

# Citizen emancipation proposals in the autobiographies of Gandhi, Luther King Jr., and Mandela

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## Abstract

The paper studies the citizen emancipation proposals in the autobiographies of Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968) and Nelson Mandela (1918-2013). To this, it focuses on the concept categories: “love being” (FROMM, 1956, 1976); trans-utilitarian (FROMM, 1977); the practice of nonviolence (MULLER, 2007); dialogue (SENNETT, 2012; RESTREPO, 1998); communication rights (PERUZZO, 2009) and human rights (GALLARDO, 2014; BOBBIO, 2004; MARSHALL, 1967), of the content analysis (KRIPPENDORFF, 1990; FONSECA JÚNIOR, 2015), which added to the hermeneutic analysis (THOMPSON, 2011) compose the methodological path traced. As a result, one can observe the ability to mediate, from the dialogic and active experience, developing in front of conflicts and different situations of human rights, the potentiality of being and acting for collective well-being.

**Keywords:** Emancipation. Citizenship. Autobiographies. Gandhi. Luther King Jr. Mandela.

## Introduction

Barack Obama, former President of the United States, convened Americans, in his farewell address, to share other opinions, which are different and even antagonistic. “Politics is a battle of ideas; in the course of a healthy debate, we prioritize different goals and the different means of reaching them” (OBAMA, 2017). The choice in observing life under the prism of the interlocutors, as active and dialogical subjects, is a necessary way to think about the emerging conflicts of opinion and fundamentalisms. Obama (2017) identified social polarization in categorizing everything and everyone, in a process that verges to the “natural and inevitable” as an emblematic threat to the democratic system, and thus for the strengthening of democratic politics stresses the welcome to the contrary.

Added to Obama’s statement is another current data, related to the research on hate speech and xenophobia developed by Amnesty International in its annual report. In the text, we can verify an increase in social behaviors encouraging the hate rhetoric and hindering the culture for human rights around the world, causing the negative expectation of more divided populations and more dangerous territories to live (AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, 2017).

However, turning to the narratives of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Nelson Mandela<sup>1</sup> is an attempt to reflect on how these activists negotiated conflicts constructively and proposed alternative historicity. Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to investigate in the autobiographical works of Gandhi, Luther King Jr., and Mandela the citizen emancipation proposals from their experiences of cooperative collective living.

## Research methodology

For the current research, it was used the depth hermeneutics (DH) developed by Thompson (2011) in the work *“Ideology and Modern Culture”*. In the chapter on DH, Thompson (2011) proposes the importance of the social recovery of symbolic forms and their structural characteristics, as well as the appropriation, when opportune, of other methods interrelated to DH, excelling in the efficiency of the study results. Thompson (2011) explains that symbolic forms are “[...] meaningful constructions that require interpretation; they are actions, speeches, texts that, because they are meaningful constructions, can be understood” (THOMPSON, 2011, p.357 – Our translation).

In this sense, we put together in this research the DH and the Content Analysis – AC (KRIPPENDORFF, 1990; FONSECA JÚNIOR, 2015), in order to systematize methodologies to the organization of the analyses and judicious interpretations.

Thompson (2011) defines three main procedures for the application of DH: socio-historical analysis, formal or discursive analysis and interpretation/reinterpretation. In the first step, the researcher understands the symbolic forms as produced items, transmitted and received under specific historical and social conditions. Therefore, the main objective of this analysis “[...] is to reconstruct the social and historical conditions of production, circulation, and reception of symbolic forms” (THOMPSON, 2011, p.366 – Our translation).

For the formal analysis, the AC was chosen as a methodological proposal to be interrelated with the DH, using the concept analysis (FONSECA JÚNIOR, 2015). For this research, it was identified in the autobiographical experiments by Gandhi, Luther King Jr. and Mandela, to delimit, compose and apprehend specific themes.

Thompson’s study (2011, p.374 – Our translation) describes that: “By studying the narrative structure, we may seek to identify the specific narrative effects that operate within a particular narrative, or elucidate its role in storytelling”. In this sense, they were verified in the pre-analysis of thematic autobiographies in common and significant in the interdisciplinary with the citizenship.

