Perspectives in Cultural-Historical Research 5

Fernando González Rey
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Subjectivity within Cultural-Historical Approach

Theory, Methodology and Research

Springer

Perspectives in Cultural-Historical Research

Volume 5

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Foreword

This book has very much to offer. It makes an important contribution to the development of a cultural-historical approach in psychology, first of all, by introducing the concept of subjectivity as a core concept in its theoretical vocabulary. The presented theory offers a very original conception of subjectivity as a specifically human phenomenon emerging and developing on a cultural-historical basis. The book is, therefore, not only of interest to scholars working within a cultural-historical approach but to everybody looking for new ways ahead for psychology—in theory and practice because this is not only a theoretical volume. Besides chapters on the development of the theoretical and methodological conception, other chapters show how it may be used in diverse fields of research and practice and how these fields may benefit from this theory and contribute to its elaboration.

This theory of subjectivity is the result of over 20 years of work, primarily by the first editor. As a part of this work, the editors established two closely collaborating research groups at the University of Brasília. The research group "Subjectivity in health and in education" is coordinated by the first editor and the research group "Creativity and innovation from a cultural-historical theory of subjectivity" by the second editor. Work from these research groups is presented in the book. Even so, it is written by an international group of authors. While most are from Brazil, some from Cuba, Columbia, Guatemala, Australia and Russia.

In psychology, a cultural-historical approach was first developed in the Soviet Union. Here, we see another advantage of the presented theory. The first editor studied and worked extensively with important figures in this tradition. The development of the theory is, thus, rooted in comprehensive knowledge of this tradition, notably in theoretical ideas and deliberations by Vygotsky, Rubinstein, Bozhovich, Abuljanova, Chudnovsky and many others. The theory is grounded in an analysis of the conceptual strengths and problems in the history of this cultural-historical tradition. Besides throwing new light on the history of cultural-historical psychology, this—unfortunately quite rare—way of grounding theory in psychology enables a deeply informed creative move forward. The

presentation of the historical lines of development of cultural-historical psychology is also fascinating and inspiring in itself because much is not widely known.

While the book as a whole presents a sub-tradition in the current cultural-historical approach in psychology, three chapters are written by scholars affiliated with other sub-traditions. They present their research and discuss similarities and differences with the theory of this book. They even use some concepts from this theory in their work in pursuing the joint goal of developing the cultural-historical approach. These chapters make the reasons for particular conceptual and methodological choices in the theory of this book stand out more clearly.

Inspirations from other sources beyond cultural-historical psychology are also reinterpreted and integrated into this theory of subjectivity. Most important is the work of Lewin's group in Berlin, the late Foucault's work on the self and the art of living, discourse theory and social constructionism, branches of psychoanalysis and dialogues with Latin American critical social psychology and social representation theory.

The book is divided into four parts. The first part presents the theory, epistemology and methodology in the study of subjectivity.

Subjectivity is not theorized much in cultural-historical psychology or in psychology as a whole. There are three main reasons for introducing subjectivity as a core concept in the theory presented here. First, subjectivity can foster an integrated grasp of the human mind. In this respect, it resembles the concepts of personality and consciousness traditionally preferred in delivering an integrated view of the human mind. But these concepts generally offer a too individual-bound conception of the human psyche.

This brings us to the second reason. The concept of subjectivity enables us to grasp the human mind as a culturally, historically and socially engendered phenomenon. Due to the historical and social genesis of the human mind as well as our sociocultural forms of life, both have a subjective quality. In sociocultural life, the complex symbolic networks of discourses and the social symbolic institutional realities of gender, religion, morals, science and policy hold a subjective character. These symbolic social constructions constitute sociocultural subjective realities. Their social subjective senses appear as living subjective processes in social networks and serve as a link in the emergence of individual subjective senses depending on how individuals and groups experience them. Individual subjectivity is conceived as an integration of symbolic processes and emotions forming new qualitative units as subjective senses. Constellations of such fleeting, symbolic–emotional, individual subjective senses are assembled in individual subjective configurations. These individual configurations establish a self-regulative and self-generative organization of individual subjective senses. Social symbolic realities of gender, religion and moral values are thus involved in the individual subjective senses of these configurations. The subjective senses and configurations also function as human motivation. In contrast to most cultural-historical psychology, the theory highlights the role of emotion, motivation and imagination. This is inspired by Vygotsky's argument, in writing about the psychology of art, that

emotion and imagination are inseparable processes. It leads to the conclusion that subjectivity is a motivated system in which imagination is the cornerstone of human creations.

The third reason for introducing subjectivity as a core concept in this theory is that imagination gives individual subjectivity a generative character enabling individuals to transform the environment and themselves. The theory considers individual subjectivity as a counterforce against adaptation and it is opposed to the predominant notion of individual adaptation in psychology.

As mentioned above, the theory rests on a notion of a systemic functioning of the mind. It insists that subjectivity does not replace psyche but integrates psychical processes of emotions, thoughts, etc., in a new system as subjectively configured processes. Psychic processes are then not separate entities or functions and subjectivity is not grasped as a separate element in a set of fragmented concepts.

Such a theory of subjectivity calls for a concordant methodology. The book presents an original and bold response to this challenge. It is called a constructive-interpretative methodology and rests on a qualitative epistemology. Knowledge production is seen as advancing in and through dialogue and leading to participant development. In a dialogue, participants are subjectively engaged and its sequence is not under the control of any individual participant, e.g., the researcher. The constructive-interpretative process advances through joint discussions and reflections with the researcher playing an active, dialogic and analytic role. Methodological instruments, such as narratives, participatory observation, sentence completion, imagination-focused tasks, essay writings, drawings and photographs, are used to promote the constructive-interpretative dialogue.

Theoretical constructions and methodological actions advance hand in hand in the process. Through the dialogue, the researcher's use and development of theory make new phenomena intelligible. But the results are neither simply derived from empirical data or a direct application of a preexisting theory. Theory is, rather, an analytic device for constructing knowledge about singular phenomena and unexpected and unknown research questions. In his or her interpretations, the researcher first explicates conjectures as reflections, doubts and ideas. They are questioned and scrutinized through further dialogue and interpretations into indicators which are gradually assembled in advancing toward a more general and precise hypothesis. The researcher gradually integrates indicators and hypotheses into a new qualitative level of knowledge where they are combined with theoretical speculations based on a more embracing theory. Hypothetical, partial meanings, thus, obtain coherence in a more embracing theoretical hypothetical construction which opens a more consistent theoretical avenue to be followed in the course of research. The researcher gradually proposes a theoretical model of the studied phenomenon. This methodology transcends the split between data collection and analysis by combining dialogue and theoretical construction rather than seeing them as a sequence of steps.

In this methodology, theory is a conceptual resource to be used creatively in guiding the theoretical construction of the topic toward a more stable, general theoretical model. Concepts allow processes so far not captured to become intelligible. For instance, the theoretical concept of subjective configuration only comes

to life when it is constructed theoretically during a concrete piece of research. Theoretical concepts are malleable and appear in different ways in the wide range of human experiences in social networks and practices. Theories are also historical constructions which never exhaust the real character of the subject. Their non-exhaustive character is also due to the essential singularity of the phenomena and subject matter of a cultural-historical psychology. Subjective senses and configurations are singular phenomena of singular subjects. The methodology must grasp their singular and changeable organization resulting from the rich, malleable and dynamic character of complex systems. Case studies can capture complex phenomena which always are different from others of the same kind. The singular functioning of individuals and social arenas lets us access the qualitative characteristics of such complex systems in the process. But the singular gains meaning in a theoretical model in which its specific character is coherently assembled. Each piece of research thus contributes to a wider theoretical representation in which the singular loses its uniqueness.

The other three parts of the book contain ten chapters written by members of the two research groups about concrete research projects using the presented theory and methodology. Four chapters address subjectivity in school practices in studies of subjectivity in school innovation, sexual diversity and subjectivity in school and subjectivity in teacher development. Three chapters address subjectivity and learning processes in studies of creative learning, overcoming learning difficulties and subjectivity at various levels of education. And three chapters address subjectivity, psychotherapy and health in studies of subjectivity in psychotherapy, health and performance in physical education and sports and the development of practice in a community service center.

In these chapters, the authors show why using the basic theory and methodology matters in their field and study. Their studies are able to address aspects of their topics overlooked by other theories and methodologies. They do not apply concepts and methodology as a fixed, general framework adhered to in precisely the same way in every concrete study. Depending on their diverse fields and topics of research, they use the theory and methodology in different ways, highlight different aspects and promote a more differentiated understanding of them. The chapters demonstrate the fruitfulness of the theory and methodology and how the studies/fields contribute to elaborate them. Their different topics lead to different elaborations, concretizations, enrichments and relations to the work of others in various fields. These chapters, finally, present studies in areas frequently omitted by cultural-historical psychology, such as social subjectivities of institutions, teacher training and innovation, learning as a subjective process, sexual education, psychotherapy and mental health.

In the chapters on education and learning, the mainstream technical and instrumental view on education and learning is replaced by considering learning as a personal process of a learning subject. This brings other, usually overlooked aspect of education and learning to the fore. Learning is captured as a process of producing subjective senses with different affective states instead of as centered on intellectual, logical and cognitive operations. In this process, the learner changes as

a subject by bringing about other, complex configurations of subjective senses. This personal, creative and dynamic view of knowledge integrates imagination and reflection in the process and even includes a constructive view on mistakes. Imagination, fantasy and human emotions are, thus, seen as inseparable from intellectual operations. And motivation is constituted in the subjective configuration of learning and grounded in the subjectivity of each student during learning. These characteristics are even demonstrated in learning topics such as learning to read and write. Creativity is seen as central in learning due to the centrality of imagination and the generative capacity of subjectivity. It is related to the learner's subjectivity and his or her personalizing of information from his or her perspective. Subjects' singular modes of involving themselves in learning are, thus, not disregarded. The bringing about of subjective senses in subjects' learning trajectories are also studied, such as learning music in a trajectory leading to becoming a professional musician and appreciating other things in life, including the richness afforded by processes of development. Subjective learning processes directed at supporting learning by others are also studied in a school principal's learning to develop an institutional social subjectivity in a process of school innovation. Likewise, teachers' subjective development in teacher training and in the emergence of new pedagogical practices is analyzed.

The chapters on subjectivity, psychotherapy and health studies present work along similar lines. They show that new theories and practices are needed which, e.g., include the concepts of subjectivity and learning in sport's training and practice. The theory of subjectivity also enables a new approach to psychotherapy which has not been studied much in cultural-historical psychology. This new approach is illuminated in a case study of subjectivity in psychotherapy. It paves the way for new practices recognizing individual participants as subjects of the process. Mental disorders are grasped as centered on how the person produces subjective senses in living his or her experiences. The main goal of mental health care is seen as considering the subjective development of the afflicted person related to his or her dialogues and relevant social subjectivities. The new approach promotes an ethics of the subject and a logic of transformation instead of mental illness and social exclusion. Likewise, a chapter studies the professional team of a mental healthcare center in times of reform. It focuses on the team in meetings with joint discussions and reflections on current challenges and cases. In doing so, it addresses individual and social subjective development in an institution in the process of transformation of its service. This process is analyzed as a conflictual process unfolding into different, still conflicting new positions as a basis for further changes.

All chapters on empirical studies in this book address their research subjects as individual agents engaged in changes. The singularity of the other is the permanent reference for research and practice instead of opting for standard interventions in solving standard problems. The chapters stress that subject development and the development of new social practices are inseparable. Research is considered a resource for developing social practices and their participants. And the theory may simultaneously advance subject development, professional practice in a field and research.

As a whole, the book offers a unique chance of coming to know a current, creative and important line of work on developing cultural-historical psychology which is keenly aware of and critically scrutinizes its historical lines of inspiration. There is a strong sense of cohesion across the different topics, fields and levels of abstraction in the book which should be of special interest to scholars seeking to combine the development of theory, methodology and social practices. At the same time, the work aspires to make topics and phenomena intelligible which have not been visible in other theoretical frameworks. And it is carried by the anti-dogmatic ethos of viewing theory as a system in permanent development which feeds and is fed by new research and new practice.

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Contents

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Part I
Theoretical and Methodological Questions About the Study of Subjectivity

Chapter 1
The Topic of Subjectivity Within Cultural–Historical Approach: Where It Has Advanced from and Where It Is Advancing to

Fernando González Rey, Albertina Mitjáns Martínez and Daniel Magalhães Goulart

Abstract The topic of subjectivity has been historically overlooked by a psychology mainly grounded on rationalism and empiricism. In fact, subjectivity as such was also absent in Soviet psychology, mainly as a result of the prevailing political and ideological climate in the Soviet sciences, which left no room for the matter of subjectivity. Nonetheless, in Soviet psychology, there were important theoretical antecedents for advancing a theory of subjectivity on a cultural–historical basis. This introductory chapter draws a picture based on important premises to advance the topic of subjectivity in Soviet psychology; new relations between authors and classic topics of Soviet psychology are constructed, along with new interpretations of historical aspects, through which the topic of subjectivity appeared as one possible path in the development of the legacy of Soviet psychology. The introduction of subjectivity into cultural–historical psychology is an attempt to transcend the individual character and ontological vagueness of the two concepts used by Soviet psychology to refer to psychological systems: consciousness and personality. Nonetheless, this path in the advancement of the topic of subjectivity has also been enriched by dialogue with other theories, which has influenced its comprehension as an ontological definition of human phenomena, whether social or individual. The transit of this proposal on subjectivity through dialogue with Latin American critical social psychology, Social Representation theory, and lately, some critical authors from different theoretical backgrounds, is also discussed in this chapter.

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Over the last ten years, new interpretations related to cultural–historical psychology have emerged with particular intensity. This has generated not only new avenues along which to advance its legacy, but also new interpretations of concepts and questions that have remained overlooked for decades by both Soviet and Western psychology. This effort has led to interesting historical divergences, embracing theoretical and historical questions that have also contributed to defining new alternatives for the development of that legacy which, at some points, seemed to be frozen within those dominant interpretations that reduced it to a static and erroneous representation that equated Vygotsky, Luria, and Leontiev. In doing this, on behalf of cultural–historical psychology, their contexts, the different points of their lives, and the more general movement within which their work took place, Soviet psychology, were completely omitted. This dominant position has been widely criticized since the end of the 1980s, both within Soviet and Western psychology, advancing a new understanding of that history (Chudnovsky 1988; González Rey 2009, 2011, 2012, 2014a, 2015, 2017a; Leontiev 1992; Mikjailov 2006; Miller 2011; Orlov 2003; Van Der Veer and Valsiner 1991; Yasnitsky 2009, 2012; Yasnitsky and Van der Veer 2016; Zavershneva 2010, 2016; Zinchenko 1993, 2012).

Among the new topics that have appeared in Soviet psychology since the 1980s, we emphasize subjectivity, although its emergence characterizes a theoretical discussion due to its omission from that psychology, rather than a program of research (Abuljanova 1980; Chudnovsky 1988; and, decades later in the 2000s Serguienko 2009; Skotnikova 2009). The development of a theory of subjectivity from a cultural–historical standpoint has been our main focus since the 1990s (González Rey 1997, 2002, 2005). Despite the absence of a research line in Soviet psychology, the dialectical inspiration of some authors advanced important questions and concepts that, in fact, highlighted subjective phenomena. On our path to advance subjectivity as a theoretical proposal, a research program has been developed, which has also demanded new epistemological and methodological proposals; it is the presentation of this program that is the main goal of this book.

Nevertheless, every new theoretical proposal that leads to new ontological and epistemological constructions cannot avoid a historical and philosophical discussion on its main premises. This is not the subject of this book but has been advanced elsewhere (González Rey 2009, 2011, 2014a, b, 2015, 2016, 2017a, b; Gonzalez Rey and Mitjans 2017a, b). As part of the series, "Perspectives in Cultural-Historical Research," we consider it important in this introductory chapter to affirm that the focus of this book is centered on the legacy of Soviet authors and theories that have been largely ignored in their similarities and relationships both within Soviet psychology and beyond it. These authors and their theoretical legacies are essentially: (1) an alternative reading of Vygotsky in relation to A. N. Leontiev and his followers; (2) Rubinstein, Ananiev, Miasichev, Yarochevsky, and Bozhovich, as psychologists who shared the early experiences of Soviet psychology and; (3) later Soviet authors, such as Abuljanova (1973, 1980), Chudnovsky (1988), Lomov (1984), and Nepomnichaya (1977), who explicitly advanced new useful contributions on subjectivity from a cultural–historical standpoint (González Rey 2014a, b, 2016, 2017a, b).

It was not easy at all to advance on subjectivity as such within a psychology dominated by a theoretical imagery, the Marxist character of which was defined by an objective representation of human psyche, and which developed itself within a political context in which idealism was defined as a political enemy. An objectivistic materialism without any room for explicit advances on subjectivity characterized the sequence of official psychologies that dominated Soviet psychology from the mid-1920s to the mid-1970s: Bechterev's reflexology, Kornilov's reactology, and Leontiev´s activity theory. All of these centered on explaining human psyche as determined by something external, and on replacing psyche by something different, such as complex formation of associative reflexes and energy (Bechterev), external influences from which behavior was understood as reaction (Kornilov), or operations with external objects that become internal, properly psychical, through internalization (Leontiev). That situation within Soviet psychology was defined by Abuljanova as follows: "The attempt to materialize the psyche or assign its materiality through its identification with something different reveals the anti-dialectical character of this form of knowledge" (Abuljanova 1973, p. 49).

Renouncing an advance on the definition of human psyche was an ontological renunciation that was based on the vagueness that characterized the definition of some of the most promissory concepts developed by Soviet authors. Instead of being qualitatively different from the concepts used by dominant Western psychology, those used by Soviet authors were different in their orientation but, in the end, they were also defined through the traditional taxonomy of fragmented concepts that made impossible specific ontological definitions for psychic phenomenon. The attempt to advance the theoretical representation of a specific human phenomenon within the cultural–historical conditions that characterize human life is one of the main goals that oriented this theoretical proposal on subjectivity.

It was not only the nature of psychic phenomena that remained vague in Soviet psychology. The narrow definitions of culture and social phenomena were also striking in that psychology. That position was made clear by Luria as follows:

> The psychologists as a rule share the objective positions of physiologists but carry on their work on a much broader basis, approaching psychology from the point of view of that structural behavior which is determined by social conditions. To that wing belong most of the Russian psychologists who do not accept the mechanistic point of view of the reflexologists. It will suffice in this connection to mention the names of Professor Kornilov, Professor Blonski (his psychological work is of a distinctly genetic character), Professor Basov and L. S. Vygotsky (Luria 1928, p. 347).

Luria's statement expresses the most general position shared by Kornilov's group at that time, including Vygotsky. Despite his appeal to social conditions, these were understood as mere external influences acting as determinants of human behavior. Rather than advancing on human sociality, Luria's definition represented a very behavioral understanding of environment, which was closer to behaviorism than to a new representation of social conditions.

Paradoxically, preceding the wider comprehension of social processes among the tendencies previously mentioned as being officially dominant in Soviet psychology was Bechterev's perspective of human sociality on the basis of the concept of energy

and the different complex formation of associative reflexes (Valsiner 2001) This fact to some extent explains why Bechterev's disciples in the School of Leningrad were those authors who made the most relevant contributions to the comprehension of social realities, actively attending to the topic of communication and institutions in Soviet psychology (Ananiev 1977; Miasichev 1960; and following them, their disciples: Lomov 1989; and Bodalev 1983).

The difficulties in advancing the topic of subjectivity within the multiple labels by which Soviet psychology has appeared in Western psychology have been as great as those that were faced during Soviet times due to the incomplete way in which that legacy was appropriated by Western psychology, as well as the cognitive–linguistic lenses through which it has mostly been interpreted (González Rey 2014). Those labels, such as sociocultural psychology, cultural psychology and cultural–historical and activity theory (CHAT), were mainly developed by North American cognitive and linguistic interpretations (Bruner 1995; Cole 1963; 1998; Werstch 1985). The topics that we have advanced since our studies in Moscow (González Rey 1979; Mitjáns Martínez 1995), such as personality, motivation, creativity, and communication, remained completely excluded from those interpretations. Together with the focus of North American interpretations, the lack of literature in the West on the history of Soviet psychology, along with the absence of translations, with very isolated exceptions, of some of its best known figures, has made it very difficult to open new discussions on that psychology within the dominant myth, through which the dominant interpretation became the "true and unique interpretation," a movement that was beyond the intention of its pioneers.

Alongside the aforementioned issue, it should be stressed that Vygotsky himself never completely overcame an intellectualist view of psychical processes and of development. He was highly contradictory in his effort to advance on the unity of intellectual and emotional processes in the last period of his work, being more centered on intellectual functions in his most instrumental period, between 1927 and 1931 (Leontiev 1984; González Rey 2009, 2011, 2014a, 2016; Matusov 2011; Yasnitsky 2010, 2012; Zavershneva 2010, 2016). As Matusov argues:

> People's social relations are essentially instrumental and that is why higher mental functions are a result of the internalization of these social relations or in Vygotsky's own words, "genetically [i.e., developmentally], social relations, real relations of people, stand behind all of the higher functions and their relations (Matusov 2011, pp. 102–103).

The higher psychological functions were detached from their subject and, consequently, from the system of social relationships in which the subject appears through living communicative acts subjectively engaged and not only through psychological functions. Cognitive reductionism was very characteristic of activity theory. One of its main representatives, D. B. Elkonin, openly expressed that reductionism: "The idea of this so-called internal—or, I might better say—intellectual activity has become confused with the question of the division of any activity, including intellectual activity, into an orienting and an executive component" (Elkonin 1995, p. 32). So, the identification of internal and external activity by its structure was mainly

referred to as intellectual processes. Emotions, motivation, and imagination were stripped from the intellectual functions.

Nonetheless, the concepts from the last period of Vygotsky's work began to receive special and increasing attention as part of the renewal of the interpretation of Vygotsky's legacy in recent years (Fakhrutdinova 2010; Fleer et al. 2017; Fleer and Hammer 2013; González Rey 2009, 2011, 2014, 2017a; Veresov 2016; Veresov and Fleer 2016; Yasnitsky and Van Der Veer 2016).

The reinterpretation of the first and last periods of Vygotsky's work has been mainly centered on the concepts of *perezhivanie*, emotions, imagination, and social situation of development. Among these, however, the concept of sense has remained mostly ignored, despite the isolated efforts of two Russian psychologists to bring it to light (Leontiev 1992; Yarochevsky 2007). Paradoxically, this was the most attractive concept for us, when we introduced the concept of psychological sense into our work on personality (González Rey 1995; González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 1989).

Having completed his Ph.D. in 1979 in Bozhovich's laboratory, supervised by Chudnovsky, González Rey followed two main principles advanced by Bozhovich and her team. The first was the comprehension of motives as psychological formations integrated by different needs, aspirations, desires, and other motivational-related elements, which appeared to form a truly motivational formation. In this regard, for Bozhovich: "Already in the second year of life, the first type of personality psychological formation appears—the motivational representations that appear as a result of the first synthesis of intellectual and affective elements (in other words—needs and consciousness) allowing the child, to some extent, the opportunity to leave the limits of any immediate situations" (Chudnovsky 2009, p. 17). The second principle was closely related to the first one, even in Chudnovsky's statement; this is the capacity of personality to transcend the limits of any immediate situations, i.e., its generative capacity.

The idea of psychological formation represented, in fact, a strong subjective psychological resource that was the basis of Bozhovich's emphasis on the generative capacity of personality even in early childhood. In Bozhovich's words:

> Developing on the basis of the individual assimilation of social forms of consciousness and behavior, once the personality emerges it frees the individual from immediate subordination to the influences of the environment that surrounds him, allowing him not only to adapt to it, but to transform the environment and him/herself (Bozhovich 2009, p. 368).

These two interrelated principles developed by Bozhovich allowed her to advance in terms of the legacies of Vygotsky, Rubinstein, and Bakhtin, who attempted to use the concept of refraction as a path to avoid the mechanistic and deterministic character of the concept of reflection that was dominant in Soviet psychology. Also, Bozhovich's emphasis on transformation brings to light the creative character of individuals over the social environment, advancing in the opposite direction to the principle of assimilation that was dominant in Soviet education, based on the principles of Leontiev's activity theory (Koshmanova 2007).

Despite the fact that Bozhovich advanced Vygotsky's concepts related to motivation, personality, and creativity, which were mostly developed by him at the first

and last periods of his work (González Rey 2011), she was also critical of Vygotsky's intellectualist deviations, both in his definition of *perezhivanie* and in the role attributed by him to conceptual thinking in the psychological development of adolescents. On the latter, she noted:

> In a concrete analysis of the transition age, he (Vygotsky, *our note*) considered as the most important fact the formation of concepts…. In this reflection, there was no room for, and there was no need to pay attention to, other driving forces of development; moral consciousness exerted itself as an automatic consequence of the formation process of conceptual thinking (Bozhovich 2009, p. 295).

Apart from Vygotsky's active search for concepts capable of embodying the unit of affective and intellectual processes, a principle that was also followed by Bozhovich, in fact, he did not achieve this goal as a result of the absence of a new ontological definition by which that unit could be sustained. This unit could not emerge by grouping traditional concepts as integrative parts to be assembled into a new concept as, in our opinion, occurred with the concepts of motivational formations, senses, and perezhivanie.

The advances made by Vygotsky and Bozhovich on the topics of personality and motivation were, perhaps, the main attempts to advance a representation of human psyche as a generative, and not an assimilative system. Nevertheless, the comprehension of human psyche as a new qualitative phenomenon that characterizes not only individuals, but the wide range of human phenomena, still seems to be far beyond Soviet psychology.

As Tolstyx stated:

> Recently, it is possible to observe researchers' growing interest in questions of subject and subjectivity. It is possible to say that these issues have progressively found their place, which, in the second half of the XXth century was occupied by the research on personality (Tolstyx 2008, p. 134–135; our translation from Russian).

Among the facts that should be considered in such a reduction of the scope of Soviet psychology to individuals are the following aspects:

- The absence of a strong social psychology, which was restricted to the School of Leningrad that was overlooked for decades during the political hegemony of Leontiev in Soviet psychology, from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s. One of the worst consequences of activity theory for Soviet psychology was the omission of the topic of communication that was treated through the S-O-S scheme, according to which relations with others are always mediated by an object. The objectivistic, instrumental, reactive, and behavioral psychology implemented in Kornilov's reactology had its finest expression in Leontiev´s activity theory.
- The absence of the topics of symbolical processes and realities that were mainly reduced to the sign mediation of psychological functions (Zinchenko 1993). This gap led to the symbolical nature of all human psychological functions being ignored: The psychological nature of functions was replaced by sign mediation, something critically recognized by Vygotsky at the end of his life (Zavershneva 2016). Symbolical productions are never constrained by the immediate relation

with external influences, which was difficult to accept in a psychology constructed as determined by external influences. Symbolical processes, on the contrary, are devices by which human intuitions, based on imagination, find specific expressions through new creative images, language, models of thinking, and even concepts, which primarily have no direct relation with external influences. Human capacity to create cultural realities within which human beings live and, in turn, are created by them, is something that deserves new theoretical constructions, among which the topic of subjectivity should be considered.

- The absence of the topic of the symbolic constrained the comprehension of both of sociality and culture, which are closely interrelated to the symbolical nature of human processes and realities. That relation implies the advancing of a definition of human phenomena that simultaneously characterizes the human mind, social realities, and culture as three instances permanently interwoven with each other in such a process within which one is configured as part of the natures of the others.
- There was a split created within Soviet psychology between activity (considered by Leontiev as the main ontological definition for a Marxist psychology), consciousness, and personality (as psychological systems, as defended by Vygotsky at the beginning and end of his work, as well as by Bozhovich, Rubinstein, Miasichev, and Ananiev in that first generation of Soviet psychology, and after them by Abuljanova, Brushlinsky, Chudnovsky, Lomov, Zinchenko, among others). This split separated consciousness and personality from the living system of social relations, making impossible such an integration proposed above between mind, social realities, and culture. The principle of the unity between consciousness and activity proposed by Rubinstein was completely overlooked in such a way that activity was detached from its subjects.
- The fact that the symbolical remained beyond the comprehension of psychical processes did not allow a transcendence of the traditional taxonomy of fragmented concepts used by traditional psychology to define specific psychological functions and contents that appear separated from each other as different entities, such as imagination, fantasy, thought, perception, motive, and personality. All of these have been traditionally used to refer to individuals in Soviet psychology.
- The split between emotions and intellectual processes was intended to be overcome by units capable of integrating both processes, but without advancing a new ontological definition of those units, such as the concepts of *perezhivanie* and sense proposed by Vygotsky which, rather than making explicit a new qualitative nature of human psyche, were defined by groups of psychological elements, without specifying anything qualitatively new in terms of their psychological nature. Intellectual and cognitive processes are only one specific expression of the wider range of symbolical processes, and its comprehension by both cognitive psychology and Soviet psychology was restricted to concepts, meanings, and representations directly resulting from external influences and information. Symbolical productions, however, always imply creation, in which imagination, fantasy, and emotions appear as new qualitative units assembled by models within which symbolical processes and emotions must appear, one configured within the other. Such units define the ontological nature of subjectivity as the topic is advanced in this book.

The aforementioned aspects must be overcome in order to advance the topic of subjectivity from a cultural–historical standpoint, and these demands advancing simultaneously the interrelations between theory, epistemology and methodology, topics that have been closely interrelated since the beginning of this theoretical proposal. On this path, from which our interest in personality gradually became an interest in a new construction capable of embracing individuals within their multiple levels and their network of social functioning, two facts in González Rey's trajectory were important. First, his work at the Institute of Psychology of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union, where he completed the degree of Doctor in Science in 1987. That institute represented, at that moment, the main political force through which an important turning point was occurring in Soviet psychology as a result of which new topics, interpretations, and paths were beginning to be opened; the monopoly of Leontiev´s activity theory was beginning to be overcome.[1]

B. Lomov, director of that Institute and a disciple of Ananiev, together with his critique of the individual character of Leontiev's definition of activity, brought to light a comprehension of communication as a living interactive process that, far from being external to human psyche, is inseparable from it: "(…) communication is considered an important determinant of the whole psychical system, of its structure, dynamic and development. However, this determination is not external to psyche. The psyche and communication are intrinsically interrelated with each other (Lomov 1984, p. 248; our translation from Russian). Also, Lomov brought to Soviet psychology the topic of dialogue and the figure of Bakhtin, both of them having been completely overlooked throughout the history of that psychology.

By working in that Institute, González Rey realized it would be impossible to sustain a cultural–historical psychology centered on individual concepts, as well as the importance of finding ways capable of advancing a theoretical definition of human psyche that was not restricted to individuals. González Rey's first paper attempting to integrate personality and communication appeared in Soviet psychology (González Rey 1983). In these same years, González Rey was closely engaged in the emerging critical movement within Latin American social psychology, in which were grouped authors like M. Montero, I. Martin-Baró, S. Lane, among others (González Rey 1989, 1994, 2004); new dialogues emerged, his representation on sociality advanced, and his interest in individual psychological processes did not wane.

As a result of these new exchanges and experiences, in 1991, the concept of social subjectivity was formulated by González Rey, beginning a theoretical search to open a new path in the study of personality that would allow the study of the complex and multiple ways through which personality emerges as inseparable from social reality, which is also characterized by having a subjective functioning. One of the paths along which to advance a psychology capable of integrating these concepts is in process.

This proposal on subjectivity has also been influenced by dialogue with other authors and theories, mainly with social representation theory (González Rey 2002,

[1] For more information on the shift that occurred at that time within Soviet psychology, see González Rey (2016a).

2005, 2012, 2015). From this proposal, dialogue has also been established with authors associated with different critical theoretical proposals, such as Burman, Castoriadis, Frosh, Holzkamp, and Parker. An interesting and strong cooperation with cultural–historical authors, who have also advanced Vygotsky's legacy on emotions, perezhivanie, and imagination, is in process, generating new paths within the cultural–historical legacy (Fleer et al. 2017; Fleer and González Rey 2017; Adams and Fleer 2017; Fleer and Quinones 2013, among others). This dialogue continues in depth in some of the chapters in this book.

The resistance to subjectivity did not proceed only from Soviet psychology. Since subjectivity has been reduced to a metaphysical concept associated with a universal human nature within modern rationalism, the term has remained associated with this philosophical imagery. Modern empiricism, from Bacon to Hobbes, from Hobbes to Locke, and from Locke to Berkeley, advanced the relation of experience and thought, which far surpassed Descartes in its clarity and precision (Cassirer 2009). Following a philosophical historical sequence, subjectivity has never again been considered relevant, neither for the study of human phenomena, nor for science.

During the first half of the twentieth century, a strong empirical and behavioral psychology[2] began its hegemony in the USA, and very quickly that hegemony was extended all over the world. An atheoretical, instrumental, empirical, and individual psychology was dominant during the twentieth century (Danziger 1990, 1997; Koch 1999). European psychology, mainly Gestalt psychology and psychoanalysis, was an exception, although the latter had serious difficulties in considering itself as psychology despite Freud's clear position in this respect in the last period of his life. Marxism too was not a fecund arena from which to advance the topic of subjectivity.

Chudnovsky explained the omission of subjectivity in Soviet psychology as follows:

> The general emphasis on studying a person as an object of social development cannot lead to psychological inquiries addressed toward the question of subjectivity. This means, in fact, that the excessive and unilateral emphasis on given external influences and the relevance of the assimilation of the world's objects become the basis for the emergence of consciousness (Leontiev 1975). The essence of personality is identified by the internalized internal activity and is understood as an internal moment of activity rather than as the subject of activity (Chudnovsky 2006, p.78; our translation from Russian).

In the quotation above, the author outlined a matter that is beyond the limits of Soviet psychology, appearing, to some extent, as part of a Marxist imagery to consider external facts and realities as determinants of consciousness. Marx himself was very contradictory in relation to the topic of subjectivity, which he addressed in a highly comprehensive way, taking into account the theoretical resources available to him in the nineteenth century. In his own words:

> The supersession of private property is therefore the complete emancipation of all human senses and attributes; but it is this emancipation because these senses and attributes have become human, subjectively as well as objectively. The eye has become a human eye, just

[2]The reference to a behavioral psychology is not restricted here to behaviorism; in fact, behavioral psychologies include all those in which behavior represents their ontological definition.

> as its object has become a social, human object, made by man for man. The senses have therefore become theoreticians in their immediate praxis (Marx 1992, p. 389).

It is amazing how two contradictory ideas co-exist within the same quotation. On the one hand, Marx recognized something that, even today, is still difficult to recognize within a Marxist imagery: "The senses have therefore become theoreticians in their immediate praxis." This means that there are no objects that, in themselves, define human practices; they are our created fictions and creations are what define them.[3] So, the split between theory and practice, which still prevails in some Marxist circles, is impossible, because practice is based on theory. On the other hand, Marx made this process dependent on the supersession of private property, as if the historical evolution of mankind had not happened on the basis of the development of human subjectivity.

Eagleton criticized one of Marx's most quoted statements from "The German Ideology": "Social being is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by social being" (Marx 1976, p. 49). He asked: "How can being determine consciousness when consciousness is an integral part of it?" (Eagleton 2016, p. 85). It is precisely such a split between social being and consciousness that emerges as one of the bigger barriers created by Marxism for the study of subjectivity.

Nonetheless, Marxist dialectics and its orientation toward theoretical systems offers options to advance the topic of subjectivity on a new basis, as was clearly evidenced by Soviet psychology, in which the constraints on advancing this topic proceeded from political and institutional facts rather than from philosophical reasons.

However, the new basis on which the rejections of subjectivity have continued since the second half of the twentieth century came from a sequence of philosophical positions that culminated in the French post-structuralist discourse, oriented toward the rejection of meta-narratives and an extreme relativism from an epistemological point of view. The Heideggerian call to replace the presence by the process found its best expression in that discourse. The cult of language as the only ontological ground for all human phenomena, as proclaimed by the linguistic turn in philosophy and shared by highly influential philosophers, such as Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Gadamer, was based on the discursive turn that defined the post-structuralist realm. Social constructionism was the most direct heir of that movement in philosophy. However, in human thought, nothing is as it looks. Social constructionism also expresses a rational intellectualism that has omitted human emotions and, as such, human motivations, both engulfed by discursive terms (González Rey 2018).

The present book aims to give a picture of the way in which this theoretical proposal on subjectivity has advanced new epistemological and methodological options capable of attending to the demands resulting from the research and social practices

[3] In fact, any human theory only generates forms of intelligibility on its subjects' questions, which contacts with the study matter are temporarily defined by the new practices, knowledge, and realities that are advanced on the basis of that theory. Nonetheless, theory is never a copy or a reflection of reality, which implies the impossibility of detaching fiction from it.

that have developed from the proposal. Some of the challenges, contradictions, and demands for the proposal are explicit in the chapters of the book.

The need to bring back the topic of subjectivity on a new theoretical, epistemological, and methodological basis mainly answers the following demands:

- Taking forward the theoretical construction of an ontological definition of human phenomena that is non-reducible to language, discourse, behavior, or whatever other definition that has been used to replace human psyche as such. In this definition, subjectivity deals with a general quality of all human phenomena, whether social or individual.
- The need to advance on concepts understood as dynamic units capable of being malleable and of appearing in different ways to be inseparable from the wide range of human experiences within the simultaneous social networks and practices in which human beings are involved. These units are ontologically defined by a new human quality that emerges as simultaneously symbolical and emotional, a quality in which we recognize subjectivity as an ontological definition. These qualitative units, subjective senses and subjective configurations, are permanently interwoven with each other in human experiences, within which social and individual historical constellations of facts appear simultaneously through these different dynamic units. Both concepts allow the overcoming of most of the classical dichotomies that have historically been associated with psychological knowledge: internal/external, behavior/trait, conscious/unconscious, emotions/cognition, personality/function, and so on.

Subjective senses and subjective configurations, as dynamic units of different order, are permanently expressed one within the other, in such a variable way that they cannot be defined by contents, as has usually been the case with the traditional psychological concepts. Unlike linear concepts, such as the motivation to study, which is only defined by positive behaviors addressed toward study, through the concept of subjective configuration, as explanatory of human motivation, the interest in study is inseparable from other sources of subjective senses that apparently have little to do with study, but through which the cosmos of the life of the student appears in different ways and at different moments through study.

The proposal on subjectivity discussed in this book is not opposed to concepts addressed toward understanding the complex symbolic social networks within which social and individual subjectivities emerge. Discourse is a symbolic system that articulates many different symbolic social constructions, forming a living system within which particular symbolic social constructions, such as gender, race, sex, and illnesses, are embedded. These specific symbolic constructions, in their intermingled relations with social symbolic institutional realities like religion, morals, science, and policy, form the social dominant order, forming sociocultural subjective realities that are inseparable from the singular appearance of subjective phenomena, whether social or individual, within those realities.

Every social symbolic construction, organized as discourses, social representations, and other social theoretical constructions, does not directly activate human behaviors, whether in social instances of in individuals. These symbolical systems

appear as the basis on which subjective senses and subjective configuration emerge as a result of how these constructions are being experienced by individuals and groups. The ways in which social constructions emerge in individuals and social instances represent subjective productions that, instead of answering objective facts, produce them, as a result of a subjective configuration that is generated within a given experience.

Social symbolical realities should become subjective senses and configurations in order to function as human motivations. Subjectivity is a motivated system within which imagination emerges as the cornerstone of all human creations. These creations are the basis on which culture and social order are continuously renewed, having a historical course.

In this proposal, subjectivity, sociality, culture, and history of both individuals and social instances can be studied simultaneously, transcending any illusion to objectify human behaviors in the attempt to make them deductible from rational or objective given conditions. Human subjective productions generate diverse rationalities that are always part of the interweaving game of different and unexpected social and individual subjective configurations, which suddenly can emerge in such unexpected behavior that must be understood through its subjective configuration. Taken outside of subjective configuration, it must be taken as delirium. These unexpected processes are the basis of all human institutionalized orders.

The book has been organized as an expression of a research program that has become a constant source for new challenges and paths to be advanced as a requirement to make theory a living system. In following this path, we departed from the firm epistemological conviction that the value of science is in opening up new paths of intelligibility on studied subjects that for one or another reason do not acquire visibility from other theoretical frameworks. The book has been structured following three important criteria: (1) to make explicit the theoretical representation on which the research program that includes most of the chapters of the book is based; (2) to open a dialogue with authors who look at the proposal from different angles, creating new avenues in relation to those discussed by our research team in Brazil; and finally (3) to present a series of research studies that were carried out in areas frequently omitted by cultural–historical psychology, such as the social subjectivities of institutions, mental health, learning as a subjective process, sexual education, psychotherapy, innovation, and teacher training.

We aim to open up new dialogue within cultural–historical theories, and others that have a lot of common with them, looking for new intelligibilities from which new challenges for our own development can emerge. The book, far from attempting to be a system of rules, intends to open up new options within cultural–historical psychology.

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Chapter 2
Subjectivity as a New Theoretical, Epistemological, and Methodological Pathway Within Cultural-Historical Psychology

Fernando González Rey

Abstract The chapter presents the articulation between theory, epistemology, and methodology as an important requirement for advancing a proposal of subjectivity from a cultural–historical perspective. Historically, psychological theories have not been used to discuss explicitly the epistemological consequences of their theoretical advances. As a consequence, methodology frequently appears as an abstract and isolated field, oriented toward providing devices for empirical research in different fields, and one which is based on different theoretical perspectives. It is not possible to study subjectivity, as defined within this perspective, directly from empirical data. The concepts assembled in this theoretical proposal obtain meaning only through advancing a constructive-interpretative methodology as the only path capable of bringing intelligibility to its concepts. This means that those theoretical concepts simultaneously embody an epistemological definition and epistemological consequences; they are not equivalent to reality, but are part of theoretical models through which subjective phenomena are studied. These concepts are never exhausted within scientific research. They are only pieces of intelligibility for advancing theoretical representation of questions that remain overlooked by other theories. Constructions and interpretations are not determined by results taken directly from the empirical field; they contain degrees of speculation without which science would not be a production of thought. The chapter defends the idea that scientific research is, above all, a theoretical production, which advances through the development of theoretical models of what is being studied through fieldwork.

