Article

Career Exploration as Social and Emotional Learning: A Collaborative Ethnography with Spanish Children from Low-Income Contexts

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Abstract: Children's career exploration is a critical aspect of career development. Through it, children explore the interplay between their different life roles, including those related to work (in a broad sense), learning, and education. Through career exploration, children can (re)construct the emotions derived from the interactions between personal and contextual factors by giving meaning to life experiences. This process involves cognitive and affective activities. Evidence suggests that children from low-income contexts are more likely to drop out of school and show lower educational aspirations. Providing career exploration interventions introduces an intentional learning that allows children to develop a higher level of career awareness and increase their aspirations for the future. The sample analyzed consisted of students between 6 and 8 years old from a low-income school in Seville (Spain). The data collection methods used have been those of collaborative ethnography (e.g., unstructured interviews, student productions, and photographs). Co-analysis was the chosen method for systematizing the information used in this research. Our results have revealed a system of influences which plays an important role in the different contexts and emotions that the children derive from their interactions with different spaces and socialization agents. In short, through career exploration, children mobilize exploratory behaviors, providing emotional responses. Collaborative ethnography has been shown to be a valid process for research on career exploration as social and emotional learning.

Keywords: career exploration; qualitative career assessment; social and emotional learning; intervention study; early education; low-income contexts

1. Introduction

1.1. Career Development Systems Theory

A career is "the interaction of work roles and other life roles over a person's lifespan, including how they balance paid and unpaid work, and their involvement in learning and education" (ELPGN, 2015, p. 11) [1]. These roles include those of child, student, citizen, worker, and so on. A career is configured through the interaction between individual characteristics (e.g., aspirations, cognitive, and behavioral skills) and life contexts (e.g., family, school, friends, community, and country's historical times) (Ferrari et al., 2014) [2]. The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELPGN, 2014) [3] defines career development as "the lifelong process of managing learning, work, leisure and transitions in order to move toward a personally determined and evolving future" (p. 13). Career is constructed from early childhood, through a process in which individuals build themselves through language and social interaction (Savickas, 2011) [4]. Therefore, this process of construction has a fluid nature; it can be constrained by social and structural barriers that place the person in a situation of privilege or social disadvantage (Arthur, 2017, 2019) [5,6].

In this paper, we adopt a systemic approach to the concept of career development (McMahon and Patton, 2006; Patton and McMahon, 2014; McMahon and Watson, 2012) [7–9], which is considered to be a dynamic process of influences from the different systems to which the child belongs: the intrapersonal system (gender, age, beliefs, interests, values, roles, etc.); the social system (family, peers, media, etc.); and the macrosocial system (political decisions, historical trends, etc.). Opportunity and chance also represent a part of the system of influences. This approach therefore establishes an interactive link between all systems, as well as a recursive relationship between past, present, and future (see Figure 1).
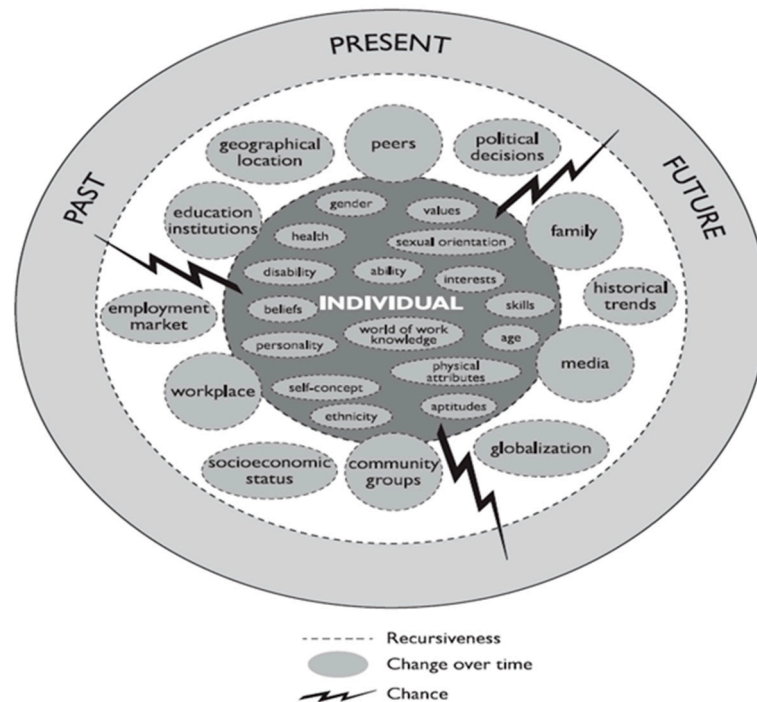

Figure 1. The systems theory framework of career development. Reprinted from McMahon & Patton (2018:232) (Copyright © Patton and McMahon (1999).