Throughout the method, in addition to producing the pre-analysis of the data, the understanding of the context, the connections with the reality of what is spoken and who

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1 This paper presents the simplified results of a postdoctoral study in Communication Processes to the Postgraduate Program in Social Communication, at Universidade Metodista de São Paulo, under the supervision of professor Cílicia M. Krohling Peruzzo.

analyzes, it is important to define the systematization of the content analysis, which involves coding operations according to previously formulated rules (KIPPENDORFF, 1990).

In the definitions of the CA rules, it is emphasized for the present paper to explain: the *corpus* as the three autobiographies; the record units – important parts of a sampling unit – such as the narratives and life experiences of the authors who dialogue with citizenship. From this logic of codification, the categories of analysis were determined (FONSECA JÚNIOR, 2015).

Given the data density of the research *corpus*, concept categories were chosen, in which, through narratives focused on citizenship, the analyst identifies key concepts following the characteristics of productivity, pertinence, mutual exclusion, homogeneity and objectivity (FONSECA JÚNIOR, 2015), as well as the repetition of concept themes in each experience narrated in the autobiographies.

Therefore, as part of the classification process, the following categories of analysis were defined: 1) love “being”<sup>2</sup>: defined as active being and the one able to extend related lives from its own qualities (FROMM, 1956, 1976); 2) trans-utilitarian: it is conceptualized as human quality and ability to transcend the physiological and structural boundaries of everyday life, in order to generate hope and construct alternative proposals of humanized utility (FROMM, 1977); 3) practice of nonviolence: they are philosophies, theories, tools and forms of action based on peaceful social behaviors, but are apparatuses of struggle and claim for groups of varying amplitudes (MULLER, 2007); 4) dialogue: the importance of the exchange in listening to the other, focusing on the interlocutor’s view in order to generate more reciprocal knowledge, and cooperation on the issues raised in the conflict or in the discussion (SENNETT, 2012; RESTREPO, 1998); 5) communication rights: as an important current characteristic to democratically promote the search for other rights (PERUZZO, 2009) and 6) human rights: as a cultural proposal to incorporate all rights and their dimensions from a popular and democratic re-signification, in the intention to add the liberating citizen practices (GALLARDO, 2014; BOBBIO, 2004; MARSHALL, 1967).

Delimited the CA as a method of formal analysis of the DH, it resumes the interpretation, as the last step of the DH. Thompson (2011) presents the interpretation as the explaining moment of the method, already interpreting what is said and represented, doing justice to the social and historically situated constructs of the objects under analysis. As a first socio-historical procedure (THOMPSON, 2011), the stories told in the autobiographies are briefly recovered.

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<sup>2</sup> The “being” in quotation marks relates to the idea of Fromm (1957) that the human being only develops the state of love being when characterized by the look of the being mode, different from the view of the having mode. In theory, Fromm (1957) explains the having mode as that limiter of the larger and more constructive sense spheres of love being.

## Autobiographies

### Gandhi: the search for transcendence

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi wrote the book “*The Story of My Experiments with Truth*” (2014) around 1927, counting with 436 pages.

Gandhi briefly describes, in the first part, about his family environment, the feeling of sadness for having married still in the child age, the difficulty of the family with the death of his father, his studies to be a lawyer abroad, the familiarity with vegetarianism, the learning in England, and of his own distrust by exercising the profession of lawyer when he returns to India.

In the second moment of the book, Gandhi comments on how he acted in his first legal process, tells about his trip to South Africa for work. He narrates the discoveries of inhumane treatment he experiences in Africa with people of color, the inequalities in ships and on land transport. He explains that he had his encounter with the profession, to mediate conflicts. He problematizes about his shyness in public acts and emphasizes his skills in understanding the other, including other religiosities.