2.1 Introduction

The dominance of positivism in psychology throughout its modern history has led to the naturalization of a single way of doing science, leading to the lack of epistemological and methodological questions. Even today, positivism is very influential

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in psychology. Such hegemony is not only to do with the absence of epistemological and methodological debates within psychology, and it is also closely related to the misuse of theory in psychology. This picture has been dominant in modern psychology, including Soviet psychology. One of the few exceptions to this picture of modern psychology was K. Lewin and his group.

The relationship between Lewin and Soviet psychology had its main representative in Vygotsky (Yasnitsky 2012, 2016; Zavershneva 2010, 2016). That relationship was current at the beginning of 1930, when Vygotsky again took up some of his foundational ideas developed in "The Psychology of Art." However, unlike in "The Psychology of Art," where Vygotsky's theoretical reflection advanced together with new audacious methodological ideas, in the 1930s the author was more centered on new concepts and omitted methodological proposals oriented toward their study.

Lewin and his group, unlike Vygotsky, focused on the epistemological and methodological issues that their new concepts demanded to be used in psychological research. The use of experiment by Lewin and his group during its German period was far from the ascetic, non-interactive, and instrumental use of experiment within American psychology at the same period of time. Lewin and his group advanced theory and methodology hand in hand in such a way that methodology answers the demands of the theoretical construction of personality and motivation. Moreover, the epistemological questions associated with that relation were also discussed (Dembo 1993).

The advances in the study of motivation and personality, which was characteristic of Lewin's work, turned out to be the main focus of Vygotsky between 1932 and 1934. Nonetheless, this was not the main line followed by Soviet psychology, of which the dominant trends throughout its history aimed to define a Marxist psychology as an objective and natural science, keeping positivistic principles invested with Marxism as its epistemological basis (González Rey and Mitjans Martínez 1989; González Rey 2009, 2014, 2017).

This chapter is oriented toward highlighting how the legacy of the aforementioned authors, taken together with other lesser known theoretical trends within Soviet psychology, which appeared, not rarely, to contradict each other in the official histories of that psychology, in fact had important points of convergence that implicitly brought light to subjectivity as a phenomenon. Subjectivity, as developed in our research line, is a theoretical system oriented toward studying a specific phenomenon, of which the uncertainty, complexity, uniqueness, contradictory, and dynamic character fall outside the categories that have historically characterized the hegemonic theories in psychology.

The main objective of this chapter is to show the close interdependency between theory, epistemology, and methodology, as reflecting three inseparable sides of our proposal on subjectivity (González Rey 1993, 1997, 2005, 2007). The concepts assembled in this theoretical proposal on subjectivity obtain meaning only through advancing the constructive-interpretative methodology as the only path capable of bringing intelligibility to its concepts. This means that those theoretical concepts, simultaneously embody an epistemological definition and can only be defined through a constructive-interpretative methodology based on that epistemology. The epistemological principles associated with this proposal on subjectivity are

(1) concepts are not equivalent to reality; they are part of theoretical models through which subjective phenomena become the subject of knowledge. (2) The concepts assembled in this theoretical proposal are never exhausted within scientific research. These concepts are only pieces of intelligibility for advancing theoretical representation of questions that remain overlooked by other theories.

The theoretical, epistemological, and methodological consequences of the inclusion of subjectivity as an important topic for cultural–historical psychology will be discussed in the next pages.

2.2 The Overlooked Articulation Between Theory, Epistemology and Methodology in Cultural–Historical Psychology

The absence of epistemological and methodological discussion within cultural–historical psychology has, to a great extent, been due to its dominant official trends, mostly oriented toward identifying Marxism with objectivity. Such identification has also led to an ontological[1] gap, as is clearly denounced by Abuljanova in the following statement:

> Despite the fierce polemics between those addicted to a socio-psychological explanation of the psyche and the supporters of the physiological or cybernetic explanation, the position of both groups is identical. The attempt to materialize the psyche or assign it materiality through its identification with something different reveals the antidialectical character of this form of knowledge, the inability to apply dialectic to the discovery of the specificity of psychic phenomena. (Abuljanova 1973, p. 49)

As a result of this gap related to the ontological definition of human psyche, Soviet psychology did not advance a theoretical system capable of defining the specific quality of human psyche in articulation with its cultural, social, and historical genesis. Soviet psychology exhibited the same fragmentation in terms of areas and concepts that characterized traditional psychology. The concepts of sense and *perezhivanie* developed by Vygotsky (Vygotsky 1987, 1993) in the last period of his work were promissory as psychological units from which a new psychological system could emerge (Leontiev 1992; González Rey 2009, 2011; Zavershneva 2016). Nonetheless, those concepts, far from defining a new quality of psychological processes, only represented an integration of different psychological elements (González Rey 2016a, b).

The most successful attempt to advance toward a theoretical system within Soviet psychology was Leontiev's Activity Theory, which understood psyche as an epiphenomenon of object-based activity. Psychical concepts in this proposal were defined in terms of activity; for example, motive was identified as the object of the activity, while the internal, properly psychological, functions were identified by their structure

[1] The term ontology is used here to define theoretical constructions through which a new theoretical field is founded, generating intelligibility about new questions from which new paths for research and practice are opened up.

as external operations with objects, which become internal through internalization. Leontiev omitted the use of the concept of psychological unit as defined by Vygotsky in his final works, replacing the emphasis on cultural mediators by object-based activity.

The replacement of psyche by activity as the ontological definition upon which psychology should be constructed was clearly expressed by one of Leontiev's closest collaborators:

> Essentially, for a long time, we were forced to be content with the fact that some external correlations were established between activity and mental processes, for example, noting that given such and such specific characteristics of activity, or such and such a structure, such and such motivation of activity, and so forth, such and such changes in mental processes occur, although the mechanism of these changes and the very nature of these mental processes were never studied in particular. (Zaporozhets 1995, p. 14)

Vygotsky's unfinished attempt to advance on a new definition of consciousness, based on senses as its units (Leontiev 1992), was completely ignored by Leontiev and his group (Zavershneva 2016). The hypothetical psychological system on which Vygotsky seemed to be advancing in the last stage of his life was differently interpreted by different authors. For Yarochevsky (2007), for example, that system was personality, having *perezhivanie* as its unit, while for Leontiev (1992), Veresov (2017), Yasnitsky (2016), and Zavershneva (2016) the system was consciousness, having sense or *perezhivanie* as its psychological units.

The concepts of sense and *perezhivanie,* taken together with communication, as developed by the authors of the School of Leningrad (Ananiev 1977; Miasichev 1960; Lomov 1978, 1984; Bodaliev 1983), and with the principle of the unity of consciousness and activity, as defined by S. L. Rubinstein, represented important antecedents in advancing on subjectivity as a new ontological definition of a unique human phenomenon, whether social or individual, i.e., culturally, historically, and socially engendered. Subjectivity from this theoretical standpoint transcends the definition of psyche, advancing a new qualitative understanding of what historically has been understood as psychological processes, and specifying a new qualitative side of social functioning.

Sense, *perezhivanie,* communication, activity, and consciousness were concepts that had never been articulated with each other in Soviet psychology, being treated separately, rather than leading to new epistemological and methodological proposals for study. From my point of view, the ideological pressures on Soviet psychology were, to a great extent, responsible for that gap between theory, epistemology, and methodology. Any attempt to move forward in the specificity of human psychological processes ran the risk of being accused of idealism. The methodological support of research undertaken within the Activity Theory framework was experiment, oriented toward the study of cognitive functions.

The research carried out by Bozhovich, and her team was strongly influenced by Lewin and his group, both theoretically and methodologically. Bozhovich and her group simultaneously advanced research into, and the theoretical construction of, personality. They formed the only group that followed Vygotsky's concepts of *perezhivanie* and social situation of development in their research. Nevertheless,

despite advancing along a new path in qualitative research, within Soviet psychology, nothing epistemological or methodological arising from this kind of research was ever openly discussed.

Bozhovich, aware of the vagueness of Vygotsky's definition of the psychological nature of *perezhivanie*, argued:

> In other words, what underlies perezhivanie, as we see it, is the world of children's needs—their impulses, desires, intentions, complexly intertwined with one another and interrelated with possibilities for meeting these needs. And this entire complex system of connections, the entire world of a child's needs and impulses, must be deciphered so that we can understand the nature of the influence external circumstances exert on children's mental development. (Bozhovich 2009, p. 70)

Despite the progress carried by this definition in relation to Vygotsky's work, and its clear identification of *perezhivanie* as being a concept of the motivational sphere of personality, Bozhovich did not advance a new ontological definition of *perezhivanie*; it continued to be an additive concept, similar to Vygotsky's definition. Sense and *perezhivanie* were defined by intertwining them with traditional concepts. Bozhovich's quotation brings light to an important methodological issue, stating that the interrelated psychological processes that lead to *perezhivanie* "must be deciphered." By saying this, Bozhovich, in fact, recognized the need to use interpretation to study *perezhivanie.*

Dembo, one of Lewin's closest collaborators, made an interesting contribution toward a new comprehension of psychological concepts, emphasizing their qualitative character. She wrote: "I had to get away from properties, which were static notions (not affecting other units) that did not permit understanding of the nature of psychological qualities in their totality or in their manifestation as single entities and occurrences" (Dembo 1993, p. 15).

In advancing the qualitative nature of psychological units, Dembo also advanced the qualitative nature of psychological research, putting theory and methodology together as two intermingled processes. The malleability and dynamic of such a unit fulfilled an important theoretical demand for advance in the topic of subjectivity. Concepts like the ones defined by Dembo (1993), such as psychological unit, in its dynamic and interactions, must characterize any proposal on subjectivity from a cultural–historical standpoint. The concept of psychological unit, as used by Dembo, is very similar to Vygotsky's definition of psychological unit. However, unlike Vygotsky, Dembo advanced the idea that units are closely interrelated, discussing new methodological issues for their study.

Dembo states:

> I could no longer bear to deal with analysis of properties that were related to our senses yet unrelated from one psychological unit to another. Finally, I call for a change! What kind of change should it be? It developed into a long and stepwise change. It varied from a change in approach to a change in methodology to a change in constituents; finally, I permitted myself even to think of a change in the meaning of quality itself. (Dembo 1993, p. 18)

Focusing on the changeable psychological units in movement, Dembo advanced on methodological issues toward a qualitative psychology capable of overcoming the

objective principles that have historically have ruled methodology in psychology. Dembo made explicit some methodological principles for the study of dynamic psychological units.

> The material to be analyzed was no longer obtained by so-called objective, outside observers, but was reported by the subjects who actually experienced the happenings. I, as an investigator, changed from using objective observations to using experiential observations. In the specific analysis of donor-recipient relations (to be discussed later), I chose to deal with interpersonal relations of a definitive kind. (Dembo 1993, p. 19)

Transcending observation as the collection of "objective facts," Dembo made a call to replace the idea of "data collection," expressed in the metaphor "donor–recipient relations," by an interactive researcher–participant communication that she defined as experiential observation. The fact that she stressed interpersonal relations as the basis of her qualitative research proposal was an important step ahead within the cultural–historical perspective. Dembo was influenced by phenomenology, as was Lewin; however, her emphasis on communicative interaction, involving emotions and values in research transcended interaction as a way to collect the expressions of the other, as emphasized in what has been identified as phenomenological research in psychology (Amatuzzi 2001; Giorgi 1995).

Dembo emphasized the study of emotions and values, as well as their presence in the living research process. She claimed:

> What I want to stress is that experiential observations have access to topics closest to that with which we are dealing. It has a relation to, an impact on, and is influenced by, our values and emotional processes, and is related to our most active living, to goal setting and goal attainment, and is decisive in our close relations with other people and in our relation to ourselves. (Dembo 1993, p. 19)

It is quite astonishing that the relation between cultural–historical psychology, widely understood as the tradition inaugurated in Soviet psychology by the most relevant of its tendencies (González Rey 2017), and the positions of Lewin's group were only pointed out by a few researchers during the Soviet period (Zeigarnik 1982). Three facts, in my opinion, were highly influential in this: (1) the way in which Vygotsky's thought was institutionalized in Soviet and Western psychologies; (2) the neglect of Bozhovich's work within the officially institutionalized Activity Theory, which is related to her late entrance within Western psychology; and (3) the fact that the legacy of Lewin's group in Germany was overlooked after the Second War World. The following statement by Dembo supports my last conjecture: "The Department of Psychology at the University of Berlin in 1920s, where I studied was a very supportive place in terms of the breadth and depth of interest in looking for the most suitable material for qualitative psychological analysis" (Dembo 1993, p. 25).

The previously discussed situation within the cultural–historical perspective allows the following conclusions:

(1) The articulation between theory, epistemology, and methodology remained overlooked within Soviet cultural–historical psychology, in which there prevailed an objectivistic, empirical, and natural approach to the study of cognitive

psychological function, and the main representatives of which were A. N. Leontiev and his followers.

(2) K. Lewin and his group theoretically influenced the last stage of Vygotsky's work, which was followed by Bozhovich and her group both theoretically and methodologically. Despite the new paths opened up by Bozhovich and her group in psychological research on personality, subverting the positivistic principles that officially ruled Soviet psychology, the epistemological, and methodological consequences of their research have never been discussed.

(3) The absence of methodological and epistemological discussion within Soviet psychology was a barrier for the development of a new ontological definition of the human mind as a culturally, historically, and socially engendered phenomenon. The theoretically promissory concepts developed by Vygotsky, and later by Bozhovich, the only Soviet psychologist who departed from Vygotsky's legacy in the study of personality, were, together with consciousness, the only proposals on psychological systems that appeared as an alternative to the monopoly of Activity Theory during the Soviet period. However, the gap of a new ontological definition, as identified by Abuljanova, and referred to above, has continued to be a challenge up until today.

The important steps forward taken by Dembo and Vygotsky in their definitions of psychological units remained out of focus for decades within the cultural–historical–psychological tradition. Our proposal on subjectivity opens up a new path along which to advance that legacy toward proposing a new ontological definition to human phenomena, whether social or individual. This generative character of subjectivity is one of its main attributes, breaking down the more adaptive view that has characterized the understanding of psyche in psychology, mostly as an epiphenomenon of external and internal forces. Bozhovich (1968) was the only Soviet psychology researcher to make explicit the generative character of personality.

The recognition of the generative character of subjectivity breaks down widespread social determinism in Soviet psychology, which led to an emphasis on assimilation and internalization as the two principal processes though which social influences were internalized.

2.3 Advancing a Theoretical Proposal on Subjectivity: Theory, Epistemology, and Methodology

This proposal on subjectivity advances along the aforementioned discontinued paths from both Lewin's tradition and the Vygotsky–Bozhovich legacy. The concepts of psychological unit, sense, *perezhivanie,* and social situation of development represented important antecedents in advancing in terms of the topic of subjectivity from a cultural–historical standpoint (González Rey 2002, 2009, 2012, 2014, 2017(a)). Nevertheless, as commented on before, these concepts did not specify a new ontological domain capable of explaining individual and social through a shared quality

that results from the historical, social, and historical genesis of both the human mind and social functioning. Subjectivity specifies a new ontological definition, leading to a new theoretical domain that makes psychology and the social sciences compatible with one another.

Subjectivity was never explicit in the works of Vygotsky, Dembo, Lewin, Bozhovich, Freud, or any other of the classical authors oriented toward the definition of psychological systems in psychology. However, subjectivity as a phenomenon appeared implicitly in the constructions of all of these writers. For example, Vygotsky noted:

> They didn't understand [referring to psychologists at the time] that a handicap is not just an impoverished psychological state, but also a source of wealth, not just a weakness but a strength. They thought that the development of a blind child centers on his blindness. The psychology of blindness is essentially the psychology of victory over blindness. (Vygotsky1993, p. 57)

In this quotation, subjectivity is implicitly recognized by three of its main attributes: (1) subjectivity is not the objective nature of experience, nor the objective conditions of an individual, which define how reality and we, ourselves, are experienced; (2) the weakness or strength of one experience depends on the psychological resources that can be mobilized by an individual during that one experience; (3) the generative character of subjectivity as a system that developed itself through its own productions.

Traditionally, psychology has been based on concepts that were understood as reactions to certain stimuli or lived experiences, such as behavior, traces, types of personality (diabetic personality, epileptic personality, and so on), patterns of behaviors (pattern A or B of coronary behaviors), pathological entities. All these concepts share the following attributes: (1) They are defined by causes external to them, whether social or biological; (2) psyche is never made explicit, remaining implicit, or even being rejected in the taxonomy of concepts used by psychology; (3) it is possible to define all of them through descriptive procedures. Psychoanalysis represents a different psychology, the detailed analysis of which is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, psychoanalysis in most of its foundational trends also shares the ontological gap in relation to what psyche is. Its concepts are grounded in biological drives as the universal basis on which the structure of the psychical apparatus would develop.

Subjectivity as an ontological domain specifies a new kind of process, that is, qualitatively different from all the processes involved in its genesis. As such, subjectivity is ontologically defined by the integration of emotions and symbolical processes, forming new qualitative units: subjective senses. Such subjective senses are "snapshots" of symbolic emotional flashes that unfold in a chaotic movement, from which subjective configurations emerge as a self-regulative and self-generative organization of subjective senses (González Rey 2012, 2014, 2016).

Based on subjective senses and subjective configurations, social and individual subjectivity appear as a system within which one is permanently configured within the other through the specific subjective senses produced by each of them. Thus, for

example, each individual gender emerges in the intertwined flux of subjective senses within one subjective configuration. In this sense, gender is inseparable from other subjective senses resulting from the way in which individuals have lived multiple other social symbolical constructions in their lives. Subjective configurations actively assemble a constellation of subjective senses that characterize social and individual motivations, in which gender, religion, moral values, political norms, and many other possible social symbolical constructions appear as subjective units in a process within the subjective configurations.

Social subjective senses are not an abstraction that floats over individuals. They emerge as living subjective processes within social networks, characterizing any social space as an active system of related individuals, within which, once a social configuration emerges, it unfolds into new subjective social processes that are beyond individual intentions and control. Social subjective configurations function in the interweaving of wider social subjective productions resulting from social scenarios that are distant from and different from that in which a particular network is acting at the present moment, and from the different subjective individual configurations through which individuals singularly engage within a specific social subjectively configured group or network.

The concept of social subjectivity allows the explanation of how society, in its diverse levels, institutions, and processes, is configured recursively in all those diverse instances, making them living, contradictory, and heterogeneous social spaces, while also being configured in individuals whose active positions and behaviors are constituent of the different paths taken for all those social instances in their development. Social and individual subjective productions actively intertwine, each with others, in such a way that transcends individual conscious intention and socially declared proposals. Social subjectivity, unlike discourse, social representation and other social symbolical productions, always engages individuals as agents of its different subjective configurations, which are inseparable from those of such individuals.

Regardless of the pressures and the control exerted by a social order, the dominant groups can only temporarily control behaviors and expressions in that social instance within which they have become dominant. The silence of expressions is not equivalent to the passivity of subjectivity; subjective productions advance underground, and soon or later, change will emerge from them. It is in contexts like this that individuals emerge as subjects of contradiction, resistance, and change in that order. The concept of subject, whether social or individual, is a key piece of our theoretical proposal on subjectivity (González Rey 1995, 2002, 2005, 2007, 2014; González Rey and Mitjáns 1989, 2016, 2017).

The inseparability of social symbolical productions and emotions in the ontological definition of subjectivity defines it as simultaneously a constituent of culture, social life, and individuals. These three different systems are subjectively configured and, as such, they are closely intermingled with one another. The social order is subjectively configured through discourses, social representations, myths, political beliefs, religion, and many other symbolical social constructions. However, its functioning and development will depend on the way that all these processes are subjectively configured in individuals, groups, social networks, and institutions.

The intermingled relationship between subjectivity and social symbolical productions, in which one is not reduced to the other, leads to a different psychology in which the classical borders of the cultural–historical approach are extended. Discourse, in itself, or any other symbolical social production, as social representation, does not exhaust the wide range of complex phenomena engendered by individual and social subjective configurations.

Subjectivity is a new quality of human realities and processes and, as such, social processes, culture, and history, although they are not reduced to their subjective configurations, are all subjective systems. Subjectivity cannot be reduced to psychology; however, this definition opens up an important new avenue for the development of a cultural–historical psychology.

At the same time, subjectivity allows a critical dialogue between cultural–historical psychology, based on the Soviet psychological legacy, and other psychological approaches that have increasingly considered culture as inseparable from their constructions, such as dialogical psychology, social constructionism, and critical social psychology. These approaches have appeared as critical reactions to individual perspectives centered on behavior and on metaphysical and universal intrapsychical definitions of psychical structures. Such critical reaction has been very useful to psychology, leading to the overcoming of the naturalization of human psyche. Nevertheless, focusing on cultural and social concepts like discourse, dialogue, narratives, and deconstruction, these critical psychologies (Gergen 1994; Harre 1995; Rose 1995) have overemphasized social symbolical productions to the detriment of individuals and their creative subjective repertories, leading to a social symbolical and relational determinism. This determinism makes it impossible to understand how individuals and their active transformative actions are inseparable from the development of social processes and realities. Allowing such an integration between social symbolical realities, individual actions and practices, subjectivity, unlike discourse is formed by subjective senses and configurations that always carry emotions, establishing them as the motivational cores of social and individual behaviors. As a production, subjectivity opens up unpredictable subjective avenues within naturalized symbolical realities. Such a definition of subjectivity, despite its relations with psychological processes, transcends the domain of psyche, appearing as a different qualitative phenomenon that characterizes all human processes and relations, embracing all institutions and processes of any concrete society.

Subjective configurations are very dynamic subjective units that express the subjective system at the specific moment of its movement; human actions, psychological functions, dialogical processes, and different living experiences, integrate with each other within the flux of subjective senses generated by a subjective configuration. This theoretical representation of subjectivity makes it possible to overcome the dispersed taxonomy of concepts that has supported psychology up until the present, without specifying its psychological nature. Subjectivity does not exhaust psyche; on the contrary, subjectivity is a new quality that stands over the psyche. Any psychological function or process, when generated by a subjective configuration, is organized as a subjective core, around which a constellation of processes is organized as a part of its function. Imagination, fantasy, and intellectual processes can only be integrated

with each other through the flux of subjective senses that result from a subjective configuration, within which any psychological function becomes a new subjective unit of functioning.

Psychological processes are still understood as organized in the face of the demands of external conditions, without carrying the biography of the individuals configured in the ongoing action. Individual biographies appear in human experiences as living subjective biographies, within which individual experiences never result from the apparent objective facts to which an observer, or the individual himself or herself could attribute the cause of his/her behaviors.

The concepts assembled in this proposal on subjectivity carry an epistemological character for the following reasons:

(1) Subjective senses and subjective configurations, due to their great malleability and mobility, form a flux within which one specific subjective sense becomes another in a constant movement that cannot be captured by an act of knowledge. Thus, they do not appear directly through language, behavior or any human relationship process. For this reason, subjective senses and configurations must be constructed only in indirect ways through a constructive–interpretive methodology.

(2) Subjective senses and configurations are singular; thus, there are no specific individuals' or social group's behaviors, symptoms or experiences that, regardless of their similar character, express similar subjective configurations. This character of human subjectivity implies that knowledge of it is furthered through theoretical models that advance along an endless path within a research line. Inductive generalization is replaced by theoretical generalization based on theoretical models in continuous development, addressing the research objective.

(3) The heuristic value of subjective senses and configurations results from the fact that they allow generation of intelligibility about processes that have been omitted in other theoretical approaches. For example, studying learning difficulties as subjective configurations allows an understanding of how different subjective senses, through which it is possible to access experiences related to family, gender, social status, race, and many other personal experiences that apparently have nothing to do with learning, appear closely interconnected within one subjective configuration related to all behaviors and feelings associated with the learning difficulties process. From these theoretical and epistemological perspectives, human experiences can never be reduced to relations between variables, because what is important is not the family or the child's group as abstractions, but the way in which the family or the child's group are subjectively experienced and how those experiences are subjectively produced by an individual within the subjective configuration of his/her ongoing experience. This configuration, in its intertwined flux of subjective senses, represents a "microcosmos" of the child's life.

(4) As subjectivity can neither be studied directly from the explicit meanings of speech and language, nor from explicit behaviors, its study demands interpretive constructions of the researcher, which will first appear as conjectures based on the qualitative organization of language, speech, and behaviors, which high-

> light implicit information. These conjectures, while carrying a well-defined, although hypothetical, meaning, have been defined as indicators (González Rey 2001, 2005). Assembling different convergent indicators by their meaning is the main criterion for advancing a more general and precise hypothesis related to subjective senses and configurations. Indicators only emerge as a result of the continuous dialogical process throughout which different methodological devices are articulated. The theoretical model is not a sum of facts, but a dynamic researcher's intellectual construction within which hypotheses, indicators, and the researcher's ideas are integrated into a new qualitative level of knowledge.

Taking into account the demands described above, it is possible to conclude that this theoretical proposal on subjectivity carries an epistemological character. The demands and paths described, in their inseparable integration, are based on the definition of "Qualitative Epistemology" (González Rey 1997). At the moment in which that term was coined, there were no other epistemological references capable of sustaining the paths advanced by us in psychological research.

The main reasons for advancing Qualitative Epistemology, as such, were: The emphasis on epistemology as the criterion that makes the difference between quantitative and qualitative research. In this sense, stressing a qualitative methodology demands answering to qualitative epistemological attributes, as well as the capability of answering new different ontological proposals from those oriented to the quantitative definition of psyche. As well as theory being implicitly related to a different epistemology, the relationship between them should also lead to a new methodological definition, a constructive-interpretative one. From this methodological definition, subjective senses and configurations cannot be defined as labels to classify observed behaviors or reactions, but as meanings on which intelligibility about new phenomena can be advanced to construct meanings based on them, which are not explicit. This proposal on subjectivity appears to be simultaneously a theoretical, epistemological, and methodological path within cultural–historical psychology. This condition is one more attribute of its cultural–historical character.

It is important, in the final stage of this chapter, to establish some differences with other ways of performing interpretation—psychoanalysis and postmodern discursive analysis. Freud was aware of the relevance of construction in psychoanalytic work (Freud 2011). However, the universal concepts on which psychoanalysis is based make construction impossible, since the analyst always has external well-established narrow constraints that rule interpretation. These theoretical constraints are a priori theoretical definitions, such as the Oedipus complex, the repressed contents that refer to early childhood experiences, early sexual drives, the concept of lack, the child's suffering in the mirror stage, and many others, depending on the psychoanalytic reference. These universal definitions, in fact, are the safe harbor from which all interpretations should come. Freud stated:

> We all know that the person who is being analyzed has to be induced to remember something that has been experienced by him and repressed […] His work of construction (he is referring to the analyst; my note), or, if it is preferred, of reconstruction, resembles to a great extent an archaeologist´s excavation of some dwelling place that has been destroyed and buried or of some ancient edifice. (Freud 2011, pp. 10–11)

The quotation above is important to understand how any theory implicitly carries an epistemology. Freud, although using the word construction, immediately replaced it by reconstruction, which is the real function of the analyst for psychoanalysis. This is reaffirmed by Freud through the metaphor of the archaeologist, who assembles piece by piece the whole structure of a prior culture or civilization. However, archeologists work on objective prior realities, while psychology researchers work with living experiences. Nevertheless, the use of the same metaphor allows us to understand two important epistemological principles implicit in Freud's theory: lived experiences from the past remain as realities in the memory of patients, and their suffering is related to the distortion of those experiences by the mechanism of repression. Thus, the only way to suppress suffering is by returning to those experiences through interpretation, reestablishing them as they effectively occurred. This epistemological realism separates Freud from the topic of subjectivity as defined in this chapter.

More recently, S. Frosh, who made significant contributions to psychoanalysis, shared with Freud the possibility of obtaining "trust" during analysis: "The postmodern opposition to depth interpretation is well understood—the claim that looking underneath the surface for a true meaning is misguided and potentially authoritarian activity" (Frosh 2002, p. 85).

I completely agree with Frosh's criticism regarding the postmodern use of interpretation. Nevertheless, I disagree with his claim about the possibility of coming to a "true meaning." Like Frosh, I do not share the relativism of postmodern theories in psychology. However, epistemologically speaking, theoretical constructions must not be confounded with realities; concepts are not truths, they are intellectual devices for generating intelligibility about specific kinds of phenomena, on which new domains of human knowledge and practice could be founded. An endless chain of new theoretical constructions, new research and practice could be based on a new theoretically-ontologically defined system. This fact becomes the main criterion to legitimize a new theoretical domain in the sciences. Theories are always historical constructions, and they never exhaust the "real" character of the subject studied. This confusion can only occur when we depart from static, invariable, and universal concepts to define an invariable human ontology.

Our proposal on subjectivity departs from the principle that knowledge about subjective senses and subjective configurations is always incomplete, but is a way to address processes of human realities that specify a new ontological domain, making possible new representations and practices relating to our societies.

Postmodern theories like social constructionism have reduced interpretation to changeable discursive and linguistic productions that are completely meaningless in explaining the type of phenomena that gain intelligibility through subjectivity, as defined in this chapter. As discussed in this chapter, discursive practices do not permit the understanding of their significance for one another and for other human processes. As Frosh pointed out regarding social constructionism: "… all knowledge positions are constructed between people in language; in this sense, postmodernism is accommodated within social constructionism, the dominant philosophical base for family therapy" (Frosh 2010, p. 15).

Both paths in interpretation, the psychoanalytic and that coined as postmodern, are different from our proposal, at least in the following characteristics: Unlike psychoanalysis, our proposal does not depart from universally given concepts and does not intend to reconstruct distorted past experiences according to their real occurrence. Differently from social constructionism and other versions of postmodern thought in psychology, our proposal is based on the recognition of ontological definitions that are not engulfed by language or discourse. Moreover, this proposal not only deconstructs old concepts within psychology, but also highlights a new theoretical proposal with its complementary epistemological and methodological basis.

2.4 Some Final Comments

Subjectivity opens up new paths for research and practice within cultural–historical psychology, simultaneously allowing new dialogues with other psychological trends that have been historically ignored within cultural–historical studies.

Subjectivity allows the highlighting of human processes and phenomena that have not been the focus of attention of other theories, including most of the cultural–historical trends. This theoretical proposal, far from denying the cultural–historical principles on which the cultural–historical domain was founded, represents an extension of some of its more important and less well-known advances.

This proposal is sustained by the inseparable relationship between theory, epistemology, and methodology, sustaining not only theoretical advances, but new paths for conducting research and practice that correspond to its theoretical advances. Theory, by this definition, is a system that is permanently in development, one in which advances depend on new research and the opening up of new domains of practice, both of which are closely interrelated.

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Chapter 3
The Constructive-Interpretative Methodological Approach: Orienting Research and Practice on the Basis of Subjectivity

Fernando González Rey and Albertina Mitjáns Martínez

Abstract This chapter aims to make explicit the different processes, moments, resources, and challenges for advancing a constructive-interpretative methodological approach. Dialogue, as a subjective process in which the participants are subjectively engaged, represents a privileged path for the study of subjectivity. Subjectivity cannot be studied through partial instrumental procedures addressed toward concrete results. Human expressions are not a sequence of isolated acts. Gestures, speech, postures, and silences are emotionally interrelated during dialogue. This sequence is not under the control of the individuals in dialogue and becomes the main source of participants' subjective engagement. This methodology simultaneously combines professional practice and research, since the intense and permanent relations established between researcher and participants, and among participants themselves, become an important path along which the participants' development occurs throughout the research process. The chapter is illustrated with examples taken from different research studies in order to explain the processes involved in knowledge construction, as well as the resources that have to be introduced and improvised by the researcher in such a living form of research. The researcher is an active subject of this process, in which theoretical constructions and methodological actions advance hand in hand.

3.1 Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, the topic of subjectivity opens a new ontological domain within cultural-historical psychology. This ontological domain allows the overcoming of the wide taxonomy of concepts which historically has been used

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by psychology and which has been indiscriminately embedded in a very general and unspecified label of the psychological phenomenon. This definition of subjectivity opens a new ontological domain in the study of human phenomena, whether social or individual, which characterizes the cultural, social, and historical human existence. Unlike psyche, subjectivity is not a reaction, nor a system addressed toward adaptation to an external environment. Subjectivity has a generative character; it is a human imaginative and motivated production within historically located social-cultural scenarios. Its emergence is mainly based on the unit of symbolical and emotional processes, which leads to an imaginative, creative system, within which society, culture, and individuals become inseparable.

Cultural-historical psychology represented the first historical attempt to advance with respect to the specific character of the human psyche on the basis of its cultural, social, and historical genesis, despite the narrow comprehension of both cultural and social realities in Soviet psychology (Zinchenko 1993, 2002). The fact of the matter is the difficulty in advancing a new ontological definition capable of leading to new theoretical constructions, allowing generation of intelligibility about phenomena that can no longer be defined in terms of the psychological. The human psychological processes, organized within cultural, social, and historical realities, become processes of a different order—the subjective ones. The relative autonomy of subjectivity from immediate external circumstances is precisely what has made possible new, unexpected, and creative avenues on which the human world has been historically constructed and developed as a cultural creation.

This theoretical turn toward subjectivity has to do, not only with psychology, but also with other social sciences, since subjectivity does not replace psyche, but integrates psychical processes within a new qualitative system in which those processes will no longer appear as separated entities, but as subjectively configured processes. Subjectivity, as mentioned in the first chapter, also characterizes social functioning in its different levels and instances, contributing to a representation of society as a system of very different intermingled processes.

While traditional psychology has separated psychological phenomena from social and cultural realities, reducing human phenomena to individual psychological nature or behavior, an emergent social psychology has reacted against such a natural and individualistic psychology through different theoretical constructions since the 1960s, beginning with social representation, and continuing with discourse, deconstruction, social construction, discursive-self, dialogical realities, communication, and ideology. This movement has been progressively separated from psyche and also from psychology. Despite their differences, all of these approaches had in common an effort to overcome individual and natural reductionism within psychology.

Our definition of subjectivity, unlike the aforementioned theories, being grounded in a cultural-historical approach, as inaugurated by Soviet psychology, moves forward the comprehension of how the social and the individual can be integrated as realities that share a subjective character, without one being engulfed by the other. Subjectivity, in this proposal, emancipates individuals from any social and biological determinism; it is defined not as external to social, cultural, or biological realities, but

as a new phenomenon that integrates these realities into a new qualitative definition of human realities.

Cultural-historical psychology has taken new steps toward a new psychology. However, it has failed to propose a new theoretical system capable of explaining specific human processes and realities, which, to a great extent, results from its ontological vagueness (González Rey 2014, 2016, 2017). This proposal on subjectivity emphasizes emotions as constitutive elements of subjective processes; they form a unity with symbolical processes that characterizes a new ontological definition of subjectivity. This new ontological definition acquires "theoretical life" in the concepts of subjective senses and subjective configurations.

Psychology, throughout its existence, has been organized through topics and concepts treated as separate from each other. Thus, concepts like behavior, cognition, emotion, imagination, creativity, fantasy, personality, and many others have been treated as separate entities or functions, on which have been founded psychological theories and specific areas of psychological work and research. On the other hand, subjective senses do not have static borders that can be studied through descriptive procedures. They represent an endless chain that organizes itself into a new qualitative level through subjective configurations as self-generative units of multiple interrelated subjective senses. The movement of subjective senses and configurations is ruled not by cause-and-effect relationships, but by a configurational order that is impossible to capture through specific instrumental acts of knowledge.

Subjective configurations generate subjective senses that are simultaneously related to different activities, relationships, performances, and other possible human experiences. They are singularly lived by individuals and social instances on the basis of social symbolical constructions, such as race, gender, physical appearance, social status, and many other social constructions. Such social symbolical constructions only became subjective senses through current social networks within which individual and social subjectivities emerge as carriers of their own histories. Different moments and contexts of a single human existence, whether social or individual, turn into a new qualitative and inextricable order through subjective configurations.

The question that this chapter is aimed to advance is: How to study subjective senses and configurations in their complex functioning? Once emotions are no longer considered isolated reactions or feelings, being intrinsic to subjective senses and configurations, they are embedded in all subjective productions, from the word to thinking and behaviors. Zinchenko, after his turn toward consciousness as the focus of his interest, stressed very important ideas closely related to this definition of subjectivity and the ways it could be studied. He wrote: "When word is 'born' and takes an external form, a person becomes a complete voice and enters into an interminable dialogue. The person participates in it not only with one's thoughts, but also desires, destiny and all of one's individuality" (Zinchenko 2012, p. 72).

Subjectivity, senses, and configurations embody that complex core of words, thoughts, desires, and destiny as different expressions of one's individuality, as mentioned by Zinchenko. The emergence of subjective configurations related to concrete experiences in any sphere of life integrates thoughts, emotions, imaginations, and fantasy as constitutive of any psychological function related to that experience. Such

integration occurs through different subjective senses generated by the subjective configuration of the current experience. Departing from this definition of subjectivity, its study cannot be conducted on the basis of what individuals, groups, media, governments, and other social instances make explicit in their intentional communication. All direct and conscious speech is intentionally guided by a certain position and intention that mostly expresses "politically and morally correct principles" within each concrete social instance.

Subjective senses are never explicit in individual beliefs or intentional statements; they are embedded in some beliefs and words, but they do not appear explicitly in the meaning intentionally addressed toward others. Subjective senses always appear through the intrinsic qualitative organization of human expression, which is always beyond individuals' and groups' conscious intentions.

Most conscious intentional positions represent attempts to keep oneself, whether individuals or social instances, within the rational institutionalized principles on which the social order is instituted. Subjective senses and configurations escape any logical attempt to deduce them. Any psychological function only achieves motivational character when it is configured as a subjective function within some subjective configuration; motivation never results from one specific drive, but always represents a subjective configuration (González Rey 2014). Thus, the study of subjectivity is only possible by advancing through indirect pathways on the basis of complex systems of expression, which articulate postures, gestures, speech, emotions, and thoughts in one imperceptible order that can only be accessed through intellectual constructions capable of generating intelligibility throughout a sequence of human expressions.

In this chapter, we attempt to explain moments and processes closely intermingled within the definition of the constructive-interpretative methodology, which, despite being oriented toward the demands imposed by the study of subjectivity, can also be used for the study of other complex human issues. Advancement in such a methodology demands a new definition of knowledge to be made explicit, which must be based upon the epistemological principles in which this methodology is grounded. Qualitative Epistemology (González Rey 1997) is the epistemological basis on which this constructive-interpretative methodology stands.

Qualitative Epistemology represents an attempt to justify our methodological approach to the study of subjectivity, on which we have been advancing forward, departing from our studies on personality. These epistemological reflections started with the methodological challenges associated with our studies of personality from a cultural-historical standpoint. In those studies, we advanced with respect to qualitative research in such a way that it does not follow the dominant premises that ruled this kind of research at that time (González Rey 1982, 1983, 1993; González Rey and Mitjáns 1989). The transit from personality to subjectivity was not only theoretical, but also epistemological and methodological. In the absence of epistemological positions that would be capable of responding to the demands of the study of subjectivity at the time, the term Qualitative Epistemology was introduced in order to make explicit the epistemological principles on which our methodological proposal for the study of subjectivity relies.

The "epistemological umbrellas" in fashion in psychology in the 1990s did not allow our methodological work to be sustained. The articulation between these epistemological and methodological proposals, according to the demands of the study of subjectivity, is the main proposal of this chapter. Moreover, the chapter intends to explain, through concrete examples taken from research, the main methodological procedures and processes that sustain this proposal.

As for every new path in science, the appropriation of this epistemological-methodological framework is a hard process, because of its deep differences regarding the hegemonic institutionalized ways of doing psychological research that are mostly based on a crude empirical-instrumental distortion of what positivism as a philosophy was. Such an empirical tradition emphasizes responses over constructions, instruments over dialogue, the result over the search, confirmation over hypothetical paths, collection over theoretical constructions. Our proposal moves completely in the opposite direction.

3.2 Advancing on a Constructive-Interpretative Methodology

Instead of being focused on instruments, the constructive-interpretive methodology has dialogue as its main methodological device. Dialogue is understood as a conversational flux that is organized progressively through many symbolical devices, which assemble with each other within a dialogical "corpus." Dialogue is a subjective system, not a pure relational system, as it frequently appears in the literature (Shotter 1995; Gergen 1982; Anderson 1996; Giorgi 1995). Dialogue is a subjective living system the functioning and development of which depend to a great extent on the active agency of the individuals in dialogue. The individuals, as agents or subjects in a dialogue, are inseparable from the subjective configuration of the dialogue as an interactive process. Individual subjective configurations of the agents in dialogue and the social subjective configuration of the dialogical interaction intertwine with each other in such a way that one configuration is configured within the other through the specific subjective senses generated by the other. A dialogue and the agents involved in it are subjectively configured to each other; the subjective configuration of the dialogue implies subjective senses and processes that have resulted from the active positions of individuals in dialogue and their subjective configurations.

The functioning of a dialogue is inseparable from the active positions and decisions of individuals involved in it. Dialogue, as with all human subjectively configured realities, takes unpredictable paths, generating processes that are beyond the participants' control. Many unexpected subjective productions emerge, leading constantly to new dialogical paths and contradictions. Among those paths taken by dialogue, only the actions and positions assumed by its participants can keep the process alive.

Dialogue, as a subjective process in which the participants are subjectively engaged, represents a privileged path for the study of subjectivity. Subjectivity cannot be studied through partial instrumental procedures addressed toward concrete results. Human expressions are not a sequence of isolated acts. Gestures, speech, postures, and silences are emotionally interrelated during the dialogue. This sequence is not under the control of the individuals in dialogue and becomes the main source of participants' subjective engagement. The emerging subjective processes in the dialogue become intelligible only through the researcher's constructed meanings. These meanings, given their non-regular and changing sequences, allow the emergence of hypotheses which would be impossible to formulate through abstract, and presumably objective, data collection.

The hypothetical and partial meanings constructed by the researcher obtain coherence within a more embracing theoretical hypothetical construction, through which a consistent theoretical avenue is opened up, to be followed in the course of research. These partial meanings, which are gradually integrated with each other by the researcher, are named indicators in our methodological proposal.

