of cultural meanings transmitted by the subjects about the blood or the subsequent family, and about education, specially in a professional project level. In that same way, is important as well to identify the resistance to given significances, that materialize in change proposals. With that purpose, the analysis takes us to the familiar origins where the relation with those and the children education is born. As it was told, the urge to give them an education comes more from the social context than from the family itself, with the possible exceptions of the women cases.

In none of the cases, the thematic autobiographies give importance to the subsequent family, every participant seems to emphasize the links with the blood family and their education, generated as a direct or undirect consequence of the life time when they are tightly related to the blood family context. Subsequent family is, as it was told, implicit in the discourse and only in some cases. It seems that professional project is established within the blood family context and not in the other, therefore, their life projects seem to raise in that period. Nevertheless, emancipation is at sight and that can have implications in the subsequent family’s situational context.

About the elements done obvious by that relation, it can be said that come from processes that maintain familiar situations, as in Damián, Marcela and Margarita’s cases –at least seen from certain perspective.

The fluency and richness of the dialogue produced within the virtual forum, as well as Ana and Margarita’s specific opinions about the virtual context, makes us think that it makes easier to think and establish a dialogue about the relationships given in the context of the family, and about a professional project. That sharing through a virtual dialogue is specially meaningful for the women, as Helena’s case demonstrates it, because it allowed her to redimension the role that Lucía, her elder sister, had promoting a change in the way she thought and live the gender subject, in a situation where elder women dictated a dominant discourse where men subjugated women because of her

condition. Education is understood as a professional project that opens an opportunity to think and act differently, from a resignification of her gender. In the case of María Inés, education gives her clues to understand the negative aspects of a family organization that revolves around a never-present father, which nevertheless gives specific orders to solve any problem lived in the family, not letting anyone else to act in a different way, even having the will to do it.

Finally, it will be said that the analysis of the participants' discourses—in the form of thematic autobiographies, sent anonymously to the researching coordinator of the Seminar or expressed in the virtual forum—allows me to characterize a *situational context* of a society patterned by the dominant discourse that promotes education as a professional project mostly for men and the less for the women, which social roles are inculcated by elder women. Even though, education, followed in the first place by a social inertia drawn by the mandatory condition of education established by the State, transforms itself in nurturing factors for the establishment criticism, in the case of women. In some of the thirteen cases, women that continued to post graduate courses, are beginning to re-signify their gender through personal discourses, whose styles come from the development they acquire through the making of their *professional projects*, these ones transforming into *life projects*. Though, they are still few, who take on the task to change cultural context, imposed by a *dominant discourse* within the blood family. As to men, it could be identified the embracing of a professional project as a mean to change the source of family income, some of them because they were men and that privilege was granted by the family context, others led by external examples and others by some kind of social inertia that justified such project.

About the *I of the others*, it is important to say that the sustained dialogue in a virtual space makes obvious that they are more comfortable to express themselves subjectively, about subjects that are not easily spoken of in *vis a vis*, at least in their society. On the other hand, and as a consequence of it, women are more willing to revalue the *I myself* specifically, as women-subject decided to act in the construction of a personal way to present herself to her dialogue companions.

Except for Helena's case, the fragments of the *thematic autobiographies* do not show an intention as Helena's, who, led by her sister, seems decided to change the context in order to re-signify gender. Therefore, the *I of the others* is implicitly perceived as a screen in which they see each other reflected, they don't like the way they look, but are respectful, in a mandatory way that culture imposes.

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Appendix

Glossary of terms

Ejido. Communal land for agricultural use.

Ejidatario. From *ejido*, a person that lives and commonly works in the *ejido*.

Luchón, luchona. A struggling person, the one that is capable and willing to cope with real-life problems.

Milpa. A fraction of land, a plot commonly used for corn growing.

Abarrotero. From *abarrotería*, a grocery or convenience store; the one that owns and manages the *abarrotería*.

Changarrero. Derogatory for *abarrotero*. From *changarro*, a small, basic store, usually a grocer's.

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