By continuing, in the third part, he briefly explains his stay in India. After returning to Africa, in Natal, he gives political progress to the Congress, formed by the community of Indians and other collaborators, seeking to promote the freedom of action for the Indians in the country. At that moment, he narrates his need to potentiate self-purification, through the vow of living the *brahmacharya*, in Sanskrit, a celibate and disciplined life. He describes his active participation as a member of nursing, in the support group, for the Boer War together with the British cause. In the return of the war, he articulates procedures for the sanitary reform and for the campaign against hunger, with the collaboration of the Congress. Back to India, he works with lawyers to understand the new structures of the Congress and the Indian Parliament and returns to Natal.

In the fourth part, he brings his experiences in Natal, when he collaborates with a group of Indians again in the nursing sector in the Zulu “rebellion”, helping the wounded Zulus. He deepened in the teachings and practices of the vegetable-based food diet. He explains his approach to spirituality. He forms with collaborators a community in the light of *satyagraha* (the firmness in truth, in the fight for righteous rights), the *ashram* (“community” in Sanskrit). He studies and experiences hydrotherapy medical treatments and food diet.

At the end of the work, he returns to India and begins to pilgrimage inside the country. He talks with local communities about the ills of the Indians’ lives, creates community proposals to solve conflicting situations, experiences the knowledge of distant lives, of the humblest villages and affirms how important was his “firmness in truth”, of his human sacrifices and his human ideal. Finally, he collaborates in the popularization of the Indian Congress in the villages, irritates the British authorities and sees the Indians getting

angry and acting without fear in the search of their freedom and respect. At the end of the autobiography, he brings the history of the weavers' claims for raw material.

## **Luther King Jr.: nonviolent activism**

The book "*The Autobiography of Martin Luther King*" is a collection of the material narrated by Martin Luther King Jr., by the historian Clayborne Carson, of 2014.

The 464-pages work features the path of Luther King Jr. as an activist and one of the leading authors of many historic protests in the United States. Luther King Jr. led the black people's claim to occupy equally the enclosures and public spaces, as well as the right to vote and other expressive marches. In Western history, he also left the possibility of the practice of protesting starting from the nonviolence.

The book presents 32 chapters. In the beginning, there is the autobiographical recovery of his childhood and his family cultural heritage. The Luther King Jr.'s initial confrontation with social inequality and the segregationist system is also described. The union with the musician Coretta, and the theoretical alignment of protesting in the light of nonviolence, based on the works of Mahatma Gandhi, is punctuated. At the outset, he also contextualizes Luther King Jr. as determined to be a pastor and to continue studying about social theology. He finishes these chapters with the departure of Luther King Jr. to Montgomery, to serve at the Baptist Church, on Dexter Avenue.

The inspiration of the protests, with Rosa Parks daring to disrespect the segregationist laws by sitting on the specific seat for white people, marks chapter eight onwards. Luther King Jr. discusses the Parks' trajectory to local protests of collective confrontation, with politicians in Montgomery, against segregationist bus seat laws. Luther King Jr. features manifestations in favor of Parks and joins the Association for the Progress of Montgomery, as a chief member, articulating the protests.

Chapter thirteen defines the formative strategy of nonviolent protest; taught by Gandhi, starts from the logic of shaming the opponent using the protest of nonviolence. The subjects in front of the protests presented specific demands, also organized collectively to take to the streets in significant number, besides having a participatory collaboration of groups formed by white people. Luther King Jr. describes the practice of nonviolence: it was up to demonstrators receive name-calling, abuse, mistreatment, punching, kicking, scars and assassination without returning violently. Therefore, in the practice of the protests, most of the demonstrators were able to resist peacefully, but they resisted, except that they used nonviolence as a defense north. For Luther King Jr. this scenario marked the violence practiced by police, politics, and government, and by the other clearly segregationist groups.

From chapter fourteen onwards, the autobiography exposes protests and anti-segregation demonstrations. It explores Luther King Jr., as a mediator and collaborator among religious and private institutions, for them to encourage claims, especially by paying the bail of thousands of activists arrested in the country for participating in the protest

marches. It narrates the formation of movements extra city and in the south region, in the protests for rights and freedom, as the march on Washington and the campaign of Chicago.

