Chapter 8
Sexual Diversity, School, and Subjectivity: The Irrationality of the Dominant Rationale

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Abstract This paper discusses how the prejudices against different forms of sexuality and gender appeared in one Colombian school. Based on the theory of subjectivity from a cultural–historical point of view, social and institutional facts are theoretically interrelated through subjective social configurations that appear organized as the motives of educators, whose behaviors are oriented toward excluding and discriminating against any sexual or gender expression that does not correspond to the conventional male and female models. The chapter shows that, instead of sexual education, in the studied school the students are only informed about the implications of sex for health, ignoring sex as expressing human affection, authenticity, and love. The theory of subjectivity opens up new paths toward understanding how individuals' histories and social experiences appear subjectively configuring human sexuality. There are the subjective configurations of professor, students, other school professionals, and the major barrier for the application of the new Colombian educational regulations, which promote education oriented toward the acceptance and integration of sexual and gender diversity.

8.1 Introduction

This chapter is based on the doctoral research, "Education, sexual diversity and subjectivity: a cultural-historical approach to sexual education in schools," conducted by Moncayo (2017) in Cali, Colombia. Based on the theory of subjectivity proposed by González Rey (2002, 2014, 2016), this chapter aims to show how subjective, social, and institutional processes in Colombia influence the way in which educational institutions address sexuality. Colombian educational authorities have made

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various efforts to integrate and educate all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation. Nevertheless, the dominant forms of social subjectivity in schools and their various subjective configurations within the agents of the educational process prevent the effective implementation of the new policies, which address respect for and acceptance of sexual and gender differences.

Sexuality is the central focus of the extensive literature on gender (Foucault 1991; Laqueur 1990; Butler 2007; Wittig 2006). However, the various understandings have ignored the fact that gender is a subjective production that integrates subjective senses[1] from other social spaces in a subject's life and his or her individual history (González Rey 2002, 2005, 2007, 2015b; Moncayo 2017). Unlike gender-focused approaches, which generally incorporate sex–power relationships as developed by Foucault, this chapter aims to explain how sex is very similarly configured at the subjective level in the educative agents and students, embodying the dominant social subjectivity of Cali, which is hegemonic in the social subjective configurations of the studied school as an institution. These hegemonic forms in which sex appears in the socially dominant subjectivity integrate the subjective senses that are related to dominant social constructions on religiosity, which is closely related to prevailing conservative moral values. Both religion and dominant social values are important sources of subjective senses configured in the social subjective configurations of the family in Cali. In turn, these processes are inseparable from the subjective senses that individuals, groups, and institutions generate as a result of the tremendous social pressure that the symbolic power of medical and social normalization exerts. Such processes are beyond the awareness of the educational agents.

8.2 The Importance of Subjectivity for the Study of Sexual Education

During the last 20 years, the subjectivity proposal, on which this chapter is based, advanced together with an epistemological and methodological proposal for its study. The emphasis on the constructive–interpretative character of knowledge as an epistemological principle has directed the constructive–interpretative methodological proposal, leading to the conduct of research on which, in turn, the current research is based (González Rey 1997, 2005; González Rey and Mitjans 2016, 2017; González Rey and Moncayo 2017).

Although subjectivity and its main categories are explained in the first chapter of this book, we would like to briefly restate their importance for the issue we are examining. Human experiences generate subjective senses, through which an event

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[1]As proposed by González Rey, subjective senses are symbolic–emotional units that express the way in which a person experiences various spheres of life. In this view, sex is configured subjectively and uniquely in each individual, who creates subjective senses associated with morality, race, gender, religion and sets of subjective social constructions according to the way in which he or she has subjectively experienced them in his or her microcosm of life. See the first chapter of this book, in which this idea is fully developed as part of a theoretical proposal.

is subjectively experienced. In their processuality, subjective senses create subjective configurations,[2] which constitute the motivations for individual and social processes (González Rey 2014; 2013).

Social subjectivity is an innovative concept in this proposal, which is so important for understanding how communicative and institutional processes are directly and indirectly the main barrier for the integration of gender and sexual diversity into Colombian education.