1.2. Early Years Career Exploration

From this standpoint, career exploration is viewed as a "process of gaining understanding about oneself and the labor world, as well as of how self and environment may interact to produce desirable outcomes" (Cheung, 2015, 157) [10]. The self-and-environment exploration can be seen as two aspects of a single process (Oliveira et al., 2016) [11] in which attitudes, cognitions, behaviors, and emotions interact (Oliveira et al., 2015; Taveira and Rodríguez-Moreno, 2003) [12,13]. The cognitive component concerns the knowledge children have acquired about themselves and their educational and social world. The affective component refers to the feelings about the insights that emerge during the career exploration process (Ferrari et al., 2015) [2].

Career exploration is a key process in career development learning, through which children can imagine and construct possible futures which are consistent with their community (Hartung et al., 2008) [14]. The formation of critical beliefs and the expectations that shape their career development begins between the ages of 6 and 10 (Oliveira et al., 2016) [11]. This period is also important for their socioemotional development. Literature recognizes the role of emotion in career development (Meijers and Lengelle, 2015; Oliveira et al., 2015; Vondracek et al., 2014) [12,15,16]. Emotions play an important role in career development, and children require help to co-construct the meaning of their emotional experiences (Oliveira et al., 2015; Watson et al., 2015) [12,17]. Experiencing positive or negative emotions may, respectively, facilitate a more detailed exploration or hinder it. Therefore, it is important to create learning environments that support the co-construction

of a sense of meaning of the emotional experiences implied in the exploratory process of lived experiences (Meijers and Lenguelle, 2015; Oliveira et al., 2015) [12,15]. To work with children implies the need to use a collaborative approach (Pahl and Pool, 2011; Campbell and Lassiter, 2014; Haviland, 2017) [18–20], which responds to the right of all people to engage in the process of self-construction (Maree, 2018a, 2018b) [21,22], giving children the role of "only experts in their own lives" (McMahon and Watson, 2017; Banks et al., 2018) [23,24]. Qualitative career assessment is a process which can create these learning environments.

1.3. Qualitative Career Assessment

The qualitative assessment of career exploration engages children in a collaborative process of exploration and meaningful contribution to their life. Children act as contextual and self-interaction observers. The focus is not only on exploratory behaviors but on the subjective and emotional aspects of exploration (Oliveira et al., 2016) [11]. Qualitative career assessment is a collaborative modality of intervention and learning process (Brott, 2015; McMahon and Watson, 2015) [25,26]. Qualitative career assessment activities propose to the children and the counselor situations in which they must co-construct a story. (McMahon et al., 2005) [27]. The integration of visual and artistic methodologies, such as those used in this work, favors the involvement of students in the process (Byrne et al., 2016) [28]. The use of qualitative career assessment encourages children to reflect and express who they are becoming (Hartung, 2017) [29] through the co-construction of meanings and critical consciousness (McMahon et al., 2019) [30]. In this way, children act as active agents who can construct their own narrative on their life themes, that derive from the subjective experience of their own careers. (McMahon, 2020) [31].

Along with Meijers and Lengelle (2015) [15], we consider that "it is essential for learners to be helped through cognitive learning stages, with the help of dialogue about concrete experiences, which aims to pay attention to emotions and broadens and deepens what is expressed" (p. 41). In sum, qualitative career assessment enables children to access the conscious and unconscious meanings of their life experience (Romero et al., 2021a,b) [32,33] and, consequently, leads them to the "active mastery of what was passive and suffered" (Savickas, 2011, p. 11) [4].

1.4. Social and Emotional Career Learning

There is a consensus for the need of facilitation of career exploration in school curriculum through the collaboration of the various systems of influences (family, school, and communities) (e.g., Porfeli and Lee, 2012; Skorikov and Patton, 2007; Watson and McMahon, 2020) [34–36]. Evidence also indicates that interventions that deeply engage children in meaningful processes of exploring themselves and their possible futures positively affect their performance (Lapan et al. 2017) [37]. Woolley et al. (2013) [38] show how the use of exploratory methodologies favors the emergence of a better understanding of themselves and, at the same time, the improvement of the educational process. Children also become aware of how their personal involvement (agency) can influence the daily decisions that affect them (Crause et al., 2017) [39]. All these elements are linked to the purpose of socioemotional learning (SEL), which aims at developing the five essential competencies identified by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2005) [40]: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. These five competencies have been endorsed in multiple research studies. (CASEL, 2013; Durlak et al., 2011; Mahoney et al., 2020; Weissberg et al., 2015) [40–44].

Through career exploration, children can express thoughts, emotions, and perceptions of academic performance and their school adaptation (Arbona, 2000) [45] as factors influencing their learning. A significant body of research has shown the impact of career exploration interventions on children's achievement in school. Career exploration improves knowledge children have of their own career motivations, their interest in studying, or

their meaning-making of learning, which positively affects their commitment to learning and their attitude toward school (Edwin and Prescod, 2018; Kennyet al., 2006; Shin et al., 2016; Scherrer and Preckel, 2019) [46–49]. Career exploration helps students to recognize the connection between what they learn at school and their future. This has a positive impact on their involvement in school and on their engagement in learning.