Such meanings constructed by the researcher gain theoretical relevance through a sequence which generates continuity and visibility to a set of elements. Taken by themselves, such isolated elements have no meanings. Dialogue is the best way to advance in this constructive process; dialogue implies provocations, reflections, and criticism as important devices to advance in depth the subjective engagement of the participants in the research. Any dialogical action could imply new subjective engagements of individuals in dialogue, opening a new avenue to continue our hypotheses during the process of conducting research. The dialogue should be profound and long-lasting, both being important requirements in advancing theoretical constructions in relation to subjectivity. For this reason, individuals in dialogue, rather than looking for definitive answers, are oriented toward sharing reflections, which are frequently contradictory. These contradictions are excellent resources to compromise the subjectivity of participants. Methodological instruments within this methodological proposal are understood as dialogical devices.

Our society does not characterize itself by dialogical functioning, which creates difficulties for researchers, many of whom, instead of entering into dialogue, passively follow the intentional speech of research participants. In doing so, they fail to move forward in their communications with others, making a constructive-interpretative process impossible. The passive researchers' positions are contrary to the active engagement that is necessary to advance the dialogue. Research as a dialogical process demands intermingled relationships between theoretical constructions and dialogical operations, in a process such that one is based on the other, opening up new paths in the dialogue-theoretical construction relation.

Both dialogue and theoretical constructions are in permanent feedback with one another through the positions of the active researcher, who must conduct both processes simultaneously. Gradually, the researcher takes an important step forward by proposing a theoretical model of the studied phenomenon, supported by the hypotheses generated through different sequences of indicators. The theoretical model is a construction capable of integrating different avenues advanced by different and

simultaneous hypotheses throughout the research. The theoretical model allows the researcher's process to be assembled within a given theoretical account.

Theoretical models combine indicators and other theoretical speculations in an attempt to get the best picture to explain and to represent the topic that is being studied. Subjective configurations are a good example of a theoretical model being constructed in the research process. Theoretical models make the studied topic intelligible in terms of theory. In fact, the researcher's passive position turns the open dialogical method of doing research into a new way of collecting material; instead of collecting data, such a position, in this new way of doing research, allows the researcher to passively collect fragments of conversations.

As the epicenter of dialogue, researchers continuously open new focuses and paths in research, with respect to which they advance progressively through conjectures and indicators. The hypothetical advance of knowledge as a methodological demand for the study of complex systems has been noted by sociologists regarding social realities (Bourdieu 2003; Touraine and Khosrokhavar 2002; Elias 2001, among others). Touraine stated: "The point is not to enclose in discourses or make an "objective" study of acts and practices. Sociology has advanced on a contrary form of social organization, attempting to find the social self-productive movement of society that can only be discovered through a system of hypotheses" (Touraine and Khosrokhavar 2002, p. 231; my translation from Spanish).

Constructive-interpretative methodology considers theoretical hypothetical constructions and interpretations (indicators and hypotheses) as processes that advance together within dialogue, integrating the whole methodological arsenal employed during research. Dialogue and other methodological devices must not be regarded as different procedures; any methodological device only becomes a source for the study of subjectivity when it provokes expressions that are useful for formulating indicators and hypotheses on the topic studied. Methodological instruments are means oriented toward new dialogical moments, which must represent the beginnings of new avenues of conversation. Based on this assumption, this methodological proposal transcends the traditional split between "data collection" and "data analysis." The entire course of research is a theoretical process, during which one theoretical model is advanced. Elucidating this construction process is what legitimizes this type of research.

Unlike the position of "not knowing" that characterizes the researcher's/professional's position, as proclaimed by social constructionism (Anderson and Goolishian 1996), indicators and hypotheses make it evident how the knowledge produced during research is an important device for advancing in terms of the topic studied in the research. This combination of dialogue and theoretical construction also makes an important difference in relation to other methodologies used in psychology under different theoretical umbrellas, such as phenomenology, discursive analysis, narrative analysis.

It is important to characterize briefly the differences between a constructive-interpretative methodology and phenomenology, since within cultural-historical psychology the use of interpretation has been frequently associated with phenomenology. One of the main representatives of phenomenology, A. Giorgi, argued:

> It is research based upon description of experiences as they occur in everyday life by persons from all walks of life. These descriptions can be written by the participants initially or the data could be obtained by means of an interview and then transcribed [….] These descriptions are then systematically and methodically analyzed so that implicit or explicit psychological meaning contained in them can be identified or made explicit and organized to reveal the underlying psychological structures. (Giorgi 1995, p. 39)

The main differences between this summarized picture of phenomenological research drawn by Giorgi and the methodological proposal defended in this chapter are:

(1) Phenomenology departed from the explicit conscious retelling by individuals of their own lived experiences; our proposal advances the idea that it is only through the researcher's constructions that knowledge can be gained of subjective processes, which are always beyond any conscious individual capacity of being directly reported.
(2) In phenomenology, written or oral stories are taken as they are described. The main methodological means of working on this material is through analysis. Through the researcher's analysis, an attempt is made to highlight the essential psychological structures of lived experiences, using the procedure of phenomenological reduction of the narrated elements that hinder the understanding of those essential structures. Researchers must suspend their own beliefs in order to maintain the capacity to grasp objectively the experience as it has been consciously retold by the person during the research. In this sense, phenomenological analysis is guided by descriptive-inductive procedures. Our proposal, on the contrary, is guided by the constructions and interpretations of researchers, based on indirect indicators of the ways those individuals and groups structure and organize their different expressions, instead of taking the direct meanings of those expressions. Rather than the retelling of an experience, our material, upon which the constructive-interpretative process is taking place, consists of indirect qualitative elements embedded in individual and group expressions.

The aforementioned phenomenological research is based upon the definition of phenomenon, which guides the research goal. The phenomenon is understood in Giorgi's words as follows: "A phenomenon is the way in which a human subject attributes meaning to certain aspects of the world." The constructive-interpretative proposal is oriented by a completely different theoretical representation; its focus is how the unconscious and inaccessible flux of subjective senses generated by a subjective configuration defines the ways by which one experience is felt and developed by individuals and groups. The attribution of meanings to one experience cannot be treated as synonymous with the way in which the experience is lived by individuals. The attribution of meaning does not represent a pure individual conscious act; it expresses a complex plot of social symbolical constructions that is not exhausted in the meanings attributed by individuals to the experience. Moreover, the focus on meaning overlooks the way in which emotions qualify different human expressions.

Once the split between theoretical and empirical is overcome, theory cannot be considered as a "package" of knowledge to be applied, but as the basis of the general

theoretical model that emerges during the research, guiding the theoretical construction of the topic being studied. As argued before, the researcher moves forward long uncertain hypothetical paths that only become theoretical models through his/her own theoretical constructions. The concepts of subjective sense and subjective configuration are not concepts to be applied on a mass of collected data; they should be constructed simultaneously with the chaotic and unexpected range of information provided by the research. The more stable theoretical core around which the research is organized is defined here as the theoretical model. Subjective configuration represents an important theoretical concept, but it only comes to "life" when it is theoretically constructed during a concrete piece of research.

Based on these considerations, the assertion of the intrinsic unity between a constructive-interpretative process and dialogue becomes possible. A constructive-interpretative process can only advance through the progressively deepening process of the dialogue. Dialogue is a living process that gradually advances in breadth and depth, a process within which the participants are provoked by the researcher to be reflexive, authentic, and critical with each other. Dialogue, as the methodological ground of this proposal, is the only guarantee of integrating conversations with the multiple non-dialogical subjective expressions in their intermingled and continuous relationship. Subjective senses and configurations are theoretical devices to generate intelligibility about those processes, which is not an empirical integration, but a theoretical one.

Dialogue cannot be understood as a series of discontinuous acts and moments; dialogue requires time to be arranged. It implies contradictions, unexpected unfolding paths, new decisions and thoughts, intense emotions, which taken together could lead to its consolidation or interruption. Keeping the dialogue alive is the main challenge of the researcher in this methodological framework. An important capacity to be developed by researchers that aspire to work with this methodology is to be active in conducting the dialogue through their theoretical conjectures, simultaneously advancing the dialogue and the theoretical construction.

As an example of the unexpected decisions that researchers must make during a dialogue, Bezerra (2014) wrote the following about the experience working with Alan, an eight-year-old boy, participating in her research. The researcher invited Alan to solve a problem based upon the prior knowledge that Alan supposedly should have had from his previous classes. Alan's emotional discomfort before the task was evident. He brought up different topics during the conversation with the researcher, avoiding focusing on the task. Suddenly, he asked the researcher: "Is it true that you are also working with Thiago[1]? He is a donkey and you will never make him advance." The researcher firstly ignored the comment, repeating that it was important for him to be focused on the task. Then, Alan, defiantly and sarcastically, looked at her and said he did not know how to solve the problem. So, the researcher, also sarcastically, asked him: "hmm, so Thiago is the donkey?"

Alan did not expect this sarcastic reaction by the researcher, who took the initiative in reacting with the same communicational device used by Alan. This was really

[1]Thiago was another child participating in the research.

effective in taking Alan out of his position as provocateur and challenger in his conversations with the researcher. Alan's reaction was immediate, and he asked the researcher: "Do you want to see how easy this task is for me?" He took a piece of paper and worked through the exercise from beginning to end. Alan felt challenged and actively reacted by facing the researcher's provocation.

Alan's reaction not only allowed the researcher to advance in her work with him, but also opened up the opportunity to construct some indicators on the basis of his reactions, to advance further regarding the theoretical construction related to his learning difficulties. This example allows us to take the description presented by Bezerra further. Two intermingled indicators relate to Alan's affective emptiness and social discomfort in his social involvement. On the one hand, his negativistic reaction may be constructed as a defense against what he felt to be the result of his social position in the school, which is closely associated with his learning difficulties, contributing to a representation of him by the others that is unconsciously reinforced by the teacher's behavior toward Alan. On the other hand, Alan's effort to solve the exercise may be constructed as an indicator of his need to be accepted by the researcher. Such an indicator becomes stronger with his accusation toward Thiago of being a "donkey," which, among other things, could be an expression of jealousy in relation to the researcher. The representation of Alan's unique affective social space at that point in his life, which was that of his relationship with the researcher, is fundamental for such theoretical construction.

The aforementioned indicators may be interrelated within a more comprehensive construction that could become a hypothesis to be followed during the research. This hypothesis can be explicit in the following terms: Alan does not enjoy the social spaces within which his social life occurs. Other aspects constructed by the researcher at previous points contribute to this hypothesis: the rejection that Alan experienced from his father and the explicit rejection of him by the teacher. Both factors provoke fear, insecurity, and rejection of him by the others.

That first formulation of a hypothesis represents the first step in a process through which new indicators must appear in order to continue, change, or reject this theoretical path. In this process, previous hypotheses may be integrated within a wider theoretical model or may simply be abandoned, taking into consideration new constructions that will emerge throughout the research. The prior example is evidence of how indicators are constructions that evoke wider theoretical constructions that cannot be reduced to the sum of these indicators. In this methodological proposal, indicators represent a path to legitimize broader theoretical constructions, not because they are harmoniously expressed by these constructions, but because theoretical models assemble indicators in such a way that they end up being the best fit for generating intelligibility about the topic under study. Departing from the same indicators, the scientific community cannot propose a better model than the one presented by the researcher at some point in his work.

The capacity to imagine and float upon the objective facts of a specific situation must characterize the researcher's position within constructive-interpretative research. As was discussed in Alan's case, from one particular behavior, several indicators can be constructed, which can lead immediately to the formulation of more

and more comprehensive hypotheses. Taken as isolated and discontinuous statements, indicators do not mean anything. They must be constructed upon different expressions, reflections, stares, gestures, postural changes, and emotions that can be used separately or in combination as new sources for the construction of further indicators.

Concepts such subjective senses and subjective configurations are based on the other concepts, which taken together define this theoretical proposal. Theoretical categories allow a new theoretical representation of specific human phenomena. Once a theory has assembled its categories in a way that highlights the domain of new phenomena, it acquires ontological relevance. Human subjectivity represents one of the main attributes of the cultural character of human existence and realities.

One of the principles formulated within Qualitative Epistemology that we would like to comment on in relation to this methodological proposal is the value of the singular for scientific research on subjectivity. In the hegemonic scientific psychological tradition, based on inductive principles as the main resource for the legitimization and the generalization of knowledge, the singular is completely ignored in terms of its scientific value. However, based on our theoretical definition of subjectivity, scientific research is always oriented toward singular phenomena, a reason by which methodological procedures should be sensitive to this quality of the phenomenon being studied. As the objects of scientific study become more complex, their singular and changeable organization has to be seriously considered by the methodology.

Only case studies allow in-depth advance on interrelated and simultaneous singular processes. Case studies are frequently and mistakenly referred to as the study of individuals. However, case studies characterize research and professional practices addressed toward units of complex phenomena that are always different from others within the same kind of phenomena. For example, two different schools formed two different social subjective units, even though both of them share the same social subjectivity in the wider understanding of the term. Both of them are singularly socially subjectively configured, generating many different social dynamics and individual positions in each case. As a result of this, the case study becomes an excellent means to study their different social dynamics and the different issues of the wider social subjectivity within which both are embedded. The singular functioning of individuals and social arenas is a privileged way to access qualitative characteristics of the complex systems in process.

One of the objections to the singular as a source of scientific production is the erroneous identification of the singular with the unique. The singular is not unique, due to the theoretical model within which it assumes meaning, thanks to the prior constructions of the researcher. As such, the singular is always compatible, within the theoretical level, with prior hypotheses already in the process of development. The singular results from the richness, malleability, and dynamic character of complex systems, which, as with subjectivity, express themselves through malleable organization capable of being singularly configured within the different contexts through which these systems develop their trajectories. The uniqueness of the singular is always an empirical expression.

Most methodological instruments that have been used historically by psychology have been focused on behavioral definitions, which can be measured, compared, and generalized through quantitative procedures, because their qualitative nature does not change. With such a research topic, theoretical construction has a distorted and secondary place.

The aforementioned methodological features were responsible for the split between theory and empirical research. The psychological research field has, for a long time, been defined through instrumental-methodological lenses, with the omission of theory. This tendency has been well captured through concepts like "methodolatry" (Danzinger 1990) and "methodological fetishism" (Koch 1999). Until the present day, most methodologies proposed in psychology, no matter their declared epistemological affiliation, continue an understanding of psychological research as empirical. From our methodological assumption, research is the most important process of theoretical construction.

It is through research that theories are developed as living systems, opening up new spaces for intelligibility about different subject matters. As living systems, theories constantly improve and advance their own concepts, according to the demands of the research and of practice. The importance of the singular as a means for the study of subjectivity is due to its qualitative character; subjective senses and configurations cannot be standardized by any quantitative criterion.

The singular attains meaning within a theoretical model, within which its specific character is coherently assembled within the demands of the theoretical model in process. Within a theoretical model, the singular loses its uniqueness, because of its compatibility with the theoretical constructions advanced by the model. The construction of information, according to this methodological proposal, is highly singular, but each piece of research, oriented by a similar research matter, constantly advances toward a wider theoretical representation of that matter, and this is a long-lasting process. This is one of the reasons why different research studies within this theoretical account are not "acts of research," enclosed in some specific results. Every good piece of research within the constructive-interpretative methodology opens up a research line that might be advanced by a research team.

This constructive-interpretative model has important antecedents and current expressions in natural sciences (Prigogine 2004; Prigogine and Stengers 2004; Heisenberg 1995). Heisenberg, one of the pioneers of Quantum Mechanics noted: "[…] the subject of scientific research is never directly known from observations, i.e., from experimentation, but by theoretical construction (or axiomatic postulate) speculatively proposed, and indirectly and experimentally evaluated" (1995, p.12, our translation from Portuguese). However, due to traditional formation in psychology, the construction of speculative devices, such as indicators and hypotheses, is very difficult for psychologists to understand as a means for guiding theoretical constructions, and not as a priori ornaments to be stated or demonstrated.

The capacity to follow a constructive-interpretative research model is only possible through a long-lasting and deep "immersion" of researchers in fieldwork. This process should happen under permanent supervision by an experienced researcher. No matter how explicitly these principles are written, or explained, they can only

be appropriated by young researchers through active engagement with a supervisor, step by step, via constructive processes (González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2017).

A frequent problem in some researches, explicitly identified with such a constructive-interpretative path, is that instruments are used as isolated sequences, separated from theoretical constructions, as well as from a dialogical plot. These processes, as argued before, advance hand in hand in this methodological proposal. When the research process advances separately from the researcher's constructions, the research, in fact, reproduces the collection-analysis scheme, as is still characteristic today in psychological research.

3.3 Constructive-Interpretative Research: Difficulties and Advances

Any new proposal in science gains space in the scientific community gradually. Regarding this proposal, in which theory, epistemology, and methodology are closely intermingled, the difficulties in opening up a path in psychology are harder still because of the relatively little importance that these three topics have historically had in psychology, as well as the rejection that they have suffered in the so-called critical psychologies, the Anglo-Saxon versions of which have been strongly influenced by French poststructuralist philosophers. Moreover, this way of conducting research and professional practice requires an intensive training process for researchers, who have mostly been trained by the positivistic and empirical tradition. Such a requirement has been stressed elsewhere (Mitjáns Martínez 2014) along with other requirements that we will address below.

One of the main requirements of this methodological proposal is that fieldwork should take as much time as possible. Fieldwork is not understood as a sequence of intermittent moments defined by the application of instruments, but as a social space that integrates within itself different dialogues between the researcher and participants, as well as between participants. Such dialogues take place both during research sessions and in more informal moments that emerge spontaneously during the research. Research becomes a social interactive space, within which many subjective processes that characterize any social space may emerge, such as envy, competitiveness, conflicts. For this reason, the researcher's "submersion" in fieldwork is highly recommended, because his/her presence is important for advancing the research as a continuous dialogical plot.

To illustrate some of the aforementioned characteristics of constructive-interpretive methodology, we will present a case studied by an undergraduate student under our supervision. We will advance on what has been done by the student, making recommendations for actions and strategies in order to didactically present what should be done from a constructive-interpretative perspective. The undergraduate student, JP, focused her research on the subjective configurations of different women in relation to the births of their children. We select one of those case studies to make

explicit the processes described below that must characterize the construction of information during the research.

BR, as the participant was identified to preserve her real identity, is a 38-year-old woman. She was interviewed in relation to the births of her first son, when she was 17 years old, and of her younger daughter from a second marriage, when she was 37 years old. The research with BR took two years, during which several conversations took place alongside some methodological devices, such as the complement of phrases.[2] In this research study, this instrument was used following the same principles that rule the use of any instrument within this methodological account. It was used as a dialogical device that may or may not provide new information on the research matter. This information provided by the instruments is used as a source for advancing new indicators and hypotheses during the research, not as a source of conclusive results.

In the first conversation with BR related to the birth of her first son, she said:

> I have bad memories in relation to the first moments with my baby. Everyone looked at me as if to say "Wow, so young!" […] I wanted so much to show everyone that I was capable of being a mother, and paid attention to every detail regarding my son. But being so concentrated on these details and responsibilities, I forgot to enjoy that nice time with him.

It strikes us that in the first retrospective conversation, the focus of BR was not the affective relation with the baby, but her concerns about what others could be thinking of her. By doing this, BR seems to be more centered on the opinion of others than on her enjoyment of her son. It is also interesting that, in her story, she omits other affections, like her husband at the time and her family, in what supposedly should be an important moment in her life. The way that BR constructs her memories about her first son's birth allows us to make some conjectures that must be followed in order to formulate the first indicator in relation to the subjective configurations related to her babies' births. No conjecture can be immediately taken as an indicator because, as researchers, we have suspicions that cannot be immediately transformed into meaning. Before BR's previous statement, some alternatives come to our minds as researchers: (1) Why is she so dependent on the opinion of others? (2) How were her familial relations when her first son was born? (3) Is she religious or does she have other beliefs that made her so sensitive to the fact of being a very young mother?

Following these conjectures will support the construction of the first indicators, based on which subjective senses configured her early experiences with her babies' births can be formulated. Unlike indicators, conjectures are reflections, doubts, and ideas, to which a well-formulated hypothetical meaning cannot yet be attributed.

The limitation on the length of this chapter compels us to synthesize the participants' expressions, allowing readers to follow how a constructive-interpretative construction happens.

Following the focus of the first conversation, in the second one, BR said: "My concern about the way in which the others perceive me accompanies me up until

[2]The complement of phrases is used according to our definition of methodological tools (González Rey, 1993, 2005; González Rey & Mitjáns, 1989). The tools within this methodological framework, instead of being addressed toward offering results, are a means to provoke the expression of others.

today. Thus, for example, when people look at me and my son I feel embarrassed thinking that they must be calculating my age at the moment I became a mother." This second emphatic reference to the same point referred to by her during the first conversation led us, as researchers, to the conviction that her concerns in relation to her age at the time she became a mother are present in other areas of her life, being an aspect of her personality rather than a specific event in her motherhood. An important element that supports such construction is the perseverance of this emotional experience even today, almost twenty years after having her first son.

The fact that her concern remains so vivid after twenty years turns her memory into a very relevant element to be elucidated in exploring the subjective configurations of her motherhood. All aforementioned conjectures should not be confounded with indicators; the conjectures help us to focus on certain topics, while the indicators are constructed meanings from which the avenues of intelligibility toward the theoretical model are advanced.

As the presentation of this case also has a didactic objective, we want to stress that, rather than new fragments of information being picked up from what was said by the participant, it would be necessary, at this point in the conversation, to advance the dialogue around the topic on which the attention of the researcher was focused. Advancing a dialogue in relation to these first impressions in the case would demand contributions like: "Tell me a bit more about your concern with your age when you became a mother"; "Which elements, in your opinion, dealt with your concern related to your age at that moment?"; "Please, tell me your three best and worst memories of those first moments of your first motherhood." These are only examples of where the course of the conversation could have led, motivated, and provoked in order to enter into an in-depth and authentic dialogue. If these inductors or others had been used in that second conversation, some indicators would possibly have been constructed at that point.

Although the researcher did not actively advance a dialogical dynamic, she followed her research topics in several conversations. She took, for example, a good initiative in asking BR to comment on each of the phrases with which she responded for the complements of phrases. Before such methodological action, BR showed her excellent motivation to communicate with the researcher, which is a key feature for the subjective engagement of the participant in the research. In order to progress toward indicators that will allow us to construct the first hypotheses to be conducted throughout the research, some phrases were presented by the researcher, followed by comments from fragments of other conversations.

Based on the "complement of phrases" and BR's comments on her responses, it was possible to construct the first indicators to be followed in her case study.

> Phrase 4: The happiest moment: was to see the faces of my son and daughter for the first time, and being together with them forever.
>
> Her comment on this phrase was:
>
> My son and my daughter are my life. Nevertheless, up until today, when I meet my son and his friends, I feel a little constrained; they are 21 years old! The way our small age difference is perceived by others frightens me so much! That may be a prejudice of mine, but I cannot avoid it. I love saying that at this moment I am close to my 40 s; 'wow, what a relief.' I am

one of the few persons that like to look like older; it means that I have the maturity to take care of my son and my daughter.

She continues to be focused on her children, leaving other affections out of her comments, but, even in relation to her children, BR is not focused on her emotions and affective enjoyment together with them, reiterating her prevailing concern with her own age. Moreover, her husband and her marriage do not appear, neither in her first conversations, nor in her first comments related to the first phrases that she elaborated upon. Based on this way of treating her affections, and particularly regarding her relationship with her husband, we can affirm that she is not centered on love and affection as the basis of her relationships, neither with her husband nor with her children. On which subjective configuration is this relationship pattern to be configured? At this point in the construction of information, it is important to go back to some of the first conjectures previously defined in relation to the fragments of the first conversations. These conjectures guide the construction of possible new indicators to be assembled with the first ones.

Among the first conjectures to be considered again are: (1) her possible ideological beliefs or dogmas, (2) her relationship within her original familial core, and (3) her other current interests. In order to advance these conjectures, we will continue presenting her phrases along with her comments on them. An important methodological feature to be stressed regarding the complement of phrase instrument is that each phrase is, in fact, an inductor of expressions that could be subjectively engaged with different areas of the participants' life. This makes the comments related to the phrases good material to be used in the constructive process.

Phrase 5: To be a mother: is the best thing in the world. This is what brings sense to my life.

Comment on phrase 5:

When I had my daughter, I was 38 years old. I always think that when she is the age I am now, I will be nearly eighty years old. I won't have the opportunity to enjoy my relation with her as much as I enjoyed the one with my son. I also don't expect to enjoy much of my first grandchildren. For me, there is nothing as good as enjoying my children in the family. I love other parts of my life, such as my profession, but for me to be in a family, with my family, my mother, my children, is the best part of my life. I love making plans with my family!

The previously defined indicator, which related to the lack of affection in BR's pattern of relations within the family, becomes stronger with the omission of her husband from her statement about the family. Until this point, her unique references to love and pleasure are in relation to her children and her original family. However, these declared preferences never appear personalized through concrete experiences lived together with her children and her husband. In the previous comment, she mentions her mother, but her husband continued to be absent. This reinforces the indicator regarding his secondary role in her life. BR even talks about her interests in her profession, but does not mention her husband. The indicator that she is not centered on affections as the main element of her relations is reinforced by the previous comment.

In a fragment taken from her fourth conversation with the researcher, BR said:

> I think that I am responsible for the integration of my family, as my mother and my grandmother had such a role before me. I feel that when I am not focused on my family, because of my involvement at work or any other reason, things begin to destabilize the family unity. I feel responsible for generating programs to be done by all members of the family together.

Once again, her husband does not appear in such an important reflection about her family. However, the way she constructs her comments on her family allows us to bring new elements into view. She considers herself as the center of her family, and once again she refers to the family in terms of tasks to be done. Her identification with female figures in her original family allows us to think that her distance from her husband qualifies not only her marriage, but also her life. Taken together, her explicit identification with female figures in her family, the omission of male figures, as well as the way she assumes the role that she referred to as formerly being her mother's and her grandmother's, allow us to define a new indicator that opens up a new path in the construction of information: She feels the family to be a duty that must be complied with. This indicator is closely related to the prior one that defined the lack of affection in her pattern of relationships in her family. However, it adds the sense of duty as an important subjective production to be considered. At the same time, from the previous paragraph, we can construct a conjecture related to the importance of the female figures in her life. Is this importance given by a matter of gender? Gender has not appeared as relevant up to now. It is important to continue taking the research material forward in order to define new indicators that may allow the construction of a hypothesis about the subjective configuration that the researcher is looking for.

At this point in the research, it would have been very important to deepen the basis on which BR's relationship with her mother was subjectively configured. However, the fact that the researcher did not advance the construction of information and her fieldwork simultaneously, with one being part of the other, did not allow her to have a strategy to advance in depth on this topic. In any case, as BR was so convinced of her position in life, her spontaneous expressions during the research allow us to take new information to advance new indicators which, in fact, changed the previous course of the process. If the previous indicators had not been constructed, these new ones would not have appeared. On the basis of the previous fragments of the conversation, the researcher could have developed new paths in her construction. Nonetheless, up to this point, the indicators formulated do not permit an advance in terms of subjective senses through which BR's experiences with her original family, with the female members of her family, with her recent experiences in creating new families, articulated with other aspects of her life, are related to the way that she has subjectively configured her relationships with her children. This configuration is inseparable from the constellation of her lived experiences.

Going deeper into this part of the theoretical construction, it seems important to us to know more about BR's relationship with her mother. The next statement from one of the conversations allows new theoretical avenues to be advanced about this relationship:

> My mother is my safe harbor. I know that if I am not capable of obtaining something, her support is guaranteed. She is always ready to support me; for example, when I participate in

the affairs of the Church where I used to go at night, I could always leave my children with her. My mother is the person I can count on for everything.

BR brings relevant new elements into her story. First, one prior conjecture can be constructed now as an indicator: Religion is a source of subjective senses that crosses all spheres of her life. The absence of passion, marital love, pleasure, and affective expressions in relation to her family might be related to the subjective senses through which she experiences her religious values, from which she generates subjective senses that might be related to the special affection for female figures in her family. As for all indicators, this one has to be followed by others to advance an important hypothesis on BR's subjective configurations. It is important to note how the process of constructing information has advanced from the first indicator, integrating possible new subjective senses that have changed the orientation of the whole process of construction, leading to new paths toward answering the initial question formulated by the researcher as her research focus. The current subjective plot is far from BR's early descriptions about her motherhood experience, being mainly related to subjective senses resulting from other spheres of her life.

The rigidity, surveillance, and control that she imposes on her actions and on the actions of others are strong elements that support the previous indicator relating to how her affection for her mother and her religious values are two inseparable sources of subjective senses, that become relevant to the way she has subjectively configured her affective relations. These subjective senses have configured the relevance of duty as the subjective core around which her different affective relationships are organized.

If, at the first point in the theoretical construction, we were willing to consider that the troubles in her marriage were the main sources of subjective senses configuring the way she has experienced the births and lives of her children, we would have thought that her rigidity and tendency to control, and her sense of duty, were more related to the pattern of relationships that characterized her mother and grandmother, which are crossed by her religious values. There is a strong identification with her female relatives in which affection, gender, and religious values seem to be closely articulated as part of the subjective configuration that characterizes not only her relationship with her husband, but also with her children and father, who she completely omits.

In order to advance the first hypothesis, on which the theoretical model depends, there are other elements that reaffirm the later indicators. The next complement of phrase response and its respective comments have a particular relevance at this point in the process:

Phrase: 12. My place: is where I could be happy, and/or where I can learn something to make me better. I love when these places are related to my family, my profession and God.

The comment referring to this phrase is the following:

As I have a strong faith, I always believe that there are some things that express messages for me in all the stars of life. Thus, in all situations, I try to find the answer to the question: What am I doing here? I think that everything has a purpose that is beyond ourselves; thus, I relax going to where I must go. I don't like to be in places where I don't perceive any of these feelings; to feel and find myself spontaneously and to find a sense of myself.

Her comment is an explicit expression of how strong her religious beliefs are, and also about how they function. They are not constructed on a rational basis but as a faith sustained by special personal prerogatives and feelings that allow her a special relationship with transcendence. The way in which her religious beliefs unfold into different subjective senses deserves deeper study, because on this question we do not have any further material available in order to advance. Constructive-interpretative research only advances theoretical constructions as a process, through which some statements are advanced while others remain open. At this point in the work, it would be necessary for a new round of conversation on the basis of the last indicators that were raised, especially those related to BR's religious values and to her own family history. In this process, it could be very useful to use photographs from different times and events during her family life and to ask her to comment on those moments in the family. The creation of instruments should be continuous throughout the research, as it is highly useful in deepening the dialogue, opening new zones of conversation oriented by already defined indicators.

According to the theoretical account that guides the research, it would be impossible to think that BR's relations with her children since they were born could be explained only by her experience of motherhood. From this theoretical account, no experience can be subjectively defined within its own borders; any experience involves a constellation of other experiences that appear at the present moment as subjective senses generated by subjective configuration of those experiences.

A well-defined indicator is related to BR's husband and marriage. The place of both in her life can be synthesized by the following elements: (1) Her husband only indirectly appears in the fifth conversation with the researcher; (2) in the complement of phrase instrument, he appeared for the first time in the penultimate phrase, as a result of a direct inductor, "My husband…." The way that BR constructs her relationship with the husband is decisive in advancing the indicator of how little presence he has in BR's life. Her marriage looks like a compromise by BR for a good partner, for a father to her daughter. She follows, at least apparently, the order and values imposed by her in the family. On this basis, a hypothesis could be formulated that her husband is secondary in her life, which was only stated as indicator before. The convergence of new indicators on this matter can be further reaffirmed by the next fragment taken from the conversation:

> My husband is my great friend. He has a lot of things that I don't like, indeed I don't like. To be married is a daily battle. I have a complete comprehension that marriage is not an easy thing, but we both share the same values. We have moments of crisis like everyone, difficulties, but both of us have a will to solve problems together. He is a good father, which allows me to invest in other areas of my life that I like. I am not saying that he is perfect, but he is a great partner, my best friend. Thanks to God.

She has a good marriage, but one based on a friendship contract. The way in which BR constructs her husband offers strong elements to reaffirm how secondary he is to her. Since the very beginning of this case study, indicators related to her husband have appeared. As part of the picture drawn before, her duty, her rigidity, and the secondary place she gives to affection in her relationships are part of the subjective configuration of her relationships, and her relationships with her children

have not been conceived as an expression of love, but as something that had to be done. Her husband is tolerant and clearly subordinated to the order imposed by BR in the family. In her statement about the husband, no personal expressions related to their relationship appear—nothing about having shared a project or happy memories they have lived together. There is nothing that refers to their common life. This indicator becomes stronger after BR's statement that her mother is the person that supports her most. The way in which BR has constructed her speech and expressions in relation to her main affective figures is quite different. This is a process that is beyond consciousness and beyond any intentional control. For this reason, it is so important for this kind of research that the researcher provokes engaged expressions from the participants.

Subjective configurations and senses are powerful theoretical devices to be constructed as theoretical models capable to explain how a constellation of past life experiences are configured through different subjective senses in the way that a current experience is lived. In this case study, it was possible to advance the first step in BR's subjective configuration related to her family relationships. She expresses directly a strong affection for her children. However, she never makes explicit the enjoyment of joint experiences with them. The situation is the same in her references to her husband. Her strong faith and the way she lives this faith could be an important source of subjective senses that are central in her relationship with her children and her two husbands, from both marriages. The main core of her affective life is her mother. Duty, order, responsibilities, and norms are the principles that rule her life, and, to some extent, explain her concern in relation to her age compared with her son's. This core of subjective senses is very important in her subjective configuration of her affections, including her children's births.

The main goal of the presentation of this case has been to discuss the details of the construction of information, as conducted by following the constructive-interpretative proposal's principles. The fact that the case study was conducted by a student taking her first steps as a researcher allows commentary about possible paths and actions which, although they were not used, did not constitute an obstacle for the student in advancing in terms of knowledge about the matter being studied. The transit, from her first representation of the question to be posed at the beginning of her research, up until her final constructions, which allowed the perception of how an apparently punctual question is configured in a very complex way from a subjective point of view, was a very fruitful path for a researcher familiarizing herself with this way to conduct research on subjectivity.

The discussion of this case study has also allowed us to show possible actions and instruments that could have been used at different points in the research study. This process should be taught and discussed with students, whose prior training processes are frequently oriented by a comprehension of research as the collection of data that are later processed in instrumental ways. The understanding of scientific research as a long-lasting process, course of which is actively guided and oriented by the researcher's theoretical constructions, is maybe the most important aspect of the training process for young researchers.

The construction advanced in the case study is inserted into a line of research that has been opened up by our group, in which some work has been done on subjective configurations of postpartum depression and postpartum subjective experiences of women, such as those commented on in this chapter (Arrais 2005; Cesario 2016). One of the most interesting results of these research studies is the creation of alternatives to the notion of pathology, understanding postpartum depression not as a punctual experience, but as an expression of the complex way in which the constellation of facts of a unique life is intermingled in subjective individual configurations, through which social subjectivity appears in the most diverse ways in individual expressions.

3.4 Some Final Comments

The methodological proposal discussed in this chapter, unlike the way in which methodology has been commonly treated in psychology, specifies and explains why methodology is at the same time an avenue of the theory in which the subject matter is highlighted, making explicit the epistemological basis of this process, due to the different comprehension on which the knowledge of subjectivity is based. The three attributes of Qualitative Epistemology, upon which this methodological proposal is founded, cannot be understood as isolated principles, but as principles that imply theory, epistemology, and methodology as three parts of the same system. Dialogue, constructive-interpretative operations, and the relevance of the singular are closely articulated to each other, simultaneously having consequences for the advancement of theory, epistemology, and methodology.

The proposal drawn in this chapter departs not from what others say, but from how they construct and elaborate what they say. It is not the language or speech used in what is directly consciously made explicit by individuals and groups that is the focus of this type of research, but the indirect issues that qualify what is being said or written, and these are only accessible through theoretical models capable of generating intelligibility on this matter.

The constructive-interpretative methodology presented in this chapter and the epistemology upon which it rests are far from intending to exhaust the problem studied in one concrete piece of research. The study of subjectivity must be developed through different research lines, within which the same problem can be studied and discussed through different research fields. As exemplified in this chapter, we understand research as a long-lasting process, course of which allows the formulation of a theoretical model through which the knowledge about a problem progressively advances through several acts of research.

The flux of subjective senses cannot be grasped by a single act of knowledge. Its heuristic value is related to the opportunity opened up by concepts like subjective senses to advance in terms of how a certain constellation of facts about a single life, whether of social instances or individuals, appears together within a subjective unit, the subjective configuration, through a current concrete experience. It allows current experiences to be understood, not as a sum of lived events, but through a flux of

subjective senses, within which senses unfold, one into others, forming the flow of generative processes that characterizes subjective configurations.

Subjective configurations will never be completely understood by any research, but their construction contributes to providing meanings for processes and facts that are overlooked by other theories. Fieldwork and the construction of information in this approach are co-developed activities, one being a part of the other. Knowledge, from this epistemological perspective, is never a final result, which is a reason why the concept of research lines is emphasized in this chapter as the only way to study such a complex system as subjectivity.

Research in itself is understood as a theoretical process. The split between data collection and data analysis belongs to a descriptive and instrumental way of doing research. The theory of subjectivity assembles different interrelated concepts, giving visibility to a phenomenon that up to now has been overlooked in other theoretical lenses. The departure of a new theoretical representation of subjectivity has demanded that we reframe methodology in relation to how it has been used in psychological research so far. This reframing process implies a different use of theory as part of the active conduct of research and, at the same time, the transcending of the idea of the application of theory within the research. Theories, from our point of view, cannot be applied; they are devices for constructing knowledge on unexpected and unknown research questions.

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Chapter 4
Subjectivity and Perezhivanie: Empirical and Methodological Challenges and Opportunities

Nikolai Veresov

Abstract This chapter explores possible ways of connecting subjectivity and perezhivanie on both an empirical and a theoretical/methodological level of analysis. It begins with elaborating two meanings of perezhivanie which exist in the original texts of Vygotsky—perezhivanie as a psychological phenomenon (P1) and perezhivanie as a concept in cultural-historical theory (P2). Perezhivanie as an empirical and observable psychological phenomenon might bring new ways of understanding of how subjectivity works since perezhivanie is a complex nexus of various psychological processes and should not be reduced to pure emotional experiencing. In certain sense, perezhivanie is an empirically observable manifestation of subjectivity. This makes an analysis of children's concrete perezhivanie a powerful tool for studying how subjectivity works. It shows that a child's subjectivity, the individual subjective configuration of the child, is no less powerful in defining the course of her individual unique developmental trajectory than the objective characteristics of her social environment. On the other hand, the concept of subjectivity might bring a new dimension into the empirical studies of perezhivanie. Perezhivanie as a concept within the cultural-historical theory (P2) is not an empirically observable phenomenon; it is a theoretical tool for analysis of the influence of social environment on the course of child development. New concepts of the micro-social situation of development and of dramatic perezhivanie are introduced, and an opportunity to investigate theoretical and methodological links between the concept of perezhivanie and subjectivity is discussed.

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss possible new avenues of inter- and intra-theoretical dialogue on perezhivanie and subjectivity. By saying this, I do not mean purely theoretical constructions and considerations; theoretical discussions which

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do not create a new framework for experimental and empirical research are mostly senseless. Theoretical improvements become powerful when they allow us to put new research questions and open new ways of data collection and analysis, using theoretical concepts as analytical tools. Theoretical concepts are instruments for analysis, and they should be carefully selected and properly used according to what they were designed for. In this respect, they can be compared with surgical instruments in medicine, having a specific application. The chapter discusses perezhivanie and subjectivity and their relations with this "medical" metaphor in mind. It begins with introducing perezhivanie in a way informed by Vygotsky's original and seminal writings and discusses how this might enrich and improve the understanding of the concept of subjectivity and subjective configuration, with an aim of opening up new ways of empirical research and new types of research questions. However, what is discussed in this chapter are not solutions, but rather challenges which need further elaborations, clarifications and collective discussions in a dialogue pursued through empirical and theoretical studies. This chapter looks at these challenges as potential opportunities in the development of a cultural-historical research methodology. In a certain sense, this chapter continues, and, I hope, contributes, to a dialogue started in the previous book on perezhivanie, emotions and subjectivity (Fleer et al. 2017).

4.2 Perezhivanie: P1 and P2

In Vygotsky's (1994, 2001) original writings, perezhivanie is presented in two interrelated, but different meanings and contexts—(1) perezhivanie as a phenomenon (P1) and (2) perezhivanie as a theoretical concept within cultural-historical theory (P2). Elsewhere, I undertook an extended discussion of P1 and P2 (Veresov 2016a; Veresov 2017; Veresov and Fleer 2016); I therefore will limit myself by discussing issues related to the topic of this chapter.

I begin with discussion of perezhivanie as P1 and how this might contribute to empirical research and what kind of new research questions it might generate. Then, I briefly identify possible areas of continuing a dialogue with the theory of subjectivity and subjective configuration.

4.2.1 Perezhivanie as a Phenomenon (P1): Challenges and Implications

Perezhivanie as a phenomenon (P1) is "how a child becomes aware of, interprets, and emotionally relates to a certain event" (Vygotsky 1994, p. 341). In other place, more general and integral characteristic is given: "Perezhivanie[1] must be understood

[1]Translated as "experience" in English translation (Vygotsky 1998, p. 294).

as the internal relation[2] of the child as a person to one factor or another of reality" (Vygotsky 1984, p. 382). Perezhivanie is a complex nexus of different processes and individual (even personal) characteristics of a human being. It includes components of representation, understanding, subjective interpretation and the awareness of an individual in relation to certain events in her social environment.

This interpretation challenges the existing tradition of presenting perezhivanie as an emotional phenomenon (emotional experience), which originates from English translation of Vygotsky's Collected Works (more discussion of this in Mok 2017; Veresov 2016a). Another aspect of this challenge is the meaning of the word "experience". It might complicate understanding and even be misleading because in translation of Vygotsky's works the Russian term "opyt" (опыт) is also translated as "experience".[3]

The second challenge goes far beyond the translation issues. In different periods of Vygotsky's theoretical evolution, in different original texts, the word perezhivanie was used with different meanings. For example, in early writings such as *Psychology of art* and *Pedagogical psychology*, written before 1924, perezhivanie is used only as P1 because the cultural-historical theory did not exist (Zavershneva 2010a, b). Vygotsky's theoretical programme at that time was to build a theory of consciousness on the reflexological objective method, and consciousness was defined as "merely a reflex to reflexes" (Vygotsky 1997, pp. 46-47). Perezhivanie as a theoretical concept within the cultural-historical theory appears at the last stage (1932–1934) of Vygotsky's work. Thus, dealing with Vygotsky's legacy, especially with English translations, we should always undertake a sort of small textual investigation. Since volumes in Collected Works do not always follow the chronological order, we should pay attention to the year of original publication (or the year it was written) which might help to identify whether "experience" means perezhivanie or opyt, and if it means perezhivanie, does it mean P1 or P2?