Sex education cannot be reduced to information on a healthy sex life. Above all, it is supposed to prepare children and youths for a healthy and authentic coexistence, capable of guaranteeing that people can live together. Sex education should be an integral part of a subjective development-oriented education, not restricted to mechanistic instruction on reproduction geared toward assimilation of the content that is exposed, as is hegemonic in Latin American countries (Mitjáns Martínez 2012; Mitjáns Martinez and González Rey 2014).

In this theoretical perspective, sexuality does not have the privileged place it had for psychoanalysis (Freud 1976; Kristeva 1974; Miller 1998). Rather, it is viewed as a subjective configuration that, when healthy, includes the other regardless of the other's gender and this constitutes a source of pleasure as opposed to a set of obsessive behaviors that block sexuality's expression. Like any subjective experience, sexual experiences are subjectively and singularly configured. They generate subjective senses through which singular histories appear as inseparable from those subjective senses evoked by actual experiences. These subjective senses are integrated within the human bonding that characterizes every relationship that acquires a sexual meaning for those involved.

The neglect of subjectivity by French post-structuralism and social constructionism (Lyotard 1987; Gergen 1991; Shotter 1995) is a strong critical current in psychology largely inspired by Foucault. Nonetheless, in his later work, particularly *The History of Sexuality* (1991), Foucault's thought takes an interesting turn and begins to perceive sex within social, political, and economic processes which, although undefined with respect to their subjective effects, are integrated as an indissoluble social dimension of sexuality. Elden (2016), a scholar of Foucault's production in the last decade of his life, uses Foucault to argue in a manner close to our proposal on social subjectivity

> Governments perceived that they were not dealing simply with subjects, or even with a 'people', but with a 'population', with its specific phenomena and its peculiar variables: birth and death rates, life expectancy, fertility, state of health, frequency of illnesses, patterns of diet and habitation: At the heart of this economic and political problem of population was sex" (Foucault 1978, p. 35) (…) Foucault is here anticipating themes he would discuss in detail in subsequent lecture courses, but he also linked the regulation of sex to that of race and racism from the course delivered earlier in 1976. (Elden 2016, p. 48)

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[2]Subjective configurations are relatively stable and transient forms that result from the flow of the subjective senses that characterize a human activity. Once formed, subjective configurations are the source of subjective senses that are self-generated by the configuration during an experience organized within that subjective configuration.

Foucault, at this stage of his life, attached sex to the complex network of social politics and institutions, making sex an expression of the social realities and practices within which individuals live. However, in doing this, Foucault maintained a sociological analysis, omitting the multiple and singular paths through which sex appears in individuals.

Unlike Foucault, our proposal on social subjectivity understands sexuality as socially produced subjective configurations, which integrate as subjective senses many different social constructions such as race, gender, moral values, and other social symbolical realities.

Departing from this representation of sexuality inserted into daily life, within systems of practices, discourses, and knowledge, our proposal stresses the subjective character of those processes through which sexuality appears through many different subjective configurations. This definition implies consideration that sexuality and gender can never be reduced to standardized normative systems. Sex education needs the social configurations of social spaces within which the students feel themselves respected and recognized in their real subjective configurations of sex and gender.

Sex education cannot be viewed as a specific type of education. We educate sexually when the subject of sex appears naturally within spaces of communication, both formal and informal, for example, through lectures, films and discussions, activities which unfortunately are rare in Latin American schools today. To educate is to generate dialogical participatory frames, within which individuals are encouraged to appear spontaneously according to their authentic feelings and ideas. In such frames, new networks of relationships are created and new forms of subjectivation appear in relation to topics previously unknown for the students or commonly excluded from educational arenas, such as sexuality, racism, and similar topics that are usually dominated by preconceptions and distortions. Not only is sex omitted by schools, but in addition social conflicts, cultural issues, general problems in the society in which young people live and much else that stimulates students to think critically and participate actively in school and society are ignored.

The view of the subject defined in this theoretical framework (González Rey 2002, 2014, 2016) offers the possibility of understanding the individual in his or her ability to create unique paths of subjectivation in the face of the norm, even to oppose norms. However, because it constitutes a dominant force within the institutional systems in which individuals develop, social subjectivity exerts tremendous pressure on individuals.

The chapter advances by discussing how the topic of sexuality appears in different moments and contexts in the schools where the research was conducted.