To sum up, the qualitative career assessment is therefore consistent with a narrative and constructivist process of career construction, and hence, it is a form of career development learning. Career learning and SEL are closely related. On the one hand, career is built through a systemic process of interactions entailing social systems (family, school, friends, social networks, etc.) and a personal system; this involves lifelong learning (from childhood to active aging) that includes social and emotional learning. On the other hand, SEL is a predictor of the results of the processes that are linked to the career as academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011; Panayiotou et al., 2019) [42,50], long-term success in college, careers, and life (Mahoney et al., 2020) [43], as well as "a range of important outcomes in late adolescence and adulthood, including high school graduation, postsecondary completion, employment, financial stability, physical health, and overall mental health and well-being" (Chatterjee Singh and Duraiappah, 2020, p. 28) [51]. Qualitative career assessment tools can enhance lifelong career learning and, thus, the relative social and emotional learning. These approaches underpin the objectives of this work.

Considering all that was pointed out in our introduction, we set the following research objectives:

1. To explore the possibilities of collaborative ethnography in the study of career exploration as social and emotional learning.
2. Identify the social system factors that influence career construction of children in low-income contexts and the resulting emotions.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Our Research

The research was divided into several phases, which, after a first analysis of needs, completed a recursive cycle of planning, intervention, observation, and reflection. During this cycle, the research we planned was subjected to a monthly (minor) and quarterly (major) analysis, and it was reviewed by the people in charge of the research process. The result of this review was a new planning cycle (revised) turned intervention, giving rise to the subsequent collaborative observation and reflection.

This research is part of the *Building the Third Literacy Space in the San José Obrero School* project, funded by the Junta de Andalucía (Ministry of Education). The "My Map" program was developed as a part of this research, and its main objective was to help students develop personal and social skills related to career exploration (socioemotional and career learning).

The results presented in this article correspond to the development of five actions that are described below (see Table 1). For more extensive information, see Moreno-Morilla and Romero-Rodríguez (2020) [52].

Table 1. Actions included in the "My Map" program.

Actions	Description
My traveling backpack	The incorporation of this artifact in the teaching–learning process allowed us to create bridges that connected the children's homes with the school. This "traveling backpack" became the object that helped us gather information and materials that are relevant to the career exploration process. It also served to involve families in the research process.

Table 1. *Cont.*

Actions	Description
Photolanguage	This action used evocation through photographs as a tool for pupils to reflect on their present as students and on their expectations for the future. The aim was to make students aware of the importance of the present–future relationship.
My silhouette	The purpose of this action was for participants to spend time thinking about themselves to later present themselves to the rest of their peers (especially their psychological and personal traits). Secondly, it was intended that, through their public presentation of their expectations and interests, they would concretize some goals in front of others.
My story in photographs	The photobiography facilitated the awareness of the different milestones, moments, and significant people in children's life trajectories. It also made it possible to observe the evolution they have gone through, as well as the significant people and places in their lives. On the other hand, it allowed the children to identify the place they occupy in the different systems they are part of (e.g., family, school, etc.).

2.2. Research Design, Description of Participants, and Data Collection

This research project is focused on the first cycle of Primary Education (6–8 years old), since it is a particularly vulnerable period due to the transition the students are experiencing. As far as design is concerned, this research is a nested multiple case study, a type 4 design in the terminology used by Yin (2014) [53]. This design is multiple, since it studies several cases represented by the students, and it is nested because it analyses different subunits in relation to the mentioned cases (e.g., career exploration, systems of career influences, etc.).

The school in which the research was carried out is in an urban context of social exclusion. It is a public school in which almost 400 children between the ages of 3 and 12 are enrolled, belonging to 33 countries in Europe, Africa, America, and Asia. The sampling method we used was deliberate, according to children's availability and to their level of class attendance (high percentage of school absenteeism and mobility). The initial sample saw the participation of 98 children, although in the final phase of the research, the sample was reduced to 64 children. These children's sociocultural and family context is defined by constant instability and uncertainty. The change of residence is recurrent, as well as the alternation of people who care for these children (e.g., mother who disappeared for 9 months, a grandmother who is temporarily responsible for the care of her granddaughter, refugee mothers and daughters, etc.). Most households are experiencing unemployment, needing to resort to social assistance for basic sustenance (e.g., food and housing). Specifically, the participants selected for this research have the following characteristics: 68% male and 32% female; 9 countries (Spain, Italy, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Morocco, and Senegal); 72% migrants or from migrant families; 70% of the families have precarious employment (unemployment, informal economy); and 2 girls in foster care due to family neglect.

The information collection procedures we used were those of collaborative ethnography. Unstructured interviews, participant observation, document analysis, student productions, diaries between teachers and researchers, photo-taking (taken by the students and research staff themselves), and audio/video recordings served as basis for the research. These techniques were chosen because of their noninvasive nature: their introduction into the classroom respected the environment and the existing relationships without disturbing the curriculum development. The data collection process focused on the daily interaction between researchers, teachers, and students. In addition, some other actions, such as the "My traveling backpack" activity, were used to keep the home and school spaces connected throughout the intervention/research process. This backpack became a key element, be-

cause it allowed families to bring their children's everyday objects (e.g., toys, letters, photos, etc.) to class throughout the school year, and these artifacts were central in the process of exploring their careers and the social and emotional learning they were developing.