4.2.2 Perezhivanie as P1: Implications for Empirical Research

Despite its complexity, perezhivanie as P1 is visible, empirically observable and experimentally researchable (see, e.g., Chen 2015; Ferholt 2015; Fleer and Hammer 2013). However, beyond the surface, complexity exists that cannot always be seen on the surface. Thus, this phenomenon has hidden dimensions and dynamics, but this does not prevent from its empirical investigations. For example, Mackenzie and Veresov (2013) present the situation where children were invited to draw a picture of the excursion on a bus to a church on Eastern. One child's drawing was of a picture of the bus, whereas another child's drawing was of the church (. 4.1). The drawing on the left is the bus, and the drawing on the right is the church.

[2]Translated as "external" in English translation (Vygotsky 1998, p. 294).

[3]For example, "work experience" in Russian is opyt raboty (опыт работы).

Fig. 4.1 Children's drawings (Mackenzie and Veresov 2013)

These pictures provide an opportunity to clarify how one and the same event was perceived, interpreted and understood differently by different children (see also Veresov and Fleer 2016). This fits with Vygotsky's (1994) approach to perezhivanie as a refracting prism: "Perezhivanie, arising from any situation or from any aspect of his environment, determines what kind of influence this situation or this environment will have on the child" (p. 339). However, this is influence of a very special kind. As Vygotsky concludes: "it is not any of the factors[4] in themselves (if taken without reference to the child) which determines how they will influence …but the same factors[5] refracted through the prism of the child's…perezhivanie" (Vygotsky 1994, p. 340). Thus, the above-mentioned example of two drawings allows us to identify which particular aspects or components of the event of excursion to the church influenced these two children.

Yet, this is not the whole story. Perezhivanie is a unique phenomenon as it allows us to investigate the subjective psychological characteristics of the child in the process of refraction. As Vygotsky puts it: "the personal characteristics of children are, as it were, mobilized by a given …perezhivanie, become crystallized within a given perezhivanie" (Vygotsky 1994, p. 343). Therefore, studying child's perezhivanie "also helps us select those characteristics which played a role in determining the attitude to the given situation" (Vygotsky 1994, p. 342). What makes perezhivanie a unique phenomenon and interesting to investigate in empirical research is that it allows us to identify which specific aspects (moments) of environment influence the child and, at the same time, which personal characteristics of the child are mobilized and crystallized through perezhivanie. We might know that the excursion to a church influences different children differently; but the analysis of children's drawings might give us an answer *how this happens* and *what sort of influence* it is.

[4]Moment (момент) in the Russian original (Vygotsky 2001, p. 72) is not factor, but rather a certain component, a part or particular aspect of a situation or an event.

[5]The same moments in Russian original.

4.2.3 *P1 and Theory of Subjectivity: New Avenues for Dialogue*

The theory of subjectivity, developed by Gonzalez Rey (Gonzales Rey 2005, 2007, 2015, 2017; Gonzales Rey et al. 2017), introduces subjectivity as not something individual and internal, but as a "new ontological domain of human phenomena, whether social or individual, which is inseparable from the cultural-social world within which human beings live their experiences" (Fleer et al. 2017, p. 3). On the other hand, subjectivity is not considered as an opposition to "objectivity" or a kind of subjective perception of an objective world which is the concept still dominant in a mainstream literature.

This approach might look like a challenge to the cultural-historical understanding of P1as the *internal* relation of the child to reality discussed above. However, what does this mean—"the internal relation to environment"—within the logic of the cultural-historical approach? What is its psychological content, its dimensions and characteristics? Does "internal" means "subjective" here?

We can probably get some insights into the following words of Vygotsky: "…in perezhivanie we are always dealing with an indivisible unity of personal characteristics and situational characteristics, which are represented in the perezhivanie" (Vygotsky 1994, p. 342). "Indivisible unity" is obviously the key word here. From this very important conclusion follows: "…it is always necessary to approach environment not with an absolute but a relative yardstick…" (Vygotsky 1994, p. 338). This "principle of relativity" pertains equally to the personal characteristics in perezhivanie. Aspects of environment and aspects of personality melted into perezhivanie, and represented in perezhivanie, cannot be considered as absolutely internal or absolutely external; they are unmeasurable with absolute yardstick.

It seems to me that Vygotsky's reading of P1 and Gonzales Rey's approach to subjectivity have more in common than it might appear. Taking this challenge as an opportunity, a new avenue for a dialogue emerges. The concept of subjectivity, developed by Gonzalez Rey, might provide a powerful analytical tool to apply as a *relative* yardstick in studying perezhivanie as P1 (that is as a complex phenomenon). On the other hand, studying different examples of perezhivanie (P1) allows us not only to identify specific aspects of the environment, but also to study both empirically and experimentally which components of the environment become an integral part of child's subjectivity. What is important is that this type of research allows us to take these aspects of environment neither as absolutely external, objective, nor, at the same time, as absolutely subjective. And, finally, such kind of research might contribute to a better understanding of how it happens, how subjectivity is being constructed in and through perezhivanie in various environmental settings.

The theory of subjectivity radically reconsiders the concept of psychological functions and processes. As Gonzales Rey puts this,

> Psychological functions, from this point of view, are not merely cognitive operations, or specific fragmenting entities; they become subjectively configured processes and functions,

> being connected to the subjective system through their ongoing subjective configurations (Fleer et al. 2017, p. 4).

At first glance, it also looks as if the statement contradicts and challenges the cultural-historical understanding of higher mental functions as separate psychological processes (logical memory, voluntary attention, abstract thinking, etc.). However, if we take a look at the children's drawings presented in Fig. 4.1, we can analyse them in two different ways. For example, we can interpret these drawings strictly in terms of what remained in a child's memory after the excursion to the church on a bus and therefore how a child's memory works. However, in this case, an analysis will be fundamentally incomplete and superficial because the fundamental question of *why* the church remained in the memory of one child, but the bus remained in the memory of another is outside the scope of analysis. But if we take this as an example of children's perezhivanie, we gain an opportunity to study how these two children became aware of, interpreted and emotionally related to the whole situation of an excursion.

All three processes (awareness, interpretation and emotional response) do not come one after another as separate steps; they coexist as an integral unity of perezhivanie. The process of becoming aware cannot be divided into separate psychological functions; interpretation is not a result of thinking alone; it also includes subjective perception, understanding, memorizing and even imagination. Even more, child's past experience, interests and motivational sphere play a role. At the same time, these processes cannot be separated for the convenience of analysis as they work together being configured by the unique way in a subjective system. This presents another interesting opportunity for continuing a dialogue: perezhivanie (P1) and the subjective system. I am aware we still have a lot to do, but I think that the phenomenon of perezhivanie originated in Vygotsky's writings and developed by recent theoretical studies might significantly contribute to the research into subjectivity.

4.2.4 How P1 Might Enrich the Research of Subjective Configuration?

The concept of subjective configuration is integral to the theory of subjectivity. Yet, my task is not to discuss this concept in details; I will only focus on possible areas of a dialogue on how studies on perezhivanie as a complex phenomenon (P1) might enrich and probably advance the concept of subjective configuration and, on the other hand, how the concept of subjective configuration might contribute to better understanding of perezhivanie.

The place and role of the concept of subjective configuration might be shown with these two quotes:

> …processes and functions become subjective when they are organised within a subjective configuration, as self-organised subjective system that generates subjective senses, and

> whose emergence cannot be explained or be evident to observers as objective elements of the experience (Fleer et al. 2017, p. 4).

This quotation resonates with the "relativistic" approach to "objective–subjective" discussed in the previous section; however, there is something more if looked at from a theoretical perspective. This quotation shows the connections of this concept with other concepts in the theory—(1) subjectivity, (2) psychological functions, (3) a subjective system and (4) subjective sense. The second quote is a definition of the subjective configuration as a "complex organization of subjective senses" (Gonzales Rey 2007, p. 12) and, from a wider perspective, as "an attempt to define a unit of subjective functioning that allows us to overcome the dispersive taxonomy of concepts that has characterized the history of psychology, which also has been the basis on which developmental psychology developed" (Gonzales Rey et al. 2017, p. 227).

Taken from this perspective, the children's drawings presented in Fig. 4.1 could be interpreted not as children's subjective reflections on an excursion to the church, but as material representations of the productions of their subjective senses, generated by the different and unique subjective configurations of two children, as two unique symbolic-emotional units "of emotional and symbolical processes that form a new qualitative phenomenon" (Fleer et al. 2017, p. 3). Drawings here are more than examples of what children remember after the excursion; they are examples of what subjective senses were generated due to different subjective configurations.

This approach opens an opportunity for a new question: Is there a difference between what is defined as subjective senses in Gonzales Rey theory of subjectivity and as perezhivanie in the cultural-historical theory? Or are they coinciding phenomena? These questions cannot be resolved on theoretical level only; they require empirical and experimental research. However, the challenge is that there is a little empirical research of both phenomena—subjective configurations and perezhivanie,[6] and there is no research studying the relations or connections between them.

If we take this challenge as an opportunity for a dialogue, it might open a new perspective of empirical research. For example, the drawings in Fig. 4.1 might be approached from a new angle: looking from the perspective of the theory of subjectivity this kind of data might give an answer to the question "What subjective senses were generated within the subjective configurations of these children"? Looking from a perezhivanie perspective, questions like "How were these subjective senses generated?" or "Why were these particular subjective senses generated by these children?" might inform an empirical or experimental study.

Another challenge which might be taken as an opportunity for a dialogue is related to the understanding of social environment and its influence on children's experience. In cultural-historical theory, the social environment is considered not as a factor, but the basic source of development (Vygotsky 1998, p. 198). The theory of subjectivity seems to challenge this basic concept. As González Rey (2005), suggests social processes are no longer seen as external to individuals or as mere factors of influence.

[6]Some examples of contemporary empirical research on perezhivanie are discussed in Veresov (2017) and Veresov and Fleer (2016).

They have become part of a complex system of social subjectivity (p. 202). However, in Vygotsky's original writings, the social environment as a source of development is understood in a specific way. "Source" here is not a metaphor, such as the source of a river from which the water flows naturally, but rather as an infinite source from which "child will acquire ever newer personality characteristics, drawing[7] them from the social reality" (Vygotsky 1998 p. 198). This highlights the active role of the child. The source does not determine the process; it becomes a resource when the child begins to draw from it. Here again, we see more similarities than differences.

I will return to this point in the following section of the chapter where I discuss theoretical perspectives of a dialogue, but here in discussion of perezhivanie as a phenomenon (P1), I would like to highlight an important direction for discussion. Social environment is not static, it is not given in a permanent form, it changes all the time both at the micro- and macro-levels, and the child is always part of a process of permanent change. This statement might look general and undisputable, but in this particular case, that is in relation to the phenomenon of perezhivanie, it acquires concrete psychological content. The dynamics of the social environment mean changes in its various components. This, in turn, means that in different moments of time, different components of an environment change and therefore different psychological characteristics of a child are mobilized and crystallized through perezhivanie. What is new in such an approach is that it is not the environment which mobilizes and crystallizes the child's personal characteristics, but perezhivanie. It is impossible to predict which moments of environment are being refracted in a child's perezhivanie and which personal characteristics are being mobilized and crystallized through perezhivanie. However, what we can say is that the process of subjective configuration is changing; configuration is not something which is stable, but constantly evolving. It can be compared with the word "construction", which might mean both the result ('the solid construction of a bridge prevented it from being destroyed'), and the process ("Sorry, this website is under construction").

For empirical studies, this means that the subjective configuration cannot be captured as something stable as in every moment it is in motion; the "picture" of subjective configuration never reflects its motion. However, perezhivanie can in principle be discovered in more or less stable form. This does not mean, of course, that perezhivanie is more stable than the subjective configuration. Rather, this only means that it is much easier to collect empirical indications of perezhivanie in particular research. The drawings on Fig. 4.1 do not provide much empirical data about the subjective configurations of these two children; however, they are rich, as it was discussed above, in relation to children's perezhivanie. I do not know yet how this kind of research and analysis of perezhivanie as a phenomenon might improve our understanding of subjective configuration (reconfiguration), but I hope this opens an opportunity for an inter-theoretical dialogue.

In this section of the chapter, I tried to show that the cultural-historical understanding of perezhivanie as a complex human psychological phenomenon (P1) creates

[7]Vygotsky uses the word черпать (to scoop) in Russian original text, like scooping water from the well.

opportunities for empirical research and, at the same time, might in different ways contribute to a dialogue with the theory of subjectivity. Researching different types of children's perezhivanie might enrich our understanding of subjectivity, subjective senses and subjective configuration.

Perezhivanie might be a powerful tool for empirical studies of how social environment becomes an integral part of a subjectivity and influences children. This allows to look at social environment not as something existing outside the child and surrounding her, but as a reality which becomes an environment *because* its components are refracted or being refracted by a child through her unique perezhivanie. Studying different examples of perezhivanie in a particular child in a concrete environment, we can deepen our understanding of how the social environment influences the child. The children's drawings in Fig. 4.1 are clear examples of such influences. But to influence the child and to influence the course of a child's development are not the same. We cannot make any conclusions about how the excursion to the church influenced the whole process of development of these two children. Yet, this perspective is not completely closed. To study the influence of an environment on children's development, we need to consider perezhivanie not as a phenomenon (P1) but as a theoretical concept (P2), that is an analytical tool for researching the process of development.

4.3 Perezhivanie (P2) as a Theoretical Concept and a Tool to Study the Process of Development

This section of the chapter is focused on perezhivanie as a theoretical concept (P2). I begin with the brief outline of the difference between P1 as a phenomenon and P2 as an analytical theoretical tool. Then, I give an example, taken from original Vygotsky's texts, of how perezhivanie was used as an analytical tool. This is followed by some theoretical perspectives in relation to perezhivanie and the social situation of development. At the end of the section, I show how the cultural-historical understanding of perezhivanie (P2) might contribute to the improvement of the concept of social subjectivity.

Studying children's perezhivanie as a phenomenon (P1) might bring rich data for the analysis of how concrete social environments influence a child's mind, and how a particular child interprets and emotionally relates to certain event. But perezhivanie as a cultural-historical concept (P2) has no phenomenological content; it is not something empirically observable; it is a part of the theory, and its content is completely theoretical. Cultural-historical theory in general is a system of interrelated and interconnected theoretical concepts and principles to study the process of sociocultural development of human mind, aimed not at "objects under study", but rather at "the process under study" in all its key aspects (Vygotsky 1997).

Concepts of the cultural-historical theory are instruments, theoretical analytical tools, and they can be compared with glasses or lenses which uncover and clarify

what is hidden under the surface of empirically observable phenomena. However, if the theoretical content of the concept is vague and blurred, it will make the image of the process under study vague and blurred also. This is why it is important, as a first step, to clarify the theoretical content of the concept. The way to clarify the content of perezhivanie as a concept within this theory is to answer questions: (1) How is this concept related to the process of cultural development, and which aspects of cultural development does it theoretically reflect? (2) How this concept is related to other concepts within the theory?

Elsewhere, we undertook an extended analysis of the theoretical content of perezhivanie (P2) (Veresov 2016a; Veresov & Fleer 2016); I therefore will focus on its main aspects which relate to the topic of the chapter.

Perezhivanie as a concept plays a specific role:

> … perezhivanie is a concept which allows us to study the role and influence of environment on the psychological development of children in the analysis of the laws of development (Vygotsky 1994 p. 343).

Perezhivanie is a tool (theoretical concept) for analysing the influence of the sociocultural environment, *not on the individual* per se, but on the process of development of the individual, which is seen as the "path along which the social becomes the individual" (Vygotsky 1998, p. 198). Using this concept as an analytic tool, a researcher might explore how social environment influences the whole course of child development, the sociocultural genesis of the human mind. Probably the best way to show how perezhivanie works as a theoretical tool for data analysis is take an example from original Vygotsky's writings (Vygotsky 1994, p. 339–340), which I present in the following section.

4.3.1 Vygotsky's Example: How P2 Works as an Analytical Tool

Vygotsky's famous example is about three children from the same family. The situation in the family was awful because the mother drank and suffered from several nervous and psychological disorders. When drunk, the mother regularly beat the children or threw them to the floor and had once attempted to throw one of the children out of the window (Vygotsky 1994 p. 339–340).

The three children present completely different pictures of disrupted development, caused by the same situation. The same circumstances result in an entirely different picture for the three children. The youngest child reacted by developing a number of neurotic symptoms, that is symptoms of a defensive nature, in the form of attacks of terror, depression and helplessness.

The second child was

> … developing an extremely agonizing condition, a state of inner conflict … On the one hand, from the child's point of view, the mother is an object of painful[8] attachment, and on the other, she represents a source of all kinds of terrors and terrible emotional experiences [perezhivanija][9] for the child. He experienced internal conflict expressed in a simultaneously positive and negative attitude towards the mother, a terrible attachment to her and an equally terrible hate for her[10] (Vygotsky 1994 p. 340).

Finally, the third and eldest child showed signs of some precocious maturity, seriousness and solicitude. Because he understood the situation, he could see that the younger children were in danger and therefore he took on a special role as the senior member of the family, the only one whose duty it was to look after everyone else.

> As a result of this, the entire course of his development underwent a striking change. This was not a lively child with normal, lively, simple interests, appropriate to his age and exhibiting a lively level of activity. It was a child whose course of normal development was severely disrupted, a different type of child (Vygotsky 1994, p. 341).

How can one explain why exactly the same environmental conditions exert three unique influence on these three different children's development?

> …Each of the children experienced[11] the situation in a different way. So … depending on the fact that the same situation had been experienced by the three children in three different ways,[12] the influence which this situation exerted on their development also turns out to be different (Vygotsky 1994, p. 341).
>
> Therefore, it is not any of the factors[13] in themselves (if taken without reference to the child) which determines how they will influence the future course of his development, but the same factors refracted through the prism of the child's … perezhivanie (Vygotsky 1994, p. 339–340).

This is an example of a *theoretical* analysis in relation to the influence of an environment on the course of child development.

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[8] In the Russian original, the expression «предмет большой привязанности» (object of great/intensive attachment) is used (Vygotsky 2001, p. 73–74).

[9] In the Russian text «источник самых тяжёлых впечатлений» (a source of all kinds of … terrible impressions for the child) is used (Ibid). Nothing is said about emotional experience or perezhivanie in this sentence.

[10] In the Russian original "страшной привязанности к ней и страшной ненависти к ней" (a terrific attachment to her and an equally terrific hate for her). The word страшной here means the degree of attachment ("deep", "intensive", "strong", "terrific"), not the character of it ("dangerous" or "terrible").

[11] In the original Russian text, the verb perezhival (переживал) is used. This is the past singular grammatical form of the verb perezhivat' (переживать), from which the noun perezhivanie has been derived.

[12] In the Russian original text «у троих детей возникло три разных переживания одной и той же ситуации» (three different perezhivanie of the same situation appeared in three children) (Vygotsky Vygotsky 2001, p. 74–75).

[13] In the Russian text, the word моменты (moments) is used: существенными моментами для определения влияния среды … (Vygotsky Vygotsky 2001, p. 72). Factor in Russian is фактор.

4.3.2 P2: Analysing Vygotsky's Analysis

Elsewhere, I undertook an extensive discussion about how perezhivanie as a concept (P2) was used by Vygotsky as theoretical tool for analysis of this example (Veresov 2016a). Here, I take the next step in theorizing by reviewing Vygotsky's analysis to illustrate what this type of analysis allows to discover. In doing this, I would like to highlight three important characteristics of Vygotsky's analysis. In other words, I will undertake an analysis of the analysis.

The analysis Vygotsky did was not focused on the content of child's perezhivanie (as, e.g., in the analysis of children's drawings in Fig. 4.1). It begins with a general characteristic of a situation ("awful", "difficult", "dangerous") with emphasis on the detailed description of different developmental outcomes in the three children ("different pictures of disrupted development" in Vygotsky's words). In other words, there is almost nothing about P1 in this analysis, and perezhivanie is taken as an analytical tool, as a concept (P2). This enables him to *distinguish* two processes: (1) the influence of the environment on the children and (2) the influence of the environment on the course of each child's development. Yet, how does this work? The two paragraphs which follow might provide some insight.

First, the concept of perezhivanie (P2) here is a theoretical tool which avoids the "factors" model of analysis. Social environment is not conceived as a system of factors which influence development, but as the source of development from which the child acquires and develops new personal characteristics through perezhivanie (Vygotsky 1998, p. 198).

Second, the concept of perezhivanie as a tool for analysis of this example enables the differentiation of three concepts: (1) social environment, (2) social situation and (3) social situation of development (SSD). The social environment is the wide context in which the child lives; however, the task of analysis is not to "investigate the environment as such without regard to the child, but instead …the role and influence of the environment on the course of development" (Vygotsky, 1994, p. 342). The social situation is a component of the wider social environment and, as *a concrete situation,* is a complex, contradictory, dramatic and challenging situation in Vygotsky's example.

However, being in the same social situation, the children demonstrated different developmental outcomes because the same situation was refracted by different perezhivanie. Therefore, in the same social situation, three *different* social situations of development existed. This introduces an important concept of the social situation of development (SSD) as "a completely original, exclusive single and unique relation between the child and reality" (Vygotsky 1998, p. 198). The social environment is the source of development; it influences the child, but what makes the social situation a social situation of development is perezhivanie (Veresov & Fleer 2017). Therefore, what becomes extremely important in terms of analysis of the influence of environment on child development is "*to find the relationship which exists between the child and its environment, the child' s … perezhivanie"* (Vygotsky 1994, p. 341), where perezhivanie (P2) is the unit of analysis of the social situation of the development.

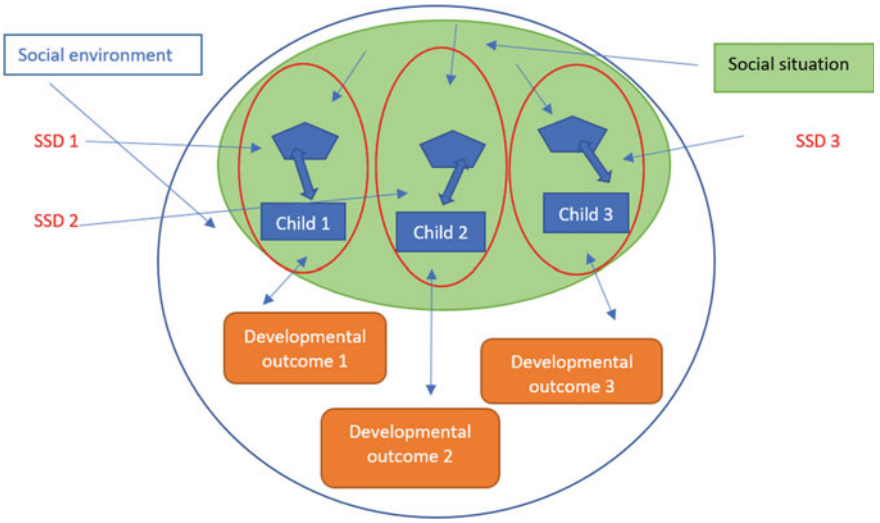

Fig. 4.2 Social environment, social situation and perezhivanie

In brief, the theoretical analysis proceeds in the following way:

(1) the social environment is objectively existing sociocultural context, independent of the child, which surrounds the child;
(2) the social situation is a part of the social environment, an ongoing event the child is involved in, a situation some moments of which are being refracted through the child's perezhivanie (P1) and which therefore influences the child (see Fig. 4.1 as an example);
(3) the social situation of development is the concept which allows us to study how social environment influences *the entire course of child's development,* as it allows us to identify *the changes in development* through an analysis of an individual child's perezhivanie of a social situation—which might create various and different social situations of development.

This is shown in Fig. 4.2 where the social environment (white area) is shown to contain a social situation (green area), which is refracted by the children through three different perezhivanie (blue prisms) making three different social situations of development (red areas) and leading to three different pictures of development and developmental outcomes.

The role of perezhivanie in this process is expressed by Vygotsky briefly in the following way:

> The environment exerts this influence … via the child' s perezhivanija, i.e. depending on how the child has managed to work out his inner attitude to the various aspects of the different situations occurring in the environment. The environment determines the type of development depending on the degree of awareness of this environment which the child has managed to reach (Vygotsky 1994, p. 346).

Only when they are taken together do the concepts of the social situation of development and of perezhivanie (P2) create a conceptual unity, a theoretical dyad for the analysis of the influence of social environment on a child's development, in which the environment is not a combination of influencing factors, but the *source* of development.

4.3.3 Introducing Dramatic Perezhivanie

Vygotsky's example of analysis does not include a detailed picture of the social environment of three children; it is not described as a system of factors; it is focused on *the social situation* the family experienced *and social situations of development* and developmental outcomes in three children. However, the character and the nature of a social situation in this example are interesting. The social situation here is a dramatic collision full of external and internal conflicts and contradictions.

I would agree that this is only an example specially selected for the purpose of detailed analysis and presented in a very clear form. A social situation in the form of a dramatic collision is very convenient for analysis as it shows clearly both the characteristics of the social situations of development (as the initial phase) and different pictures of developmental outcomes (as its results).

However, as I am going to show now, it potentially contains opportunities for further theoretical improvements. By this, I mean the concept *of dramatic perezhivanie*. Elsewhere, I have discussed the opportunities this concept might bring to this field of research (Veresov 2016a, 2017, Veresov et al. 2016); here I discuss some opportunities for further theoretical progress or advancement.

Obviously, in Vygotsky's example, children's perezhivanie were of a special type. Children's perezhivanie were refractions of a dramatic social situation in the family. As a result, it generated serious changes in the development of children. This special type of perezhivanie as a refraction of a dramatic collision that children experience can be defined as a *dramatic perezhivanie*. Introducing dramatic perezhivanie as a concept is a challenging task, but it opens an opportunity to link on a theoretical level the concept of perezhivanie and the principle of development, as

> … the basic principle of the functioning of higher functions … is social, entailing interaction of functions, in place of interaction between people. They can be most fully developed in the form of drama (Vygotsky 1989, p. 59).

This might appear to be a contradiction. On one hand, in Vygotsky's example, the social situations of development did damage the development of three children ("the course of normal development was severely disrupted" in Vygotsky's words). On the other hand, higher mental functions "can be most fully developed in the form of drama". Yet, if we take this challenge as an opportunity for further discussion, I would suggest that the concept of dramatic perezhivanie presents an opportunity to resolve this contradiction and enrich the theoretical content and context of the concept of social situation of development.

The concept of the social situation of development was introduced by Vygotsky in relation to the problem of the content and dynamics of psychological age (Vygotsky 1998, pp. 187–297), where each age is divided into two stages—a critical period (age crisis) followed by a lytical (stable) period.

Looking closely at Vygotsky's analysis, we can identify the key characteristics of a social situation of development (SSD):

(1) SSD is socially constructed; it is a *social* situation;
(2) it appears *at the beginning of each age* period as a unique relation between the child and social environment;
(3) because of this, it appears during the first stage of the child's age which is the age *crisis period*.
(4) it is characterized by special types of the child's *perezhivanie*;
(5) it leads to *the reorganization of all structure of child's higher mental functions* at the end of the critical stage of the child's age
(6) it might bring positive or destructive *developmental outcomes* depending on how the crisis is resolved.

Coming back to Vygotsky's analysis of an example of three children, we can find five out of the six characteristics of SSD and the only difference is that in Vygotsky's example SSD is not related to the beginnings of the age periods of children. From this, two interesting conclusions might follow.

First, social situations of development are not necessarily related to the beginning of age periods (periods of crises), and they might also exist within lytical periods. They are a special type of short-time "micro-social situations of development" in contrast to age-related "macro-social situations of development". For example, the transition to school is age-related and socially constructed macro-SSD, and family movement to a new city or a country is an example of "micro-SSD". Vygotsky's example of three children might be also interpreted as a "micro-SSD".

Second, though they might appear during the lytical periods, they retain all the basic characteristics of age-related macro-SSDs. Here, the concept of dramatic perezhivanie which I am trying to introduce might be used as a theoretical link to connect the concepts of micro- and macro-SSDs. Saying that SSDs ("macro-SSDs") are associated with special types of children's perezhivanie, Vygotsky did not need to highlight that they are dramatic perezhivanie; because in his analysis, they are related to dramatic crises at the beginning of children's age, they are dramatic by definition. The perezhivanie in Vygotsky's example of three children is also dramatic by their nature. I would suggest that they did bring about different developmental outcomes in the three different children because they were *dramatic* perezhivanie, perezhivanie of social drama in which the children were involved.

I would conclude this section with this suggestion: there is a special form of perezhivanie (we can call it a dramatic perezhivanie) which is a refraction of a dramatic event or situation in a child's life. This dramatic perezhivanie might bring qualitative changes to a child's mental functions and therefore might change how the child becomes aware, interprets and relates to the sociocultural environment. Social dramatic events, collisions refracted through dramatic perezhivanie, might become

micro-social situations of development and produce qualitative changes and "turning points" in children's individual developmental trajectories.

In this sense, the concept of dramatic perezhivanie is an analytical tool which unfolds the dialectics, the evolutional and revolutionary aspects of development, as well as dialectics of the social and the individual (Veresov 2016a, b) and this will be discussed in the last section of this chapter. The dramatic character of the social situation of development and dramatic perezhivanie as a refraction do resolve the contradiction I discuss here: the higher mental functions can be most fully developed in a form of drama. Dramatic perezhivanie might bring both positive and/or destructive developmental outcomes depending on (1) the child's individual characteristics mobilized in his/her dramatic perezhivanie and (2) how the crisis is managed, or in Vygotsky's own words "on how the child has managed to work out his inner attitude to the various aspects of the different situations occurring in the environment" (Vygotsky 1994, p. 346).

4.3.4 Dramatic Perezhivanie: Possible Implications for Empirical Research

Dramatic perezhivanie and the micro-social situation of development as a theoretical dyad enable the study of the role of social environment on child development during lytical (stable) age periods and lead to the reconceptualization of lytical periods. They are stable and related to quantitative changes which child gradually acquires. However, these age periods also contain opportunities for development depending on the kind of social situations the child is involved and, accordingly, what kinds of micro-social situations of development are created within the child's social environment. The psychological "mechanism" of development during critical and lytical age periods is the same; the only difference is that macro-SSDs are mostly universal for the majority of children at certain age (e.g., transition to school), but micro-SSDs are related to unique events in child's life (e.g., transition to a new school or a new country). This creates interesting opportunities for empirical research.

First, Vygotsky's requirement that "the first question we must answer in studying the dynamics of any age is to explain the social situation of development" (Vygotsky 1998, p. 198) is completely applicable to studies of micro-SSDs during lytical periods. Developmental conditions not only exist at the beginning (crisis stage) of age, but also during lytical periods of development. However, the understanding of developmental conditions might be reconceptualized. When the goal of an empirical study is to create and analyse developmental conditions for the child the question might arise—What makes these conditions *developmental* conditions?

It is true that you can take a horse to water, but you can't make him drink; however, if you take water to the horse, it does not change the situation. Bringing new components into the social environment of the child does not always imply the creation of new developmental conditions, as not every change in the environment creates a

social situation of development. Only those components of social environment which are components of dramatic micro-SSD being refracted through the prism of child's dramatic perezhivanie are likely to bring qualitative changes in child's higher mental functions. I could put this even more strongly: dramatic social situations and the dramatic perezhivanie of a child as a participant in these situations are not indicators, and they can be considered as developmental conditions. For example, introducing IPads into child's play (Fleer 2013) might or might not create developmental conditions, depending on what micro-social situations of development and what dramatic perezhivanie in children this might generate. My suggestion might look as if it is too extreme a development of the theoretical aspect, but what gives me hope is that it resonates with Vygotsky's claim that

> One of the major impediments to the theoretical and practical study of child development is the incorrect solution of the problem of the environment and its role …when the environment is considered as something outside with respect to the child, as a circumstance of development, as an aggregate of objective conditions existing without reference to the child and affecting him by the very fact of their existence. The understanding of the environment that developed in biology as applied to evolution of animal species must not be transferred to the teaching on child development (Vygotsky 1998, p. 198).

4.3.5 Perezhivanie, Social Situation of Development and Social Subjectivity: Points of Intersections

Social subjectivity is the key concept in the theory of subjectivity. According to Gonzales Rey, "social subjectivity represents a dynamic and general system organised by different subjective configurations of the different social instances that indirectly take part in? the current dynamic of one concrete social experience" (Gonzales Rey et al. González Rey et al. 2017, p. 240). Social processes, therefore, are no longer seen as external to individuals or as mere factors of influence. They have become part of a complex system, "social subjectivity of which the individual is constituted by it, but is also a constituent" (González Rey 2005, p. 202). This rich and original concept enables us to "capture" the unity of the individual and the social and distinguish it from its processual aspect, in dynamics and interrelations.

It seems that the content of the concept of social subjectivity coincides with the concept of the social situation of development, which also represents a dynamic and unique unity of the individual and the social environment, as I have discussed in the previous section. Yet, it does not prove, from my point of view, the theoretical similarity of these two concepts.

Taken as a dyad (micro-SSD and dramatic perezhivanie), this might open new interesting direction for theoretical and cross-theoretical dialogue.

First, according to Gonzales Rey's theoretical vision, social subjectivity is organized by different subjective configurations. Yet, to be organized does not mean that the organization is finished; on the contrary, organization here is a process rather than a result, as social subjectivity only exists in the current dynamics of concrete social

experiences. Social subjectivity exists in a process (or as a process?) of permanent organization.

The concept of social subjectivity provides us with the possibility and the opportunity to look at this organization as a complex process. On the other hand, the process of organization in general might be approached in different ways. For example, it might be viewed as a sort of a process of transformative change. However, not every transformation is of a dialectical nature, and not every transformation is a qualitative change of the whole system. There are transformations which happen within the system as reconfiguration of existing components, parts and elements. Following Hegel's dialectical approach, we could call them "mechanical transformations". Developmental transformation is not a recombination of existing components. Developmental transformation includes qualitative changes of the whole system where a new organ brings reorganization to the whole system in such a way that the new (reorganized) system becomes a unit of a higher order and begins to act according to new laws (Vygotsky 1999, p. 43). In other words, social subjectivity as a system is not only organized by different subjective configurations, but exists in the process of permanent organization, which includes moments of reorganization which bring qualitative changes both to the social subjectivity and subjective configurations.

In this respect, the concepts of dramatic perezhivanie and micro-social situation of developmental as a theoretical dyad might contribute to the studies of the social subjectivity in two ways. First, the concept of social subjectivity enables its study as a dynamic system which is organized by different subjective configurations of different social instances. The concepts of the micro-social situation of development and dramatic perezhivanie enable the study of the process of organization of a system of social subjectivity in two interrelated aspects—(1) as a quantitative change and (2) qualitative reorganization. Second, social subjectivity is organized by different subjective configurations of the different social instances that indirectly take part of the current dynamic of one concrete social experience. Concepts of perezhivanie and micro-SSD as a theoretical dyad enable us to explore how concrete dramatic perezhivanie might reorganize the subjective configuration of an individual. Second, the social subjectivity of which the individual is constituted is also a constituent (González Rey 2005, p. 202) and this constituting is a process of a dialectical nature; it is a unique and complex contradictory process which includes moments of reconstituting, depending on how many and what kind of micro-SSDs were created through individual's perezhivanie of a social environment.

4.4 Dialectics of Development: Overcoming Dualism and Social Determinism

Theory of subjectivity and cultural-historical theories are very close. Gonzales Rey considers the theory of subjectivity as a step forward in the cultural-historical theoretical tradition, driven by some ideas that Vygotsky started to develop at the last

period of his life (Gonzales Rey González Rey 2007, González Rey 2015). I do not completely agree with this (Veresov 2017); however, I agree that these two theories have fundamental common philosophical grounds. These fundamental common grounds challenge (1) the dualistic approach to development and (2) the principle of social determinism. This, in turn, creates a platform and determines possible ways of how these two theories can enrich each other. In this concluding section, I present these two directions in a general way to clarify, to improve and to summarize some items I discussed in the previous sections.

4.4.1 Dualism, Monism, Dialectics

In psychology, there is a long tradition of considering a monistic approach as the only way to overcome Cartesian dualism. Thus, Roth et al. (2012) make a general statement that "Vygotsky and Vygotskian inspired scholars recognize themselves as working within a monistic tradition as opposed to the Western dualistic tradition" (Roth et al. 2012, p. 31). However, is monism *the only* possible alternative to dualism? Is there any other way to overcome dualism in psychology rather than by creating a monistic theory? My answer is "No". I think that there is another way. There is a way of taking dualistic oppositions, but to take them as opposites *in the form of contradiction,* that is to take them dialectically. Applying dialectical method to the study of mental development is another possible alternative to Cartesian dualism.

It is true that Vygotsky considered dualism in the psychology of development as a fallacious direction (Vygotsky 1993, p. 253); it is also true that he addressed Spinoza into find a way of overcoming dualism in the theory, in a way that creates some grounds for considering Vygotsky's theory as monistic (Roth and Jornet 2017). Following this line of thought, the theory of subjectivity also introduces a non-dualistic vision of human mind, through the concepts of social subjectivity and subjective configuration.

However, this is also true that dialectics and the dialectical method inspired Vygotsky's theoretical conception of development. Thus, he considered the introduction of the dialectical method into psychology as a crucial task (Vygotsky 1997, p. 3) and was critical of non-dialectical thinking, which dominated psychology at that time (see, e.g., Vygotsky 1997, p. 8).[14] From this perspective, the concepts of social situation of development and dramatic perezhivanie might be used as powerful theoretical lenses to discover the dialectical nature of the process of constructing subjectivity and to analyse the complex and contradictory process of becoming of a human mind. Social subjectivity as a dynamic system is organized by different subjective configurations, and the concept of perezhivanie unpacks the complex and contradictory nature of the process of organization of social subjectivity; that is, it allows us to see the social subjectivity in its dialectical becoming. On the other hand, the con-

[14] An extended and deep analysis of relationship of the cultural-historical theory and dialectics is undertaken in Dafermos (Dafermos 2015).

cept of perezhivanie in a theoretical dyad with the SSD enables social configuration to be viewed not only as a result, but as the process, which includes moments of reconfiguration as a qualitative reorganization.

4.4.2 Social Determinism or Self-Determinism?

The theory of subjectivity challenges the principle of social determinism understanding the human psyche not as the result of internalized functions and actions, but as a generative system inseparable from the individual.

> The concept of social subjectivity is addressed so as to understand the complex subjective configurations of the different social instances and systems of relationships within the more complex systems of social instances that define society. The recognition of a social subjectivity does not entail the definition of social realities as abstract carriers of subjectivity or as fixed entities presented beforehand as living social dynamics (González Rey 2017, p. 186).

The theory of subjectivity considers individual positions and behaviours as part of complex networks of social relationships within which social subjective configurations emerge. In this way, individual and social subjectivities configure each other so that one is always part of the other through specific subjective senses generated in each of these instances (González Rey 2017).

Cultural-historical theory defines social environment as a source of development of higher psychological functions, which might look as a sort of social determinist or social constructivist approach. However, looking from dialectical position, to be the source of development does not mean to determine the course and the trajectory of development.

Social environment as a source of development of the individual does not exist outside the individual. It exists only when the individual actively participates in this environment, by acting, interacting, interpreting, understanding, recreating and redesigning *social situations of development*. Social environment becomes a source of development because of the different types of existing social situations of development *created by an individual* through perezhivanie.

> It is quite naive to understand the social only as collective, as a large number of people. The social also exists where there is only one person with his individual perezhivanie (Vygotsky 1986, p. 314).

In this way, an individual's perezhivanie is no less powerful in defining the course of her unique developmental trajectory than the objective characteristics of social environment. Objectively existing components and aspects of a social environment become forces of development only when and because the individual's perezhivanie of certain moments of the social environment creates the unique micro-social situations of development. The conceptual dyad "perezhivanie—social situation of development" highlights the active role of an individual in the social environment and positions the individual as an active participant in the social situation of development. It is the individual who by creating and recreating social situations of development

acquires new personality characteristics; it is an individual who draws them from the social reality and creatively reconfigures them in the process of becoming an individual. Such an understanding is opposed both to dualism and social determinism as

> …development is not simply a function which can be determined entirely by X units of heredity and Y units of environment. It is an historical complex, which at any stage reflects its past content. In other words, the artificial separation of heredity and environment points us in a fallacious direction; it obscures the fact that development is an uninterrupted process which feeds upon itself; that it is not a puppet which can be controlled by jerking two strings. (Vygotsky 1993, p. 253)

I think that in this respect both the cultural-historical theory and the theory of subjectivity complement each other. However, there are more questions than answers; there is still a lot of work to do and problems to solve. More theoretical and cross-theoretical discussions, followed or initiated by empirical research, create an agenda and the road map for the immediate future. Deeper understanding of a complexity of development of human mind as Vygotsky put it so many years ago

> … is possible only if we radically change our representation of child development and take into account that it is a complex dialectical process that is characterized by a complex periodicity, disproportion in the development of separate functions, metamorphoses or qualitative transformation of certain forms into others, a complex merging of the processes of evolution and involution, a complex crossing of external and internal factors, a complex process of overcoming difficulties and adapting." (Vygotsky 1997, pp. 98–99)

I hope that taking these challenges as opportunities for a further dialogue will contribute to such a radical change in the dialectical understanding of a complex process of development.