8.3   Method

This research required the authorization of the principals of both schools in which it was conducted. For this purpose, we met with the principals and with members of the school boards of both schools. From the start, we sensed mistrust and suspicion

regarding our research topic. After three hours of conversation, during which the new guidelines for the integration of different types of sexuality were discussed, the study was finally approved.

In our methodological project, dialog represents a continual resource for knowledge production, and knowledge constitutes a dialogical resource that facilitates the subjective involvement of the participants in the research. The researcher was fully immersed in the schools during the research (Moncayo 2017). During this time, classroom observations, informal discussions with students and educational agents, and group discussions that involved students, teachers, and the researcher were conducted. The research also involved school psychologists.

The interpretative–constructivist approach is difficult because the information construction process is simultaneous with the fieldwork. The approach involves forming hypotheses while creating the indicators that, together with other theoretical constructs of the researcher, advance toward a theoretical model through which knowledge production from the research is expressed. Subsequently, the hypotheses and indicators are transformed into knowledge that actively generates new possibilities in the dialogs and other instruments for the ongoing course of the research. Although this method is challenging, we were determined to pursue it. We present the research process in the next section.

8.4 Constructing and Discussing the Subject Matter of the Research During the Fieldwork

In the encounters with the educational agents that occurred during the fieldwork, the research topic seemed to initially evoke responses of acceptance toward diversity in gender and sexuality. Both the students and the teachers expressed their agreement with the new regulations aimed at inclusion. However, in extended conversations with the participants during the fieldwork, tensions and contradictions were observed in their expressions of approval and in the way in which students and educational agents expressed their everyday views.

Tensions in addressing gender and sexuality were expressed in a variety of ways: nonverbal behavior, contradictions in the arguments presented by the participants, and actions that were contradictory to their initial expressions when they were openly and directly questioned on their positions in relation to the research matter. While answering specific questions regarding the topic, it was common to observe speech that involved decreasing the volume of the voice, lowering of the gaze, silence, laughter, value judgments, and an occasional reluctance to go deeper into the subject. These observations enabled us to draw preliminary conjectures on which the research indicators gradually came to appear as indicators that allowed the beginnings of theoretical constructions as part of the fieldwork.

Our methodological proposal does not follow the logic of "stimulus-response" that has traditionally characterized psychology, where the other's voice is subordinated to

the logic of the researcher. Instead, by following progressive dialogs and a progressive course of knowledge during the research process, the topics of human rights and democratic values, such as demands for an inclusive education, were introduced into the agenda of conversation with the participants. Both teachers and students acknowledged the importance of respecting the rights of others to fall in love, marry, and work regardless of sexual orientation and gender.

However, as we delved into these topics more earnestly, contradictions appeared between the positions that were initially expressed and the everyday views expressed in the dialogs when the participants began to be provoked by the researcher. The first topic to reveal these contradictions was homoparental adoption.

After discussing various issues, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) parenting was introduced to further examine the topic. For instance, we asked: "Do you think that same sex couples have the right to adopt?" In response to this question, student answers took an interesting twist.

> Oh! Now, this will sound contradictory because I believe that they can marry, *but* they cannot have children because if they adopt, well, how will that be? Then, there will be many gay people [silence followed by laughter]. They are going to reproduce, and I don't think that's good. No, that's a lie. Don't listen to me, teacher! (Carla, personal communication)

Such comments enabled us to formulate our first indicator: Homosexuality for the participants is unacceptable and a defect that can be "transmitted" to children. In fact, such commentary assumes that homosexuals are perverts and unable to give their best to contribute to the full development of their children.

Many of the students interviewed expressed similar views regarding public displays of affection by same-sex couples.

> Student: It's okay if they are like that. They should do it *but* secretly, in their homes, not in the street. Seeing them makes me uneasy.
>
> Researcher: Uneasy?
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> Student: Yes, I don't know how to say it. It's, like, *gross!*[3] I don't agree with that. I am not interested in seeing them doing their things.
>
> Researcher: Things?
>
> Student: Yes, I don't know how to explain it.
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> Researcher: Try to. For example, what image comes to mind? What does it make you think of?
>
> Student: Well, the truth is that to think of two men kissing seems a little bit dirty, unnatural, and for them to do it in the street… I think they should be respectful of others, especially young children who can see them. (Juana, personal communication)

The student's comments reveal her difficulty in expressing her prejudice, which is not openly manifest. In fact, she considers homosexuality dirty and unnatural. This view is consistent with the indicator presented earlier, in which homosexuality is considered unacceptable and contagious because children may mimic manifestations of homosexual affection. Therefore, gay individuals are denied the possibility of loving and expressing genuine affection for one another. These first two indicators

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[3] An expression of disgust.

are configured as an expression of different subjective senses that converge in a subjective rejection of different types of sexuality and gender. This belief was expressed frequently by parents, teachers, psychologists, and students during the fieldwork, as we see next.

