

# CITIZEN FORMATION FROM THE PEDAGOGICAL POTENTIAL OF THE STUDIES OF THE TERRITORY

**Alberto León Gutiérrez Tamayo**  
University of Antioquia, Colombia  
E-mail: algt57@gmail.com

## Abstract

*In Latin America, during the last 20 years, the political democratic project has become an achievable and desirable possibility to accomplish general wellbeing and hope for the population life quality improvement; to implement, constitute and strength such project towards this goal, the effective link of all the actors and their governmental, private, academic nongovernmental, social, civic, community and citizen life forces, is required within the territory where democracy is going to be implemented. Hence, for this democracy to be possible, it is indispensable to have individually and collectively thoughtful citizens, willing to exercise their citizenship, to build a democratic project and to possibly transform their reality. These citizens are not born, they are made and educated, rooted to the territory they inhabit, modify, and use and in which they set their social practices. The executed study<sup>1</sup> suggests that in order to reach the citizen category, it is necessary, among other things, to appeal for the conscious processes theory, through the educational system, so that people, from early age, are allowed to know, understand, comprehend and put into practice citizen education potential as a pedagogical strategy to reach citizen status, exercise and promote citizenship and, strengthen a democratic political project. Emerging as so, the citizenship, territory and citizen education triad, pillar of the territorial citizen conception, essence of democratic consolidation.*

**Key words:** *democracy, citizenship, citizen, territory, territory citizen, citizenship education.*

## Introduction

The reflection about *citizen education from the pedagogical potential of territory studies* is the result of the research called *citizen education in perspective of territory studies as a pedagogical strategy*. Case: *PUI-NOR Medellín, Colombia, which was executed between 2009 and 2010*, within the framework of the Doctorate in Education, Citizen Education line of Universidad de Antioquia-Colombia, with the support of the research groups: “Didáctica de la Educación Superior” –DIDES (Didactics of Higher Education) and “Medio Ambiente y Sociedad” –MASO (Environment and Society). The purpose and main axis of this study was focused on the theoretical and methodological constitution of citizen education, incorporating the heuristic potential of territory studies, with the intention of contributing to the construction of the public, from basic and middle education within the official education Colombian sector. The thematic deepening was accomplished from the initial documentation, the before, during and ending of the integral urban program of the Medellín-Colombia north-eastern zone (PUI-NOR)-, executed between 2003 and 2007-, from the social practices in citizenship and its relation with its territory, which made possible to identify and set up guidelines for citizen education, involving territory studies, oriented towards contributing to the constitution of the territorial citizen – individual and collective- needed for the consolidation of the political/democratic project.

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<sup>1</sup> Executed between 2009 and 2010, within the framework of the Doctorate in Education, Citizen Education line of Universidad de Antioquia-Colombia, titled: *Citizen Education in the perspective of territory studies as pedagogic*. Case: *PUI-NOR Medellín, Colombia*.

Methodologically speaking, this research was executed from a *unique study case*: PUINOR in Medellin-Colombia. Methodology was *applied*, since it contrasted theory and practice and draw public educational policies guidelines for the basic and middle education in Colombia. It was *Qualitative and longitudinal*, since it analyzed the studied case from a historic perspective: 2003-2007 period. It had *Correlation*, since it secured results from a study case, executed within a municipality, in Colombia, allowing its homologation at a Latin-American scale. The creation of new knowledge in regards to the relation between citizen education and territory studies, demanded the use of *qualitative techniques* – among others, texts consultations, participant observation, interviewing key people- and, it also had *qualitative* measures – such as the data triangulation supporting on dynamic sheets and cartographic restitution based on geographical information systems – which contributed to structure and understand, in a better way, the functioning of the educational citizenship practice, with the incorporation of territory studies.

Two issues justify the writing of this text. Firstly, to recognize that the democratic political project requires for its consolidation and positioning of citizens in exercise of their citizenship; that in the Latin-American scenario, it is not enough these citizens to be classic republicans, liberals or communitarian; other citizens more renovated and linked to the territory they inhabit, use and transform, are required; that these citizens do not exit and do not have motivations to become and act such as; that, they are not born, they are educated and learn to exercise their citizenship, framed in the current political project of its territory, which makes evident the interdependency between citizens and territory. And, secondly, to assume that the territory studies can constitute a potential to educate, from basic and middle education, the territorial citizens required for the Latin-American democratic political project.