Every single activity and experience were aimed at "awakening" each student's curiosity as the axis for the development of their career exploration. The actions of exploratory behavior, self-confidence, commitment to self-construction, and leadership in their learning process have been essential elements in the development of career exploration, as well as social and emotional learning. The data collected during the observation phase were reviewed and interpreted during the reflection phase.

2.3. Ethics

The children's and their families' participation in the project were voluntary and followed the ethical requirement for informed consent, which restricts the use of the information obtained for research purposes only and guarantees the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. Moreover, this research followed the internal regulations for Social Sciences required by the Ethical Committee for Experimentation of the University of Seville.

2.4. Data analysis

The collected data were approached through a "co-analysis", which should be understood as a "process in which a dialogue takes place between two or more researchers, in relation to the same data set, to reach a shared interpretation about the same" (Cornish et al., 2014, p. 79) [54]. Co-analysis, which is part of collaborative ethnography, seeks the development of critical thinking in a local context in which the participants are part of the research team. The research followed a hands-on approach and pursued the search for knowledge that would respond to the interests and needs of the entire educational community. The co-analysis sessions we developed have been recurrent and have been maintained throughout the whole research process. During the co-analysis, the children were asked to reflect on the social factors (family, friends, and school) that influence their career and on the emotions that arise in their interaction with these factors and in the process of exploration. All the results were contrasted and triangulated with the families and teachers. In fact, the authors of this article are both the researchers (authors 1 and 2) and the schoolteachers (authors 3 and 4), who are also considered researchers. Five meetings were held with teachers to contrast the results obtained simultaneously with the data collection. Once the process was completed, a co-production was prepared (with the participation of the children and teachers), in which all the results were synthesized. Regarding the families, an initial meeting was held in which the research was explained, and their collaboration was requested. This co-production was sent to the families, who were asked to provide suggestions and comments. The situation caused by the pandemic did not make it possible to hold a planned final meeting with the families, but their comments were collected. Both agents were part of the research findings co-construction process. In co-analysis, there is no categorization or reduction of information. The authors analyze in-depth with the participants the meaning of verbal and written discourse, triangulating the information with the rest of the participants (families, teachers, and other members of the community).

3. Results

Children have identified the social factors that influence their career development (family, friends, and school) [7–10] through the career exploration process [11–17] which impacts their social and emotional learning [34–51]. These results have been the product of a qualitative career assessment process [25–33] using a collaborative methodology in which the voices of the children were the focus [18–24]. The systemic perspective outlined in the introduction of this paper [7–10] was considered in the analysis of the results. The career assessment and exploration process we developed made it easier for the children to express

the emotions that emerge when identifying the factors that influence their academic and personal trajectory [11–13,15–17]. The children identified intrapersonal and social factors, and these factors do not occur in isolation but interact with each other to form a system of influences [7–10] with a strong affective component [11–13,15–17]. We focus precisely on the emotions generated by these interactions to present the results of our study.

3.1. Family as a Place to 'Feel What I feel'

3.1.1. Precarious Situation

Families live in a situation of sociolabor precariousness that influences the relationships between parents and children as well as the emotions associated with these relationships and the configuration of the home space itself. Children show very polarized emotions; the intensity with which they live their daily experiences makes them generate contrary and very changing emotions. (E.g., "I am very happy because I am going to play with my cousins." (Alba, 7 years old, 11.35h; "Nobody loves me, nobody wants to play with me, I feel happy when I cry because I make friends. When I get sad, I take friends away from my brother and my sister." (Alba, 7 years old, 13.30 h)). In this sense, it is common for them to go from a state of maximum happiness to a state of great sadness that sometimes paralyzes them. All the children show awareness of their situation of "poverty" and of the assumption that this situation will always accompany them (an aspect that has an impact on aspirations in two senses: acceptance and lack of aspiration; aspiration for social mobility).

3.1.2. Family as a Source of Well-Being

In general terms, talking about family is a source of satisfaction and joy for children. They refer to the moments they lived beyond the physical-temporal limits of their household (e.g., "Here I am happy with my grandparents and my cousins."—pointing to a drawing he has made depicting his family living in Africa—(Sharik, 7 years old)). All of them relate situations that produce pleasure and well-being ("This was for my neighborhood when my mother taught me to skate" (Ana, 7 years old)). This manifestation of positive emotions is not only seen through their oral discourse, but also through their gestures (e.g., wide eyes, big smile, etc.) that evidence the desire for reunion and pride in being part of their respective families.

It could be said that in the family environment the experience of emotions linked to well-being are an aim in themselves ("We don't care who wins or loses, we care that we had a lot of fun, I had a great time... and that's it" (Alejandra, 7 years old); "I'm sad because mom has to work a lot, but when she arrives I'm so happy and she always brings me a little gift. (Gabriela, 7 years old)). As it can be seen, despite the extreme situations they experience in their families, they emphasize the positive aspects, highlighting the learning that is meaningful to them. Almost all of them mention some learning experience within the family (learning to skate, to fish, to swim, to cook, etc.).