In a casual conversation, the psychologist in one educational institution stated the following:

> Psychologist: Parents are wary of those who teach sex education. They like them to be women, psychologists, and married with children.
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> Researcher: What if that person were gay or lesbian?
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> Psychologist: I don't think that they would allow it. They are careful regarding who is in charge of these things.
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> Researcher: How could the parents oppose [the presence of such an instructor]?
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> Psychologist: Well, look, here, some parents complain because a teacher is gay or effeminate. Sometimes, the coordinator draws attention to parents' complaints and asks teachers to be careful.
>
> Researcher: To be careful with what?
>
> Psychologist: Well, to tell the truth, sometimes I think that the idea is that their homosexuality shouldn't show. (Paola, personal communication)

In the situations described by the psychologist, we can discern forms of indirect restriction that express the social subjectivity that is at work in the school. Professionals feel pressured and fear the opinion of parents, who for their part shun the idea for integrating gay or lesbian teachers into their children's educational process. The psychologist's position enables us to formulate the indicator on homosexuality as contagious and unacceptable. There is no difference between the position of the psychologist and that expressed by the previously quoted students. Thus, we must ask ourselves how educators can contribute to student development in this area if they share the same views as the students toward gender difference and choices. A third indicator, which is consistent with those previously described, can be defined as follows: Gender and sexual orientation can be transmitted, assimilated, and internalized by coexisting with "deviants."

The conversation with the psychologist also enabled us to define another indicator. This indicator involves how parental prejudices are configured through the social subjectivity of the school to foster an environment suffused with fear, constraint, and control among teachers and other school professionals. The school staff share prejudices regarding sexual orientation, and these prejudices are obstacles to the implementation of the new resolutions on sexuality defined in the government's educational policy.

The interrelation of indicators raised above allows a first hypothesis from our work to be formulated: The subjective senses generated by educational agents and students, from which other types of sexuality emerge as dirty, perverse, and unnatural, embodied the dominant social subjectivity in singular individual subjective configurations. Among the most important sources of this social subjectivity are the conservative values advocated by the Catholic Church, which are inseparable from the subjective senses associated with preserving the traditional family and a view of

sex as oriented toward procreation. The family-Church–State unit closely integrates all spaces of social subjectivity in Cali, including the schools.

This argument is supported by another contradiction that emerged in the group meetings with students. In response to the question, "What happens if a friend confesses to being homosexual or lesbian?", one student declared that she would continue to accept her friend because "he is not to blame for his condition" and acknowledged his right to be what he is. However, later in the conversation, she spoke as follows:

> Student: It's okay to be what he is. I appreciate that he confides in me. He is not to blame for his tastes and desires. I would continue talking with him, *but* I would not agree with that… [prolonged silence]. I do not want to say that word, but… I love my friend, but I don't accept sins, oops, no! I didn't want to say that because they are going to think that I am a very religious person.
>
> Researcher: Do you practice any religion?
>
> Student: No, it has nothing to do with that […]. I am evangelical like my mom, and she says something that is very true: they are not to blame, but they can do something to avoid committing sins. (Bruna, personal communication)

These comments contradict statements made by the student at the beginning of the conversation regarding respecting and acknowledging the rights of individuals with non-normative sexualities. This contradiction reveals how direct and intentional expressions regarding homosexuality cannot be used as hypothetical constructions related to those subjective senses singularly configured in the students and educational agents through the dominant social forces. Although Bruna initially reproduced a socially accepted discourse, after a silence and with embarrassment, she uttered the word *sin*, which visibly disoriented Bruna herself. Her response to the researcher's question about her religious views was highly interesting. First, she denied having a religious affiliation, but later she acknowledged being evangelical. It seems as if the young woman did not wish to be perceived as making a judgment on the basis of a religious belief. However, her behavior reveals the presence of subjective senses generated by religiosity in the subjective configuration of her prejudice.