The main contribution of this reflection and, therefore, one of the research results with the most generated interest, is constituted by the conception of *territorial citizen*, considered from the *citizen education*, with the incorporation of *territory studies*, as the ideal scenery to accomplish its closing stages and social duty: educate, instruct and develop actors capable of taking their role as citizens; ready to exercise their citizenship; and, who are oriented to the construction of an authentic democratic political project.

Consequently, the *territory* potentiality is set to generate identity, sense of belonging and dynamic hold; the relation between *citizenship* and *territory* is foreseen as an stimulating aspect to become a citizen and exercise citizenship in an active, social and critical way, with the purpose of owning the territory to transform it; then the motivation to feel part of a *territory* emerges to make such territory a property to actively and critically manage *citizens* ready to transform it to collectively build a territorial *democratic* hope; and, among other things, the scope of the *territory studies* are visualized as a pedagogical potential within citizen education.

At the central approach, democracy is recognized as a political project in construction, as well as its need to count with educated citizens, from the educational system, and specially, linked to the territory, conscious process own issue. Democracy, as the possibility to achieve the best life quality and general well being levels (Gallardo, 2007), requires democratic citizens (Kymlicka and Wayne, 1997), participative citizens (Dewey, 1971), social citizens (Lechner, 2000), political citizens (Marshall, T.H. and T. Bottomore, 1998), active citizens (Lechner, 2000) and critical citizens (Magendzo, 1996; Freire, 2005a), with the capacity to transform the daily reality, and who are dynamically and critically rooted to the territory they inhabit and who fight to materialize their dreams. These citizens are not born; are made (Santos, 1998; Cortina, 1998; Espinosa, 2005; Naranjo, 2006). To structure a citizen education able to materialize this dream, requires that the educational system proposes it as an objective image, which means a conscious process which provides knowledge, values, attitudes, abilities, and the necessary competencies, in a context, and aimed at complying with the current political project. This trinity, *citizen educational processes, citizenship, and territory*, encourages the Latin American

democratic dream; its links make possible the pedagogical potential of territory studies that feed the citizenship education processes addressed to generate citizens, citizenship and promote democracy within a territory; meaning, *territorial citizens*, who are organized, suitable and ready to feel, inhabit and start the transforming action of their socio-territorial reality.

Having as reference the scenery hereinafter mentioned, three aspects are herein emphasized. The first one, proposes territory and territory studies as a citizen scenery; the second one, exposes and provides the renewed conception of a territorial citizen; and, in the third one, the conception of citizen education supported in the conscious processes theory is proposed, to manage the territorial citizen oriented to the strengthening of a democratic political project.

### **Territory and Territorial Studies: Citizen's Sceneries**

A territory can be thought as a group of places and a symbolic truth in a permanent motion, more than a simple group of objects (Santos, 1998); implying besides its exploiting as a continent of "socio-cultural" productions; it must be understood as a complex net in which multiple weaves are constructed from the simultaneous existence of internal and external elements that lay over, juxtapose or confuse, creating modifications in the population life structure that are reflected on its physical, political, economic and social organization and that due to the way these elements configure its territory, they also indicate integration and socio-cultural possibilities or dangers to the social link (Sanchez, 2005).

Based on this reflection, a territory is taken as a geographic segment, which is socio-culturally used, semantized, appropriated and built; a product of the historic transformation made by it people; as well as, an scenery that makes possible or impossible the citizenship exercise, given that depending on the type of territory being considered, its potentials or barriers, citizenship and individual and collective citizen behavior of the people inhabiting and transforming such territory will be.