3.1.3. Transmission of Cultural Values

The results also show how home space represents an important source of transmission of their cultural values, which are represented in the children's narratives through traditional festivities ("Here I was with my family from here celebrating in our church" (Adif, 6 years old); "Here we were happy because we were in our feast and with the clothes we wear. Teacher, we were celebrating the feast of the lamb" (Asad, 7 years old)). Family is a space that enables the development of conversations around shared activities ("Here is my father telling me something that is in the movie, and I am also talking about the movie" (Cristian, 7 years old); "Here mom was teaching me how to make pastries" (Alisha, 7 years old)). The children relate their home to their cultural heritage, in short, a space of nonjudgment and encounter with their religious beliefs and cultural practices (being able to BE without being judged). In this sense, they recognize that the family environment facilitates the development of meaningful learning for them, even if they are aware that, in

most cases, this is not transferable to other spaces, such as school ("I learn Arabic when I go to the mosque with dad, so I can talk to my cousins from Morocco" (Ashraf, 8 years old); "The sound of the guitar reminds me of some Venezuelan songs that my granddaddy used to teach me" (Gabriela, 7 years old); "My brothers teach me a little Portuguese because my parents and my brothers are from there, I came from there too, but in my mother's belly" (Stefano, 6 years old)).

3.1.4. Gender Roles Transmission

It can also be seen how family acts as a model for the transmission of gender roles. An important part of the children's narratives shows stereotyped roles and behaviors. The children's verbal discourse shows a clear awareness of the biological differences between men and women, as well as of their roles in society and their expectations and functions (stereotyped on the basis of gender). These representations are a clear example of the social learning that takes place in the family context, although subtle differences can be appreciated, depending on their culture of origin ("On weekends I am with my father in the park playing soccer, my mother is not there because she has to work at home" (Abdel, 6 years old); "Grandma is the one who makes the food, sets the table and cleans everything. Grandpa just sleeps and watches TV all the time and yells if we bother him" (Alba, 7 years old); "My sister helps mom and prepares the table for when dad and I arrive" (José, 7 years old)).

3.2. *School and I, a "Love–Hate" Story*
3.2.1. School as a Space of Homogenization

The analysis of the results shows how school is considered by the teachers and the students themselves as a space of homogenization. The school space helps them to escape from the "adult responsibility" that they assume at home from an early age (e.g., they cook alone, they take care of their younger siblings, they do the shopping, etc.). The children see school as something that "is different from them", but at the same time, they consider it as a space of security and tranquility where they have the support of teachers and peers. Children's school trajectories are marked by positive and negative emotions that are produced as a reaction to the interaction of different influencing factors. The positive or negative nature of their emotions is not generated by the factor itself (e.g., school), but by the way children interact with it. School can provoke emotions such as boredom ("When I work a lot, I feel bored, tired, I don't feel like going back (José, 7 years old); "I have chosen a picture for school in which there is a frightened girl because at school they scold me when I make mistakes. Carmen is always punished because she can't read, and her grandmother can't help her" (Lara, 6 years old); I don't like coming to school, I don't like doing homework, I also take exams that I don't like" (Rafa, 7 years old)). These emotions are generated from experiences that are linked to repetitive and academic tasks.

3.2.2. Social Relationships at School

However, positive emotions prevail; in this case, they are generated by experiences that are related to social relationships and to the well-being children experience when they feel part of a group. The children identify emotions related to satisfaction ("I feel satisfied with myself because we work together and help each other in everything" (Cristian, 7 years old)), happiness ("I feel happy because I like being with my friends in class, they are good and they love me" (Andrea, 7 years old)); joy ("I like this picture because they are laughing like me when I am with my friends, it gives me a lot of joy" (Lucía, 6 years old)); comfort ("I feel comfortable with all my friends, I learn little things and I play" (Lara, 7 years old)). Well-being is generated by both play and shared work ("Here this girl is happy, that's why I chose her, because I am happy when I am in class with classmates, I like to play and work with classmates, but not alone" (Blanca, 6 years old)). Personal relationships, however, can also be a reason for sadness when they are not well resolved ("I can't stop being sad

because I have no friends, nobody wants to play with me and the teacher always tells me I'm bad" (Alba, 7 years old)).

The importance of these interactions' positive experience can be seen in the influence it has on the students' self-esteem ("a classmate of ours said that I am a good classmate and I liked it a lot. It is the first time that one of my classmates said that to me"; "in the silhouette they told me 'You are my best friend', and I felt loved"; "they told me 'Smart' and when I read that word, I felt very good").

3.2.3. Type of Activities at School

Another factor that produces positive emotions is the connection of activities that take place in moments of rest or play: ("Happy . . . because I like to play in the playground" (Ana, 7 years old), "I chose this picture because the children are playing" (Damián, 7 years old); "I chose this picture because they are playing, but in class you can't play... it's in the playground" (Jasmine, 7 years old)). They also show well-being in school activities that connect with their interests when they are aware learning. Some of these emotions are "hallucination" ("I hallucinate with the things I learn, we have learned many types of Science" (Carlota, 7 years old)), happiness ("I chose this picture (happy girl) because I like reading a lot, so you can imagine and dream many things, and I read at home too" (Flores, 7 years old); "I feel happy at school because I like learning, so my brain grows and I can teach my mom to read and write. If she knows how to read and add, she can have a store and earn money" (Sharik, 6 years old)).

