Chapter 1
Challenges for the Construction of Identities With Historical Consciousness: Heritage Education and Citizenship Education

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ABSTRACT

As a result of innovative didactic experiences and previous research, the authors selected and highlighted some of the most important bases to consider that citizenship education and heritage education share common principles and objectives to enhance aspects such as participation, commitment, or historical awareness. However, there are still challenges that must be faced collaboratively between public administrations, social groups, the private sector, and the general public. This chapter starts with a review about research on heritage education and research in citizenship education and continues with the description of some innovative experiences based on research into heritage and citizenship education; concluding that the connections between citizenship education and heritage education allows the definition of new lines of research and innovation framed as relevant socio-environmental issues, such as controversial social issues, the approach to freedoms, social justice, respect and sociocultural empathy, democratic values, and construction of identities, among others.

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INTRODUCTION

The construction of identity has become a complex process, largely due to the challenges faced by democratic countries from a glocal perspective, an outlook that has been accompanied by an increase in initiatives to enhance the global commitment of citizens (Delgado-Algarra, 2015). Thus, in recent decades, together with the thrust of globalisation, the debate on emerging socio-environmental issues that must be dealt with more urgently has intensified; problems which, in many cases, have become structural. In parallel, two fields of educational research have been developed and consolidated; one focused on analysis of heritage from an educational perspective and the other around how to educate for democratic participation.

To tackle these problems, universities, public institutions and international organisations have participated in the search for an improvement in the democratic quality and quality of life of people in different countries, including the promotion of citizen awareness and environmental responsibility. As a result of this situation, the 2030 agenda for sustainable development was developed and published, which included 17 universal sustainable development goals (United Nations, 2015): no poverty; zero hunger; good health and well-being; quality education; gender equality; clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; decent work and economic growth; industry, innovation and infrastructure; reduced inequality; sustainable cities and communities; responsible consumption and production; climate action; life below water; life on land; strong peace and justice institutions; and partnerships to achieve the goal. These goals must be understood in an interconnected manner, highlighting that education becomes a fundamental pillar for the promotion of awareness, the promotion of values and the development of the necessary competencies for citizen participation and the critical conservation of heritage.

Following this approach, from a holistic perspective, heritage education and citizen education find many points in common that encourage a natural integration. So, under the paradigm of a school understood as an engine of social change, throughout this chapter we review the historical milestones of research in heritage education, highlighting some of the most significant actions associated with the need to address heritage from an educational perspective and based on aspects related to the socialisation of heritage. Next, some of the most significant research results in the field of citizen education are reviewed, including achievements and limitations that exist in this respect in teacher training, and attending to a perspective of convergence between both lines of research. Then, further examining the existing links between citizenship education and heritage education, some international experiences of an innovative nature based on the research on heritage and citizenship education are presented.

In short, we address the importance of continuing to work on education for a fair citizenship, committed to the critical conservation of its heritage and acknowledging that with which other people are identified, emphasising the importance of initial training and professional development of social science teachers to achieve these aims.

RESEARCH ON HERITAGE EDUCATION

The approach to heritage education has traditionally been considered from the standpoint of using heritage as an educational resource, mainly for the teaching and learning of History and History of Art, or tourism, along the lines of developing the economy of certain areas with acknowledged heritage potential, also of a primarily historical-artistic nature.