At the conclusion of the autobiography, Luther King Jr. narrates his prominence against the government's position of bringing American soldiers into the Vietnam War. He justifies his understanding on the expression "black power", initially identifying problems of linguistic and political characteristics. He finishes the work bringing futuristic imaginations, affirming the existence of the moment in which the black people will be included; however, he does not see himself in this projection.

### **Mandela: from the right to life**

The book "*Nelson Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom*" (2012) printed in 1994, divided into eleven parts, presents 776 pages. Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela narrates most of the autobiography at the prison in Robben Island, South Africa, with the collaboration of the oldest members of the African National Congress (ANC) party. However, some chapters after the prison time are detailed after his election and end of the *apartheid* regime in the country.

At the beginning of the work, he describes his childhood and rural environment where he grew up. He points to his father's death as the challenging moment and narrates the chance to resume life in other affection relationships in the Great Place with the education of the regent and his family.

In the second and third moments, he explains how he fled to the capital, Johannesburg, with his companion, Justice, the regent's son. He also describes the experiences of housing, in small rooms, until arriving at the popular settlement of Alexandra. He tells about starting in the politics, participating in the ANC, in addition to mentioning the work and experience in advocacy and mediation. He contextualizes the history of the country, identifies the segregated and inhuman scenery of the works, everyday life, transportation, and the black people life's in general.

In the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh chapters, his life is summed up in the struggle for human rights in South Africa, he clarifies the choices he made in opting for nonviolence, when carrying out civil disobedience and non-cooperation to the apartheid, and later in the narrative, points to sabotage and guerrilla warfare as assertive proposals against the South African government. He justifies these experiences, in part, by the government to enact Martial Law and to significantly restrict the survival of any political party that goes against the Nationalism of the *apartheid* regime, of President Malan. Still, in the course of these chapters, he speaks of each defense preparation, arguments, statements, scenarios and judgments, since a popular atmosphere of protests and demonstrations has been created.

In the eighth moment, he exposes his life in the prison, on Robben Island. He describes the routine as a political prisoner, heavy work, breaking stones, corn-based food, and difficulty in contacting guards for the various claims.



In the ninth and tenth chapters, he comments on the affective re-significations that the Island has given him. He also describes that because of some constant claims they have been able to improve prison difficulties. He also points out that his role as a lawyer, even as a clandestine one, has contributed to several prisoners who would have no defense. He exposes the political collaboration of the ANC in prison, explains how they organized, guided and decided collectively.

In the final part, he talks on negotiating with the then president of South Africa, Klerk, about the end of the *apartheid* regime, and the dismantling of several segregationist laws. He exposes how the process of constitution of the national assembly, elected by popular vote, occurred for the occupation of positions in the South African government. He describes the election. Talks about the speech he pronounced, as president of South Africa and in the last part reflects on personal experiences of kindness, fear, love and freedom.

## Results & Discussion

From the socio-historical description and the definitions of the CA delimited in this research, we move towards interpretations and reinterpretations, following the order of presentation of the autobiographies.

Mahatma Gandhi formed with friends and collaborators a space for discussion, on account of society in Natal - South Africa - practicing cultural prejudice with Indian workers who came to the city on informal contracts, which rather than officials were assigned to servitude characteristics by the contracting officers, besides the aggression and physical violence. Called Congress, the sphere of information and protest, it provided a claiming atmosphere both in Natal and in the region, in 1894 (GANDHI, 2014). In the episodes of these narratives on formation of the Congress, the concept categories of communication and human rights are visualized. The shared communication (PERUZZO, 2013) in the Congress intervened in the deconstruction represented by the Indians themselves about them, as well as expanded their constructions regarding the rights to work, health and access to assets such as those of historical and cultural patrimony (BOBBIO, 2004; GALLARDO, 2014).

Gandhi brings the claims of human rights, from the right to communication and the concept of *satyagraha*, in the breadth of the right to be (FROMM, 1956, 1976, 1977). For Gandhi, therefore, the citizen's struggle while being a right of the individual as forms of being and acting, is also related to this fulfillment of the being, so that the daily claims unfold in characteristics directed to the citizenship indeed.