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Part II
Subjectivity Within the Study of School Processes

Chapter 5
Subjectivity in a Cultural-Historical Perspective: New Theoretical Insight on Educational Processes and Practices

Cristina M. Madeira-Coelho and Maria Carmen V. R. Tacca

Abstract Alternatives to coping with problems and misconceptions of the contemporary educational context fail to achieve the desired changes. Thus, challenging questions, such as school failure, learning difficulties, and school dropout, persist. The fragility of these alternative actions seems to result from a technical and instrumental practice that standardizes forms of learning and teaching, keeping the focus on techniques on "what to do," "how to do it," and "for how long to do it," instead of focusing on those who are engaged in what is planned to be done and what is effectively done. This chapter addresses two main aspects of this problematic issue: the teacher–student relationship and professional teacher training. Both aspects arise from the argument that, within learning contexts, students and teachers must participate as subjects in alternatives proposals designed for educational processes and practices. We understand that this change must result from new epistemological representations that support the understanding of learning processes as subjective productions, as proposed in the theory of subjectivity in the cultural-historical perspective. Thus, traditional theoretical positions are confronted in order to argue that both pedagogical practices and educational research need a Qualitative Epistemology that allows us to comprehend subjects and their subjective productions related to the processes of learning in which they are involved. The continuous theoretical–conceptual productions that integrate the theory of subjectivity allow new possibilities both to favor the emergence of the singular subject and make the theoretical–practical link more precisely, taking into account the needs of society to innovate in educational contexts.

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5.1 Introduction

In the context of contemporary education, there are problems, mistakes, and failures in achieving objectives, despite the numerous actions, public policies, and studies that seek to analyze the nature of the problems and provide recommendations. To ensure creative, dynamic, and lively teaching and learning processes, there is a continuing demand to increase children and young people's competence in learning, as well as to develop basic and continuing training oriented toward renewed understandings in the teaching profession.

Many of the intervention alternatives and proposals fail to achieve the desired changes, and, as a result, there is a recurrence of old problems. One of the most provocative problems occurs when children do not learn in school because, since even the early school years, learning processes at school seem to be unreachable for children.

Another important question is related to the pressing need to provide an education that is aimed at producing knowledge, rather than merely repeating or reproducing content, which does not support development. This type of learning has no impact and does not develop critical abilities, such as the motivation to create and invent new solutions for different life situations.

One of the hypotheses that arises when seeking explanations for the weakness with which education fulfills its role is based on the observation that a technical-instrumentalist perspective guides practice toward presented solutions such as using technology, new didactic methods, curricular changes, an increased workload. The belief that there is a better and unique way of enforcing a homogeneous educational process continually prevails in the social representations both of common people and education professionals.

Another question arises from conceptions about the formal relationship between the theoretical and practical aspects that govern the daily processes of pedagogical experiences. The relationship between theory and practice is often highlighted in the field of education, but these different human productions are viewed from a direct and linear perspective and treated in a dichotomous manner. Theory is an abstract system of ideas, while practice involves specific types of activities, such as school practices. During teacher training, there is a prevalence of aspects regarding epistemology of practice or the applicability of theories, which makes it impossible to establish relationships between theoretical and practical dimensions. This ignores other aspects of the educational dynamic, such as teacher–student and student–student relationships; i.e., the classroom (representation) is not regarded as an active social fabric.

This situation has led to a fragmentation of concepts that are oriented toward directing concrete actions and practices and are restricted to the idea of training skills, developing abilities and different methods for stimulating creativity. This constitutes a reductionism that focuses on abilities, skills or stimuli, while excluding active agents of the educational experience.

As such, this chapter discusses the idea that learners and education professionals must be present as actors in the proposals and alternatives that are designed for

school educational processes. We understand the educational process as all efforts by different social institutions to enable individuals to participate in society through an involvement constituted by symbolically structured values, innovations, and modes of thinking that are provided by the culture. In this context, to be a *subject*[1] is to be active in one's own singular, complex processes while actively participating and continually questioning, in a personal path that continuously develops autonomy in action.

This argument imposes a theoretical–epistemological redirection that leads to a comprehensive and complex understanding of processes and enables alternative actions in the field of education.

In this context, there is a need for principles that are related to an innovative theoretical coordination, which allows the people who are involved to generate action strategies that are oriented toward effective learning and solving different problems. The cultural-historical perspective of the theory of subjectivity is a resource for the intelligibility of processes that have historically been either ignored in educational practice or addressed in a fragmented manner. Taken together, we extend the connections among theory, methodology, and practice based on this theoretical framework, in its many potential articulations in education.

The central premise is to confront traditional theoretical positions from the perspective of understanding educational practices that are constituted daily in relation to subjects and their subjective productions, which are the central organizers of the teaching and learning processes.

Thus, classic questions, such as teacher training, teacher–student relationships, or teacher actions and practices, have led to alternate understandings, considering new propositions for actions to both confront existing problems and respond to demands for modernization and innovation in the system based on new theoretical approaches.

5.2 New Understandings of Aspects of the Educational Process, from the Perspective of the Theory of Subjectivity

The development of subjectivity from the cultural-historical perspective of González Rey (1997, 2002, 2005, 2016) and González Rey and Mitjans Martínez 2017, which is identified in the first chapters of this book, expresses the paradigm of complexity in psychology (Mitjáns Martinez 2005). It is characterized as an open and historically conditioned theoretical approach that differs from individual intrapsychic subjectivity as presented in modernity. In this approach, subjectivity appears "as a qualitatively differentiated production of human beings within the social, cultural and historically situated conditions in which we live" (González Rey and Mitjans Martínez 2017, p. 62).

[1] The subject is a theoretical category in González Rey's cultural-historical approach to subjectivity. See Chaps. 1 and 2.

Lived time is no longer understood as linear facts or stages. Subjective productions of lived experiences represent a specific and singular quality of human processes. They are configurations that express aspects of personal history in the present moment, so they integrate diachronic and synchronic processes.

Thus, learning does not occur based on simple processes of content assimilation. People in teaching–learning situations are involved in processes that require their active involvement; they are grounded in a continuous subjective process in which imagination, fantasy, and emotions are inseparable from intellectual operations.

As such, recurrent questions call for new theoretical formulations, such as (1) *addressing the learning process in its complex conjuncture as a subjective production*, constituted by different subjective senses; (2) *considering the teacher–student relationship as a space for the manifestation of individual and social subjectivity; and (3) rethinking teacher training activities*, both to clarify the theory/practice relationship and identify historical processes in the teacher's subjective constitution. These aspects impact pedagogical practices and support the development of didactic schedules regarding the selection of content and methodologies, which can promote learning and subjective development.

These conceptual assumptions relate to all educational fields in a broader perspective. They relate both to pedagogical action in the specificity of social relationships at school and in the classroom, as well as to the training of education professionals who assume different positions in the network of educational activities. Although there are other questions that can be considered, this chapter focuses on these three aspects.

5.3 Learning as a Complex Subjective Production: The Emergence of the Subject and the Production of Subjective Senses

Our argument emphasizes the need for students and teachers to be present as active people in the proposals and alternatives that are designed for educational processes. This alternative is only possible with a new epistemological representation as a condition for advancing a theoretical path that supports understanding learning as subjective production. Thus, traditional theoretical positions must be confronted by arguing that both pedagogical practices and educational research must thrust learners into the possibility of becoming subjects in their learning processes.

Hence, the subject category assumes a position of importance, insofar as the learning—in his/her subject condition—assigns the teaching–learning actions that are triggered and defines the subject's path to taking a stand and assuming a positioning. According to González Rey and Mitjans Martínez (2017), the subject is an individual or group that can generate an alternative path of subjectivation in the normative institutional space in which they act. He/she synthesizes his/her lived experiences in a systemic processualism that is in constant movement. The subject's

different forms of expression manifest singular subjective senses that he/she produces in his/her social integration and, as we emphasize, in the school environment. Thus, the author proposes that:

> …learning is much more than a process of understanding and using cultural operations and meanings; the emphasis on assimilation in the understanding of learning has important consequences for the analysis of its psychological nature. In human beings, the psychological nature of learning is inseparable from subjectivity, which represents a specifically human level of the psyche that is defined by the cultural character of human existence. (González Rey 2012, p. 33)

We want to stress both aspects of the act of learning: as a complex subjective production and as a necessary condition of someone who is learning.

Traditional and mechanistic educational conceptions must be revised, as they contain the persistent idea that methodological and pedagogical strategies—defined either by the macro-educational system (program proposals, curricula, etc.) or in classroom micro-entities (pedagogical materials, technological equipment, etc.)—can single-handedly account for the complex dynamic of a group of students, which is never homogeneous. The constitutive complexity of learning asserts itself in the subjective configuration of learning, in which the learner can emerge as a subject. "The learning process configures itself subjectively, involving—on a subjective level—different experiences from the learner's life history and current context" (Mitjans Martínez and González Rey 2017, p. 61).

In a recent study, Sousa (2017) demonstrated subjectivities of adolescents, who were diagnosed with ADHD, were part of a learning support group and felt welcomed within that social space as people with a desire for feeling capable: *"Because the people who are here understand me, they understand me, they know what I'm capable of, they help me, they believe I'm capable and that helps a lot…*" Another student expressed her emotions when speaking about a coming test: "*I get nervous. I start to cry out of nowhere. That day, I was going to cry and then I said: I won't cry, I won't, I'll make it. Then, I sighed…*"

In another study, Passos (2017), there were strong expressions that reflected the subjective senses of students who participated in the research. One girl brought her experience of family conflict to her school life, a conflict generated by having been adopted and feeling devalued in the social position that she occupied in the family that adopted her: "*…my mother doesn't even know my birthday… I'm excluded from the family, no one remembers me, unless they want me to do something for them.*" She also expressed a personal devaluation that removes her from social relationships in the space where she coexists with others: "*…so why should I try to look nice? If I'm ugly, because the ugliest girl at school is me, I'm not hot, I'm not pretty. What's the use?*" She also stated: "*I don't like anything about myself. I don't like my face, my body, I don't want to be this color… I want to be white, I want to be blonde, I want to have blue eyes.*" Even for an adolescent—at an age when physical appearance often has a disproportionate importance—it seems clear that this girl needs to have her insecurity, fears, and feelings of abandonment understood to take a more active position in both her personal and school lives. Because this condition has not been met, all that appears

to be left for her is the stereotype of a misfit, which is a common way of presenting oneself in the face of social rules that require adequate coexistence and behavior.

In the cited studies, there is an impressive number of situations in which the subjective senses, which integrate lived experiences in different areas of life, express, in different ways, a complex constellation of life histories and contexts. These include family situations full of mishaps, an absent father and mother, or prejudices, which are associated with subjective states, such as low self-esteem, a lack of belief in oneself, fear, insecurity, and the need to be accepted and protected by family and friends or to simply be viewed as a person. These situations and their associated subjective states contrast with the harmonic and unimpeded continuity of learning processes that are intended by the school on a daily basis.

Thus, subjective sense is a theoretical category that helps us understand the intricate subjective networks that constitute the individuals who inhabit learning spaces.

The definition of subjective sense presents sense as a constituted and constituent moment of subjectivity. This perspective integrates different processes that emerge in social life, which are culturally organized in different domains—such as social, biological, ecological, semiotic—in a subjective configuration that is defined by articulating and generating other subjective and related senses through their different forms of expression. Thus, subjective senses and subjective configurations may generate new processes that render the human characteristic of creativity (González Rey and Mitjans Martínez 2017, pp. 63–64).

Nevertheless, the traditional hegemonic perspective prevails and emphasizes learning as merely a process of assimilation and reproduction without any relation to the complex process of subjective development. It includes continually telling teachers and students what they should do, how they should do it, when and for how long they should do it. Such a perspective undermines the potential for different modes and processes for implementation that lead to different paths. Regarding the pedagogical position that reifies functional and cognitive–intellectual approaches, subjectivity and the subject that emerges in the learning process are suppressed.

Thus, students who have experienced neglect in their personal histories—and have been robbed of their ability to generate senses about their life histories—need to be filled with and shown that they can produce knowledge.

Rather than developing the ability to generate subjectively configured knowledge, school experiences are often reduced to repetitive activities that include curricular content, the definition of which is based on the system's external logic. This logic merely fosters a pedagogical game that does not recognize the complex mosaic of subjective productions. It leads to school failure, as it generates a series of situations that reflect non-learning or persistent learning difficulties, which are continually identified as students' individual limitations or incapacities.

As such, the hegemonic maintenance of traditional theoretical conceptions and approaches—in addition to expressing a lack of understanding about the singularities of the processes—imposes challenges for understanding the ways in which individuals are involved in learning and teaching processes. Furthermore, it considers imagination and fantasy as epiphenomena of intellectual learning processes,

which are not understood as units or systems (González Rey 2005, 2012; Mitjans Martínez and González Rey 2017).

Thus, the choice of traditional practices unfolds into reductionism, and learning difficulties either result from mistakes by institutional systems or are derived from the individual who is directly responsible for his/her school failure. This type of reductionism undermines a complete understanding of human learning processes and demands new theoretical approaches in which learning is a subjective process that qualitatively integrates aspects that we generally separate. As such, learning and teaching must be understood as arising from complex and singular subjective configurations that provide new methods for considering and supporting inclusive education.

5.4 Social Relationships as a Space for Manifesting Subjectivity

Current research has consistently highlighted the role of social relationships in the learning process (Gallert 2016; Tacca 2004, 2005). Teacher–student relationships generate subjective senses that move in different directions and are expressed in both individual and social subjectivity of school groups, such as the classroom.

An awareness of this constantly shifting dynamic seems to be a daily necessity for teaching practices and can help understanding the motives and emotions that are subjectively configured in the classroom.

Furthermore, Gallert (2016) found that new ways of a teacher relating to her students—establishing closer relationships, understanding their motivations, and aligning with their interests—reversed disengagement and dropout. This change promoted by the teacher allowed the production of new subjective senses that emerged with the new teaching proposal and reversed rebellion, which made it possible to create an environment of favorable relationships and engaged learning. This situation identified an important and substantive movement of the group's social subjectivity.

We understand that when there is consideration of subjective aspects in the school's daily experiences, there are more possibilities for articulated and continually revised teaching actions that can reverse conflicts and lead to resolution. This occurred in that classroom.

Thus, educational contexts that are conceived as places of social coexistence have the potential to partly consist of an individual and social configurational system, which can encourage and predispose other learning and educational processes while promoting development.

Therefore, social contexts, such as the school and classroom, are dynamic, interrelated, complex, and recursive contexts that require us to move beyond the surface of actions and to integrate social and individual dimensions. This dynamic becomes essential for the emergence of subjective senses in the scope of educational processes.

Thus, it is possible to understand that the social may promote the generation of new senses about educational experiences which, in turn, may change the subjective configuration of those social contexts.

Therefore, the concept of social subjectivity is essential for studying educational phenomena, as it does not reduce social spaces to gatherings of people, an environment with good relationships, or the intention of a collective. It rather represents a complex system of individual and social subjective productions, in which "each level is intrinsically organized in the other, in the specificity of its singular production" (González Rey and Mitjans Martínez 2017, p. 64).

Thus, understanding the concept of social subjectivity reveals new fields of interpretation for school issues, such as the challenge of students who do not learn in school or teachers who are satisfied or dissatisfied with their profession.

From this perspective, educational activity is always implicated in a space of social subjectivity and expresses subjective senses that exist beyond the walls of the educational institution in a dynamic space that intersects with the subjective senses that are produced in relation to different family values, dogmas, beliefs, discourses, and prejudices (González Rey 2007).

Within the scope of social relationships, a different understanding of pedagogical interventions, from the perspective of individual and social subjectivity, is also important.

To understand educational interventions in the institutional context of the school, the teaching–learning process must coordinate with the relationships between the teacher and student. From this perspective, there is an emphasis on the teacher's trust and sensitivity when working with students and recognizing their subjective processes (Tacca 2017). Dialogue has a central position in obtaining an understanding of the generative and motivational character of the processes (González Rey and Mitjans Martínez 2017). And motivational aspects are subjective productions that are expressed and assume different paths in the sphere of educational relationships.

Thus, different aspects of the learner's subjective functioning are integrated into the conjuncture of the pedagogical work. The learning experience occurs in a subjective configuration that emerges in a specific and singular context of the teacher–student relationship when they experience a pedagogical moment.

One research project (Tacca 2017) demonstrated striking experiences of pedagogical interventions with children who had learning difficulties, in which supporting the student and recapturing his/her sense of belonging to the group and his/her self-confidence led to important advances. In a case study by one member of the research team (Madeira-Coelho et al. 2017), there was disbelief in the child's potential at the beginning of study, as the teacher declared: "*It's no use, no one can talk to her, it's better to just leave it and no one here cares, I'll leave it like this until someone cares*" (p. 153). Through the researchers' work—recapturing the child's position in the social group and at school, helping her develop habits, rules, and work routines—her engagement and her participation in school activities were enabled. The fact that someone cared about her made it possible for the creation of affective bonds between the child and the researchers, which led to change. Gradually—and with singularized activities—the child, who had been lost in the group, was recaptured

and gained more confidence in expressing herself to her classmates. We understand that, through the production of new subjective senses in relation to her individual and social situations as well as her learning potential, it was possible to recapture her for other activities with her classmates. In one group activity, everyone was surprised at the involvement of the previously excluded child, saying: *Wow! Even Hanna is participating. Yeah, the activity is really cool if even she is doing it, and quietly!!!* We believe that the research activities provided subjective value, and thus, the girl's mobilization changed the social relationships that she had with the class and her position as a student who could participate and learn.

Regarding the development of interventions, particularly with students who face obstacles in their educational process, we believe that the theory of subjectivity helps clarify the path that should be taken for the student to receive appropriate support and position themselves to confront their difficulties.

5.5 Training Teachers: Teachers' Processes of Subjective Constitution and the Relationship Between Theory and Practice

In teacher training, it is challenging to guide actions that may impact educational action. Like school learning processes, there are also formative spaces—usually courses—that are organized for teachers and consolidate a reproductive perspective of knowledge that emphasizes aspects of pedagogical instrumentalization. Rationalist and cognitivist principles generally constitute the foundation for these formative proposals, which aim to ensure effective and efficient teaching actions.

However, focusing on the technical dimension excludes the essentiality of the subject condition for formative processes. As a consequence of this regulatory process, there is a lack of meaning in the teaching action derived by the exclusion of the potential for teachers' involvement in their own objectives, involvement which includes singular motives and needs that are subjectively configured in the form of a teaching action. The turning point would be, then, not to focus on technical dimensions but to approach a new quality of the system's functioning, "[a quality] where the intellectual option generates emotion, in which imagination, feeling, and fantasy are inseparable from intellectual achievement and emerge as a subjectively configured process" (González Rey and Mitjans Martínez 2017, p. 76).

Conversely, formative spaces should allow for the development of new subjective configurations that are allied to and anchored in the experience of activities that are developed with students within the perspective of an integrated student and teacher development. As González Rey proposes:

> The assumption that human experience is such a subjective process within which "the human world" is continuously created and modified does not need mediators but rather requires effective partners in relation with each other. (González Rey 2016, p. 181)

Teachers, who believe that assimilating instructions is all that is expected of them when they are being trained in a specific method or program, assume this without any reflection or questioning and abdicate from their own subject condition by subordinating themselves to the regulatory institutional system. Yet, it is the teacher within his/her own group who takes stances and begins to demand the singularization proposals.

Yet, as Madeira-Coelho (2012) indicates, when addressing challenges related to educating disabled people, the discourse of preparation for acting in inclusive education is grounded on the idea that merely receiving information is sufficient for acting in this dimension. This instrumentalizing conception presides over basic and continuing training programs and disregards the singularity of the situations that teachers will face throughout teaching. However, it is clear that no institutional formative entity can address any and all unforeseen situations.

As such, becoming a teacher is a "constitutive process of a historically situated subject" (Madeira-Coelho 2012, p. 118), in which daily living experiences and problems are anchored to a production process of subjective senses that are manifested in different subjective configurations, based on the consolidated social situation. As a guiding principle of teacher training programs, these aspects have a large impact on the teacher's formative considerations.

Diáz (2017) investigated the teacher constitution process and shows an illustrative case study. One participant in the study described how her university training was related to her previous experiences and how the school where she worked provided resources for her professional and subjective development. The entire process was strongly tied to her life circumstances, as she had moved from less socially valued positions to becoming a teacher. She expresses this in the following:

> I began to train with the coordinators, with the teachers, with the whole conjuncture involving the school. I remember that I couldn't write very well, especially reports. I think it was a building process, I was very motivated. When I arrived, we read a lot, so I went out and bought books. We have to delve deeper into the themes we're studying. I always say that to motivate children, we have to be motivated. (Diáz 2017, p. 82)

There were different circumstances in which the author demonstrated how this professional was constituted as a subject of her teaching action, as she moved safely and made suggestions to her group of colleagues and discussed their propositions. She produced subjective senses of valuing her own pedagogical practice and showed autonomy, authorship, and independence in her positioning toward life as she moved between the different social spaces in which she lived.

These findings lead to a new understanding of the binomial theory and practice in teacher training programs. They add a strong value especially considering a professional practice with an ancient tradition far earlier than modern scientificism.

Although there is delay between theoretical production in research and its effect on the development of innovations in established educational systems, theories and practices are present in educational issues, specifically in the discussions on and orientation toward teacher training processes. The concepts that govern the understanding of these human productions suffer from reductionisms that arise from the

analytical thinking that orients the complete opposition between theory and practice, without evidencing their relationship.

For teachers who are in a training process, the epistemology of practice is often the main point of the training experience, which is revealed in multiple statements: "*In practice, we have to gather all the theories we studied and synthesize them because practice is much greater than any theory*"; "*Here at the university, we only get theory, theory, theory; this program lacks the practical part*." Taken together, these statements indicate the reductive dichotomization that was mentioned above, in which theories are taken as instruments of standard actions that cannot account for the multiple experiences that are involved in the subjective constitution of teaching.

A new quality in the theory and practice relationship arises, however, in formative experiences that are conducive to the emergence of subjective senses. Since there is no linear relation between theoretical and practical aspects, this understanding expresses heuristic value through the plasticity that allows it to overcome the direct linearity of the cause–effect relationship that reflects a person's affective states, behaviors or actions (González Rey and Mitjáns Martinez 2017, p. 51).

Subjective senses connect previous experiences, the current lived context, and future plans in a temporal interweaving that—in learning—has a singular organization in which the theory and practice relationship is unified in the development of the teacher's professionality.

Although organized by a program's generic principles, aspects of training that are subjectivated by questions that are singular for each student encourage a synthesis between what is learned and the resulting forms of application across contexts.

Thus, there is a need to revise the traditional forms of knowledge construction, which are hegemonic in teacher training programs. To respond to the challenges that education demands, it is necessary to make an epistemological turn, in which—over the course of formative processes—understanding the potential of experiential moments that are connected to human development can lead to the emergence of subjective aspects that encourage the configuration of unity between the theory and practice dimensions through the intentions and actions that are involved in teaching.

Another statement about teacher training experiences demonstrates the value that the teacher under training begins to assign to the qualitatively differentiated relationship between theory and practice: When it is incorporated throughout the professional development process, this relationship unfolds beyond individual training and is configured as an entity that is collectively experienced by those who are involved in the process.

> Studying these materials, along with the weekly discussions, made it possible to learn aspects related to the literacy process from a perspective that had not been addressed in my basic training. But mainly, it allowed for a synthesis between the theoretical aspects and the daily classroom practice that encouraged this learning and was also enhanced by other teachers' reports of their experiences, who reported situations different from those that I experienced. These aspects of continued learning and the exchange of experiences were significant for me. (Vaz 2015)

The unified relation between theory and practice is only assessed by those who are actually involved in the educational contexts. They will generate living experiences in which processes, motives, and intentions will be subjectively configured in relation to their actions or the forms that are historically organized in the action (Madeira-Coelho et al. 2017).

Therefore, the theoretical–practical dimension of educational experiences does not stem from more programs, a greater workload or an excess of practices as is the case in an instrumentalist perspective.

It is not the notion of quantity that should define the relationship between theoretical reasoning and practical actions but, rather, subjective configurations that are generated from experiences in which symbolic, affective, motivational, and imaginative aspects and convictions, beliefs, and knowledge are lived. Such aspects, beyond their usual extensive taxonomy, are viewed as subjective configurations that emerge in the complexity of the professional training process as subjective development.

Effective formative processes allow (future) teachers to assume the condition of subject and allow them to synthesize theoretical aspects and the different dimensions of their pedagogical actions in teaching practice (Oliveira 2016).

5.6 Conclusion

We emphasize, in this chapter, that new theoretical propositions—leveraged by the theory of subjectivity—have a heuristic value for education and create new paths for understanding persistent educational problems. Other aspects beyond those examined here also show this importance, such as teacher actions and practices, the complexity of learning processes, challenges in the inclusion process of disabled students, or pedagogical administration and coordination processes.

We believe that these challenges should be addressed through the understanding of the constitutive subjective complexity of human processes. The continual theoretical–conceptual productions that integrate the theory of subjectivity allow for new possibilities that can both encourage the emergence of a singular subject and advance the theoretical–practical relation, while accounting for society's need to innovate in educational spaces. Moreover, the unity of the social-individual dimension and the dynamic and creative character of human experiences that preside over the pedagogical relationship of an educational community are not reduced to a mere give and take negotiation that has winning or losing interactions but constitute a positive sum game, in which everyone experiences a different form and extent of transformation.

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Chapter 6
The Role of Subjectivity in the Process of School Innovation

Luciana de Oliveira Campolina and Albertina Mitjáns Martínez

Abstract This chapter focuses on educational innovation from the perspective of the theory of subjectivity from a cultural-historical standpoint. Special attention is given within this theoretical reference to the concepts of social subjectivity and the subject. Based on a study conducted at a school in Brazil, this chapter aims to understand the principal's role in the configuration of social subjectivity of an innovative school institution. The research was based on a qualitative epistemology approach and the constructive-interpretative method. Teachers, students, and family members of students and members of the school administration participated in the research. The research instruments included the researcher's presence during complete school days as well as conversational dynamics, document analysis, and written instruments. Indicators and hypotheses were constructed in relation to how the principal acts as the primary transformational agent of this innovative school's social subjectivity by taking actions that encourage changes in the school's social functioning. The study's conclusions highlight the role of individual subjects in the social fabric that impacts on changes in social subjectivity. Finally, the theory of subjectivity makes it possible to understand the innovative processes based on the production of social subjective configurations that are conducive to innovation.

6.1 Introduction

In the field of education, innovation is understood as the actions and strategies undertaken by groups and individuals at different levels of the educational system that aim to generate changes and improvements in educational processes. They include new forms of learning and teaching, transformations in school curricula and in admin-

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istration processes of schools as institutions (Carbonell 2016; Century and Cassata 2014; Hernández et al. 2000; Gide 2014; Korhonen et al. 2014; Law et al. 2011).

Studies on educational innovation consider individual participation in school changes as essential, whether by teachers or administrators. Such studies focus on the individual from the operational dimension in the implementation of strategies for adopting and spreading innovation. Regarding the school principal's participation in educational innovation, the studies address the development of managerial competencies, abilities, and leadership styles that are expressed in managing innovation in organizations (Aas 2017; Aydin et al. 2013; Clifford et al. 2012; Fullan 2014; Huber and Muijs 2010; Goksoy 2013; Yi-Hwa and Alan 2016).

On the other hand, studies on educational innovation have also addressed the social dimension of this process which, from the dominant theoretical representation in this area, is understood as an external system of influences on individuals, groups and institutions, disregarding the individual's role in its constitution, and omitting the necessary articulation of the individual and the social scenario in favor of the innovation. Current studies have addressed organizational competencies in the environments of educational institutions, involving the idea of organizational climate (González and Meza 2009; Jishnupriya 2017; Soini et al. 2013). From this theoretical perspective, the social dimension is not viewed as a system that organizes and generates the different experiences of people and social groups in concrete contexts (González Rey 2017a), maintaining a gap between singular individuals and the social fabric.

The theoretical, epistemological, and methodological advances that are proposed by González Rey for investigating and understanding subjectivity (González Rey 2005a, b, 2016, 2017a, b, c) allow the generation of intelligibility on this complex qualitative human phenomenon that is rarely considered in organizational studies. Subjectivity, from this theoretical position, is discussed in terms of two levels closely configured to each other, social subjectivity and individual subjectivity. In this chapter, González Rey's proposal on subjectivity is used, stressing the concepts of social subjectivity and the subject. Social subjectivity represents a living system of subjective productions that characterize the social subjective productions of a single social space, which in turn integrates and generates, in its own specific social configuration, subjective senses that express subjective productions resulting from other social subjectively configured social processes and instances. Such social spaces are reciprocally configured through the social subjective configurations that emerge through relational and institutionalization processes, representing new sources of subjective senses in each specific social space (González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2017). In turn, the subject can be understood as the "individual who is capable of generating his/her own paths of subjectivation and development within different socially normative activities of his/her daily life" (González Rey 2007, pp. 20–21—our translation from Portuguese). The author has defined as subjects those individuals who are reflexive, critical, and capable of generating new paths that lead to diverse consequences in the range of individual social action within one concrete activity (González Rey 2007, p. 21).

We believe that the heuristic value of investigating educational innovation through the theory of subjectivity—a new approach in this field—lies in the possibility of advancing within the dominant perspectives, allowing an understanding of the subjective processes involved in innovation, in such a way that the individual and social processes implied by it can be simultaneously studied. This chapter focuses on how the role of the principal in a public school in São Paulo was closely involved in changes in the social subjectivity of the school, promoting educational innovations in the school.

6.2 The Research

The research followed the principles of qualitative epistemology and its unfolding within the constructive-interpretative methodology. On the basis of the place given to singularity in this proposal (González Rey 2005a; González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2016), a case study of an innovative school was carried out.

The school was selected for implementing an innovative project characterized by the central criteria for recognition of innovation (Hernández et al. 2000):

(1) New strategies implemented in pedagogical practices, involving thematic research, workshops, orientation in tutor groups[1]; new strategies in the curriculum that use textbook-based research scripts; implementation of collective councils and parents', teachers' and students' assemblies; and transformation of the physical space, turning classrooms into study and research halls.
(2) Commitment from administrators, teachers, students, and parents to implementing the innovative project, along with the 13 years duration of the project, which began in 2004. Both of these criteria were also considered by the Brazilian Ministry of Education (Ministério da Educação 2015) when it recognized this school as an innovative experience.

The school is a nine-year elementary school located in São Paulo, serving 637 students, from 6 to 14 years old, with a staff of 47 professionals (teachers, volunteer educators, and trainees), working both in morning and afternoon sessions, each lasting 5 h.

The field research occurred over ten months, and the participants were members of the administration, teachers, students, employees, families, and former students who participated in implementing the innovation. The research was organized into two stages, with the first including initial visits with the aim of creating a collaborative space between the researcher and the participants. The second stage was characterized by developing a continuous and dynamic communicative process. The following research tools were employed in order to advance this communicative process.

[1]This was formed by 20 students and a teacher who joins the group once a week with different learning activities, over the course of 4 years.

The researcher's immersion in the daily life and activities of the school characterizes the whole research period: Following this principle, the researcher actively participated in multiple situations and contexts within the everyday life of the school (classrooms, courtyards, school breaks, the library, the boardroom, teacher's meetings, and student and parent assemblies). Observations and informal conversations were recorded in a field diary, in which these notes appeared together with the researcher's ideas and thoughts.

Based on an active stance toward permanent involvement in activities, the researcher managed to develop ties with the school actors[2] that gradually expanded, making it possible to understand the relational dynamics and forms of communication that characterized the different social spaces of the school. Initially, some of the teachers proposed that the researcher participated in pedagogical activities with the students, which provided knowledge about the routine and rituals that characterized their daily school activities. Subsequently, the principal, Sarah,[3] invited the researcher to attend weekly pedagogical meetings with the teachers, allowing her to understand the ways in which the school actors participated in the school's innovation and activities.

A decisive step in the course of the research took place in the fourth month, when the principal invited the researcher to participate in the pedagogical council,[4] composed of the principal, two external counselors, two teachers, and two parents. Being a part of these meetings opened up the opportunity to the researcher to obtain information about the principal's historic involvement in the implementation of innovation in the school.

Conversational dynamics: Conversation is an important methodological device used in our research program to address the study of subjectivity. Its more informal character, malleability, and spontaneity allow a deeper subjective engagement of the participants. In conversations, the researcher and the participants involve each other in so many unpredictable ways, facilitating a spontaneous, reflexive, and emotional climate that is a condition for the emergence of subjective processes (González Rey 2005a). Because dialog favors emotional engagement and is an important condition for participants' subjective commitment, it was essential for understanding the school actors' experiences in the scope of innovation. With the teachers, these dynamics were developed in study halls, at breaks and recesses, moments during which the researcher was asked about the study. This led to possibilities for exploring subjective processes closely associated with the principal's involvement in the history of innovation at the school.

As the extent of these dialogs grew the researcher began to have almost daily conversations with the principal and was sought out by her during breaks in activities. This continuous contact allowed the conversations to explore memories about

[2]This is a term used to designate people in the school context, such as teachers, students, family members of school students, employees, and school staff.

[3]All names are fictitious.

[4]This is the higher educational board in the school where the main pedagogical decisions are taken.

lived situations that facilitated the expression of subjective productions related to her participation in the implementing of innovation.

Conversational dynamics occurred with the students' parents during their daily visits to the school, and the researcher was invited to expand on topics that were of interest to parents, which led to a very participative dynamic that also contributed so much to our research. In the same month that the researcher was first invited by the principal to participate in the pedagogical council, one of the student's parents invited her to attend one of the School Council meetings.[5] Her invitation for the researcher to join the pedagogical council signified an appreciation of her participation in the school; her social position began to gain ground within the school. The meetings were biweekly and very rich, discussing measures and issues related to the students, parents, teachers, pedagogical coordinator, and principal. The research's dialogical process made it possible to understand more about the principal's historical actions, which introduced new strategies into the school's functioning.

Document analysis: Documents analyzed included school regulations, the political-pedagogical project (PPP[6]), meeting reports, and the school's website and newspaper.

One example of the significance of these informational sources was that the principal allowed the researcher to access the school documents, which we interpret as an indicator of her satisfaction with the work and her commitment to the innovative project. Far from being a formal data analysis, the document analysis provided information on how history was integrated with the principal's singular actions, as it identified situations that were included in the school's social subjective configuration in the scope of innovation. This analysis expanded to conversations that explored the emotionality and positionings of the principal and other school actors on educational innovation.

Informal moments: These are moments that were created through spontaneous relationships with the research participants, such as the researcher's participation in cultural events that made it possible to meet the families of former students.

6.3 The Principal's Participation in the Configuration of the School's Social Subjectivity

Social subjectivity is not a closed system that directly influences individuals. Rather, social subjectivity is a system that is formed by configurations the development processes of which are organized in relation to other configurations that simultane-

[5]This is a body that includes the principal and student, parent, teacher and staff representatives. It has created opportunities for the school community to participate in decisions, establish goals, and identify solutions to the school's problems. Law 2565/08. Retrieved from https://pt.scribd.com/doc/127174401/Portaria-2565-SMS-2008-Conselho-EscolaFA.

[6]This is a guiding reference for all areas of the school's educational activity. Its development required the participation of the members that compose the school community.

ously appear, confront, and complement each other in the course of a social space (González Rey 2005b, 2016, 2017a). Individuals and their decisions, groupings, and positionings are part of the living movement of these processes, and simultaneously, social subjective configurations are configured through specific subjective senses in the individual subjectivities that are related in this social space.

To better understand the principal's role in the configuration of social subjectivity, it is important to highlight the historical and contextual aspects of the school that encouraged educational innovation (Campolina and Mitjáns Martinez 2014, 2016). In this sense, the institution had three notable characteristics. The first referred to the existence of problems in daily school life. The school experienced a deterioration process that was typical of a public institution in Brazil, with low academic achievement rates, school dropouts, students who had learning difficulties, teachers with no commitment to pedagogical work and conflict among students during recess.

The second characteristic was a history of community participation in the school. Prior to the first year of implementing the innovation, some of the students' families participated in cultural events, such as parties and fairs. Through information from the PPP (written by the members of the School Board) and conversational dynamics, there was enough information to identify the first actions that were developed by the principal from the very beginning of her presence at the school. Sarah, the principal, assumed this position in 1996 and immediately removed grids that isolated rooms, hallways, and courtyards; these were the first modifications to the physical space and marked an important moment in the school's history.

The principal's decisions about changes to the physical space can be interpreted as a first indicator of her intention to produce changes in the school's work dynamic, indicating also her active positions in the face of the dominant order that had ruled the school before her.

The third characteristic was that the school had the support of the São Paulo Secretary of Education, which created an opportunity to establish cooperative and supportive connections. The state government's defined public policies for community participation allowed for the School Council to take decisions oriented toward the funding of cultural projects. The institution's appropriation of public policies occurred with the principal's decision to support family participation in the School Council. More concretely, principal Sarah, with the support of Carrie, a student's mother who was also an artist, created a Brazilian cultural project, using games to allow volunteer mothers to be present at school to help organize activities for the students during recess. The increased participation of families in cultural activities and school's administration is another indicator of the principal's intention to change the school's functioning.

This information about the school's three characteristics took shape through the researcher's constructions and allowed her to characterize an initial context that was conducive to innovation, in which two aspects are critical: recognizing parental participation and the role of the School Council.

Before implementing the innovation, the School Board had approximately 20 parents who attended sporadic meetings. In a dialog with the researcher, Jane, the

mother of former students, who continued working as a volunteer in the school library, explained the situation:

> Researcher: How was it at the beginning, from what you remember, Jane?
>
> Jane: Ah yes… it started with Sarah and Carrie, who proposed that Brazilian cultural project with capoeira and theater workshops. At the first Council meeting I attended, they brought the project in to be voted on by the Council, and it was approved.
>
> Researcher: And what was the mood like among the people in the Council?
>
> Jane: Wow… it's kind of similar to this project… it was a really difficult moment; it was a situation of those who want it and those who don't.

From this dialog, another indicator can be defined that goes in the same direction as those indicated above; this is the principal's conscious action addressed toward changing the school and its context. Specifically, the mother's preserved memory about Sarah's role since the very beginning in implementing new strategies and educative actions in the school is also an indicator of her place in the subjective processes that are conducive to innovations.

In conversational dynamics conducted with teachers who were at the school before the implementation of the innovative project, it was noted that the presence of families was perceived as an annoyance and generated resistance from teachers and employees. At that moment, there were two crucial initiatives of the principal in process. The first was to promote a debate with teachers and staff about the importance of community participation in facilitating the implementation of Brazilian cultural workshops. The second was creating parent–teacher committees to identify and discuss problems in the School Council, including poor student's behavior and the high levels of the absence of some teachers.

These two initiatives are an indicator of the principal's positions in regard to the creation of participatory spaces that could stimulate the subjective engagement of parents, students, and teachers to address the problems in daily school life. They can also be interpreted as another indicator of her condition as a subject of her educative practice, as they express the openness of a singular path of subjectivation that led to important changes in the school's social functioning. The relationship between the indicators leads to a hypothesis that we will continue to follow: the principal's active administration integrates active agents inside and outside the school, dynamizing new social forces in the school's functioning, and making it much more participatory. The school began to function as a living socially configured instance capable of following the complex and changing dynamic of the school.

Given the living fabric of the school's social functioning, there was more participation and involvement by parents in organizing groups and problem solving. This simultaneously generated a change in the teachers' representations and commitment, an indicator that we defined based on a conversation with one of the teachers, Elaine.

> Elaine: The School Council is very strong; they are present in everything. Tutoring brings us closer to the parents; they're at the school whenever they want and can work on projects together. This is breaking boundaries, and we no longer know what belongs to what group.

Recognizing the new form of social functioning—where the roles of teachers and parents are articulated—broadened our understanding of the impact of the principal's

actions and the importance of exploring the dynamics of the School Council's functioning. After the conversation with the teacher, we met the principal to seek more information on the impact of her actions on this council. The following statement taken from the conversation seems especially interesting for us:

> When I was going to have that meeting every 45 days, it was a community that mobilized to discuss, to think. But this was very important because those were the people who came to the meetings, who began to listen to the educational discourse in another way… It was 1% of the population that attended school, but they were people who came to participate.

From this statement, it is possible to conclude that participatory spaces created by the principal began to mobilize new social driving forces in the school. The principal, by seeking out the engagement of a group, even if a small one, provided an active space for the progressive engagement of school actors. This fact, which could be combined with the hypothesis constructed above, is strong evidence that an innovative education process is going on, and for the main role of the principal in the changes in the social subjective dynamic of the school. It was not the physical and organizational changes that led to the innovation, but the way they were subjectively experienced by all the educational actors, forming a new socially subjective school functioning.

> Lucy, mother of a former student, Council participant: First, it took a lot of courage because we were sharing everything, the school leadership, the parents. It was a matter of having the courage to face up to it, to be able to show that we were together… It was a lot of organizational work!

In this fragment, we highlight information about a dynamic process of mobilization that was taking place in the school that involved a different subjective set of the parents engaged in the process that the school was involved with. The parent-teacher group debated the problems, generating a new social climate in the School Council; it was one more piece of evidence for how the principal's actions gained strength within the school.

The principal's initiatives and decisions make it possible to already elaborate the hypothesis of her condition of subject. They are the actions of an individual subject in the genesis of new fabrics and processes in the development of the social subjectivity; they are actions that unfold in new groupings, in the participation of new sectors in school life. Each of these processes leads to changes in other groups and individuals, including changes in subjective processes. It is this movement of actors, both groups and individuals, which characterizes the new social subjective configuration that is conducive to innovation at the school under study.

As initially indicated, the increased community participation at the school made it possible for people who were not teachers to engage in cultural activities with the students. This generated new processes of subjectivation, processes that generated resistance in some teachers, who did not see any relevance in the changes that were taking place. One of the teachers, Emily, says:

> The teachers had an extreme need to mark their territory; they highlighted that "he isn't a teacher, she isn't a teacher, they can help, but they are not teachers." We demanded that they

did not participate as much, and now I think it was awful. So, they were only there for the first or last hour. We had a problem because it was like a pre- or post-class; they weren't teachers, it wasn't class. The idea was to have cultural workshops. But for us, it was to fill the time of the teachers' absence. And if the teacher thinks that, then the student will too. They thought "I'm not going to do it because it's not a class. I don't need to obey because it's not a teacher" and that turned against us. But how could we make them do it if we didn't believe in it either? That's where things started to change.

Researcher: You talk about demanding from them. Who?