3.2.4. School Spaces

Some school spaces also produce positive emotions in children, especially those where autonomous learning is promoted, through play and the development of creative activities (e.g., library, playground, gymnasium, and morning class): ("I love being in the playground because I feel free and I see birds (Abel, 7 years old); "The library is my favorite place because there are many books and I can choose what to read" (Flores, 7 years old); "In the canteen we have a great time, we are together, we can chat and we laugh with nonsense" (Laura, 7 years old)). On the other hand, the classroom becomes a space of rejection, because it represents nonsignificant learning from a sociocultural point of view (curriculum; standardized activities; closed, individualistic and standardized space; error penalization; and classroom hierarchy). This situation affects more those who come from a more complex family and social situation ("I come to school to bother because I am sad, I don't want to read and the teacher punishes me in the corner all the time" (Alba, 7 years old)). However, children coming from more "normalized" situations have better internalized the concept that the school structure has to be the way it is (they assume the hegemonic and hierarchical role of the school ("I love school because I learn things about painters, scientists and all that" (Flores, 7 years old)).

3.2.5. ECE to PE Transition

The dynamic nature of children's experiences in and with their context, and the emotions that derive from it, is clearly illustrated in the way they narrate their ECE-PE transition process. This process is lived from the "paradox" ("I felt a lot of happiness and also fear" (Carlos, 6 years old)) between "feeling important" ("I remember when I went to Primary School that when I climbed the stairs I felt, I don't know, like a king" (Javier, 7 years old); "excited because I had the sense that, hey, I have gone to a higher level!" (Laura, 7 years old)) and fear ("I was nervous because I was afraid" (Ana, 6 years old)). This fear is very present in the transition process. The uncertainty of the beginning of a new stage is accompanied by the fear of failure ("I felt nervous because... I don't know, I thought it was going to go a little bit wrong" (Rocío, 7 years old)), of new relationships ("I didn't know if there were going to be new people" (Amín, 6 years old); "nervous because I thought there were new people" (Alejandro, 7 years old)), of the teachers' demands ("I was worried that in Primary School there would be a stricter teacher" (Rocío, 7 years old). They

identify these emotions with the gray color ("I represent gray because of fear" (Carmen, 7 years old)) and yellow ("Yellow because I was very nervous" (Antonio, 7 years old)). The experience of fear leads children to experience the transition as an act of "bravery" that is preceded by the achievement of reaching the goal of being in Primary School (which is a "victory").

Positive emotions are linked to the awareness of achievement, in this case, that of having passed the ECE stage and reached the PE stage ("I was very happy that I was going to Primary School" (Luis, 7 years old); "... I was very excited because I couldn't believe I was going to Primary School" (Alejandra, 6 years old); "Nervous and excited. Excited because I was going to move up a grade" (Ahmed, 7 years old)). The colors with which they mostly identify these emotions are blue ("Blue reminds me of victory and my country" (Adil, 7 years old)) and green ("Green is joy" (Ana)).

3.3. Virtual Spaces: A Window from Which to See the World They Dream of
Social Networks as a Space for Socialization

Social networks are a space of "free" interaction and escape for these children. We must consider that their model of spatial interaction is very limited, and it is largely limited to their neighborhood. This means that any extension of this space produces emotions of astonishment and exceptionality ("I saw in my grandmother's cell phone a huge park for children, there was even a swimming pool" (Alba, 7 years old)); "Well, I saw the beach on my mother's Facebook, and there were jellyfish... they were big and very blue!" (Ana, 6 years old); "A girl was riding with her mother on a plane to go far away" (Javier, 7 years old)). The co-analysis sessions held with the participants show how social networks are for them an opportunity to "make friends", to "travel", to "visit their families" but above all, an opportunity to diffuse the situation of social exclusion and marginalization that they suffer in most cases. The most common socialization channels are Tik Tok, YouTube, and WhatsApp ("In Tik Tok I am like a princess, super pretty because I have filters" (Rocío, 7 years old); "Well, my friend has put me in a group of neighbors and they send us songs by WhatsApp, it's super fun." (Carmen, 7 years old)). Immersion in cyberspace generates very positive emotions for them, and they have the possibility of "satiating" their needs, e.g., seeing their grandparents who are in Morocco or enjoying a beach vacation through YouTube ("yesterday I made a video call with my grandparents and saw the sea and the blue houses of my country in the background" (Merien, 7 years old)). For families, these virtual spaces are a mode of entertainment that allows them to keep their children "under control" while they work at piece rate. Families consider technology as a toy, without being aware that the meaning this tool has for their children is the possibility of finding an alternative community that provides them with the desired path to upward social mobility ("In Fortnite I have friends who speak English and have a lot of money, their houses are big (Sergio, 7 years old)). Children manifest emotions linked to blissful satisfaction, admiration, and surprise for what they have found, but above all their emotions are linked to the feeling that they are part of a recognized community ("They have a lot of money and so do their parents, and they travel a lot. I see it in Tik Tok" (Javier, 6 years old). However, when they are forced to leave this desired "reality", they manifest negative emotions (e.g., anger, kicking, insults, etc.) which are addressed against their closest relatives and which emphasize the rejection toward the situation of vulnerability they live.