The right to be in Gandhi includes the rationality of nonviolence, that is, the individual has the right to represent itself in the world in order to despise any form of violence. For the philosopher Muller (2007, p.197), Gandhi, in bringing ethical demands of nonviolence “[...] consolidates the humanity of man, as well as in the experimentation of nonviolent action strategy, which allows the peaceful resolution of conflicts”. He provokes by referring to Gandhi's practices, empirical answers of the human power to formulate resolutions of the

essential problematics on its own, which relate to the meaning of existence and its own history (MULLER, 2007, p.198 – Our translation).

The option for nonviolence (MULLER, 2007) of the being in Gandhi connects the individual to other related rights, especially to tenderness and love. Love is conceptualized as an evolved state of the socio-historical conflict of humanity (FROMM, 1976), it is also represented as a creating activity, and its role is to extend life. Tenderness is conceptualized as a constant deny of violence, both intimate and related to the external. This understanding places the presence of the other as indispensable for the conquest of actions on the basis of tenderness (RESTREPO, 1998). From this proposal on tenderness, the human being displaces its condition of a disarmed and impotent citizen to strengthen itself of the non-compromise of the “business of the death” (RESTREPO, 1998, p.81 – Our translation).

Recognized the right to be, tenderness and love, citizenship in Gandhi acts as a platform, connects rights, then expresses them; thus, it corroborates in the manifestation of *ahimsa*, in Sanskrit, the nonviolence to all beings.

From the north of *ahimsa*, the concept categories of dialogue (SENNETT, 2012; RESTREPO, 1998), trans-utilitarian being (FROMM, 1977) and love being (FROMM, 1956, 1976) are identified in Gandhi’s narratives when he returns to the interior of India and faces local deprivations, especially with the detailing of the conditions of abuse and injustice that the indigo farmers, in the Champaran region - north of India -, sequentially were submitted by the owners of the lands that they leased. In intermediating the situation, around 1917, Gandhi remains in the locality for approximately two years, listening to more than a hundred peasants, together with police authorities, and identifying that the problem transcended the production of indigo and other abusive taxes, also involving lack of infrastructure of basic sanitation, education, self-esteem and perspective of life for the families (GANDHI, 2014).

As a historical result, the abusive system of production and lease was abolished by law, just as illegal taxes were indicated to be reimbursed to the peasants. And so, the Agrarian Law Project was approved and with social value for the region of the peasants and their families (GANDHI, 2014).

Therefore, in Gandhi, the study for full citizenship belongs to the human being, who must seek to act in an ethical way with itself, in a process prior to its own claim and collective struggle, in order to precede and prepare the dialogical process with the other. Nonviolence in Gandhi allowed this observation because not being violent with the other is necessary to not be violent with yourself. The path of the citizen’s struggle under the light of nonviolence prospects ideologies of a different historical trajectory. In this sense, citizenship includes the right to tenderness and love and the paradigmatic change of nonviolence.

For Muller (2007), the ideology of violence instrumentalizes man. The key to a culture of nonviolence would be the reversal of this ideological process of applauding and heroizing violence. “The question that arises today for the rational man is whether it would not be possible to invent another story by experimenting another technique of action other than violence” (MULLER, 2007, p.244), in seeking to seize this man from his humanity and value.



Another example that refers to the concept category of the practice of nonviolence is the reconciliation between weavers and factory owners in Ahmedabad, on wage adjustment and working conditions (GANDHI, 2014). Gandhi proposed to organize collective actions of non-cooperation among the workers, as well as to form the *ashram* in the light of the practice of nonviolence (MULLER, 2007), making proposals that solidified the human brotherhood in community, in a cooperative environment, from the approximation of the differences between the existing social relations. The search for this human value in the social relations was also part of the idea of human rights in the experiences of combating racial segregation and social inequality in the autobiography of Martin Luther King Jr.