From Bruna's comments, we can see that in Colombia it is not only the Catholic religion that generates this type of positioning. It also occurs with the evangelical religion, which is gaining strength in Latin American countries. In addition, the student made a link to her mother, whom she identified as evangelical. She highlighted her mother's phrase, which implicates the family-Church unit in the formation of prejudices regarding sexual diversity and gender types that deviate from the norm. Thus, her comments may also constitute an indicator of how participants' subjective configurations regarding sexual diversity integrate various subjective senses that are generated in the microcosm of each individual's life.

Bruna expressed a dominant social representation regarding the various forms of sexuality, which coincides with the previously developed indicators. This social representation is characterized by its view of homosexuality as dirty, contagious, sinful and unnatural. However, this social representation is configured subjectively and takes different forms in each student. These subjective configurations are responsible for the motivational influence of social representations on the behavior of individuals (González Rey 2014, 2015a, Mijtáns Martínez and González Rey 2012). Social

representations are configured in the individual subjectivity. They do not depend exclusively on their object. Rather, they are shaped in individuals through singular subjective configurations that result from each student's life history.

Another example of religious beliefs as a source of subjective senses in the rejection of gender diversity appeared in the following conversation with a teacher.

> Teacher: I don't think that is right.
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> Researcher: Who says it is not right?
>
> Teacher: It is not right in the eyes of God. I am a believing, God-fearing man. Honestly, I do not think that is what God wants for our children. It is not right. He made us male and female. Human rights are not going to change that now. (Fabricio, personal communication)

The tension between religion and human rights is expressed in the teacher's comment. The God defended by the teacher represents a dogma associated with truth and punishment, which is reflected in the fear expressed toward that figure.

Religion is a strongly institutionalized social-symbolic construction and a source of subjective senses that are configured simultaneously in social and individual subjectivity. These subjective senses are present in the specific subjective configurations of types of sexuality and gender identities.

Other relevant events in Colombian society during the past 3 years include the 2016 censoring of material on sexual diversity in the sex education pamphlet, "March of the Family," and the 2017 attempt to call a referendum to reject homoparental adoption. These events can also be used as important indicators that can be integrated into the above-constructed indicators on the basis of what was expressed by the participants. A common denominator of these events was the leadership of the evangelical and Catholic religious sectors.

A conclusion we have reached on the basis of this research is that, in conservative societies, such as that of Cali, in which the church and its hegemonic values regarding family represent a strongly dominant ideology, opening up to changes entails enduring the same social pressure that exists in societies in which political ideology constitutes a totalitarian power.

According to the theoretical proposal on subjectivity developed from this perspective, subjective configurations are never constrained to the social space in which one human behavior or performance takes place and are not organized exclusively in a social space, nor do they depend on dominant social constructs within one social space. Norms, laws, and regulations are configured within the constellation of different social subjective configurations that characterize the networks of social instances that are simultaneously part of the different social institutions and processes that occur within macro-social space, in this case the city of Cali. Different social subjects and actors, as well as individuals, can subjectively configure that socially dominant subjectivity in many different ways. Nonetheless, the weight of closed and dogmatic social subjectivities on individuals is a topic that must be researched in depth.

Although the participants explicitly supported human rights in their narratives, in fact, their support consisted of social clichés that were not subjectively configured in the agents of the educational process or the students. The research participants

tried to present a "correct" social image regarding sexual diversity. However, the subjective configurations of their actions did not permit them to be consistent with respect to the projected image. Thus, certain participants spoke by using a double discourse in which homosexuality was a right and an admissible mode of being but also a socially infectious disease that should not be accepted by society.

The subjective productions on which the described positions emerged are beyond the consciousness of the participants. Due to this, they tried to include them in a socially accepted rationale related to hygiene and to the "harmful" nature of other types of sexuality and to certain gender assumptions, which are incompatible with natural sexual activity.

These subjective productions, which are defined by subjective configurations in which emotions are strongly associated with established and unquestionable symbols, are fixed in rigid beliefs. These beliefs generate subjective productions that are naturalized. As previously stated, individual and social subjective configurations are integrated into different spheres of life at both the individual and the social levels. These levels are reciprocally configured to each other through their own subjective productions, which embody dominant subjective expressions that emerge in the behavioral contexts at both levels and that develop from the multiplicity of concrete experiences of individuals and social groups (González Rey 2015a, 2017).