4. Discussion

The conclusions discussed in this section are based on the overall constructivist framework and findings from the Results section, which have been triangulated with stakeholders. Collaborative ethnography has allowed us to listen to the voices of the children in identifying the factors that influence the career construction and to get closer to the social and emotional learning that derives from this process. Children construct stories about who they are and who they are becoming through the exercise of giving meaning to their experience through self-reflection and social interaction (Ahn, 2011) [55]. As

authors, they configure a personal narrative of their lives and a script, which is represented in the family, games, and domestic work (Hartung, 2017) [29]. From early childhood, children begin to construct narrative identities that hint at their life themes and include their self-perception in their tasks, family, and community.

4.1. The Influence of the Family System on the Career and Socioemotional Learning

Since the theories of career construction (Savickas, 2011) [4] were put forward, it is considered that parents are models for the different vital roles and that their children take on some of their characteristics when they begin to build their career identities. Fantasy and play, which largely take place in the family sphere, have an important impact on this construction process (Hartung, 2015) [56]. Children themselves indicate their fathers and mothers as the main influence in the construction of themselves (Hartung et al., 2005; McMahon and Rixon, 2007) [57,58]. Family influence on children's socialization is based on the families' own aspirations, especially in terms of gender stereotypes (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011) [59] and social class, which are projected onto the biased aspirations of the children (Flouri et al., 2017; Liu and McMahon, 2017) [60,61]. In a direct or indirect way, whether deliberate or unintentional, families offer behavioral models from which children begin their process of building identities (Romero-Rodríguez et al., 2021a) [32]. However, only limited research has yet been conducted to understand this influence and to take advantage of it in order to enhance children's learning in formal education (Liu et al., 2015) [62].

Our results show how families assume a relevant role in the creation of the sociocultural values of children. They contribute, to a greater or lesser extent, to raising awareness of the culture of origin. In short, they help children to maintain contact with their roots and give meaning to their sociopersonal identities (García-Jiménez et al., 2018) [63]. On the other hand, although school acts as a "homogenizer" institution, it does not fully incorporate the sociocultural practices that define the identity of students and their families. This causes a gap between both agents of socialization that has obvious consequences. Patton (2017) [64] insists on the need to train families for the development of an adequate career-building process, which, as we have already pointed out, is based on a diverse and dynamic interaction structure in terms of agents and factors of influence. Along these lines, our results show the need to create a "bridge" that connects the learning and interests of children in the family environment with schoolchildren, linking with the systemic SEL approaches proposed in the work developed from CASEL (Mahoney et al. 2020) [43].

4.2. The Career and Socioemotional Learning at School

School must offer children the opportunity to give meaning to their sociocultural practices and, above all, must guarantee openness to other possible worlds with a focus on equity and social justice (Rowsell and Pahl, 2007) [65]. This has recently been raised by organizations such as UNESCO (Chatterjee Singh and Duraiappah, 2020) [51] when "rethinking" SEL for education systems. The evident rupture between family and school gives rise to the lack of "approved" referents (by their primary socialization agents) for an optimal career development, which leaves ample space for social networks to shape preferences and future aspirations. The creation of a third space could become the aforementioned "bridge" between family and school (Levy, 2008; Moje et al., 2004) [66,67]. The representation of families and communities in the school (third space) would favor the development of the children's career, as well as the socioeconomic development of areas that need a social transformation (Campbell et al., 2018) [68]. This would mean introducing into schools the personal sociocultural practices developed in the framework of children's households, neighborhoods, or other communities (Rowsell and Pahl, 2007) [65]. The practices developed by families at home could be used within the classroom to promote the creation of new values related to career development (Moreno-Morilla et al., 2018) [69]. The creation of this third space within the school would offer training and guidance with a touch of realism and relevance, while evoking the need to develop a more flexible curriculum in areas with social transformation needs (Compton-Lilly, 2003; Marsh, 2003) [70,71].