Luther King Jr. appropriated Gandhi's practice of nonviolence (MULLER, 2007), concept category, for the construction of his citizen practice, as well as was careful to include that other, a victim of the segregation system beyond black, that is, the white population.

In the historical context of segregated bus boycotts, until the law perished and no longer had a division in transportation, in Montgomery, in the southern US, it became a "popular act of non-cooperation" (CARSON; LUTHER KING JR., 2014, p.73-75 – Our translation), the demonstrators went to their daily activities walking or hitchhiking. The protest lasted 381 days, until 1956, when the US Supreme Court declared segregationist laws on buses unconstitutional. According to Luther King Jr., was essential for the movement to get organized from the tutelage of love (CARSON; LUTHER KING JR., 2014).

The lived ideals of love and trans-utilitarian being (FROMM, 1956, 1976, 1977), concept categories, configured Luther King Jr. to fight for the rights of the black society, manifesting itself not violently, that is, not cooperating with the discriminatory system on buses, then in schools and other public places. The late configuration of the movement corroborated in the claim for social equality and the right to vote.

This process of struggle for rights in which the other is part of an assertive proposal for unity, promotes dialogue (SENNETT, 2012; RESTREPO, 1998), concept category, and alterity to the component of citizenship.

The concept of alterity encompasses respect for the different in the exploration of its diversity to be contemplated (ARRUDA, 2002) and dialogue as the exchange of knowledge and experiences in the search for a common resolution, agreed and successful, from a conversation in between the parties (SENNETT, 2012). In this process, the negotiation of differences is valued (ARRUDA, 2002). One of the major obstacles to this negotiation came from the Western culture itself, which reinforces the unilateral action of emotional illiteracy, reducing the right and the alternative of affection to the human rationality (RESTREPO, 1998), and at the same time providing the "public" all rights and legalizations to govern the "intimate".

For Restrepo (1998), it is due to the Western culture the legacy of all information concerning the intimate, the subjective, being distanced from the movement of everyday political actions, minimizing the understanding by a full citizen ethic, which should also include how the relations of power in society are built "intimately" (RESTREPO, 1998, p.10

– Our translation). Based on this premise of subjugating the value of issues related to the intimate sphere and enhancing value by transferring control to the “public”, the difficulty of finding possibilities to get out of this unique outlet and see, for example, non-violence and the tenderness problematized as cultural platforms of law, is identified.

The citizenship proposal in Luther King Jr. contemplates alterity in the goal of including differences and emotional right. This position on citizenship is active and recognizes in political actions the human value of collective ethics.

The characteristics of active being made Mandela prefer to live, even in the hostile and torturous environment of Robben Island (MANDELA, 2012). In prison, they demanded glasses, long trousers, equal foods, light to study, and warned about injustices, no matter the size of them. In addition, “[...] we fought against injustice to preserve our humanity” (MANDELA, 2012, p.498 – Our translation).

In conversations with guards and other prison officials, Mandela describes the learning in talking from their references to political prisoners. “He would have believed that we were terrorists and communists who wanted to throw white men into the sea” (MANDELA, 2012, p.514 – Our translation). As the talks unfold, Mandela explained the non-racialist idea of the movement, the ANC’s politics, the intention of equal rights, and for some the Nationalist argument made no sense. Mandela’s central idea was to “disrupt the prejudices” of guards and officials (MANDELA, 2012, p.558 – Our translation).

Mandela did not relinquish his rights by avoiding the necessary conflict, on the contrary it was via conflict, between the police and authorities in the prison of the Island, and later, with the government, establishing the possibility of a contact between the parties, with the objective of generating equity between them, in order to grant their respective rights. Hence arises the need for the active being in the adversity of the other, even if different and distant (MULLER, 2007).

The perspective of alterity in the development of *post-apartheid* politics by Nelson Mandela contributed to the democratic basis in the country match with the dialogical approximation (SENNETT, 2012; RESTREPO, 1998), concept category. The process of struggle and citizen’s claim for human rights (concept category), social, civil, political, right to communication (concept category), right to freedom of action was subsidized by insistence on dialogue between antagonistic parties, from constructive conflicts, at times. However, the search for this citizenship was characterized by freedom of life, by greeting to life.