The link among territory, collectivity and social production derived from it transforms the territory as well as the people inhabiting it; therefore, the territory is particularized by social groups that intervene within it making it part of their historic evolution; it is the result of the senses given by these groups to the space through diverse territorialities (Echeverria & Rincon, 2000). This territory, considered as the space socially produced, an unbreakable group of systems and objects and actions systems, susceptible of being governed, ordered and managed, modifies human activity; meaning by this that the social organization is structured and transformed in function of the produced systems' modalities and which are adapted to the social context; and which at the same time, collectivity takes, in the territorial horizon, successive historical and cultural transformations that are the representation of the accumulated social work and the aggregated cultural values (Santos, 2000); this is how the relation between transforming individual and transformed objects is bidirectional: Individuals create and modify their territory; and said territory leaves prints and transforms individuals and the collectivity inhabiting within it (Echeverria & Rincon, 2000).

A citizen is a localized individual, located in a place, which allows the concrete citizenship, no abstractly. In many occasions, the lived space has injustices and inequalities that make it be, in reality, a space without citizens, due to the impossibility to access to the goods and services needed; they are spaces regulated by the market and the State to serve the economic model and not the civic territorial model (Santos, 1998). The localization of people in the territory is always a combination among the marketing forces and the state decisions, the state basically represented by the government. It is not a matter of the individual's will; individuals are determined by these combinations of forces. Consequently, the equality of citizens it is assumed as the same right to the access to goods and essential services to have a worthy life; this requires a territorial location far away from the market, avoiding in this way the

economic model increases, as an additional result of the social inequalities already generated by the territorial distribution. The difficulties, inequalities, and exclusions generated by the geographic location to be a citizen are duplicated by the political distance, since living in the center or around not only generates distances from the goods and services needed to have a worthy life but also these distances are the source of political opinions isolation.

The said before leads to an evident conclusion: to study a territory, creating a territory, its characteristics and its constitution process, such study has pedagogical potentialities to, from formative processes, motivate, stimulate and encourage the collectively and personally considered individuals in their aspiration to reach a citizen category, to exercise citizenship and contribute to the consolidation of its political project; which in Latin America is the democratic one.

### **The Territorial Citizen**

There are a variety of classical political points of view of what a citizen is: republican, liberal and communitarian (Bobbio, 1987; Ovejero, 1993; Papacchini, 1997; Kymlicka & Wayne, 1997; Cortina, 1998; Gallardo, 2007); for our case, we will use a more integral, contemporaneous and adequate one to the challenge of creating a democracy: the *territorial citizen*. The republican citizen has as their principle the exaltation of the virtuous citizen; the individual has to participate in the public policy making; the liberal one sets out a citizen that has to be selfish, consumer, pay taxes and vote for the law and policies that suit him better; the communitarian one is the one who identifies with a group before than with the total society.

The territorial citizen is not only the civic one or the good one: but the one that has a collection of knowledge and attitudes that allow them to comply with the rights and obligations established, and exercise practices that promote the relation with themselves and others; it is not only about the one who participates in politics and the social phenomenon; loves the homeland; practices courtesy; promotes the knowledge of history; knows and applies social interaction rules; recognizes the importance of the State; recognizes and respects the human being, family and exalts altruistic values; he is not only the virtuous one, the believer in the collective interest; in solidarity, in the welfare of everybody, with concrete and innovating judgments; aiming at a social, public and moral order. It is about the citizen who is formed, since not everybody is a citizen (Santos, 1998), by the sole fact of being born, of being part of the human being society, in a determined context, particularly the democratic one, individuals have unchangeable rights and therefore these rights have to be granted. To be born and live in a specific moment, in a determined place, implies to assume with the other individuals, a moral heritage full of prerogatives and duties. Prerogatives as the right to have a house, to be protected from the rain, heat and cold; to be fed; to be educated; to be under a health care system; to have a job, to justice and freedom; it means, the right of a life, a worthy existence, within pre established frameworks. All these do not make an individual a citizen but make individuals of rights; make people part of a human society, that if it is a democratic society, it must secure his freedom of being, doing and thinking; but at the same time it also demands from them the fulfillment of duties inherent to them. Between the full realization of an individual and the accomplishment of a citizen category we have organizations, of all kind, that structure the social life of a society in a determined time and place. It is through the relation with others in a fashion order; with their social practices; in this way, that is possible to obtain a territorial citizen category.