8.5   Censorship and Discrimination: The Subjective Dimension in Action

In another phase of the investigation, we analyzed the way in which censorship is practiced by teachers and psychologists. This analysis enabled us to inquire into the configuration of social subjectivity regarding sexual diversity in the studied schools. Acts of censorship are those that do not allow someone to reflect on a particular topic, for example criticism of political organizations in totalitarian systems. In relation to sexual diversity and gender choices, the same is true for the school. That is, reflection on these issues is not allowed. Arguments that implicate others as responsible for the positions adopted by the school hide the real prejudices of the educational agents in phrases such as "parents do not like these issues," "the principal may get angry," or "the boys are not ready yet." These phrases are examples of how censorship is exercised without its agents feeling responsible for the process. One never speaks of censorship in the first person. It is not presented as one's own. In this regard, several interesting points emerged in informal conversations on the subject with teachers:

Teacher: Parents feel very uncomfortable when you work on the issue of sexual diversity.

Researcher: Have you asked them about it?

Teacher: No, but one knows.

Researcher: How do you know?

Teacher: Well, it is a controversial issue, and they do not like it.

Researcher: But how do you know that? Can you explain it to me?

Teacher: I know why I say so. (Augusta, personal communication)

Attributing thoughts to another individual, with whom one has never spoken, constitutes an important indicator that can be used to explain how censorship operates. Based on the information that emerges in the research process, the studied schools tend to conceal topics related to sexual diversity and the plurality of gender concepts, even though such topics should be included in sexual and citizenship education.

Dominant prejudices that occurred among teachers were evident in our conversation with the teacher, Thiago (fictitious name, personal communication), who commented as follows:

> Since I realized that a student [J] was absent, I went out to look for him, and the porter told me that he had seen two students going to the basic education bathroom. I thought it was very suspicious. So, I went with him to search for the students, and we saw the two kids leaving the bathroom. We didn't see anything else. However, I inquired about what they were doing, and they answered, "nothing; we were just talking". I asked the older student [J] to leave, and I began to question the younger one [C]. I began to interrogate him insistently until he told me that [J] had asked him to give him a kiss, to show him his penis and to touch it. (Thiago, personal communication)

Here, the teacher behaved more as an agent of censorship than as an educator. An element that extends the preceding discussion is the use of the word *interrogation*. From the situation in which the word appears, a second hypothesis is created that builds on several of the indicators that led to the first hypothesis. The second hypothesis is that fear and guilt have their clearest expressions in teachers in terms of control and surveillance. Both processes are the negation of what education should be. The conversation with the teacher continued:

> Researcher: Why were you interrogating him?
>
> Teacher: Because I suspected they were doing something wrong.
>
> Researcher: Do you disapprove of what they did?
>
> Teacher: Of course because that is not right. That is not natural. You have to be alert to prevent it.
>
> Researcher: Prevent what?
>
> Teacher: That kind of behavior since it can generate things in the other boy. (Thiago, personal communication)

In his *interrogation*, the teacher acted as a guardian of norms and morality. From the start, he perceived something out of order in the behavior of the boys, which compelled him to investigate, whereby he became a representative of the ruling order instead of acting like an educator. Pathologization and criminalization are processes that go hand in hand and replace education with punitive action. What facts or information supported the teacher's suspicion and his subsequent behavior? One possible answer to this question arose when the researcher asked why the teacher requested the older student to leave and "interrogated" the younger one.

> Researcher: Why did you tell [J] that he could go and stay behind with [C]?
>
> Teacher: I knew that getting information from [C] was easier. Also, I did not trust [J] because he has always had special features.

Researcher: What kind of features?