In a markedly violent atmosphere, where extermination was the political outlet of the government, Mandela cooperated by emancipating the value of life in dealing with his permanent negotiations, acting actively with the interlocutor: sometimes the government, sometimes the ethnic groups, sometimes the militias, sometimes his own party, recovering the central value of the right to life (FROMM, 1956, 1976, 1977).

The meaning of the hopeful man who claims life not counted by the violence in the country allows accrediting to the citizenship the integrity of the human. For Fromm (1977), the hopeful man is active and can, from the realities, add an alternative to differentiate

humanity from these conditions. From the existing conditions, dialogue and alterity guided the struggle for human rights in Mandela.

## Final considerations

In the trajectory of the activists, there is an apology to the creative life, promoting justice by the peers, through the citizen struggle, claiming human rights and human coexistence, both when appreciating alterity to their equals and to their different, in the difficult but possible mission of defying ideologies which became organic states.

Organic structures also develop the identity of human rights unrelated to its primary function of equality and pro-action to the human being. For the researcher of the area of study, Gallardo (2014, p.26 – Our translation), an artificial prototype of human rights is lived, because in the social imagination prevails the idea of “[...] transforming the enemies into beings that, for their wickedness, do not fill the concept of humanity”. This process, systematically organized ideologically, morally and politically, justifies violent wars and disputes because they present human beings who are losers in the podium of life.

The human rights researcher proposes as an outlet an integrative political work among the social majorities, in order to diagnose and revalue the rights. He indicates this process as human survival, of what is understood as humanity, today depends on the strengthening of this cultural process around human rights.

He explains how societies are significantly diluted in many minorities; the challenge is to resemantize by loosening the particularities of the liberating demands for majorities (GALLARDO, 2014). In a movement of articulation to produce a new culture of human rights, emphasizing: “[...] sensitivity of recognition, accompaniment and human solidarity. From a culture that bets on the risk of assuming the different that strives to grow in a liberating way, as a reference for learning and humanity” (GALLARDO, 2014, p.109 – Our translation).

The construction of this human rights culture perspective reflects the possibility of a civilizing experience, which matches the core of citizenship proposed by Gandhi, Luther King Jr. and Mandela (GALLARDO, 2014).

An important factor in this articulation of a human rights culture is the dialogical problematization between the singularities of the represented social groups, in order to develop their demands constructively (MULLER, 2007).

In the positioning of information quality and expression of communication, Peruzzo (2009, 2013) includes communicative activity, properly from the right to communication, as part of human rights. He bases the importance of communication as a propositional practice to emancipate the being, giving it possibilities to know more deeply its own rights in society. “[...] Communication can contribute to the processes of knowledge, organization, and action in order to ensure the fulfillment of all human rights” (PERUZZO, 2013, p.169 – Our translation).

The right to communication was used by Gandhi in the sphere of Congress in South Africa and later in India; as well as in any possibility of public defense. It was also incorporated into Mandela as a tool of political discourse and *anti-apartheid* education in the environments of judgment and manifestations. Luther King Jr. took advantage of the religious spaces, marches, interviews, declarations, and others to promote the right to communication as a platform to claim the practice of nonviolence and the desegregationist vision.

The analyzed narratives highlight the historical importance in negotiating from the skills of the dialogue, the alterity, and the love being mode. The crossings of the activists, starting from the sharing of citizenship and characteristics of action to dialogues, restructure human rights closer to their human values, promoting life in collective, in the permanent challenge for justice in social relations.

In the conclusions, it was verified that the experiences and knowledge in the autobiographies added concepts to the citizenship, contributing to the emancipation of the individual, just as of the individual in the dynamic with the collective. In the movement of the increasingly complex and diversified societies, to think about citizenship in the optics of activists is to give light to the formulations on dialogue, alterity, nonviolence, active, hopeful, tender and love being, and apart from the conceptualizations, is to find in these references the hits to the practical and negotiable life.

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