We are talking of a citizen with diverse characteristics; the product of an integral combination of the classic and currently renewed conceptions; an alternative citizen, perhaps more contemporary, when being described by the context portrayed: the territorial citizen who, by being one, is in the condition of conjugating his democratic, participative, social, political, active and critical responsibility he has been in charge of; and able to the required exercise

citizenship to construct the democratic desire.

It is about a citizen who is the result of the combination between category and activity; given that, he is the knower and is in possession of instruments for the action and ready for the territory transformation by exercising citizenship through diverse territorialities, it is not only a status, a basic normative and judicial condition (Magendzo, 2004); but also a praxis that subvert the unfair and inequality order established, a way to live in the middle of differences and diversity, a way to individually and collectively act within ethical frameworks, to transform in a positive way reality. This is about the citizen who semantizes territory, who becomes dynamically and freely rooted to a place, the one citizens belong to, providing them with sense, finding motivation and the stimulus for the exercise of his citizenship and consequently, to construct a democratic project.

This citizen is located and can be visible in a place, in a semantized territory, in a delimited geographic, characterizable and real space. The values of an individual who is born, depends on the place where he develops, where he inhabits; hence, the access to essential goods and services for a worthy life in public as well as private, will depend on such territorial location which, most of the times, is involved with inequalities and territorial exclusions to obtain the essential life demands (Santos, 1998). It is here where a citizen can or cannot be effective; where the citizenship practiced is concreted; where it is possible the hoped democracy construction; where he will or will not individually and collectively contribute to improve the general welfare levels, being as a whole, the territory product, from the territory and for the territory, under the shadow and on purpose of the contextual tendencies. This citizen requires a place, of the semantized geographical space to act as such; the exercise of his citizenship will also have a clear territorial reference; thus, democracy will also happen.

### **Citizenship Formation in a Democratic Perspective**

Citizens are not born citizens; citizens are made, formed. It is a way of being, a behavior, a life style that is learned and strengthened thorough practice so a territorial citizen exercises the citizenship territorized. To reach this *citizen* category and obtain the fundamentals for the exercise of a renewed citizenship; support a territorial democracy; a proper formation, an integral basis and sceneries that generate them are required; it is demanded that, in the citizenship formation processes, the pedagogical strategy derived from the independency between citizenship and territory be incorporated to forge these citizens, to create the planned renewed citizenship and the territorial democracy wanted.

Historically, the citizenship formation has been a task specially taken by the school, meditated by a teaching process in which instruction prevails as the way to teach how to socially perform as citizens. From this, in this traditional environment, it is the fundamental task of teachers to offer the contents and assess their memorization by students, and not their application put into practice in the daily school performance. This is why the cognitive, social, attitudinal and procedural abilities are constituted under a condition in the new citizenship learning. This has to be the reference framework for education and citizenship formation. For this purpose, located in the educational sciences, as a theoretical guiding approach, education is taken as a fact, assignment and social process; as social fact, through which societies methodically incorporate young people to the adults ways of living; it is based on the education sociology and having the school as its scenery by excellence; as social assignment, is a State function, leaded from different educational institutions, with the purpose of educating the new generations in compliance with social needs and supported on the education philosophy; as a social, systemic, consistent and complex process, education aims at cultivating through instruction, the development of skills and attitudes, from pedagogic as the education base science.

It is precisely at the core of pedagogic where education is installed as a conscious, intentional and in context process through which *education happens* providing knowledge; people are *instructed* in attitudes that incorporate what was taught, and it is *developed* for the execution and successful performance from practical abilities (Alvarez de Zayas, 1998; Alvarez de Zayas & Gonzalez, 1998) Schools allow, as a group, from knowledge, to find the category of being, to do and transform. This transformation is obviously found in the interaction with the own learning-teaching processes respectively, of didactics and psychopedagogic. It is about a formation (Diaz & Quiroz, 2005) connected with particular learnings, abilities or skills as the means to reach an integral being, in context, is accomplished through the pedagogical models that guide instruction, development and education in a systematic relation, as the base of the theory of conscious processes (Alvarez de Zayas, 1998).