Emily: The children, the parents, to understand that these activities were important. We said "look, it's important", but we had the same speech. When it reached that point, Sarah said: "enough of pre-classes and post-classes, the workshop won't be at the end of the school day, it will be in the middle, and the teachers will be present during the last hour too." Then we started to organize the teachers who started working in the first and second periods.

It is interesting to note that the principal, realizing that the introduced cultural activities implied a rejection of this innovative idea, decided to change the school organization. This has promoted a new curricular structure that has changed the subjectivation processes that had been generated. This is another indicator of the principal's subject condition: the role of the individual subject in group subjectivation processes.

The new processes were vitally important to the process of implementing innovation, as ties with the families grew, and the School Council, led by the principal, took an active role as a discussion group for educational work and as a social entity, with common objectives that were conducive to the innovation.

For our constructions, another important aspect is how the principal's actions were represented, subjectively experienced and valued by the school actors. The concept of social subjectivity allows us to understand, in a complex way, how the principal's actions progressively impacted the school's social functioning, at a qualitatively different level. As the multiple relational systems in which individuals are involved represent the space in which subjectivity emerges, simultaneously and unpredictably, then different subjective senses appear; these are subjective senses that social experiences evoke in both individuals and social instances.

The next statement, based on an excerpt from the school's PPP, is one more strong argument related to the changes occurring in the school:

It was time to take down the fences that closed off circulation in the courtyard and, in a vote of respect and confidence, to open the school on weekends, to improve the spaces, making them more pleasant and geared toward coexistence, and to, at last, open the school to the community. The principal's office is no longer the panopticon of a totalizing institution, a threat to the deviant student, and always has an open door to be the epicenter of a radical transformation.

The following is from a conversation with a father of a former student,—a member of the School Council, who was so convinced about the ongoing changes in the school's social functioning:

John: Parents want to know about the pedagogical project and whether that's what they want for their child. It's important to open the school to parental involvement. Usually, principals don't want to open schools; they don't want to confront problems, and Sarah is different.

Researcher: But the Pedagogical Council and the School Council were clear about it? What can you highlight from that situation?

John: I think the first question was the principal's vision of wanting the school to have community involvement. Since she came, the parents have been able to express themselves and have discovered that the School Council is a deliberative forum.

This part of the conversation once again revealed how the actions taken by Sara were inseparable from the social subjective configurations that characterized the school's functioning, making it possible to implement many innovations that, in their interrelation, were responsible for a complete new educational climate in the school. The principal's role in the social subjective configurations that characterize the functioning of this innovative school has been widely evidenced through the convergence of the hypotheses and indicators advanced and discussed above. The school actors achieve new levels of relationships among themselves that are promoted by the unfoldings of the principal's decisions and positionings and generate a new condition of social subjectivity that is not exempt from contradictions, but constantly develops through new actions by those involved in this social fabric.

The subjective impact of changes to the physical space and the School Council were not exhausted there; they led to new social networks within the school, of which the more interested and active parents were part, and the new actors and social spaces were growing in such a way that practically all the school functions expressed changes.

The emergence of new subjective senses is not an isolated process and is not determined by external influences; rather, they are interrelated and are produced as a side effect of a new institutional dynamic that was conceived within the school, as an expression of a new social subjectivity that was configured at the school.

On the basis of the above theoretical constructions related to the subjective processes involved in the school's development, one fact caught our attention; educative agents, as such, had different opinions and positions in relation to the school's functioning, but they are subordinate to the dominant school order. There were the principal's initiatives embodied in the system of action, from which new participatory spaces emerge, the social process within which a new engaged educative process emerged, making the changes possible. The school's third characteristic, which was very important for the ongoing process of innovation in which the school was involved, the support of the Secretary of Education, appeared as follows while talking with Peter, who was the chairman of the School Council.

Peter: I began to participate in the School Council in 2001 and it was a critical situation on all sides. Everyone criticized everyone else, and they all had their reasons. No one was happy. And I looked around and thought "everyone is right." Then, I was elected chairman of the council…

Researcher: And how did this happen?

Peter: We started trying to figure out what was going on… The school had a pedagogical project and, at the beginning of the year, the principal and coordinator presented the pedagogical project and the council had to approve, so they presented a project.

Researcher: Because there was already a project?

Peter: There was… I mean… it had a dynamic, but we didn't know what to do… because there was participation in the cultural area… Then I said, "What are we going to do now?" Then there was the idea to look at the pedagogical project, which was very beautiful, but it didn't work; the reality was different.

Researcher: How did you have this confrontation?

Peter: It was very interesting to compare the pedagogical project with what was happening. We needed a methodology and we, as parents, couldn't do it; that was when Sarah suggested the idea of talking to a psychologist, so we could have an analysis of the pedagogical project.

Faced with the difficulties of the pedagogical project's effective functioning, the principal takes the initiative to seek an external advisor. This decision was supported by the Secretary of Education and was conducive to implementing the innovation. The advisor began by reviewing the values and educational practices with the objective of discussing a new political-pedagogical project. The complaints led to a growing organization of school actors who were striving to make changes and, to some extent, challenge the *status quo* of the educational system.

The new social subjective productions, mainly those that occurred in collective instances in which political decisions related the pedagogical project can be taken, such as the School Council, reveal the importance of the creation of new social dynamics within an institution in which individuals are paralyzed, even when they have different positions in relation to the dominant institutional order. People within public institutions in the dominant Brazilian social subjectivity, far from feeling engaged as part of the social functioning, seemed to be adapted to what is dominant. This is an interesting fact that deserves to be followed more deeply in future research oriented toward studying social subjectivity. A similar process occurred in a Mental Health Center, where Sara's role in this research was assumed by the researcher (Goulart 2017). The group's new subjective production materialized in the actions of some of the actors, indicating the overcoming of an attitude of passivity, within which a new social subjectivity is created. In a conversation with Anna, a school inspector who participated in implementing the innovative project, she expresses:

Researcher: You think that everyone must to play their part, but it isn't predetermined; you have to deal with whatever happens. Is that right?

Anna: I believe that within the school, there is no "you do this." I think we can do everything, even help a student who has fallen.

Researcher: Is this the idea of accountability? Because you have freedom, but you also have responsibility…

Anna: And it's up to you to be able to do this; the project gives you that freedom, your colleagues in the collective know that you can do it, so it isn't delegating functions. We're all responsible for all the students. In the same way that I'm also responsible for the classroom when the teacher isn't there.

Researcher: But this was something constructed by the project?

Anna: It's something that's being constructed. When you don't delegate, you say "we are all responsible."

This fragment of conversation highlights an indicator of the engagement with and commitment to the collective work, an expression of the changes resulting in the

school's social subjectivity. A collective identity began to appear, making professors, students, and parents begin to feel proud of being part of the school. By many paths, the researcher was a testimony to this kind of expression in the wide range of informal contacts that she had in the school: students enthusiastically commented on the project's new strategies, teachers commented in reflections arising from their meetings, teachers also commented in conversations they had with the principal, etc.

In an episode that was observed in the tutoring group, which was led by the principal, the female students expressed a mixture of passion and indignation because a group of boys had not completed their activities; they argued that they should value the school and the people involved, including the principal, and used the expression "shed blood for the school." This behavior from the female students provoked a reaction from the group of boys, who did not provide a counter-argument, and an emotional stir in the principal herself, who was present during the discussion.

These observations become an indicator of the subjective engagement of different school actors who, far from avoiding facing possible conflict, in this case with the boys, actively and publicly positioned themselves on the basis of their compromise with the school. The emergence of social identity is an important factor in how the collective instances in any institution become a driving force of social subjective functioning. Without this subjective social engagement, innovation becomes a very difficult task.

The next fragment of conversation is an example of how this process also occurred with the parents:

> Rebecca: This is one of the most interesting experiences I've had. That's why I think it's a privilege to participate. Here, there is an open and dynamic educational process that is constantly under construction because it's made of the ideas and practices of those who participate, with very strong premises and foundations. Respect and autonomy are values that are adopted by the educators in pedagogical practice. Students also adopted the school.
>
> Beth: Autonomy is a goal. The community can and should participate. I love the school! The project has already advanced and is continuing. It's hard work. The school has many problems with students and educators. When the educator thinks it will be easy, they're wrong, it isn't easy. It's a process.

Our constructions are woven from the elaborated indicators and hypotheses that have been discussed and allow us to highlight the principal's central role in the new social subjective configuration that developed with her administration. The principal undertook actions that encouraged changes in social dynamics that went beyond her individual actions, since subjective production is configured in a complex and unpredictable manner. In the fabric of social subjectivity, the principal acts as the primary transforming agent of the innovative school's social subjectivity, not through direct effects, but as a generator of the production of subjective senses constituted in the social, with the school actors.

6.4 Final Considerations

We can conclude that the principal's actions as a subject promoted actions that created a new dynamic for the functioning of social instances and generated new configurations of the school's social subjectivity that were conducive to educational innovation. In this context, there was a new production of subjective senses that, as part of the social subjectivity, allowed for the implementation of innovation.

The construction made evident the role of individual subjects in the social fabric of the space in which their actions develop, with an impact on changes in the subjectivity of this space. The subject category allows for advances in understanding how social subjectivity does not linearly determine individual actions. It expresses the possibility of the individual as not subordinate to the processes that mark social subjectivity, generating new forms of subjectivation that imply the rupture with dominant practices and representations.

We highlight how the theory of subjectivity made it possible to investigate innovative processes from a different perspective than in other research, and to understand the administrator's role in innovation from a new angle, including their role in producing new social subjective configurations that are conducive to innovation.

The study also showed how the close school-community bond, in which the principal had an important role, was conducive to innovation by generating new forms of functioning that changed dominant practices and representations, and created new forms of social subjectivity, which showed how the school constitutes a living social fabric.

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Chapter 7
Changes in Teacher Subjectivity in the Context of Inclusive Education

Geandra Cláudia Silva Santos and Albertina Mitjáns Martínez

Abstract In this chapter, it is discussed how the subjective development of one teacher led to changes in her behaviors and pedagogical activities, generating changes in the social climate of the classroom as result of a new social subjective configuration generated in the classroom's functioning, implying a new set of behaviors and social relations within the classroom. This allowed one deaf student, who had felt excluded from the classes' dynamics, to come to feel herself included in the classroom. The case chosen for the chapter was studied in wider research developed on the basis of González Rey´s theoretical proposal on subjectivity and also on the basis of constructive-interpretative methodology proposed by the same author for the study of subjectivity. The study was conducted with a primary school teacher who worked at a city public school in the state of Ceará, Brazil, where she had just started working with disabled students. The research made it evident how the training of teachers must change to include the development of resources to work with the subjectivity of both students and the classroom and also to prepare them to attend to the subjective development of students. Teaching is effective when it leads to the inclusion and development of students. Didactics is the development of resources capable of mobilizing the students' motivation. Neither the disabled student's presence in the classroom nor discourses on inclusion, nor reflecting on teaching practice and training opportunities can lead to changes in teachers' subjectivity and, consequently, in their pedagogical practice.

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7.1 Introduction

Teacher training in inclusive education is currently a prominent topic in international scholarly productions. There is a consensus that the changes that are required in public policy for the inclusion of disabled students in regular schools imply changing the teacher's work, while investment in both basic and continuing training are a key aspect for their effectiveness. Teacher training in inclusive education has been increasingly considered by a number of authors as inefficient (Mccrimmon 2015; Ruiz-Bernardo 2016; García 2016; Mensah 2016).

Training in service[1] is taken as a productive path in the generation of capacities that allow teachers to face the specific challenges of inclusive education, stimulating new ways of working in this kind of education (Srivastava 2016; Dávila and Zambrano 2016; Sanchez Sanchez 2016). Besides training, the importance of teaching experience and connections within the profession are recognized by Machu (2015) and Machado (2016).

Dávila and Zambrano (2016) identified mismatches between teacher discourse and practice that contradicted the inclusive paradigm. They considered that studying the meanings constructed by teachers helps to understand the contradictions that emerge in inclusive education, creating conditions oriented to the development of a consciousness favorable to inclusion. The research mentioned above has stressed the difficulties in preparing teachers; it has emphasized two ways of training teachers, one addressed toward providing information for them, and the other oriented toward provoking reflection on their own practice.

Based on the theory of subjectivity proposed by González Rey (1997, 2003, 2015, 2017), it is possible to consider the subjective development of teachers as one of the main objectives of any training process. Together with teachers' reflection and knowledge, it is very important to develop their communicative capacities and subjective resources, allowing them to work on their relationships with the included students.

The general picture of the theory discussed in the first chapters of this book is that it allows a complex representation of human subjective processes as inseparable from human social practices. In this chapter, we will center on the experience of subjective development of one teacher as a result of her professional involvement with inclusive education for the first time.

This study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the development of subjectivity, as well as to open up new perspectives on the educational processes through which teachers deal with disabled students and students with learning difficulties. In our research program, previous works have been devoted to these topics (Mitjáns Martínez 2003; Rossato 2009; Santos 2010; Anache 2011; Madeira Coelho 2012; Rossato and Mitjáns Martínez 2013; Bezerra 2014; Batista and Tacca 2015).

Studies on subjective development based on González Rey´s theoretical proposal represent a recent but promising research line, understanding subjective development as a highly singular process (Gónzalez Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2017a). According

[1]The term 'in-service training' is used to characterize the training opportunities that occur concomitant to the teacher's professional work, usually in the form of courses.

to these authors, subjective development can be defined as the "… development of new subjective resources that allow the individual to make qualitative changes in different life areas, generating deeper personal involvement in the area in which the subjective configuration of development emerged" (González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2017b). In this process, the emergence of an individual as a subject is important due to the capacity of this condition to allow the opening up of new processes of subjectivation, during which new subjective resources are generated (González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2017c).

Subjective changes are inscribed within the complex movement that is intrinsic to subjective development; however, not every change can be characterized as an expression of development. Changes are integrated into the dynamic and self-organizing flow of subjectivity, within which some subjective configurations emerge as subjective paths of subjective development, while others could even cause that process to stagnate.

The research from which this chapter has developed was focused on the changes occurring in the individual subjectivity of teachers who were working with disabled students in their classroom for the first time.

The increasing number of disabled students in regular classrooms in Brazil, resulting from public policies on school inclusion (Laplane 2016), has demanded more teachers capable of working in this kind of education.

Thus, this chapter's specific objective is to present, based on one case study, the singularity of such subjective processes that have characterized one teacher's subjective development that resulted from her teaching experience. Based on this study, we aim to understand both the emergence of new pedagogical practices and the process of the teacher's subjective development as inseparable from each other.

7.2 Methodology

This case study was based on González Rey´s Qualitative Epistemology, from which a constructive-interpretative methodology has followed (González Rey 1997, 2002, 2005; González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2016, 2017c).

The teachers selected to be part of the study had just started working with disabled students. In this chapter, we only present the case of a primary school teacher who worked at a city public school in the state of Ceará, in northeast Brazil.

The researcher promoted pedagogical meetings with the staff of the school before classes began. In those meetings, dialogue was facilitated, promoting the interest of the teachers in the research topic. The participants were selected from among many other professors that expressed their willingness to participate in the research with the agreement of the school management. In doing so, both the school and the teachers were implicated in the research.

According to the principles of the constructive-interpretative methodology, different written and non-written instruments were used, having as their basis the continuous dialogues with the participants, either in formal or informal contexts. The

instruments used were: three semi-structured interviews, addressing issues related to personal and professional life, topics related to pedagogical practice, disabilities and the school inclusion process; conversational dynamics, used at informal times throughout the research process and an instrument involving the complements of sentences (first used by *Rotter and Rafferty (1950)* as a projective technique). This instrument was used at two points: at the beginning of the first semester and at the end of the course. The participants were asked to write two essays, entitled "My greatest concerns and happiness" and "Being a teacher today". Both essays were addressed toward possible reflections on the part of the participants, on which we advanced in further depth during later conversations. The researcher was immersed most of the time in the school and followed the daily routine of the teachers, the students, and the school. Some collective dialogical meetings were also organized with teachers discussing, among other things, lesson plans and didactic material prepared for disabled students.

The fieldwork, which lasted for approximately ten months, started at the beginning of the academic semester and was developed throughout the academic year. This way of working made it possible to follow the changes in the teachers' subjectivities during the research. Throughout the study, as mentioned before, we drew special attention to informal conversations that took place at informal moments (snack times, conversations in the teachers' lounge, at school cultural activities, etc.) There were also meetings organized with the participant in this case study outside of the school in an effort to encourage spontaneity and authenticity in her expression.

The first interview unfolded as a very spontaneous dialogue, which was an important element of judging the subjective engagement of the participant. From that moment onward, a rich dialogical process developed, unfolding at many points into conversational dynamics.

7.3 Bárbara, the Teacher[2]

At the beginning of the study, Bárbara was 44-years old, had been teaching for 15 years, and had an undergraduate degree in Pedagogy. She taught Portuguese Language and Literature for 8th year students at a public primary school. Bárbara had three young children, as well as grandchildren. She had been divorced from her husband for some time and was in a new relationship. She had a student with bilateral deafness, Cícera, who was literate in LIBRAS[3] and Portuguese, receiving support from an itinerant teacher[4] at the school.

Bárbara was enthusiastic and available to participate in the study. During the first conversation, we asked her about her first contacts with Cícera in the classroom: "I

[2] All names are fictitious.

[3] Brazilian Sign Language (Língua Brasileira de Sinais—LIBRAS).

[4] An itinerant teacher is a professional who provides technical support to students with special educational needs at different schools.

felt irritated and tense when I saw a deaf student in front of me. I got fearful, but I needed to overcome this fear. But how? I thought this fear will continue until I can communicate with her." For the complements of sentences instrument, she also completed the following as: Disability: causes fear and challenges.

In that first meeting with Cícera, Bárbara got lost, feeling fear and perplexity due to the communication barriers with the student. The fact that Bárbara felt irritated on her first contact with a deaf student may be an expression of how the dominant social prejudice against deaf people also appears in teachers beyond their conscious representation; this is undoubtedly part of the fear, perplexity, and annoyance that she felt. Facing her conflict, she looked for support in order to advance strategies of communication in relation to Cícera. At the school, Bárbara only received support from the itinerant teacher:

> I looked online for different ways to communicate, but I didn't find anything that would help. I talked to the principal. We only received support from one itinerant teacher. I already talked to people who can help me.

Among Bárbara's initial difficulties, we note her lack of representation of what the process of inclusion means. This absence of representation resulted from the absence of culture and training for working with these students. The topic is rarely discussed in training programs. In relation to inclusion, she initially said:

> It's to promote everyone participating in the same educational activities, feeling themselves respected by others. I have to work more on the understanding of inclusion for myself in order to advance my pedagogical work with disabled students. This is really a topic to be openly discussed in the schools, but it is not.

At another point in the conversation, Bárbara stated:

> Her education is failing because of me (referring to her student, Cícera), because I haven't been able to work with her like I work with the other students. It is possible for her to get an education, but I still don't understand… how do you give someone individual attention when you have a room full of students?

The position of the teacher revealed a willingness to work with Cícera; however, she is not prepared as a teacher to do this work, and she had also not received any support from the school because, in fact, Brazilian teachers are not trained to work with subjective processes, neither those of the classroom, nor those of the students. Despite her prejudice, Bárbara had subjectively experienced the new situation as a challenge that she should face as a protagonist.

Based on her ethics as a teacher, and her engagement with the profession, Bárbara fights against her prejudices, giving priority to finding pedagogical resources to work with Cícera.

Shortly after Bárbara approached the student, the itinerant teacher spontaneously mentioned that Cícera "… is a bit skittish with Bárbara because she's trying to use sign language in class. She seems embarrassed in front of her classmates." In the second session of discussion with the group of teachers, Bárbara says: "When I heard that Cícera was uncomfortable with me, I was very shocked. I felt worse than she did

because she can already capture some of my behaviors. So, let's respect her. Let's stop here!"

We interpret the student's reaction as an indicator of the naturalization of her disability in the teaching process. The student felt the teacher's disappointment with her conditions and reacted emotionally, even when she was not conscious of her reaction. This situation evidenced the importance of the subjective relationships that characterize the social networks in the classroom, something far from being attended to by Brazilian schools today. The prejudice against disabilities is part of the central role that the exclusion of differences has in the dominant social subjectivity of Brazil. The training of teachers could include the subjective development of the teacher, as well as active discussions on the local dominant cultures in which they will teach.

The naturalization of Cícera's disability in the classroom was disrupted to some extent by the teacher, Bárbara, after finding out about her reaction when she attempted to use LIBRAS to communicate with the student. After the discussion with the group of teachers referred to above, Bárbara understood how inadequate the way she approached Cícera was. She had attempted to use LIBRAS without having created any relational space with the student, in such a way that LIBRAS was used strictly as an instrumental device, ignoring the communicative action within which any educative action should be involved. That reaction, together with the irritation expressed by Bárbara at the first conversation about having a deaf student in the classroom, allows an indicator to be proposed in relation to the inadequate emotional contact between Bárbara and Cícera since the beginning of the course. That initial path taken by their relation was inseparable from Cícera's disappointment. That communicative situation generated by the teacher from the beginning was a source of subjective senses related to Cícera's condition that began to subjectively configure her position at the school, becoming a subjective barrier for her subjective development as a student.

Bárbara attempted, based on her values and ethics as a teacher, to approach Cícera, but her actions were not accompanied by the effect that is necessary for an authentic relationship. Her lack of sympathy with the student, without which no human relationship can be established, needed to be transformed for the relationship with the student to advance. Teacher training is based on a very instrumental representation of what teaching is, focusing on the development of skill, knowledge and formal pedagogical operations, but leaving aside students' subjectivity and the social subjectivity of the classroom as such, as well as the relevance of communication for students' well-being in class.

According to our observations, Bárbara was conscious about the situation, but got lost in how to change it. She transferred some educational activities with Cícera to the itinerant teacher. This behavior led us to formulate one more indicator capable of being integrated with the previous one related to rejection and the incapacity of Bárbara as teacher to deal with the situation; her rejection of the student is congruent with the student's own perception of the teacher's actions. We believe that these mutual reactions demonstrate the preconception and naturalization of disability that are dominant in social subjectivity and that also characterize the social life at the school.

During our presence in the classroom, we identified that the most participative students, those with the best performances, sat in the front rows of the classroom and received attention and stimulation from Bárbara, while most students with learning difficulties sat at the back of the class and were not engaged in the class topics. The teacher seemed to be indifferent to this functioning within the classroom.

Such selective pedagogical logic and the inadequacy of the teacher's behaviors toward Cícera are indicators of the representation of learning as a depersonalized process and the student as a passive individual. These representations are dominant in the social subjectivity of educational institutions and are expressed in a singular way by Bárbara. They are sources for the production of subjective senses of which the teacher's emotions of like and dislike toward her students are an expression. The indicators defined above allow the construction of a first hypothesis about how the teacher's initial rejection of the student led to a relational process that also implies the student's rejection of the teacher, leading, in fact, to a subjective configuration of the relationship that generated subjective senses that made communication between them difficult. This lack of communication and the learning process are closely interrelated as moments in the same subjective configuration.

Despite Bárbara's difficulties in working with students with learning difficulties, she exhibited involvement with teaching activity: she strictly fulfilled her professional duties, discussed school problems, participated in implementing solutions that she had suggested, as well as dressing up for class. All of these behaviors can be taken as an indicator that teaching engages her as a professional and as an individual. This conclusion can be complemented with the following sentences constructed by her on the basis of completing the instrument:

I love: life, my family, my work.

I always wanted: to be a teacher.

I really like: my work.

My greatest pleasure: my family, my work.

It is particularly important to note that she included her work in sentences for which the inductors have nothing to do with work. This is a very important element on which to judge her subjective engagement with the profession.

When asked about her affections in one of the interviews, Bárbara mentioned her family and added: "And as for affections, I can consider my students; it's a daily concern of mine, the idea of working with these students… I like it a lot." She also explained her challenges: "The high number of students in the classroom is unsettling and worrying. Sometimes it's difficult to do a good job in those overpopulated classrooms…"

Based on the above indicators, we formulate the hypothesis that Bárbara has a strong commitment to her profession as a teacher, despite the fact that, for the reasons stated above, she demonstrated rejection toward Cícera. This shows us how important it is to work with teachers' subjectivity in training programs; they are motivated to teach, but they are scared that the presence of disabled students might interfere with their work. Two main factors influence this misunderstanding: firstly, they were not

formed to work with these students; secondly, they show their own prejudices that are sometimes reinforced by pressure from parents who think that the presence of disabled students in the classroom may be prejudicial to their own children. The latter is an expression of how prejudices have its roots within a social subjectivity shared by teachers and parents.

Bárbara's lack of subjective resources to deal with Cícera brought her into a crisis in the face of an unexpected situation in the classroom. During an oral presentation by students that Bárbara had organized, a good atmosphere developed, with students discussing together with enthusiasm throughout the class. Suddenly, Bárbara perceived that Cícera was completely apathetic to and isolated from the activity and from the rest of the students, because she could hear nothing. She had forgotten to consider Cícera when she had planned the class. Faced with this situation, Bárbara could not contain her emotions and began to cry in front of the group. Concerning that incident, Bárbara said: "Everyone seems to be conscious of the rights of the others. Nonetheless, in the daily life frequently the other is forgiven. First of all I blame myself for what happened. My tears in front of the class, far from helping Cícera made her feel worse, because she perceived that she was at the center of the situation created." I blamed myself for not giving Cícera what she needs.

Bárbara's emotional reaction can be taken as an indicator of her affective change toward Cícera. From that moment, Bárbara was more conscious of the need to change her relationship with Cícera and to make this relationship the best device for Cícera´s inclusion. From then onward, a clear change was observed in the priority that Bárbara began to attribute to her relationships with students.

Bárbara returned to the topic spontaneously:

> When one student remains in silence all the time in the classroom, we respect his/her limits. But is he going to be quiet all year? So, for example, for Pedro it is hard to talk, but today I made contact with him, I created a good relational climate with him and we are talking more and more to each other, inside and outside the classroom. This change in our relationship has made Pedro feel more confident and motivated in the classroom. The fact of being in a social relationship with me makes him feel that he has a social space within the classroom. This is what I need to achieve with Cícera.

This fragment of our conversation reveals how she is subjectively engaged at this point with a pedagogical task that goes beyond teaching one discipline. It is impossible for a student to learn when his/her subjective states in the classroom do not allow him/her to concentrate on the subject that is being taught as a result of anxiety, fear, underestimation and other subjective states experienced in the classroom.

The reflexive process in which Bárbara subjectively engaged during our conversation, as well as her new style of working with students with different kinds of difficulties, makes it possible to develop an indicator about her subjective development as a teacher. However, this process of change is not easy, having advances and backward steps. Yet this effort constitutes the first moment in a process in which new subjective senses emerge that could progressively lead to a new subjective configuration of her role as a teacher.

The initiatives that Bárbara undertook may also indicate her emergence as subject in the classroom. She began new paths of subjectivation on the basis of her own

experience leading her to introduce changes in her teaching routines that were not defined, nor even approved by the school. She was gradually able to create new pedagogical alternatives to the school's dominant social subjectivity expressed in new ways of engaging students with learning difficulties and disabilities and, specifically, in new forms of relationships with these students.

Subjectivity changes always imply subjective senses from different spheres of life that are generated within new subjective configurations that in appearance have nothing to do with the observable changes and behaviors in one concrete sphere of life. It was also possible to find out the current changes that Bárbara was experiencing as a teacher. Her family, another central area of her life, which has constantly appeared together with her professional activity, was also affected by important changes at this point in her life. In her essay, "My greatest concerns and happiness", she expresses the following: "Both my home and my classrooms lack a solid basis that safely supports them. Their instability makes me concerned, but at the same time gives me the courage to struggle for their improvement."

Bárbara's family life has been contradictory and full of frustrations throughout its different stages; firstly, she suffered the divorce of her parents, as a result of which she became distant from her mother. Later, during her adolescence, she was pregnant and separated from her partner, the father of her son. That family history is a source of subjective senses subjectively configuring the changes experienced by her in this new stage as a teacher.

Talking about her family experiences, Bárbara said: "My parents never lived together. I always lived with my grandmother. I felt very alone, but I found refuge in her. I'm changing myself, and I'm going to change my home too." It is interesting in her statement that she is changing herself and her home too. She feels herself to be in a process of change, in which Bárbara the teacher, the mother and the individual, are changing simultaneously in different spheres of life, which is precisely one of the elements that allows talk of subjective development.

During a conversation focused on the major achievements and frustrations in her life, she stated: "At the beginning my marriage was wonderful, but it became so difficult after our separation. I became very depressed because my children decided to live with him."

Bárbara reiterated in many different ways her position in relation to her children. In some of the phrases in the complements of sentences instrument, she wrote: "My main concern: is my children." "My greatest fear: is dying before I see my children in a good situation." She also stated: "First, I would like to see my daughter in a much better life situation than the one she is in now. For my children, I want to do everything possible to guarantee them a good life."

It is very interesting how the experience she was living with Cícera led her to talk about her family in one of the conversations related to her current experiences at the school. Bárbara wanted to discuss with the researcher how she actually assumed her motherhood position, one closely resembling her position as a teacher, brought her to address better communication with her family. This is an example of how subjective senses that emerge in one experience are generated by other experiences and are subjectively and simultaneously configured in actions that take place in different

areas of life. Bárbara argued regarding her motherhood: "I have my own position in relation to what it means to be a mother. She is not a person that only has duties to be do for her children. For me, above all, she has to be a companion, a friend, to be capable of good communication with them."

Also, in one of the conversations her relationship with her mother appeared to be a source generating subjective senses in her subjective configuration as a teacher:

> … I bring a lot of the experience with my mother to the professional realm because I see students in the same situation as me… I know I don't have the power to transform them, but as their teacher, I can guide them… So I look at these students, and I don't want them to be bitter, suffering people, like I was at one point.

In other sentences completed by her in the instrument described above, she wrote:

> I am bothered by: injustices toward the disadvantaged, the vulnerable.
>
> I hate: indifference, a lack of love, falsehood.
>
> I become depressed: when I can't help others.

We interpret these three sentences, taken together, as one more indicator of her professional commitment and of the subjective senses originating from her family experiences, which are expressed in the subjective configuration of her profession.

Her tears in the classroom were an expression of strong emotional involvement with her work, but such engagement was also configured by her intense affections involved with subjective senses, the origins of which were in her familial trajectories, and which simultaneously appear generated by her subjective configuration of the profession at the current moment.

The subjective senses produced by Bárbara in relation to her parents' divorce and her mother's estrangement appear through the new subjective senses that emerge in her work as a teacher, mainly when she turns toward the relationship with her students. These new subjective senses carry the subjective expression of those configured in her family life. Subjective senses are never identical in different times and contexts; what is similar are the emotions symbolically expressed by different ways in different contexts. So, Bárbara´s emotional reactions as a result of the situations experienced with Cícera were not simple reactions to what occurred in those situations, but an expression of a subjective configuration through which the Bárbara´s existential constellation of lived experiences subjectively appeared through her relationship with Cícera.

The teacher's engagement, in giving support to Cícera, took place after Bárbara perceived how fragile and emotional Cícera was, being surrounded by an environment that was completely strange to her. Was it the suffering of Cícera that defined the turning point for Bárbara in her relation to her initial preconception against the student? Her prejudice against Cícera was mainly driven by her fear that Cícera would become an obstacle for the quality of her teaching. Nonetheless, the acute sense of the other formed by Bárbara throughout her personal history was an important subjective resource for completely changing her position, and putting at the forefront the human side of herself as a teacher, that led her not only to change her relation with Cícera, but also with all of the students with any kind of difficulty.

Bárbara began to develop subtle strategies for getting closer to Cícera again; when speaking, she adopted a slower word articulation rhythm and started to use the blackboard and printed materials as a visual support for explaining the content. These pedagogical strategies become increasingly complex and productive actions.

The Bárbara's relational shift changed not only her personal position toward the students, but was a key element in changing her general pedagogical strategy in the classroom. Cícera was also gradually changing her position as a learner as a result of Bárbara's new behaviors toward her that were complemented by the new pedagogical options developed by the teacher.

The subjective senses generated by the teacher, and the new behaviors subjectively configured on its basis in turn led to a new social subjective configuration of the classroom, within which the teacher's behaviors led to new networks of social relationships, which in turn changed the whole social climate of the classroom. These changes also influenced Cícera's behaviors; she attempted to communicate with peers, who also integrated her into their communication, and she also began to show interest through new questions that Bárbara read to all of the students, supporting the integration of Cícera, who was subjectively engaged with them. The new social subjective configuration of the classroom appeared through a set of behaviors, social relationships, and new pedagogical activities that guaranteed a social space for Cícera, who felt herself part of the group. As result of this process, Bárbara also changed her representation on inclusion. She stated: "There will be inclusion when she is working, participating, cooperating and sharing. Then, we are good!"

Another interesting topic that appeared in the conversation with Bárbara was the meaning of life. In relation to this she said:

> The meaning of my life is to serve others. Teaching is the area where this meaning takes form… when I became a teacher; I got involved because when I got involved in this profession as an educator, as a teacher, I made the right choice.

Teaching takes an important role in Bárbara's life, its subjective configuration becoming one of her more important motivations at the current moment. This subjective configuration integrates/generates subjective senses originally generated in multiple lived experiences and future projects, in addition to those resulting from her professional practice.

It should be stressed how subjective configurations function. Once Cícera reacted emotionally, Bárbara generated subjective senses that integrated her own personal reaction in the face of Cícera's behavior, which closely resembled her family experience and the antecedents of her own life; new subjective states appeared, changing the Bárbara's positions in relation to Cícera, but at the same time changing her relations with the group, causing new social networks to emerge within the group that also integrated Cícera. This process transcended the Bárbara-Cícera relationship, narrowly located in the space and time; it generated new subjective senses that marked a turning point in the teacher's pedagogical practices toward all the students. New pedagogical resources were implemented, and new devices were used in such a process that radically changed the social climate in the classroom. Those social processes, in which Bárbara, as a teacher, played a central role, become a process of

Bárbara's subjective development, changing her positions and behaviors not only as a teacher, but also in relation to her family and her way of representing life. The subjective configuration generated by the incident with Cícera become a configuration of development to both Cícera and Bárbara, and from them new subjective senses were generated by the social subjective configuration of the classroom.

7.4 Final Considerations

The case study discussed made explicit how the teacher's subjective configuration related to her educative work changed according to her ongoing teaching activity, generating changes in the students, mainly in Cícera, the deaf student, as well as in the social configuration of the classroom. It is important to stress how motivational changes are never exhausted by a local situation, implying subjective configurations through which certain constellations of lived experiences appear as sources of subjective senses of the ongoing lived experience. The new subjective configuration that emerges in Bárbara's living the chain of events that characterized one moment of her relation with Cícera should be considered a subjective configuration of development. This is because it implied new behaviors and changes simultaneously in different spheres of the teacher's life; new pedagogical practices were developed, a new set of social relations were created, and Cícera, for the first time, felt herself as part of the group, generating interest in the subjects being taught.

The study also made evident how important it is to advance with respect to the current dominant teacher training programs. These programs should pay attention to how to work with the classroom and with individuals, considering the classroom as a dialogical network which involves both individual subjectivity and social subjectivity. New activities must be integrated into these training programs, such as the discussion of case studies, the psychological preparation to deal with the practice of daily life, and the training of teachers in conducting groups.

The challenges of inclusive education should be considered ahead of all of the means for social inclusion of disabled children into the social dynamic of the classroom. Without this inclusion which, in fact, means the subjective engagement of the children within the classroom, no program of inclusion can function.

The discussion above evidences the versatility and complexity of human motivation, and how the relationship between subjective senses and configurations allows an understanding that motivation is never exhausted by a present and immediate experience. Subjective senses inform us about how the cosmos of one individual life is inseparable from the subjective states and actions of the individuals engaged in one experience and about how, from this theoretical understanding of subjectivity, the subjective configuration of one action also implies a social subjective dynamic from which unexpected changes and paths could emerge.

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

Fernando González Rey and Jorge Eduardo Moncayo Quevedo

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

[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)

[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?
>
> 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.
>
> 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

[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.
>
> Researcher: What if that person were gay or lesbian?
>
> Psychologist: I don't think that they would allow it. They are careful regarding who is in charge of these things.
>
> Researcher: How could the parents oppose [the presence of such an instructor]?
>
> 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.
>
> 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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Chapter 9
The Role of Subjectivity in Understanding Teacher Development in a Scientific Playworld: The Emotional and Symbolic Nature of Being a Teacher of Science

Marilyn Fleer

Abstract Many studies have been undertaken to better understand children's development. Yet, little attention has been directed to how children's development is reciprocally related to the development of the teacher. In this chapter, the concepts of subjective sense and subjective configuration as proposed by González Rey are drawn upon to analyse teacher subjectivity during periods of teaching science. The focus is not "the science teacher" but rather the "person who is a teacher of science". In this chapter, the lens is centred on the personal narrative of a preschool teacher who participated in a study designed to teach concepts, not as an objective body of knowledge, but rather as embedded in a series of Scientific Playworlds. Through following the teacher's emotions and the symbolic processes generated when implementing Scientific Playworlds over 2 years, insights were gained into the dynamic and evolving subjective senses of what it means to teach science to young children in play-based settings. In using a cultural-historical framing of subjectivity, as advanced by Gonzalez Rey, science knowledge was not conceptualised as an individual construction, but rather something that is historically located, emotionally charged, and socially produced through human relations. The findings show that the teaching of science concepts is connected directly to how the teacher and children together make meaning and how their motives change through their relations with each other and with the Scientific Playworld narrative that developed over time. Science was collectively conceptualised by the teacher and the children through how it was imagined, re-imagined, and emotionally and symbolically produced in the Scientific Playworld. Although subjectivity is rarely discussed in the teaching of science, it is argued in this chapter that it should take centre stage for better understanding practice and research in science education in early childhood settings.

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9.1 Introduction

Contrary to accepted beliefs about science revealing objective truths, Vygotsky (1987) argued that, "By isolating thinking from affect at the outset, we effectively cut ourselves off from any potential for a causal explanation of thinking" (p. 50). Contemporary research into science education is actively resisting this cognitive narrowing, and opening up spaces for contextualised and historicised knowledge, challenging assumptions about the neutrality and objectivity of scientific thought, and seeking to decentre the privileged position of the sciences and hegemonic notions of knowledge production (Strong et al. 2016). What is emerging in science education research is new methodologies that bring into the research paradigm a sense of place and a method that promotes, rather than removes, the participation of the researcher (Fleer and Gonzalez Rey 2017) as part of researching teaching and learning in science, where remarkable moments emerge (Carlone et al. 2016).

In humanising the research process, a fuller sense of the complexity and dynamics of thinking and feelings associated with the learning of science concepts emerges (Hadzigeorgiou 2016). Vygotsky (1987) argued that, "There exists a dynamic meaningful system that constitutes *a unity of affective and intellectual processes.* Every idea contains some remnant of the individual's affective relationship to that aspect to reality which it represents" (p. 50; original emphasis). The remnant of this affective relationship plays out in science education classrooms and early childhood settings where children are constantly constructing knowledge, but always in relation to how they feel about their own learning of science concepts (Solis and Callanan 2016). How early childhood teachers feel about the teaching of science is also of importance for understanding the experiences they organise and the ways that they interact with children (Garbett 2003). Teacher subjectivity and the social pathways that are generated through human relations are a key determinant of these subjective productions (Gonzalez Rey 2017). This chapter is concerned with these social productions, for better understanding the symbolic processes and emotions that are part of the teaching of science in early childhood settings (Gonzalez Rey 2017).

In contrast to previous research in science education which primarily follows a constructivist orientation (see Eshach and Fried 2005), this chapter seeks to study knowledge construction in early childhood settings as subjective productions and social pathways, as advanced by Gonzalez Rey (2017), for the learning of science. Hadzigeorgiou (2016) notes that, "the science classroom becomes a place where students and teachers negotiate ways of being, knowing, and acting" (p. 36). This humanisation of knowledge construction in science education is foregrounded in this chapter, where the subjectivities of teachers and children are captured and discussed as a key part of studying individual and social knowledge production. Both individual and social subjectivities are dynamically interwoven (Gonzalez Rey 2017) and, as such, must be studied as cultural practices, socially enacted and historically located human productions. These emotions and symbolic processes (Gonzalez Rey 2017) need to be captured in motion (Vygotsky 1997). This conceptualisation of research

has been theorised by Gonzalez Rey (2017) as studying these productions as the interweaving of individual and social subjective configurations.

The goal of this chapter is to better understand the development of teachers through examining the symbolic processes and emotions of one teacher who sought to introduce a new way of learning science through implementing a Scientific Playworld approach (Fleer 2017a). To achieve this goal, the chapter begins with a discussion of the context of the study where Scientific Playworld is theorised. This is followed by examples of social productions and pathways where symbolic processes and emotions are drawn out and analysed as units of affect and cognition (Gonzalez Rey 2017). The findings are discussed as interwoven individual and collective subjectivities dynamically produced in human relations within the Scientific Playworlds.

9.2 Scientific Playworlds

Hadzigeorgiou (2016) has suggested that "Science learning is about knowledge and understanding, even though such learning is influenced in one way or another by emotions" (p. 143). In this study, the focus teacher, Rebecca, had expressed concerns about her approach to teaching and learning in early childhood settings. She wanted to change her practice. She had a strong motive orientation to engage in new ways with her children so that she could deepen their learning (Lewis et al. 2017). Rebecca was invited to join a study where she had the opportunity to participate in new ways of teaching science in her preschool. The overall study focused on imagination in science and imagination in play. The theoretical framing of emotions and imagination as introduced by Vygotsky (2004) and further advanced by Bozhovich (2009) resulted in the outcome of a Scientific Playworld approach (Fleer 2017a). In this study, the conceptualisation of emotional imagination for learning scientific concepts (Fleer 2017b) and the need for teachers to pedagogically position themselves inside of imaginary play situations for progressing scientific abstractions (Fleer 2015) were key aspects of working with Rebecca prior to and during the implementation of a Scientific Playworld approach. In addition, Rebecca's ongoing readings of cultural-historical texts, and her exposure to the outcomes of previous research into a Scientific Playworlds approach, and her own studies of her own practice as part of her own Ph.D. journey (Lewis et al. 2017), together developed a motive orientation for implementing a Scientific Playworlds approach. Rebecca participated in the implementation of a series of Scientific Playworlds and an emerging Engineering Playworld. The Playworlds approach for teaching science and engineering to young children informed Rebecca's new way of teaching. How she developed as a teacher of science during this process is the focus of this chapter.