Teacher: Well, I find him very delicate. He did not like contact games. He spent time with the girls, and sometimes he used some feminine gestures. (Thiago, personal communication)

The reasons proffered by the teacher are based on what some would term *gender stereotypes*. The *theory of subjectivity* explains these gender stereotypes as subjective configurations that integrate and generate subjective senses resulting from a microcosm of each individual history, which in turn express subjective senses that embody dominant processes of the social subjectivity. In any case, these processes are non-recognizable in individuals, because they are configured in very diverse ways in each individual, being inseparable from other subjective senses generated by the subjective configuration that engenders those subjective senses. Gender is not a social abstraction. It is a subjective production that integrates various subjective senses that express, in a singular way, the social constructions articulated in the dominant discourses, representations, and prejudices on the topic. These are closely related to other social symbolical productions, such as belonging to a certain social class, economic status, religion, race, which are closely interrelated in different ways within the subjective configurations of gender, whether social or individual.

At another point in the conversation, the teacher made the following comment:

Researcher: What do you think about your time as a student?

Teacher: It was not like this. One was strong. Being tough was important if you wanted to win someone's heart. One could not be effeminate because no one would fall in love with you if you acted like that or because your friends would tease you all the time. Better said, that would not even come to mind […]. Students today take a feminine stance. They play games of less contact, they have more fine-motor skills, they are more aesthetic, they spend time with girls, they are mannered and very sensitive, and they complain frequently […]. Today men can cry. They are encouraged to be emotional, to express themselves, et cetera. It was not like that in my time. (Thiago, personal communication)

In this comment, the teacher describes the changes that have occurred over the last two decades regarding masculinity, with a hint of longing for the past, and awards greater weight to the attributes of masculinity of his time. For him, strength, emotional stoicism, aggressiveness, speed, and toughness are attributes that define masculinity. In his view, all of that is being lost. Such nostalgia for the past enables us to construct an indicator according to which gender is viewed as an ahistorical "ought to be." This view continues to be dominant today in Colombian social subjectivity. The way the teacher portrays young people today expresses the social representations and traditional dominant discourses in the neighborhood, the school, and the family in which he was raised and in which masculinity excluded any attribute considered feminine.

A school aims to be a space that includes and teaches respect for other gender types and identities. However, the subjective configurations regarding these issues of the educational agents and the school as an institution prevent progress toward that goal.

The theoretical model we offer as a result of this research includes the two hypotheses that result from the indicators presented, and can be succinctly expressed as

follows: The school is an institution traversed by a hegemonic social subjectivity. To the extent that subjectivity assumes an ideology as central to the organization of its values, these values are more rigid, unquestionable, and exclusion-oriented. The characteristics of the hegemonic social subjectivity in Cali are organized around religion in close relationship with the hegemonic and traditional values of the family and the community. This process is expressed in the school through control and surveillance, as well as behavior oriented toward preventing student spontaneity in relation to sexuality.

Our research shows that the school, far from being an institution that favors development, reproduces the dominant social subjectivity, primarily because the subjective configurations of the students and the teachers match the values of the dominant social subjectivity.

8.6 Final Considerations

Colombia is a country with progressive laws and regulations. However, their implementation entails difficulties that reveal a lack of consistency between political intentions and achieved objectives, as well as between the rational intentions and the actions subjectively organized in the institutional spaces of daily life in which those laws and regulations should be applied.

The educational agents' actions are subjectively configured within the dominant social subjectivity and are oriented toward repressing the existence of different types of sexuality and gender. Sex is treated as a path to human reproduction, ignoring its subjective configuration through which it appears as inseparable from individual subjective biographies. Sex is detached from human motivations and relations; its different forms of expression are ignored, along with how these are all sources of love and authenticity in the expressions of human affections. When sexuality is addressed in school life, pathologizing what is different is gaining ground. As shown in this paper, prejudice, censorship, and discrimination reveal how the subjective productions of the protagonists of sex education become the main obstacle to advancement in this area within the educational process.

This chapter shows that the subjective development-oriented education of children and young people is not a priority for schools. Sex education should not be separated from education in general. Teachers focus on the subjects that they teach. However, student development is not part of the school agenda. There is no room for education in citizenship or for an ethics of the subject. Therefore, the moral development of students is neglected. There can be no moral development without a social space in which students and teachers can express themselves authentically and in which differences do not impede dialog.

Omitting subjectivity reveals the instrumental–operational nature of education. The subjective condition of students is neglected, impeding the expression of their various social worlds and histories, which appear through different subjective configurations within the school space.

It is necessary to understand that education for subjective development requires the training of educational agents dialogically and the integration of subjectivity while overcoming the challenges it poses to educational practice. This understanding is lacking in Latin American countries.

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