The conscious processes are a pedagogical tendency, result of social developing models that through their structuring as opened system of dialectic relations of the educational, instructive and developing process, outline a paradigm in which individuals are not alien to their learning process, to their formation process and therefore, they can fully and freely participate in the economic development of the new knowledge societies (Alvarez de Zayas, 1998). This tendency, as such, is constituted in a pedagogic alternative in which the educational, instructional, and developing dimensions meet, it dialectically interprets former pedagogical models, in particular the ones coming from the historical-cultural approach as the conceptual base of pedagogic and the Vigotsky activity theory (Daniels, 2003) and the relative curriculum theory in Dewey (Canfux et al., 1996), giving value to right choices and formulating new components to involve school and live through the education based on problems, as it relates the teaching process with research and attending the society requirements of knowledge.

If information understood in this way happens in the individual socialization spaces, is then the school, where, due its nature, it is taught by excellence: a school aware of a person is, in essence, what education makes out of him (Kant, 1983); that we are not by nature, what we are supposed to be, but through education, in the evolution of time, people assume the task of indefinitely constructing themselves, trying to be what in the path of life is being (Gadamer, 1992); that it is at early years in life where the essential can be developed (Dewey, 1971), this, that during adulthood can be demanded from the individual, expected to apply in his actions, and individual and collective practices.

It is deduced from what comes before the guide notion of *citizen formation* we conceived: before every, *process*, due to connection with pedagogy, linked to the education social process characteristics, in a direct relation with sociology and philosophy of education; with psychopedagogy and didactics; *educational process* which not only comes before but which is preeminently at school and, vey particular, at basic levels; *guided by the conscious theory processes*, since it is taken as the result of teaching, education and development, in context, with the transforming intentionality in essence, which means, a formation to know, be, act, transform; and, *to form the territorial citizens*, motivated to exercise their territorialized citizenship – fruit of the interdependency between citizenship and territory- built the democratic hope. If the territory is incorporated, citizen formation can be assumed as the *pedagogical process supported on the conscious processes theory, through which the territorial citizen is formed based on the education and development categories, in context, so he exercises his territorialized citizenship*.

To form citizens is the main XXI century challenge; to create them for the citizenship exercise, in a territory, in such way that their purpose will be the construction of an authentic democracy (Iberoamerican States Organization [OEI], 2008). Not only to form citizens with preeminence in rights and civil and political responsibilities, but also to include the economic, social and cultural rights and the solidarity ones, as well as environmental rights and collective ones, that transcendence the individual ones.

## Conclusion

The formation processes described have as their main aim to contribute to the generation of democratic, participative, political, social, critical and active citizens; ready to produce changes that assure the increase of territorialized citizenship, to strengthen the territorial democracy. It is the citizen formation process a possibility to theoretically strengthen, instruct and at the same time develop, to some extent in citizenship. Process which is accompanied by the knowledge of potentialities that offer the territory studies to form citizens, to generate citizenship and to construct territorial democracy, basing on the interdependency between citizenship and territory, since such citizenship is exercised within spaces that confer identity and belonging to the collectiveness of equals but different, to the community of multiple interests and shared plurals; a citizenship territorialized, able to understand the object and action systems that characterize it, its permanents and flows, its verticals and horizontals, it means, within the territorialized citizenship as an innovating pedagogical strategy.

These educational processes, as they are understood, can generate the *territorial citizen* generator of citizenship, in citizens' territory, ready to create democracy. As such, these citizenship formation processes have for the construction and strengthen of the democracy Latin America hopes, of a powerful pedagogical strategy that feed them: the interdependency between citizenship and territory.

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*Advised by Helena Copetti Callai, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil*

**Alberto L. Gutierrez Tamayo**

Associate Teacher of the University of Antioquia-Colombia, Social Work professional with MAS in Urban Regional Studies and Citizen Education PhD candidate the Education Department, University of Antioquia-Colombia, Citizen, Territory and Planning Researcher with the research group MASO, University of Antioquia-Colombia.  
University of Antioquia, P.O. Box 1226, Medellin, Colombia.  
E-mail: [algt@udea.edu.co](mailto:algt@udea.edu.co)  
Website: <http://www.udea.edu.co>

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