Playworlds generally, and a Scientific Playworld specifically, focuses on the collective emotional imagination of the group where problem situations are introduced. The teacher selects a story that is engaging (Haakarainen et al. 2013), but also one that can be developed through the narrative of play and through dramatisation (Bredikyte 2011). The teacher has a central role in transitioning children between the real world

and the play world (Lindqvist 1995). Previous research in early childhood science education has shown that being inside the imaginary play, developing the play over time, is rarely undertaken by teachers in preschool settings (Fleer 2015). It is only in classrooms and centres which set up Playworlds that this practice is observed (see Bredikyte 2011; Hakarrainen 2010; Lindqvist 1995). What is known is that in scientific imaginary play situations, teachers appear to struggle and resist entering imaginary situations, despite the fact that children appear to enjoy their participation (see Fleer 2015). This is because most of the early childhood education literature positions teachers as being an authority figure, and therefore, their involvement in children's play is thought to interfere with their play (Lewis et al. 2017). But at the same time, teachers are expected to observe and carefully listen to the child and to follow their interests. This creates a contradiction between being authoritative and being disempowered to teach (Fleer 2009). Interestingly, Bredikyte (2011) and Haakarainen et al. (2013) have shown that when teachers step inside of the imaginary play situation as a play partner, the play appears to develop further, to deepen and to become more complex—supporting the view that teachers do have an important role in developing children's play.

A different theoretical perspective on child development underpins these two positions about involvement in children's play. In the general early childhood literature, children's play is theorised as following stages, aligned to a biological developmental trajectory, whereby play is conceptualised as being biologically determined—i.e. play changes in relation to a child's age (Vygotsky 1998). However, from a cultural-historical perspective of child development, which underpins a Playworlds approach, play is conceptualised as a cultural form of development that is socially produced (Göncü et al. 1966). This belief about play and children's development is difficult for teachers who are implementing a Playworlds approach, because this view of child development is different to what most teachers have previously learned and what has primarily been presented in supporting documentation for teachers (Fleer 2010)—even though broader definitions of child development are embedded in the national curriculum for early childhood educators in Australia (Australian Government 2006). A cultural-historical conception of child development demands a completely new world view of development (Fleer 2017b). Rebecca recognised this incongruence, but the contradiction was so great that she was unable to find a way forward without professional support (Lewis et al. 2017).

Rebecca participated in the study of the implementation of a Scientific Playworld into preschool (3–4 year olds) for 2 years. Her co-teacher Oriana was the class teacher for the children attending the first year of primary school (5–6 year olds). She was also involved in the research, as were some of her colleagues who worked in the school where the preschool was located. Their practices were digitally video recorded over that time, as Rebecca introduced a series of Scientific Playworlds into the preschool and into Oriana classroom. Two of the Playworlds she implemented were not caught on camera, but rather they were digitally recorded through weekly informal and semi-structured interviews conducted by the research assistant Sue, who interviewed the teachers in person or through Skype. At other times, the teachers self-recorded their

planning sessions. A final semi-structured interview with Marilyn was also done using digital video documentation processes.

A total of 152.3 h of digital video data of practices were recorded of the Playworlds (50 sessions over 2 years), of which 32.5 h were the semi-structured and informal interviews. The research assistant, Sue, also supported the implementation of the Playworlds approach through advising and acting as a critical friend. She led the professional development process for both the science concepts being introduced to the children, and the readings about Playworlds and previous outcomes from the overall research project. Regular discussions with Marilyn also featured in relation to relevant cultural-historical concepts and the nature of Playworld practices and outcomes from previous research.

Recognition of the role of the researcher as part of the research process is grounded in cultural-historical theory (Vygotsky 1997). To understand how scientific thinking emerges in early childhood settings as teachers develop during the process of implementing new practices, it is important that the researcher be responsive and embedded in the research context (Fleer and Gonzalez Rey 2017). Their subjectivity is also key for the development of the research project over time, particularly during the process of implementing new practices (Scientific Playworlds) not yet examined across a range of early childhood centres for Australian conditions.

9.3 Social Productions and Pathways

As would be expected, in the study of Rebecca's development as a teacher of science over 2 years, there were many moments of contradiction that needed to be resolved in the process of moving from an imagined conception of being a "science teacher" to re-imagining being a "teacher engaged in the social production of science knowledge"—not as a narrowing of objective truth to be taught and learned, but as interweaving individual and social subjective senses that integrate both symbolic processes and emotions within a unit that is simultaneously symbolic and emotionally configured. This subjectivity was captured digitally, analysed (Gonzalez Rey 2017), and is discussed in this section under the following clusters:

Emotional nature of teaching and learning—doing something different as a source of development

Teacher as the authority or the play partner—performing who you are becoming

Conceptualising and enacting a new relation—the contradiction between the real role and the play role of the teacher

The contradiction of not interfering in children's play but intentionally teaching concepts—smuggling in content

Humanising science—the emotional nature of a Scientific Playworld.

9.3.1 *Emotional Nature of Teaching and Learning—Doing Something Different as a Source of Development*

The enactment of teaching and learning is filled with social phenomena. It does not exist as an objective truth, but rather it is an emotional and symbolic process that is both individual and collective, is emotional and cognitive, and is simultaneously inside and outside of the teacher. However, teacher development needs contradiction (Vygotsky 1987). In this study, it was found that whilst contradiction does act as a force to move development, it also needs particular conditions to productively support that movement. In the process of drawing upon a new practice, Rebecca said to Marilyn that, "*When we were first asked to enter the playworld, of course you know what that means, but you don't know what it feels like*". Rebecca went beyond a cognitive interpretation of the new experience of using a Scientific Playworlds approach, to an expression of her feelings towards the new teaching practice. She said, "*I think I had fears that I, I won't be very good at it, and as a teacher I am a professional, and a big part of your job is behaviour management, and being in a certain way to the parents and the children, and all of a sudden you are going into this silly character, and I wasn't quite sure how to do it*". Vygotsky (1971) has argued that emotions and imagination are not separable processes. Rebecca is relating emotionally to the new practice and imagining her own identity as a professional in contradiction with the new role expected of her to be a play partner inside of the imaginary play situation. She is imagining this as being "this silly character". She was imagining how this change in role might be viewed by the parents of the children she teaches and what it might mean for the children themselves—her playing out being a "silly character" in the story.

Gonzalez Rey (2017) has said that imagination is more than emotions. He suggests that imagination is "a subjective production that transforms and integrates images into concepts, and generates new concepts that lead to new models of thinking, turning emotions into symbolic processes, while symbolic processes become inseparable from emotions" (p. 10). Rebecca was imagining the possible scenario of teaching in a new way. The concept of a Scientific Playworld was subjectively reproduced by Rebecca as an emotionally imagined teaching practice—*being this silly character—being in a certain way to the parents and the children.* Symbolic processes of the imagined Playworld become tied with her fear of the unknown—*I think I had fears that I, I won't be very good at it.* However, in the practice of teaching in this new way, new concepts emerged about this new approach, which led to new ways of thinking and imagining of herself as a teacher inside of the imaginary play situation focused on teaching science concepts. She said, *"Then we experienced the fun of it. How the children respond. Just having the confidence to know that the children enjoy you having a go. It's not about being a perfect dramatization. It is about play" (RIP7).* What we observed in the study was the emergence of new representations, new imaginings, which Gonzalez Rey (2017) has suggested, "become sources of new concepts, images and other productions, leading to new imaginative creations" (p. 10). Throughout the study of Rebecca's development as a person using a Scien-

tific Playworld to teach science concepts to preschool children, she was constantly presented with new contradictions, which appeared to act as a productive force for her development. Imagining herself and emotionally relating to these images of herself in a new role were constantly in flux and evolving as "new cultural realities" of her own subjectivity.

9.3.2 Teacher as the Authority or the Play Partner—Performing Who You Are Becoming

Lobman (2017) has argued that "Human beings are more than reproduction or even adaption to the current conditions" (p. 229). She suggests that humans through:

> …imaginative, creative, playful activity, [are] capable of creating new performances … collectively creating the environments where people are supported… individuals, communities, and societies can continue to develop ….development is understood, not as a set of stages that people pass through on their way to adulthood, but as the collective creation of stages (environments) where people can perform who they are becoming" (p. 229).

Performing who you are becoming is a very different view of conceptualising the contradictions between being a play partner and being an authority figure managing children's behaviour. When Marilyn asked Rebecca to talk more about her experiences with a Scientific Playworld approach, she drew attention to a tension between the authoritative role of a teacher and the performance role of being in character in a Scientific Playworld.

> Part of teaching is about having control, having to always facilitate. So to go into character, I felt I would lose control, and what happens if someone needed help, or they needed to go to the bathroom or—all of these things that you help children with all of the time as a teacher (RIP2).

Through implementing a Scientific Playworlds approach, where you can perform who you are becoming, a different image of Rebecca as a teacher was emerging. She had to find different ways to manage children's behaviour. The observations of the teaching practice revealed many moments where Rebecca managed children who were losing interest or being disruptive, by taking on a particular role, such as being the Mummy Dragon, and asking the baby dragons (children) to sit close to her. She told Marilyn, "*I realised that I could do it [managing group] in character and its fun!*" (RIP2). Rebecca learned that she could, as Bretherton (1984) has shown with children playing together, manage the children in character. Children with sophisticated play skills manage each others' actions from inside of the play narrative, where they act within the frame of the imaginary play by using their play role to change the narrative or to signal to other players that their offers or actions are not accepted (Fleer 2010). Rebecca also did this. Across the data set, there were many moments in which Rebecca used her play role, rather than her real role as the teacher to guide children's behaviours and to further develop the play narrative and to deepen the play practice.

The study found that it was through the play performance that a new pedagogical practice emerged, which she later analysed, and subsequently drew upon, to manage children's behaviour. In the performance of the Scientific Playworld, Rebecca was becoming a new kind of teacher. Implementing the Scientific Playworld had created new conditions, where new pedagogical practices were emerging and which in turn developed Rebecca into a different kind of teacher. Rebecca was becoming who she was performing inside of the play situation. Both the children and Rebecca were changing their imagined identity of what it means to be teacher holding an authoritative position.

9.3.3 Conceptualising and Enacting a New Relation—The Contradiction Between the Real Role and the Play Role of the Teacher

Rebecca also worried about the change in her real relations with the children as a teacher to a play role in the imaginary playworld of the Mad Hatter in the story of Alice in Wonderland with the children.

> I felt nervous that I had to convince the child that I was that character. The children know we are pretending. So some will say, "You are not really… the Mad Hatter", whilst others will call to you (in role) "Mr Mad Hatter" (RIP4).

Gonzalez Rey (2017) captures dynamic change, as we observe with Rebecca, as, "The subject of the action and the subjective configuration of the subject's action are configured by each other in such a process that transcends conscious representations and intentions" (p. 16). Rebecca is engaged in a system of relations with the children and her co-teacher. This relation is constantly changing, as children respond to Rebecca as "*Mr Mad Hatter*" or "*You are not really… the Mad Hatter*". Rebecca responds to them in her real role and in her play role.

The contradiction between the play role and real role of the teacher created new developmental conditions for the children (Fleer in press) and teachers alike. When Rebecca was the Mad Hatter, she was relating to the children in role—initially as a conscious act. In these situations, her relations with the children were as play relations. When she was the teacher, she was in her real relations with the children—a role she did not consciously need to consider, as it was assumed through simply being in the institution of a preschool. "Conscious and unconscious" as suggested by Gonzalez Rey (2017) "are not two separated instances; they are processes organised in two different and simultaneous moments that define two different sets of the same system" (p. 16). It was through these social productions and emerging subjectivies that a change in Rebecca's thinking about her role emerged. She said, "*So they relate to you on different levels, and all of that is fine. It's all part of the play. I didn't have to convince them, I was just playing with them. I understand that now*". The contradiction between a real role and a play was found to be constantly in motion throughout the 2 years, because both Rebecca and the children were developing inside

of the play, where contradictions between real roles and play roles of the teachers were ever present.

The Scientific Playworld is a system of relations between children and between teachers, but also between the teachers and the children. This system of relations is subjectively experienced, re-experienced, and is in constant motion between the imagining of the real role of the teachers and children, and the play role of the characters. Rebecca concluded that,

> … to take safe risk in play, we always talk to the children about that. Now I am talking to myself about it (laughs). We need to take safe risks in our play, give it a go, it doesn't matter how it turns out (RIP3).

9.3.4 The Contradiction of not Interfering in Children's Play but Intentionally Teaching Concepts—Smuggling in Content

A further contradiction that was noted by Rebecca, and which is experienced by many early childhood teachers in Australia, is of being asked to not interfere in children's play, whilst also being expected to use play as an approach to intentionally teach concepts to children. Rebecca indicated that she did not feel she could answer children's questions, but rather should listen and pose further questions to elicit their thinking (Lewis et al. 2017). She said that in a Scientific Playworld approach "*…when they [children] have questions, it is OK to answer them* (laughs)". This dynamic tension was captured by Rebecca through exploring the narrative in the story of Chalotte's Web and the scientific understandings of spiders:

> So you get a book, read a non-fiction book, watch a YouTube clip… An example of Charlotte's Web web—we watched really close detail of how they [spiders] spin webs, what is the anatomy, so they knew a lot of facts, they couldn't have come up with that on their own if they have never been exposed to it, and that ties in with the planning side, because Oriana and I had to make sure we felt comfortable with that as well; and its OK to say, "Let's find out together". If we knew it was coming, we made sure we felt comfortable with the knowledge (RIP9).

Hedges (2014) has referred to this contradiction of finding ways to teach concepts, whilst not appearing to lead conceptual development, as "smuggling in content". She argues that teachers do not feel comfortable with the contradiction of not interfering whilst also being expected to teach concepts. Rebecca illustrates this tension when she foregrounds how, "*Oriana and I had to make sure we felt comfortable with that* [content]". Rebecca also draws attention to how the Scientific Playworld approach created new developmental conditions for children for learning concepts, but at the same time it affirmed play as an important approach for learning, successfully resolving the conflict for her, as noted when she said, "*they couldn't have come up with that on their own if they have never been exposed to it*".

Dealing with contraction created through new policies from Government for more teaching, in a context of the Piagetian shadow of following from behind the child and

not being above the child's development as introduced by Vygotsky, is emotionally experienced by Rebecca. Bringing the contraction of teaching concepts together with the need for allowing children to play had an unknown outcome for Rebecca. She said, "*The thing that made me nervous at the beginning was the unknown. I didn't know how it was going to play out*". But through drawing on a Scientific Playworld to resolve this contradiction, it changed how she felt about her role in supporting children's learning of concepts:

> But now that's the bit that is really exciting…[explains what they will do on Monday], so we don't know how it will turn out. That would have terrified me before. Half the children will lose it; they will get silly. Whereas now I am thinking, it is just going to be good fun.

Marilyn asked, *What's made that change for you?* Rebecca responded, *"Just experiencing it. Just having some confidence. Having faith in the children. I have faith that we have front loaded them enough that they understand these concepts around greed, pollution, with factories, they have a strong grasp of these concepts, and the questions they are asking, are really big philospohical questions, I know they will be able to contribute to this form of play" (RIP2).*

The children's responses to how Rebecca was dealing with the contradiction were positive. This supported the development of Rebecca as a teacher of science, showing the interweaving of individual and social subjectivities, as she engaged with new practices, and developed a new image of herself as a risk taker.

9.3.5 Humanising Science—The Emotional Nature of a Scientific Playworld

Through experiencing the Scientific Playworld with the children, Rebecca was in a position to feel the emotional nature of the narrative of the story with the children. Charlotte is a spider—something that traditionally affords an emotional response from children and some adults. But in the story of Charlotte's Web, new imaginings were being created, resulting in a very different emotional response, as Rebecca explains:

> … you know they LOVED Charlotte, the spider. You know if we were just learning about spiders…and in the beginning they thought spiders were gross, to kill them all, they were saying "Squash it". Then we learn't about Charlotte from the story and her important role in the ecosystem, and then they had an admoration for spiders, understood their importance, and were very respectful, and felt they were BEAUTIFUL. Without the story, we wouldn't have been able to do that in a magical way. But—we all understand that spiders are important, but they really loved Charlotte, she's wise and kind (RIP13).

The book changed how the children emotionally related to spiders and opened up new possibilities for deep learning in science. A new emotional image of the spider emerged as a result of both the fiction and the science. The emotional imagining went beyond the character of Charlotte, to that of Wilbur the farm piglet, destined to be eaten, as Rebecca explains:

> …it is quite an emotional book, because Wilbur is almost killed. I could tell. We had to be very careful around, that this was just a story, and Wilbur was going to be OK, and sometimes that happens on farms…So I guess in terms of drama, it is about balancing, grabbing their emotions and having that…, but also that everyone feels really safe, and that that it is a Playworld (RIP17).

The Scientific Playworlds approach introduced a very different way of doing science. Recognising emotional imagination as subjective pushed against science as only an objective form of knowledge construction. The Scientific Playworlds approach created a dramatic tension that acted as a productive force for children's development, but also for the development of the teachers. The interweaving of individual and social subjectivities paved the way for a new way of learning science. During the weekly interviews with Sue, the research assistant, the social productions, the interweaving of individual and social subjectivities, and the emotional imagination of being a teacher of science emerge. The following extensive interview segments illustrate the dynamic tension and how this acted as a source of development for both teachers.

> Rebecca: Oriana did a really outstanding job of Farmer Zuckerman [in the story of Charlotte's web].
>
> Sue: So how did you feel about being Farmer Zuckerman?
>
> Oriana: I loved it because… you know, just walking up; when I've gone out to get ready and put myself in costume and come back—as I was walking I felt angry that my crop had been infested with these coddling moths. So it totally, instead of being nervous of, **the scientific facts of teaching whatever**, totally **I was that person** and I just felt angry and passionate and it just all came out. But of course, having said that we did think carefully about it before we did it, and what we were going to talk about. But having all of that, it was just, it was able to come out in a different way, you know—
>
> Sue: Yes, very emotionally by the sounds of that.
>
> Oriana: Yes emotionally, yeah.

A very different enactment of "teaching science" is presented through Oriana's response. She no longer worries about the content knowledge associated with teaching science—something that the literature has always blamed teachers for not knowing much about (Garbett 2003). Rather, the Scientific Playworld has allowed her to draw upon her strengths in drama and play to open up a new way of teaching science content, and a new image of science teaching. Rebecca positions Oriana carefully, as is shown in the next part of the interview:

> Rebecca: I think Oriana really is quite a skilled actress so it works really well, so I've had a lot of practice of being with the children as well so I think… and we're so lucky because we work so closely together and we're good friends so intuitively we're understanding the pedagogy much better. Who steps in when, kind of juggling that better.
>
> Oriana: Absolutely, and even knowing our role, like if we're going to be, you know, above, with or below the children you quickly… even if I'm more in that secondary role with Rebecca like if Rebecca's leading it I can see quickly her positioning in her questioning with the children. You know, I quickly get that, so you're more aware.

Sue then invites both Rebecca and Oriana to reflect upon this strength:

Sue: What impact do you think that's making on your teaching or to the way the children are receiving it?

Rebecca: I think the project feels much tighter, because we have a clearer idea of how to drive it and I think we feel **much more confident with these concepts** and with the microbes [previous Scientific Playworld of Alice in Wonderland], everything was new and I think we didn't feel confident enough. And I know that was our fault because it was made really clear that we needed to be confident. But for this it's just easier to run with.

Oriana: And too, we did say, you know, it was very literal in some ways, we'd stuck very closely to the story. But I think that was our—

Rebecca: We eased ourselves into this project.

Oriana:—yeah, it **was a bit like having training wheels** for when you ride a bike, you know, let's see how we can really make this.

Rebecca: But it's helped our confidence.

Sue: So, the story was like the training wheels to immerse yourself in the concepts.

Oriana: And the process, you know, the whole thing of acting out.

Rebecca: **I think the science concept was the training wheels**, having something that was a more entry level science concept was the training wheels does that make sense? (P006).

The metaphor of the training wheels to describe science concepts is illustrative of how the teachers were imagining new ways of teaching science. The study found that this constant emotional imagining was always in the context of the dynamic tensions between the fiction of the story and the science concepts that were being explored to deepen the play. The contradiction between fiction and non-fiction narratives generated new emotional images, as we heard when Oriana said, "*It was a bit like having training wheels for when you ride a bike, you know*", and Rebecca reinforcing this image when she said, "*I think the science concept was the training wheels*". The teachers were constantly re-configuring the nature of science teaching. They showed through their discourse throughout the study, the humanising of science concepts—not as facts to be learned by children, but as concepts with remnants of emotions—Charlotte the spider is beautiful, kind, responsible, but also a part of an ecosystem. The teaching of science concepts was an emotionally charged situation, as they were remembering being inside of the imaginary situation of Farmer Zuckerman with his coddling moth problem—something that needed science to solve, as we heard when Rebecca invited Oriana to talk about the Scientific Playworld, *"I felt angry that my crop had been infested with these coddling moths… instead of being nervous of,* ***the scientific facts of teaching whatever****, totally* ***I was that person*** *and I just felt angry and passionate and it just all came out*". The humanising of science through the fiction of the story is also reflective of how science is used in everyday life—with remnants of emotions, with everyday life connections, and as part of the subjectivities—social and individual—which are always in the process of developing.

9.3.6 Conclusions

The study reported in this chapter sought to better understand teacher development when introducing a new approach for teaching science concepts in preschool settings. Through following Rebecca over a period of 2 years as she implemented a Scientific Playworld, it was possible to gain insights into the symbolic and emotional productions of her experiences and to identify the reciprocity of individual and social subjectivities (Gonzalez Rey 2017) of herself and her children. Studying the emotions and symbolic processes of Rebecca as she entered into imaginary play situations with her co-teacher and the children helped build an understanding of Rebecca's psychological development and emotional imagining of herself as a teacher of science concepts.

It was found that the Scientific Playworlds approach created a dynamic contradiction between fiction (Playworld narrative) and non-fiction (science content). This contradiction appeared to act as a productive source of development for Rebecca (and Oriana) and, through this, created new emotional images about the nature of teaching science. Science concepts had become interwoven in the narrative of the storyline, positively drawing upon Rebecca's strength of teaching in play-based settings. Understanding the symbolic processes and emotions that are part of the teaching of science in early childhood settings (Gonzalez Rey 2017) was an important outcome of this study. Understanding the contradictions within a Scientific Playworld and how this contradiction was experienced by Rebecca gives new insights into how to support teachers' development in the context of science education.

The chapter reflects on the power and place of the interrelated concepts of "subjective senses and subjective configurations" (Gonzalez Rey 2017) for moving understandings forward for the teaching of science concepts to preschool-aged children, where existing debates need to move beyond the current simplistic focus on the teacher's competence and confidence to teach science in the early years (Garbett 2003). What this study confirmed was that teachers and children are constantly negotiating ways of being, knowing, and acting in early childhood settings (Hadzigeorgiou 2016). But what is NOT known, UNTIL NOW, is how this is negotiated during the teaching of science concepts in an emotionally charged and contradictory context of a Scientific Playworld. What was observed was how the images of science teaching changed as the evolving narrative developed. A new sense of science as meaningfully embedded in a narrative for the children and the teachers was emerging—Charlotte is beautiful and responsible, but Charlotte is also a spider who has a place in an ecosystem. A diversity of subjective productions and social pathways was constantly evolving in the teaching of science. Knowledge construction in science was initially imagined in traditional ways and associated with worry about knowing enough about the concepts. However, what emerged through this study was a new image about what it means to be a teacher of science, and not a science teacher. The study identified the process of the humanisation of science knowledge construction, and this is important for science education generally, and science education research specifically.

Like a shadow from the past, scientific ways of constructing knowledge have foregrounded a view of knowledge construction as objective. Yet, this study has shown that it is a subjective process with many different pathways, symbolic and emotional processes and a constant interweaving of individual and social subjectivities. What is key here is how the emotions associated with teaching of science content were always subjectively experienced and symbolically produced. The subjective senses formed from the process of teaching science content were always in flux, unfolding and re-folding into each other, and appearing to form real changes in how teachers think about themselves as they move from the role of a science teacher to a teacher of science. That is, the teachers in this study appeared to be forming and re-forming subjective configurations of the nature of science and the nature of science teaching. Gonzalez Rey's (2017) concept of subjective senses captures and makes visible the many emotions and symbolic processes that emerge during teaching.

Emotional imagination was central for understanding the identities that were introduced and re-imagined in the production of learning science through a Scientific Playworld. Rebecca's development as a "teacher of science" was constantly evolving and re-imagined, at the same time as she was actively discarding the negatively imagined role of herself as a "science teacher". Although subjectivity is rarely discussed in the teaching of science, it was found to be a central concept for understanding how teachers develop when exploring new ways of teaching science concepts to young children in early childhood settings. However, further research into this phenomenon is still needed.

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Chapter 10
The Role of Subjectivity for Understanding Collaborative Dialogue and Cultural Productions of Teachers in International Schools

Megan Adams and Marilyn Fleer

Abstract González Rey has advanced the cultural-historical concept of sense through introducing the interrelated concepts of subjective sense and subjective configuration for explaining the development of human relations as a form of social production. The subtleness of González Rey's theoretical concepts when applied to the study of families in culturally diverse settings has provided nuanced understandings of children's social productions. However, in this chapter his concepts are drawn upon to better understand how expatriate teachers working in an Australian international school situated in the Middle East socially produced cultural diversity. The focus of the study was on examining the social practice of sharing food at lunch times. During the sharing of food, dialogue acted as an important tool for illuminating individual subjectivities and for generating social subjectivities about cultural diversity. It was theorized that a sense of cultural belonging was created through the lunchtime practice of sharing food. Legitimization of cultural lunches was socially produced through reference to professional documents that detailed the concept of a sense of belonging. Indicators contributed to the development of the concept of cultural production realized through the lunchtime practices of teachers in an international school in the Middle East where cultural diversity is the norm.

10.1 Introduction

Worldwide trade and high rates of mobility have contributed to Early Childhood Centres (ELC) becoming microcosm of the world. There are groups who move countries, such as immigrants, refugees, political asylum seekers, expatriates, teachers and students. The high-rates of international mobility open countries to welcome expatriate

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workers who are employed by multinational companies. When families are internationally mobile, many select international schools for their children to attend. Hayden and Thompson (2008) argue that international schools are diverse and answer the need of local and expatriate families who require their children to become "global citizens with a concern for world peace, environmental responsibility and sustainable development" (p. 27). The teaching population in international schools potentially mirrors that of the student population. However, this is dependent upon the laws and regulations of the host country, the hiring policy of the school and the curriculum offered, which may contribute to restrictions in the diversity of the teaching population (Hayden and Thompson 2008). Yet there is research that suggests some teachers in international schools are monolingual, educated in Western universities and have had limited experience teaching in classrooms that are culturally diverse (Lacina and Sowa 2005). In the microcosm of international schools, there exists a variety of cultures, ethnic diversity, languages and varying pedagogical practices.

Today's mobile population supports pluralistic societies that incorporate varied customs, languages and heritage of diverse ethnic groups and cultures. Definitions and understandings of the word culture are wide-ranging. However, there is a theoretical need to take these definitions further and provide a greater understanding of the diverse cultural contexts which some groups experience. González Rey (2016, 2017) has introduced the concept of subjectivity to express the specific human production that emerges within cultural, historical and social processes. Subjectivity is not a determinant of culture but a specific production that emerges within culture. Understanding González Rey's conception of culture and subjectivity has been useful in our research of human relations within and across cultural communities. In this chapter, we draw upon the concept of subjectivity for understanding the nature of expatriate teachers' cultural productions of their daily lunch ritual for building a sense of belonging when teaching in a foreign country.

To achieve the goal of this chapter, we first briefly review definitions of culture. Second, we provide our understanding of González Rey's concept of subjectivity in relation to social productions in culturally diverse contexts. Third, we introduce the cultural-historical methodology that informed our study. Finally, we use indicators to build concepts and to theorize the social productions that originated between the teachers and researcher. We extend the idea of cultural productions (González Rey 2016) to explain a sense of belonging in an Australian international school situated in the Middle East.

10.2 Conceptualizing Culture

There are vast and varied understandings of the word culture, which appear across a broad range of knowledge forms and approaches to research, as is seen when we consider anthropology (see Tonneau and Thompson 2000) cultural-historical theory (see Vygotsky 1987; González Rey 2017), philosophy (see Casey 1986), psychology (Bozhovich 2009) and sociology (Griswold 2003). A classic definition

of the word culture, which is often cited, is that of "Taylor from 1871…culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities that inhabits acquired by man [sic] as a member of society" (Ghiselin 2000, p. 74). This definition provides a framework for understanding culture in a broad sense and is foundational to many interpretations. A more recent definition which represents life in contemporary times and the place of technology in society is that of Hofstede (1986) who defined culture as "the software of the mind" (p. 186). Recent definitions seek to capture the dynamic, rather than static nature of culture, by highlighting change, social practice and community. For instance, Rogoff (2003) has argued that "humans develop through their changing participation in [the] sociocultural activities of their communities, which also change" (p. 11). In this chapter, we seek to better understand how teachers change their participation, while recognizing that during this process, they change the school communities in which they work. In this chapter, we seek to show how the moment-to-moment interactions between teachers during their breaks contribute to the development of new social productions necessary for becoming members of a culturally diverse school community.

González Rey (2017) suggests that the varied definitions of the term culture are often "theoretically empty, leading to an understanding of practical and research activities as mere technical empirical instrumental procedures" (p. 2). In this reading, a dichotomy between scientific and interpretivist understandings of culture emerge. For instance, there are various authors who highlight the dichotomy in understanding when researching culture (Griswold 2003; Gutierrez and Correa-Chaves 2006). There has been a historical propensity to frame research about culture within a scientific paradigm that has facilitated generalization of members originating from non-dominant communities (Gutierrez and Correa-Chaves 2006). That is, some dominant scientific methodologies tend to be large scale and these study designs seek to define categories, such as culture, race and ethnicity. The generalizations and models of culture (Griswold 2003) are often conceptualized as repeatable study designs where researchers "compare cultural communities and subgroups with one another with little or no consideration of the history or logic leading to observable cultural patterns" (Gutierrez and Correa-Chaves 2006, p. 175). By contrast, a cultural-historical perspective based on a more holistic methodology acknowledges that there is diversity between and within communities, and there is a range of ways that individual members present and experience their life circumstances. In this cultural-historical conceptualization of culture, an acknowledgement of human experience as a variable is found, resources are considered as negotiated, and the capturing of challenges in everyday life is viewed as human constructions which are experienced differently (Fleer and Quinones 2009).

Further, many studies of cultural groups and societies consider Western culture as the benchmark and "other cultural groups are reduced to being something exotic" (Tudge and Odero-Wanga 2009, p. 143). There is little reference or recognition of cultural difference. Gutierrez and Correa-Chaves (2006) argued against "categorize[ing] groups of people who may share a geographical, linguistic and historical background" as the same, and caution those who "assume that difference from middle-class prac-

tices imply deficits" (p. 175). This is pertinent in today's pluralistic societies and often overlooked.

In drawing together this brief overview of conceptualization of culture, there appears to be a theoretical need to position empirical research on culture in a different way. González Rey (2017) argues that subjectivity is missing from the study of culture and that attention needs to be directed towards an ontological understanding of subjectivity, where cultural, social and historical human productions are located. The research presented in this chapter seeks to use the concept of subjectivity to frame an investigation of the cultural productions of teachers working in an Australian international school situated in the Middle East.

10.3 Theoretical Framework

González Rey is developing theoretical, epistemological and methodological concepts in relation to the ontogenesis of human relations. The theory of subjectivity challenges and develops further understandings of what it means to be human. González Rey (2004, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2016, 2017) has advanced interpretations of Vygotsky's concepts of perezhivanie, the social situation of development and sense. In his theoretical work, González Rey has nuanced the concept of subjectivity and provided a new ontological definition of this concept for the study of human psychological processes (Mok and Goulart 2016). We are interested in this concept for our study of cultural productions that were developed in an international school, which provides a culturally diverse setting for our research.

As discussed elsewhere in this book, subjectivity is a generative social–emotional process, which evolves through human experience, where individuals and social groups emerge as subjects of human practice and experience. Subjectivity is created within cultural-historical realities, which exist as social productions (González Rey 2016). Two concepts which are an integral part of subjectivity are subjective sense and subjective configuration.

Subjective sense brings into unity "emotions and symbolic processes" (Fleer and González Rey 2017, p. 18) that are in constant generative motion and support the development of cultural productions. Subjective senses are part of a system that is inseparable from subjective configurations (González Rey 2012). Subjective configurations are not conscious psychological processes, "subjective senses express lived situations that are subjectively recreated and that only exist at the present moment within a subjective configuration that makes them unrecognizable" (González Rey and Martínez 2016, p. 158). Therefore, subjective configurations are not perceived as an individual's consciousness (González Rey 2016). Importantly, "Subjective configurations are organized as the result of the chaotic and endless movements of the subjective senses that characterize human experience" (González Rey 2016, p. 155). Therefore, they are inseparable psychological moments which are recursive so that one is continually configured into the other (González Rey 2004).

Although a complex theoretical approach, subjectivity is a useful concept when studying expatriate teachers' experience of living and working in an international environment and using a curriculum framework developed in another country. Qualitative epistemological underpinnings of subjectivity provide a new way of interpreting each teacher's individual/social experience in a diverse cultural context.

González Rey (2017) has suggested that the conceptualization of subjectivity should "permit the integration of culture and subjectivity within the nature of their own action, without reducing one to the other (González Rey's 2017, p. 8). Subjectivity is part of a complex generative system, which integrates and configures experiences within an individual's social and cultural life. The cultural productions of individuals are in constant change, in tension and in contradiction. Individuals are "part of a complex recursive system that integrates social and individual subjectivities in different levels" (González Rey 2017, p. 7). Further, González Rey is explicit about the tension and contradictions when discussing subjectivity stating "subjectivity does not reproduce cultural social life…. or depart from any universal structured principle… Subjectivity is emancipated from psyche as a natural system and at the same time is a resource for emancipation from the social dominant institutionalized order" (p. 13). This conceptualization allows for the expression and dynamic analysis of what each teacher culturally brings to their work in the international school. González Rey's (2017) conceptualization was drawn upon to analyse each teacher's cultural productions and subjectivities brought to the international school. Within this environment, each teacher integrates singular subjectivities from varying cultures, in this instance noted through dialogue. Therefore, we look to the changes, tensions and contradictions within dialogue that informed the emerging cultural productions.

10.4 Qualitative Methodology

A significant amount of theorization has been directed to conceptualizing and enacting qualitative research (Patiño and Goulart 2016). However, in this chapter we specifically discuss González Rey's (2004) conception of a qualitative epistemology because the concept of subjectivity has been theorized within this methodological frame. In accordance with Patiño and Goulart (2016), a qualitative epistemology is a "platform of thought" (p.161) that expands subjectivity and explains principles in relation to scientific claims. There are three main principles of a qualitative epistemology (Campolina and Martínez 2016; Patiño and Goulart 2016).

The first principle is positioning "knowledge production as a theory and method that coexist and which recursively interact" (Campolina and Martínez 2016, p. 187). It is through interweaving empirical data with theory, and where existing theories are challenged, that the production of new knowledge becomes possible.

The second principle is "singularity as a legitimate source of information" (Patiño and Goulart 2016, p. 170). According to Patiño and Goulart (2016), singularity is conceptualized as a qualitative process that captures the person's "production of subjective sense and meanings" (p. 170). Utilizing singularity in constructive–inter-

pretive methodology requires the researcher to be aware that theory can explain and go beyond the singular empirical experience (González Rey 2019 this book). The researcher draws upon their ontological, epistemological and theoretical understandings to provide an explanation of the singular empirical experience. This approach provides originality, gives generalized theoretical models and captures the process of continuous development (Patiño and Goulart 2016; González Rey 2019).

The third principle rests with the understanding that knowledge production is intricately connected with the dialogical nature of the research presented by the researcher. The relationship between the researcher and the participant is viewed as generative and based on the dialogic character of social interaction initiated by the researcher. The participant is encouraged to reflect and enter into conversations and through the researcher instigating provocations, open communication is facilitated. Therefore, both the participant and the researcher are active agents in the research process (Patiño and Goulart 2016). The generative relationship fosters open communication between participant and researcher, which supports the production of concepts leading to a theoretical model of research (Campolina and Martínez 2016).

We add a fourth consideration for this methodological construct, that is, the way that the theory of subjectivity has been developed through dialogic construction between González Rey and his team of researchers within the context of Brazilian society, speaking Portuguese and collaborating. Although channels of dialogue are open between the authors of this chapter, González Rey and his team of researchers. Email conversations are not the same as being present and immersed in the culture and discussing the finer nuances of the theory and methodological considerations. Instead, we rely on our own scholarship and interpretation of González Rey's complex theory of subjectivity. This is important because within this theory, dialogue is subjectively configured as the complex interweaving of social, cultural and individual subjectivities, and these social productions inform the process of collecting and analysing data (González Rey and Martínez 2016).

10.5 Method

In the current study, we followed the teachers from an international school in the Middle East. The international school includes an Early Learning Centre, which draws upon the Australian national curriculum, known as the Early Years Learning and Development Framework (EYLF 2009). The teachers from the Early Learning Centre and the researcher were co-constructors of the dialogue during the data collection phase of the research.

The twelve teachers originated from seven countries all with varying ways of life and cultural experiences (see Table 10.1). As the teachers originate from varying cultural backgrounds, the teachers' cultural productions are used as indicators within the individual/social context of the Early Learning Centre.

The Australian international school caters for around 1200 students, and it is open to local nationals and expatriates; the main language of instruction is English. Part

Table 10.1 Passport held for those teachers working at the school, age range and average age of all participants

Country of passport	Age range of all participants	Average age of all participants
American	25–50 years	39 years
Australian		
Australian and Jordanian (dual citizen)		
Indian		
Iraqi		
Lebanese		
New Zealand		

of the school's vision is to produce a learning community where students become responsible global citizens who are critical thinkers and resilient. The values integral to the school are based on learning that produces excellence, diversity and integrity.

At the time of this research, The Early Learning Centre formed an integral part of the international school and catered for 250 3–4-year-olds who attended school from the hours of 9–1 pm.

The 12 teaching staff who participated in the research were supported by 10 Filipino teacher aides who contributed to everyday life in varying capacities, such as working with small groups of children, organizing displays of children's work and relieving teachers for breaks.

The lead researcher had been invited to the school for one week periods over two consecutive years. In the first year, the lead researcher was invited in October and delivered Professional Development sessions to the Primary and Early Learning Centre teachers and formed working relationships with the staff. One area discussed was potential research collaborations for future visits. In the second year, the lead researcher was invited to return in April for one week to deliver Professional Development sessions and work with the teachers at the Early Learning Centre on the current research project.

On the first day, of the second visit, lunchtime was scheduled for 12–12.45 pm, during the first morning of data collection. The lead researcher was invited to eat lunch with the Early Learning Centre teachers. While not fully comprehending, that lunch would be supplied, the researcher organized her own lunch and noted that the food was shared and that one person had made lunch for all of the teachers on that day. It transpired that the shared cultural lunch was a daily tradition that had been in existence for a number of years. The teachers organized a timetable where one person made lunch once every eight days (the core participants consisted of eight staff members mostly originating from the Middle Eastern countries) for the core group; however, it was understood that anyone could join at any time and share the lunch which meant that catering in excess was the norm, there were always leftovers.

Although there were eight core members of the cultural lunch group, all staff were invited to join and visitors were always included. Those staff who did not join

in the daily cultural lunch, chose to prepare their own food. These staff members cited reasons for not joining in such as: not enjoying preparing food in bulk; food routines, such as eating the same food daily was preferable rather than an unknown food, another staff member preferred to eat quickly and work over lunch to leave early for family reasons. It was also noted that the Filipino staff members sat together in a different space, all eating together.

10.6 Tools of the Research

Research tools included formal and informal dialogue, situations and resources where participants were provided with opportunities to discuss with the researcher and each other and to express themselves individually and socially to develop ideas within the context of the research. This provided development of ideas and the co-construction of data with the participants.

The main tools of the research are outlined in Table 10.2. The research tools supported the production of indicators and hypotheses, which concerned the subjectivity (Patiño and Goulart 2016) of the teachers involved with the research (Table 10.2).

10.7 Cultural Productions

The concept of subjectivity enabled the researcher to document social productions in the process of development. The constructive interpretations were advanced through the indicators expressed by the participant's dialogue. Subjective senses were generated through the human experience of eating food together. An analysis of the interweaving of individual and social subjectivities suggested two central social productions that were key for understanding how expatriate teachers in an international context worked with cultural diversity. They were

1. Dialogue as the source of social productions of cultural diversity
2. The social production of cultural belonging.

10.7.1 Dialogue as the Source of Social Productions of Cultural Diversity

Dialogue appeared as a key source of social production and supported the expatriate teachers understanding of cultural diversity. The teachers who participated in the study were part of the Australian international school, but they were also a part of society within the Middle East. Through the human experience of eating lunch, the

Table 10.2 Sources of data gathering

Type of data gathered	Hours of data	Example questions	Number of questions	Aim
Survey: Descriptive statistics	12 full responses at 30 min each Total hours: 6 h (approximately)	Demographic data Age, countries resided in passport Schools taught in Likert scale based on the EYLDF (2009) outcomes Short answer questions: examples past and current pedagogical practices and understanding of the EYLDF (2009)	11 6 16	Find out about the challenges and benefits of implementing the EYLF (2009) and in an international context
Face-to-face interviews	30 min each X 12 participants 6 h of data	Answers of survey used for discussion topics themes included: What are the benefits of using the EYLF in an international setting? What are the challenges of using the EYLF in an international setting?	15	Deeper individual understanding of the challenges and benefits of implementing the EYLF and VEYLDF in an international context
Video observation of planning meetings	3 one hour sessions 3 h	No questions—video observations only		As above: What is occurring and what is discussed
Forum discussions: Formal during Professional Development session	One hour session Total 1 h	From the interviews, one theme emerged: The importance of a sense of belonging for teachers and what practices do teachers undertake that make them feel as if they belong in this international setting?	Conversation	Deeper meaning and collective mind at work
Forum Discussions: Informal over lunch, day-to-day conversations in classrooms	5×45 min sessions Total 3 h 45 min	Tell me about: Why different teachers supply food each day? Why everyone is not involved in the lunch	conversation	Deeper meaning and collective mind at work
Total hours of data collection	19 h and 45 min			

individual subjectivities of the participating teachers became visible in the dialogue between teachers and between the teachers and the researcher.