As noted in the development of this work, this study concerns the children's transition period from Early Childhood Education (ECE) to Primary Education (PE), an essential moment in the process of building children's careers. The way in which this process is resolved can enhance the success of future academic and social transitions (Wallis and Dockett, 2015; Tao et al., 2019) [72,73], or it can lead to situations of risk, exclusion, and social marginalization (Sierra, 2018) [74], predicting transitions during adolescence (Cubillos-Padilla et al., 2017) [75]. Our work has highlighted the ambivalence in the emotions experienced by children during this stage and the stressful situation they live in, motivated by the same situation of change and the related fears (Parent et al., 2019; Wong and Power, 2019) [76,77]. It is, therefore, a critical stage and an opportunity to accompany children in the process of building their emotional self-regulation, which helps predict their future life satisfaction, their involvement with their own learning, their performance in adolescence, and their well-being as adults (Oliveira et al., 2015) [12]. Children reveal in their narratives the lack of methodological continuity between Early Childhood Education and Primary Education, due to a decrease in the globalized, student-centered, active, and dynamic nature of learning (González-Moreira et al., 2020) [78]. In the transition to Primary Education, spaces lose their value to promote the development of student-centered learning (Romero-Rodríguez and Moreno-Morilla, 2020) [79] in their material, textual, and connection dimensions (Burnett, 2011) [80]. Learning in PE, as the children show, becomes more controlled and repetitive, making it more distant, boring, and far from their interests and expectations regarding school (Cubillos-Padilla et al., 2017) [75]. As observed in our results, pupils instead express their need to be students who can create, build, and experiment by themselves, in collaboration with their peers.

4.3. Social Networks and Career and Socioemotional Learning

While the expansion of the Internet continues and generates a society with a certain disposition toward life, families from more vulnerable contexts identify it as an "entertainment" for their children. Our study reinforces what was stated by Garmendia et al. (2016) [81] and Katz et al. (2018) [82], that most vulnerable families offer less mediation within the virtual spaces in which their children participate than families coming from other social contexts. For this reason, the management of digital literacy in school is an urgent task, especially in more disadvantaged contexts. Schools' refusal to incorporate digital practices of a personal nature in the curriculum pushes the curriculum itself back in the children's priority list. Children's experiences in virtual environments could be a source of learning and knowledge to be debated and contrasted in the Säljö school (2010) [83]. In general, the presence of digital practices is scarce within the school environment, and it is reduced to the most personal sphere within the home sphere. This research shows the need to overcome school's physical limits (Green and Bigum (1993) [84]; Bigum (2003) [85]) in search of a greater interaction with the community. New forms of learning and interaction are also required in order to favor socialization and cooperation among children, as stated by Gillen and Merchant (2013) [86]. Children are actively critical in this situation and clearly express their "tiredness and boredom", provoked by attending school and carrying out the activities proposed by the teachers. The identified gap between the digital world and school has an important consequence in career development insofar as children are closing and limiting the range of future aspirations to what they find in "their virtual world". The creation of the third space, as mentioned above, would not only allow the connection between personal life and school (Cook, 2005; Pahl and Kelly, 2005) [87,88], but also the incorporation and debate of the "virtual" referents of the children in search of a social and situated orientation (Gutiérrez et al., 1999; Soja, 1996) [89,90]. In this sense, the existence of said third space in the school would assume the development of critical knowledge and discourse through the intentional use of social networks (Abrams and Merchant, 2013) [91]. ICTs in school would serve (among other things) to help children in the creation of useful knowledge for the development and validation of their aspirations and future projections (Lankshear and Knobel, 2003) [92].

From a perspective aiming at social and emotional development of the students, what the school offers is far from the UNESCO's recommendations (2020) [93], according to which education should respond to the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical needs of children, so that they can develop solid foundations for lifelong learning and well-being.

5. Conclusions and Implications

Evidence suggests that interventions that deeply engage children in meaningful explorations of themselves and their possible futures positively affect their performance (Lapan et al., 2017) [37]. Career exploration has been shown to be crucial to foster children's commitment and involvement in school and to facilitate their comprehensive development (Flum and Kaplan, 2006) [94]. Some studies (Woolley et al., 2013) [38] show how the, use of exploratory methodologies favors, in children the emergence of a better understanding of themselves and has a positive impact on adaptation, performance, and academic persistence. These exploration processes must consider the systemic nature of career construction, which is not only based on aspirations and personal skills, and it is influenced by the vital contexts in which they develop (Ferrari et al., 2014; McMahon and Patton, 2018) [2,95]. To strengthen them, it is necessary to develop intentional actions for schools with person-in-context approaches, in which greater attention is paid to emotions, reflexivity and collaboration between teachers, counselors, and different stakeholders, especially the family (Watson et al., 2015) [17]. The work carried out by our research team has proven that the use of creative career exploration and assessment tools can help facilitate the inclusion of this type of learning in schools located in low-income contexts (Romero-Rodríguez et al., 2021a. b) [32,33]. These types of tools allow children from low-income contexts to reflect on their own experiences when interacting with their environment/context, as well as on the emotions that are generated by the exploration process itself, regardless of their age and cultural aspects. This can be done using not only verbal forms of communication but also visual ones, which makes the connection with their needs more effective (Chant, 2019) [96]. Through the creative procedures of career assessment and exploration, a safe and transformative environment can be offered to children to help them give meaning to the emotional experiences they have lived through (Oliveira et al., 2015) [12], as our results have shown. The tools we used have allowed children, through the creation of a dialogic and emotionally supported learning context, to make sense of their experiences, to become aware of their emotions, and to learn to explore their career (Meijers and Lengelle, 2015) [15], to build better futures. However, these actions must be carried out in a context of community intervention, where the real participation of all participants is enhanced. Consultative ethnography can provide procedures and tools that favor this community participation, contributing to children's social and emotional learning.

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