During the first lunch, Nina and Twula discussed with the researcher Megan, why they participate in the shared experience of a cultural lunch. The lunch was situated within the practice tradition of the Arabic culture, where sharing food and eating together were an expected cultural practice. The shared lunch signified a historical sociocultural representation of the Arabic tradition in an Australian international setting. Nina explains:

> The lunch group … in the Early Learning Centre we are very much close, we are a family pretty much and we understand everybody's coming from different culture[s], and it's nice to get to know, nice to invite everybody because they always say food is something that brings people together usually … in the Arab culture it's norm, just you have to have everybody in.

Nina provided insight into the close bond of those in the Early Learning Centre and the way they are all from different cultures and the way that *food brings everyone together*, which is an important part of the Arabic culture. This appears as an indicator of *individual cultural identity* being made concrete through the social process of *being together eating food*.

Nina continues to expand on the meaning of eating together:

> So, it's nice … we learn from each other, we eat each other's food, we try new things [food] from different countries. We share recipes that do not always come from our Arabic culture. It breaks a lot of barriers when you sit together. [Nina]

Nina discusses the way food is used as a tool for the communication of learning about each other's cultural practices, eating each other's food and trying new food from different cultures. This dialogue is suggestive of an indicator of how sharing food and eating together act as a social practice that supports participants to share their cultural identities with each other. This indicator appears to manifest itself through the human experience of trying new food. Theoretically, this would suggest that the interweaving of individual and social subjectivities is being manifested in the sharing of food. Using dialogue in this way, to find out about different kinds of food, appears to act *as a source of social production of cultural diversity*.

Both these examples act as indicators of cultural diversity located in dialogue—not as an objective static process, but rather as social subjectivities, which are at the same time an expression of individual subjectivities of cultural identity. Twula extends and reinforces the significance of the cultural lunch as integral to the Arabic identity and communication:

> …we've made good friendships amongst ourselves, we're a very close team, and in our culture, in all the Arabic cultures, eating together is what makes our culture unique. It's rarely that you see anyone eat alone. So, you have to be eating with family, with friends. Even if there is no one, you will find a friend to come over and eat with you, because you enjoy food when you're having a conversation. Here we swap recipes like today Mira …she did not grow up here [United Arab Emirates] but she asks all the time for the recipe of this food… for that food. You saw today with Baba ghanoush [Arabic dip made from eggplant, tahini and spices]—she wrote it down and will bring it for us to try but of course it is not as good as mine [*laughs*]… We tell her what is missing… she comes with good food and we ask for the recipe. [Twula]

In this example, Twula expands on the importance of eating together in the Arabic culture and provides insight into the importance of not eating alone. Therefore, eating together is inseparable from the human experience of communicating with each other about what it means to be Arabic. The processes of eating together and communicating are used as a device to better understand cultural diversity, potentially acting against perceived cultural barriers. It is therefore proposed that the sharing of food is used by these teachers as a tool for positively communicating about their culture, and for interweaving individual and social subjectivities about cultural identity. Subjective senses are shown through the sharing of recipes, the discussion about cooking food and eating each other's offering of homemade food, which is shared. These are all indicators of the social production of cultural diversity. González Rey (2017) directs our attention to the theoretical need for subjectivity where a person's subjective configuration and senses "are a mix of emotional symbolic units within which one sense replaces others and at the same time is replaced by others, in such a rapid movement that it is not perceived by the individual's consciousness" (González Rey 2016, p. 155).

During the cultural practice of sharing food, we see that there is no reducing the subjectivity/culture and individual/social to separate units as Gonzalez Rey (González Rey 2017) has argued against. Rather, the interweaving of subjectivities is found through the practice of eating together. Shared cultural diversity is informed by the individual subjectivity of the teachers through sharing cultural food and the social practice of a cultural lunch. Cultural diversity is shaped by the social subjectivities that are constantly in motion and developing through dialogue. Similarly, individual/social cannot be separated or reduced one to the other as they work in unity through the socioemotional generative system ("eating together is what makes our culture unique"). The participant's decisions and options represent possible sources in the genesis of new subjective senses that are being developed, where dialogue about sharing food appears to act as a key source of social production about cultural diversity. Theoretically, it is argued that the dialogue embedded in the cultural lunch and the subjective senses that emerge through sharing food act as the source of the social production of cultural diversity.

10.7.2 The Social Production of Cultural Belonging

The participants were unable to access their extended family regularly because they were expatriates who reside with their nuclear family in the Middle East. The Arabic culture and life circumstances of the teachers were different to the context in which they worked in an Australian international school. The cultural lunch as a key social practice appeared to support the development of close bonds with others, acting as a substitute for their extended family from their own country of origin.

Megan (researcher) started the conversation on the third day at the lunch table stating:

> It seems that you all get on really well. As you all know I've been an expat too, so I know it is challenging when you are living in a country so far away from your extended family. Sometimes it's hard to find that sense of belonging but it seems like you have this at your workplace, you have come together and developed it here through the cultural lunch [Megan].

Sarah responds:

> …here it just comes naturally, we are in the same situation. Thanks to the framework… what you do on a daily basis [in the classroom] it goes to show that you don't really need to try too hard to include everyone, inclusion just comes along with it. The cultural lunch forms part of our belonging, like you said we don't have our families but we miss them, here we can almost be family [Sarah].

Sarah commented that each person was in the same situation and linked her daily practice in the classroom to that of being inclusive generally and more specifically the way belonging in the international setting is related to the cultural lunch. Yusa responded to Megan in a different way, through linking the cultural lunch to the Australian early childhood framework (EYLF 2009):

> This practice of the lunch, it links beautifully to the frameworks (Curriculum—Early Years Learning Framework) because it creates this space… this space where we can all belong, you know like, we belong together. We are eating together, we're laughing together, we're crying together, we get angry not always together… mainly at the husbands, [*laughs*]… but at the end of the day, we are all family, the lunch is who we are, we are together just like one big, yeah, one big family…[Yusa].

The dialogue opens up through the researcher's subjectivity and experiencing the life of an expat, similar to the participants in the study. The social productions inform the process of co-construction of the data (González Rey and Martínez 2016). The researcher begins the conversation reflecting on personal experience of being separated from extended family while residing as an expatriate and the challenges felt when trying to find a sense of belonging. However, for the teachers involved in the cultural lunch, an emotional–social need of belonging to an extended family was almost met for one participant ("here we can almost be family") and met for the other (at the end of the day, we are all family). The individual–social productions of eating lunch together provide the participants with a sense of belonging to a family. The participants acknowledge the role that the framework plays in bringing the teacher's together ("what you do on a daily basis [in the classroom] it goes to show that you don't really need to try too hard to include everyone"). An indicator of belonging is present in the dialogue. The teachers draw upon the EYLF as a source of validation and a way of framing their lived human experiences of being in an international school. It is thought that the link between the individual/social–cultural production of lunch and the curriculum framework is being used as a way of giving permission for the social practice of a shared cultural lunch. A sense of belonging is being legitimized, but also the framework appears to give concepts for belonging, not just for children but also for the teachers. The teacher's own subjectivity and need for belonging are acknowledged. In the same way, their professional practice of supporting the children to develop a sense of belonging in the Early Learning Centre where cultural diversity is the norm. The philosophy of the framework is based on

belonging, being and becoming within a community of practice. It would seem that for the teachers, through the cultural lunch and working daily with the framework, that the document and the concepts (such as inclusion) support their own feelings of belonging.

In many Western schools situated in Australia, lunch usually involves a short period of time, with a small snack, such as a sandwich. Teachers and children do not participate in hot meals over an extended period of time. However, on some occasions lunch is shared, this practice is usually reserved for special occasions. The majority of time, lunch is provided by the individual for the individual. The link between the cultural production (lunch) and the EYLF (2009) was surprising to the Australian researchers. Two participants acknowledged the power of the framework and the way it is inclusive and provides an avenue for belonging, which was linked to the shared lunch. Gonzalez Rey (2011) argues that "in the subject's processes, subjective senses appear behind the conscious intention and have unpredictable effects on the ongoing course of action" (p. 46). In the dialogue between Megan and the teachers about a shared lunch, the philosophy behind the frameworks emerged as an important link between the cultural lunch and the development of belonging in a culturally diverse context. An analysis of the EYLF (2009) shows that there is an emphasis on the children developing a sense of belonging, for example,

> Experiencing *belonging*—knowing where and with whom you belong is integral to human existence. Children belong to a family, a cultural group, a neighbourhood and a wider community. *Belonging* acknowledges children's interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. In early childhood, and throughout life, relationships are crucial to a sense of *belonging*. *Belonging* is central to *being* and *becoming* in that it shapes who children are and who they can become (Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations, [DEEWR] 2009, p. 7).
>
> Children are born *belonging* to a culture, which is not only influenced by traditional practices, heritage and ancestral knowledge, but also by the experiences, values and beliefs of individual families and communities (DEEWR 2009, p.13).

González Rey advocates for the interweaving of empirical studies with theory, where existing theories are challenged, which results in the production of new knowledge, rather than recalling extant ideas. Therefore, we note that there is no specific mention of the teachers' need to belong in the educational setting within the framework. Rather, there are assumptions based on general statements that teachers will develop a community of belonging, being and becoming for children. However, the teachers at the Australian international school felt the need to belong and build an extended family through their workplace and two of the teachers use this as a rationale for developing the cultural lunch as their way of being inclusive and belonging. The idea of belonging and the integration of eating together have a much deeper meaning for the teachers. The teachers appear to be drawing upon a curriculum resource to explain their practice and their need for belonging. Theoretically, it can be argued in the process of the social production of cultural belonging, that it is not only the intertwining of individual and social subjectivities, but it also the subjective senses that are associated with the need for professional resources to support belonging that must be considered.

10.8 Conclusions

To use González Rey's theoretical and methodological concepts when researching cultural productions provides a new way to interweave theoretical and empirical understandings. The ontological, epistemological and theoretical foundations of social and individual subjectivity provide the possibility to develop insight into how a cultural lunch socially produces understandings of cultural productions. Culture is not static. The production of culture in an international school through engaging in regular cultural lunches is also not static. The outcomes of this study are different to the outcomes derived from scientific methods which seek objective truth. Subjectivity as a methodological concept has provided a different way to generate and analyse subjectivities. By analysing the data, the meaning of dialogue is conceptualized as an indicator. The participants and the researcher discuss and experience individual–social and cultural/subjectivities while sharing lunch.

In our study, we were interested to know how it was that a cultural lunch could have an important emotional effect on teachers' well-being, when teaching in culturally diverse settings, isolated from their own extended family and cultural values and traditions. We were also interested to know how local and international teachers could build inclusive practices, ones that preserved and valued individual cultural identities, but also supported the social subjectivities that were in the process of developing. Theoretically, we argue that the cultural lunch acted as a source for cultural production. Dialogue appeared to be the main tool for the subjective production of cultural diversity during the process of having a cultural lunch.

The first indicator of cultural production highlighted cultural continuity and showed how change was embedded into cultural productions through a person's individual/social cultural/subjectivity. The second indicator of a cultural production was initiated by the researcher. Two participants extended the conversation and suggested a link between their cultural lunch and the curriculum that was framing the learning for children in their international setting. It was theorized that teachers drew upon the jointly used curriculum document to validate the cultural lunch as a social production of cultural belonging.

The methodological concepts used in this study allows for originality in theory, leading to the possibility for generalized theoretical models about cultural productions, captured in the continuous process of development (Patiño and Goulart 2016; González Rey 2019). The indicators located contribute to the theoretical development of how social and individual productions interweave and generatively become cultural productions that support diversity.

Research of this kind is in its infancy. The explanatory and generative possibilities of González Rey's theory of subjectivity are powerful for exposing and explaining the cultural productions of teachers that emerge when researchers study the moment-to-moment interaction of teachers over lunch. More work is still needed in culturally diverse settings for explaining how cultural productions form and change. González Rey has provided a generative theory which has helped explain the subjectivities of the teachers in this study. Through detailing the nature of teachers' cultural produc-

tions of sharing food at lunchtime, insights into the nature of subjectivity of teachers at one international school were possible.

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Part III
Subjectivity and Learning Processes

Chapter 11
Subjective Configurations of Action and the Emergence of Creative Learning

Pilar de Almeida and Luciana Soares Muniz

Abstract Interest in creative learning and its development has become a growing educational demand in our society. We employ the concept of creative learning that was proposed by Mitjáns Martínez based on the Theory of Subjectivity developed by González Rey. This chapter presents the theoretical construction process in the field with two case studies that sought to understand the emergence of creative learning by characterizing the subjective constitutions of the respective participants. The theoretical constructions that were produced are examples of the constructive-interpretive methodology under the aegis of Qualitative Epistemology. In the first case, the aim was to construct the subjective configuration of the action of learning in a basic education student's creative learning process for reading and writing. In the second, the aim was to characterize the subjective configuration of the action of learning in a young woman who was participating in a non-formal educational activity related to scientific dissemination. In our interpretive constructions in these studies, we emphasize the heuristic value of the category of *subjective configuration of action* because it allows for theoretical constructions that can integrate—at the concrete moment of the learning action—subjective senses that are associated with the learner's life history and new subjective senses that are produced during the learning action, which are, in turn, associated with the social subjectivity of where the learning occurs, the relational systems that develop during the learning process and the very course of the learning actions.

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11.1 Introduction

Interest in creative learning and its development has led to a growing educational demand in our society, characterized by rapid advances in digital technologies and the growing need to train individuals who are capable of generating information and knowledge (Mitjáns Martínez 2002, 2009, 2012b). Creative learning is commonly related to the ability to associate different topics, solve problems, and generate new ideas in a learning context. However, the understanding of *what* this process *is* and *how* it *occurs* reflects different theoretical and epistemological conceptions about learning and creativity.

Readings in this area have raised several questions for us: How are psychological resources that are commonly associated with creative learning, such as autonomy, audacity, openness to the new and motivation, constituted? How does the social context of learning influence the learner's creative ability? How and why are elements of the social context—shared by the learners—experienced differently? And, finally, why are the "standardized recipes" of pedagogical methods and strategies for developing creative thinking so inefficient?

In our attempt to understand the emergence of creativity in learning, we adopt the concept of creative learning as proposed by Mitjáns Martínez (2002, 2008a, b, 2012a, b). In this proposal, creative learning processes do not result from the direct articulation of multiple cognitive, social, and motivational factors but are living and complex moments of expression of the learner's subjectivity. The author's concept is based on the historical–cultural perspective of subjectivity as developed by González Rey (1999, 2005a, c, 2008, 2009).

This chapter presents the theoretical construction process in the field using two case studies that were selected from the authors' doctoral research. Both studies sought to understand the emergence of creative learning by characterizing the subjective constitution of the respective participants.

In the first case, the aim was to construct the subjective configuration of the action of learning in a basic education student's learning process for reading and writing. In the second case, the aim was to characterize the subjective configuration of the action of learning in a young woman who was participating in a non-formal educational activity related to scientific dissemination. In the first section, we present the theoretical framework for creative learning. In the second section, we highlight the methodological approaches for both studies. In the remaining sections, we present the case studies and the final considerations.

11.2 Creative Learning

Mitjáns Martínez defines creativity as an expression of human subjectivity assumed in a historical–cultural framework.[1] For the author, the creative process does not occur in a universal subject; it occurs in a concrete individual constituted in historical contexts, in social relations, and in singular situations of his/her life trajectory. A cultural–historical individual's relation with reality unfolds throughout his/her subjective production, in other words, through his/her symbolic–emotional productions, or subjective senses, as proposed by González Rey.

Thus, creative expression approximates the subject's own modes of functioning; "(…it is) characterized by one´s own autonomy and singularity when confronting personal and social demands" (Mitjáns Martínez 2009, p. 33). Unlike other humanist, cognitivist, or sociohistorical theoretical approaches, the author emphasizes the emergence of creativity as an expression of the functioning of subjectivity, rather than exclusively understanding it as a process that results in a creative product (Mitjáns Martínez 2009, 2012a).

By including creativity in the realm of learning, Mitjáns Martínez refers to the production of something new and pertinent to the learning process or, rather, to the process of knowledge appropriation and production.

Therefore, creativity in learning—or creative learning—refers to a qualitatively different form of learning, in which the learner—in his/her subject condition—personalizes information, approaches the content from his/her own perspectives, and generates ideas that move beyond what was initially posed. Because of its specific processes, the author indicates that it differs from other types of learning, including reproductive or comprehensive learning or learning based on memory, which are most commonly found at the different levels of our formal education systems (Mitjáns Martínez 2002, 2008a, 2009, 2012a, b).

Based on the ideas of Mitjáns Martínez, our studies sought to understand the emergence of creativity in learning situations amidst complex and dynamic networks of subjective productions that the study participants generated in the learning context. We emphasize that the theoretical category of *subjective configuration of action* demonstrated great heuristic value because it allowed for theoretical constructions that can integrate—at the concrete moment of the learning action—both subjective senses that are associated with the learner's life history and new subjective senses that are produced during the learning action. These former subjective senses may be associated with the social subjectivity in which the learning occurs, with the relational systems that are developed in the learning action and with the course of the learning actions itself (González Rey 2011a, b).

[1] In a historical–cultural framework, subjectivity is a complex, open, and self-organized system of symbolic–emotional productions that is organized both at the individual level, in the individual's singular life trajectory, and at the social level, in social spaces where individuals act. These two scopes are reciprocally constituted in the complex and dynamic fabric of subjective configurations and senses in both the individual and the subjectivity associated with social spaces. They are the theoretical categories of individual subjectivity and social subjectivity, respectively (González Rey 2005a, 2010, 2011a).

Subjective configurations are dynamic, flexible, and organized over the course of the individual's actions and experiences; that is, they are not determinants of the person's experience (González Rey 2005a). They generate subjective senses that relate to the way in which different historical experiences have been lived by individuals and cannot be dissociated from subjective senses that emerge at the actual moment of action, which can lead to modifying the subjective configuration over the course of the experience. In both studies, the interpretative constructions for the subjective configurations of the action of learning used the category, *nucleus of subjective senses*,[2] which are dominant groups of senses in a configuration (Almeida 2015; Muniz 2015).

The theoretical constructions that the two studies produced constitute examples of the constructive–interpretative methodological process that, under the aegis of Qualitative Epistemology, seeks to understand the emergence of creativity in learning by characterizing the learner's subjective configuration of action.

11.3 Methodological Approach

Both researchers used Qualitative Epistemology[3] as their methodological approach (González Rey 1997, 2005b). Under such basis, theoretical constructions in both studies used research instruments and procedures that sought moments of the participants' subjective production during dialogues and different activities.

Each investigative moment demanded the researchers' efforts toward promoting the participants' spontaneous involvement and expression. Thus, there was no predetermined path for this study, as it was a methodological production that took shape during the investigation. It is important to emphasize that the dialogical and interactive basis throughout the interviews and conversations radically differed from the "question and answer" pattern of traditional scientific qualitative methodological approaches. Under Qualitative Epistemology, research interactions, ultimately, seek constructive–interpretative theoretical productions rather than the "knowledge-verification" bias of empirical science tradition.

Through research interactions and the use of different instruments, as well as observations in the non-formal context and at school, the authors wove interpretive considerations in a dynamic process of theoretical construction on the elements of the subjective configurations of the action of learning in both participants. The instruments that were used in each case are described below.

[2]We emphasize that the meaning of *nucleus of subjective senses* in these studies differs from the original meaning (González Rey, 2005) as a structured and stable entity of subjective configuration. It is the authors' opinion that this original concept has already been surpassed in the evolution of González Rey's thought, as expressed in his most recent work (González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2017). We use the category of *nucleus of subjective senses* to emphasize relationships of dominance between subjective senses in the subjective configuration.

[3]Central aspects of Qualitative Epistemology are presented in Chap. 2.

11.4 Case Studies

11.4.1 Case Study of Gabriel

11.4.1.1 Objective and Research Instruments

The case study of Gabriel aimed to understand how creativity emerges when learning reading and writing and its interrelations with the development of the child's subjectivity (Muniz 2015).

During the investigation, we performed observations of Gabriel in school, as well as interviews and conversational dynamics with him, his teachers, and his family members. We also used instruments that were developed by the researcher, including *sentence tracking*, adapted from the "sentence completion" instrument created by González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez (1989); *diary of ideas*, a blank notebook to encourage moments of spontaneous expression in the child, beyond what was required in school; and *telling my story*, which included clay books and drawings as resources for understanding the child's life history.

11.4.2 Characterization of Gabriel

Gabriel began his first year of primary school at the age of six and turned nine during his third year. He was the youngest son in the family with two children and lived with his parents and older brother. He loved to draw and watch the news with his father. His mother worked as a cleaning assistant at a hospital, and his father was a bricklayer. After school, he would swim and get wrapped up in his drawings and games. In the classroom, Gabriel was engaged with reading and writing and had a keen curiosity for this field of learning. In the constructive–interpretative process, we identified that creativity in Gabriel's learning was expressed through information personalization, confrontation with the data, producing his own ideas that transcended what was initially posed and the ludic aspect.[4]

Gabriel's subjective configuration of the action of creatively learning to read and write

In our constructive-interpretive process, we found that Gabriel's subjective configuration of the action of learning creatively was organized around three nuclei of subjective senses. For this work, we present the organization of the nucleus of subjective senses that was associated with his relationship with drawing and his bond with his father.

[4] We defined the ludic aspect as the subject's personal, spontaneous, free, investigative, and voluntary relationship with learning. It is a relationship that allows one to escape real life through make-believe and an ability to be daring and to exceed your own experiences, as well as create your own rules and an imaginary scenario.

Gabriel's relationship with drawing caught our attention at different moments and with different research instruments. We first met Gabriel in the classroom when he was drawing a tree, and from then, we observed the rich detail of his creations and the spontaneity and concentration with which he would draw. His relationship with drawing seemed to be related to his affective bond with his father:

Telling my story

Gabriel: *Everyone likes my drawings. My father taught me how to make buildings; he's an artist. I learned how to draw on my own.*

Diary of Ideas

Gabriel: *My father made this lion. I can do it on my own now, too. When I draw a picture and my father sees it, he says: 'There's something missing,' and I already know what it is.*

Gabriel recognized his father as an artist in the field of drawing, which generated an admiration that strengthened his bond and commitment to draw more and surpass himself in his productions. In Gabriel's relationship with learning how to draw, his father was an important source of the son's production of subjective senses in the subjective configuration of his orientation toward drawing.

At different moments in the study, we noticed that when Gabriel spoke about his drawings, he expressed himself euphorically and his speech was rich with details from his productions.

Sentence tracking

28 - **I dedicate most of my time** - *i draw.*

36 - **Writing is** - *the same as playing. because i like to draw letters very slowly so that i can do it very well. i play with drawing letters. i write what i like thinking about.*

46 - **I think a lot about** - *a bunch of things and drawing*.

49 - **What i do best is** - *draw and write*.

Based on the above information, our attention is drawn to Gabriel's level of expression in establishing his own relationship with drawing and writing, which is an indicator of how drawing can be a source of subjective senses when learning to read and write. We interpret that there was an interrelation between the action of drawing and the actions of reading and writing for Gabriel, which included a flow of subjective resources, including autonomy, concentration, and euphoria, as well as an investigative attitude. These are resources which are essential to the emergence of creativity in learning to read and write and which are characterized by a playful relationship with learning.

Telling my story

Gabriel: *I write every day, and I draw too. Then, I write the letters and make each one very slowly. When I draw on my own, I use the pencil like this; you can't hold it too strong. There are drawings I copy from books and others that I do on my own. My father says that you have to care for every little detail, so I do it very slowly.*

In our constructive-interpretive process, Gabriel's father was a source of important subjective senses for Gabriel's relationship with learning to read and write. He was an important source for developing fundamental subjective resources associated with

a careful observation of details and with possibilities for his own creation—which were extremely relevant to Gabriel's self-definition as a designer of the letters of the alphabet and had different impacts on his relationship with classmates and teachers.

Gabriel often helped his classmates draw. There were moments when he would teach his classmates, rather than just doing the drawing for them. We can illustrate this point with the following expression from Gabriel: "*Everyone likes my drawings and the stories I make with them. Now I'm drawing for so many people. The teacher said everything was beautiful and even asked me to make one for her*" (Diary of Ideas). Feeling useful and cherished by his classmates, as well as worshipped by his teachers, was a source of other subjective configurations that emerged from a network of senses that developed in the school's social space based on Gabriel's ability to draw. Such current subjective configurations produced within the classroom dynamics were related to recognition by the other and to elements of socialization, security, and improvement in his own drawing skills. Gabriel created a social space in the classroom that included social approval from adults, but primarily from his classmates, who wanted to learn to draw with him.

First-year teacher Melissa recognized Gabriel's interest in drawing; she was charmed by his productions and began to include space for drawing in writing activities. In an informal conversation, she expresses: "*I know Gabriel likes to draw and write stories using drawings. The boys are crazy about learning to draw with him. I do activities that they can draw and this helps others learn. Gabriel's drawings are so lifelike, he actually seems like a professional artist*."

Thus, we emphasize that expressions of individual subjectivity cannot be dissociated from social subjectivity, given the changes that Gabriel's drawing actions made in the classroom. "Drawing" letters became an activity that was proposed by his teachers and was spontaneously performed by his classmates in a process derived from an appreciation of Gabriel's drawings and stories. The opportunities for drawing that were created by his teacher provided Gabriel with the opportunity to turn writing into a space for tracing letters and forming new shapes. Thus, Gabriel threw himself into learning cursive letters in a process of playing with drawing.

Diary of Ideas

Gabriel: *I made the letter D in so many different ways. Now it looks like a drawing (laughs). Look how much I changed it. I've never seen a letter like that. My father doesn't know that I'm drawing letters too. I'm going to tell him. Even my mother will want to learn. Look! I can make the letters any way I want.*

In Gabriel, there was a production of **historically configured subjective senses—related to his drawings—that was associated with the freedom to express his ideas. Such production was connected to the current subjective senses that were associated with the desire for a unique writing with original traits. This process integrated subjective senses that were related to social spaces at the school. At the same time, these senses cannot be dissociated from the subjective senses that were generated through his relationship with his father. This confluence, which generated subjective senses that were associated with his school life, exposes the subjective configuration of his different attitudes and achievements at school**.

As with his relationship with drawing, we assume that Gabriel formed a positive image of himself in the field of learning to read and write.

Sentence tracking

1 - **I am** - *an artist. cheerful.*

45 - **I know that I am** - *intelligent and an artist*.

Telling my story

Gabriel: *I'm cheerful and I like a lot of things (…] I like to write in my own way (…) I like to invent things and I like to draw and make friends.*

Diary of Ideas

Gabriel: *I really look like an artist. Drawing everything, even the letters. My father is an inventor. He teaches me, and I do it in a bunch of places.*

From our viewpoint, Gabriel's positive self-image in the field of learning included **historically configured subjective senses that were related to the act of drawing and the desire to invent, which were associated with the relational system of trust with his father**. These subjective senses stimulated his own ideas that transcended what was already present, as a characteristic of creativity in his learning. The fact that Gabriel believes that he is intelligent and an artist is, for us, another indicator of the trust and encouragement that he received from his father. It is also an indicator of the place he occupied in the school's social space, since his drawings and written productions were valued by the group of children and teachers and because he was involved in helping others. Both processes define subjective senses that were associated with well-being, self-confidence, and the ability to be independent and self-motivated.

Just as with drawing, Gabriel invented his own writing, which brought him closer to reading and writing. Gabriel's drawings included new shapes and generated a desire to write about what he had produced. They recursively organized his learning and were fundamental subjective resources for the emergence of his creativity when he was learning to read and write.

In our opinion, this inventive capacity was also associated with his father and mother's appreciation of their son's abilities. Gabriel's mother would usually display her son's drawings on his bedroom walls and appreciated his productions. In an interview, Gabriel noted: "*I have a room full of my drawings. My mother lets me put everything on the wall.*" We believe that the bond with the father, the mother's openness to the son's productions, and the social space in the classroom encouraged Gabriel's self-determination in the quest to challenge himself in his own productions.

11.4.3 Case Study of Camile

11.4.3.1 Objective and Research Instruments

The case study of Camile sought to understand the subjective configuration of the action of learning in an eighteen-year-old girl who was participating in a non-formal

educational project. The project was related to scientific dissemination of the topic of "health in schools" and lasted for one year (Almeida 2015). We performed observations of the project meetings and activities as well as individual, semi-structured interviews about Camile's life and school history. We used instruments such as sentence completion, an essay, and document analysis of Camile's productions in the project (logbook, portfolio, and research) and in her school notebooks. We also conducted interviews with project monitors and had informal conversations with two teachers at the school.

11.4.3.2 Characterization of Camile

At the beginning of the study, Camile was in her third year of public high school. Before its conclusion, she passed the university entrance exam and enrolled in an undergraduate social work program at a prestigious university.

In addition to a record of excellent school performance, Camile had many experiences in social work and working on behalf of students. During high school, she was elected as president of the student more than once and was the only student at her school to run for the position. In her final year, she was also a member of the school board and class president. Aside from school, Camile was also an active participant in the *Youth Forum*, which is a social movement in her city.

Of mixed race and from a low-income family with separated parents, Camile had a deep interest in issues related to social justice, politics, racism, gender discrimination, and the fight against poverty. These topics dominated her posts on social networks. One of Camile's hobbies was listening to and singing politically and socially charged "rap" music.

Camile's subjective configuration of the action of creatively learning in the context of a non-formal project

In our interpretive constructions, we considered that the subjective configuration of the action of creatively learning in the project was organized in at least four nuclei of subjective senses. For this study, we only present the nucleus that was related to her critical and confrontational attitude toward political and social issues.

In our observations during the project, we were struck by Camile's strong critical and confrontational attitudes throughout the project's activities and discussions. At many points, Camile began her interventions by saying "Since I am normally against what everybody thinks" and went on to present arguments that went against the common sense of the discussion. We reproduce a dialogue that occurred at a project meeting and addressed evaluation methods at the school:

> David: I failed biology and chemistry. It's difficult. You can only pass the test (*pause*)… though there is the formative (assessment) [*implying that the evaluation system stresses the test results and that he did not care about the formative assessment*].
>
> Program monitor: *(…)* Well, the idea of the formative assessment is precisely to avoid this. *(…)* There are different evaluation methods *(…)* (*after a long explanation, she concludes that the formative assessment is essential for respecting each student's unique process, and obtained agreement from everyone*).

> Camile: (*When the subject had already been concluded for everyone*) I am totally against the formative assessment method because you receive a good evaluation if you come to class and remain silent. *(…)* If you ask too many questions, you end up being poorly evaluated on the formative assessment.

In this example, although the group had already agreed on a position and the social subjectivity had moved toward accepting the monitor's conclusion, Camile had a contrasting and audacious position, both in her critical reflection of the formative assessment and her opposition to the resulting social subjectivity.

> In another debate about hospitals in her city, Camile argues:
>
> "Spoken Map" Project Dynamics
>
> Monitor: Do you think anything is missing there [*referring to the neighborhood where they live*]?
>
> Participant 1: A hospital, the bus we need to take [*to a far away hospital*] is always full.
>
> Monitor: Let's talk about the bus being full… where does it stop?
>
> Participant 2: It's always full [*putting a piece of paper on the map, at the bus stop on the main avenue*].
>
> Camile: The lack of a hospital means that there is overcrowding at *Hospital S*. Everyone comes to the hospital to fix things that don't need to be fixed at a hospital. Hospital S. serves W, X, Y and even, Z [*referring to surrounding cities*]. I once interviewed a hospital professional who told me "I had allergies and had to get a document at the health center to go to Ceilândia" [*Another city far away from the Federal District*].
>
> [*A long discussion begins on the institutional roles of the health center and the hospital.*]
>
> [*Following the discussion, after a long silence…*]
>
> Camile: But that's the way the bus is, right? Like, I live two kilometers from school and sometimes I'd rather walk than take the bus.
>
> [*A long discussion begins on public transportation*].

In this example, Camile demonstrates a reflexive attitude and an ability to move on to new topics of discussion at a whim. At this and other points, we observed Camile's recurrent ability to confront the data and her reflexive intentionality in the search for new perspectives by associating ideas and generating explanatory hypotheses about the topics under discussion. These actions are part of a subjective production that is marked by engagement, autonomy, and audacity in discussions on politics and society.

Camile's interest in topics related to social justice was also expressed in the way that she personalized the broader concept of "health" that was proposed by the project. When remembering the project's activities, she reports:

> Interview
>
> … the reporter kind of asked us what we were going to do for the project, and at that time, we didn't really know [*laughing*]. It was so funny! … Mika said that there were a lot of pregnant girls at her school; L. [*another classmate*] said we were going to talk about prevention; and I talked a little about the **hospital-centric culture** [*referring to the common conception of health as directly associated with medical-hospital services, to the detriment of a broader perspective*].

Interview

… **When we talk about health, the first thing that comes to mind is that health is the absence of disease**. However, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), the definition of health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not just the absence of pathologies.

In these and other statements from Camile, we perceive that her critical and confrontational stance toward social and political issues becomes a learning resource that allows her to personalize learnt concepts in a highly personal and engaging way.

Camile's interest in social and political issues and her critical stance toward them was also expressed in the school context. Her intense and difficult experiences as student body president and student representative on the school board are illustrative. In one interview, Camile complains about two school events. In the first, she describes the moment when she is informed of the school administration's unilateral decision to transfer her to a different class. Although they never clearly explained their motive, unofficial information suggested that they wanted to "separate groups" in which she was a significant mobilizing force.

In the second statement, Camile describes difficult moments in her interactions with two teachers. In the first, she mentions that she wrote a letter to the school board in the name of the entire class formally presenting a complaint about the pedagogical behavior of a teacher who gave a test on issues that had not been taught in class. In the second, she describes a discussion with a teacher who disrespectfully addressed a classmate in the classroom.

During the period of the project, which coincided with her enrollment at the university, the memories of the difficult events during her final year of school were fresh in Camile's mind.

In addition to the anxious and impatient tone in her reports, other research information suggested that her political actions at the school—specifically, in the student body, on the class council and as class president—resulted in moments of strong emotional response for Camile.

Sentence Completion

6. **At school,** people like me, and I like them.

28. **I believe my best attitudes are** understanding, affection and the trust I give people.

41**. I will do my best to** be happy and make sure the people I love are happy.

46. **I fight** for justice.

In an interview, when Camile is asked what she liked most about school:

My friends. I feel like a mother…. I started a study group, I was always encouraging them… I always think about how they're doing now without me.

In another interview, when asked about significant knowledge and discoveries that she made by herself in her school life, Camile responds "[having] a critical sense and standing up for my rights."

This information indicates that subjective senses from the political and moral sphere constituted the subjective configuration of the action of learning in Camile, both in the project and at school. These meanings were associated with socialization

and knowledge production processes, which encouraged her questioning, and self-confident and audacious attitudes.

Nevertheless, the difficult events at the time she left school were a source of anguish for Camile. In addition to the complaining tone of her statements, in an interview in which we requested a statement about a good teacher, we were surprised that Camile recalled a teacher who advised her not to get involved in politics at the university. On another occasion, in an informal conversation about school memories, Camile self-confidently asks herself: "Was it all worth it?" In these and other moments in which she talks about school, Camile expresses a tone of anguish and nervousness, which reflects a deep unease about her activities in student politics.

On her social network, around the time of the project and when she was outside the school, Camile published the following note on receiving a merit award from the Legislative Chamber of the Federal District, which she received on behalf of the students at the school:

> It is very gratifying to be able to receive this Merit Award on behalf of all the students of Educational Center 02. I felt very honored today; I see that my effort and dedication are recognized and that I am loved by many. Thank you!

The enormous amount of information in interviews and informal conversations that Camile provided about her experiences at the school—in contrast to the very few references to her new university life—suggested that her troubled exit from school constituted a source of subjective senses associated with anguish, self-reflection, and questioning about the legitimacy of her political activities at school. In the time and context of the project, such subjective production was part of the subjective configuration of the action of learning in Camile.

At the same time—and in a contradictory manner—we perceived, in the context of the project, the value that the group of participants added to Camile's experiences of political action at school and in the social movement.

The moment of preparation for the "Scientific Forum," one of the project's activities, illustrates this point. When the monitors presented the preparation schedule, Camile expressed her criticism about the number of meetings. She thought this was not sufficient to prepare for the event. She recalled her experience of the organization of one of the forums of the social movement she participated in and described, in detail, a long list of activities that were necessary for organizing the event. At the end of her account, everyone agreed with her. The schedule was altered, and new meetings were added. In the project, Camile often referred to her experience of organizing meetings, debates, polls, and events. This experience differentiated her from the rest of the group and was broadly welcomed during the activities. Again, we consider the production of subjective senses in Camile related to the political and moral sphere. Such senses integrated the subjective configuration of learning in Camile in the context of the project. They related to aspects of her self-valuation based on social recognition from the group of participants favoring her autonomy, her self-confidence, and her audacity.

In fact, much other research information suggested to us that Camile was sensitive to social judgments. When asked about the most valuable experiences in her life, the

first experience that Camile cited refers to a time in which a second-year teacher suggested that she skip a year due to her intellectual and academic level. When asked how she feels about tests, Camile takes the opportunity to mention that in the "Interdisciplinary Test," a preparatory test for the university entrance exam, she had the highest grade in the entire school.

When asked to cite three unforgettable experiences at school, Camile again cites, first, the second-year teacher; second, the moment when she received the merit award from the Legislative Chamber for "important services to her city," on behalf of all the students at the school; and, third, the fact that she passed the entrance exam. All these experiences reflect a social recognition of her performance. Through such information, we consider this aspect to hold value in Camile's subjective production in the social spaces in which she participates and the tasks in which she is involved.

In the context of the project, Camile's historically configured subjective senses were related to her critical stance toward social topics, were associated with her moral values and fight for justice, and were linked to new subjective productions that were associated with her troubled exit from school and the social recognition, by the project group, of her activities in school politics. This subjective production constituted her learning processes, positionings, and achievements in the context of the project.

Finally, we emphasize that these subjective senses of political and moral expectations, which comprised the subjective configuration of Camile's learning actions both at school and in the project, are expressions of a social "other," which appears in a highly singular and personalized way in Camile and which, through her active stance, generates new processes of social subjectivity in the two contexts.

11.4.4 Final Considerations

In both case studies, the constructive–interpretative process demonstrates that the emergence of creativity in learning occurs through dynamic and complex moments of expression of the learners' subjectivity as concrete individuals and producers of subjective senses and configurations that are organized as a subjective configuration of the learning action: at the moment of learning and in the context in which it occurs. The authors' reflections made it possible to:

- Highlight the heuristic value of the theoretical category *subjective configuration of action,* based on the theoretical proposal that was developed by González Rey, in its processual, open, and dynamic character of subjective senses that are organized in the person's life trajectory and for the new subjective senses that are produced over the course of the action and are connected to elements of relational systems and the social subjectivity of the action's context (González Rey 2012b).
- Emphasize the heuristic value of the *nuclei of subjective senses* category for studying subjective configurations as a method for understanding *the dynamic interrelations between subjective senses and subjective configurations that emerge in*

the context of the action, but whose relationship with forces and dominances falls within subjective configuration (Almeida 2015; Muniz 2015).

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Chapter 12
Relational Dynamics in Overcoming School Learning Difficulties

Marília dos Santos Bezerra and Maristela Rossato

Abstract Studying subjectivity in a cultural–historical framework allows us to view learning as a process for producing subjective senses. In this sense, learning can be understood according to its processuality and its different affective states. Including subjectivity in research is an alternative for signifying the types of processes that have a specific symbolic–emotional quality. This chapter aims to analyze how the quality of relationships with the other can mobilize subjective development processes in students who have learning difficulties. Using case studies, we discuss the way in which research fostered the emergence of new productions of subjective senses that were related to learning, as a constituent dimension in a communicative space. Based on the analyses, what drives learning is not directly related to an operational condition but is a need that arises from the subjective field. Being affectively involved with learning made it impossible for participants to develop alternative subjective senses when they were confronted with their difficulties. However, over the course of the research process, as the social context of the study became a space that was conducive to development, the children felt affectively accepted and were more positively engaged with learning.

12.1 Introduction

Based on the cultural–historical perspective of the theory of subjectivity and qualitative epistemology, which were both developed by González Rey (2005, 2007, 2014), this chapter analyzes how the quality of relationships with the other can mobilize subjective development processes in students who have learning difficulties (Rossato

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Fig. 12.1 Michael's written production

2009; Bezerra 2014). Relationships with the other, as a subjective configuration of development (González Rey et al. 2017), are discussed through two case studies with students who had overcome learning difficulties: The case of Daniel emphasizes the relationships that were established with the teacher, and the case of Michael focuses on the relationships that were established with the researcher.

The theory of subjectivity was considered as part of an ontological commitment to understanding psych as a cultural–historical production. Subjectivity integrates different operations and functions as subjective configurations and overcomes the purely instrumental character of the constitution of psych (González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2017a). It is a qualitatively differentiated production that is intimately related to the historical dimension of the concrete and current experiences of individuals and social groups. The subjective senses that emerge over the course of learning experiences are understood as units of analysis that make it possible to understand the complexity that is involved in the attempt to overcome learning difficulties (Fig. 12.1).

The concept of subjectivity, which was presented in depth in the first chapter of this book, represents a dynamic symbolic–emotional system that is developed and organized in the networks of the social relations in which individuals and social groups live their lives. School is merely one of these social networks for the children who participated in this study. Subjective senses are produced in different experiences and areas of life by subjective configurations that do not have any apparent connection with the current experience (González Rey 2016). That is why subjectivity cannot be studied in a fragmented way according to the studied context or phenomenon.

This conceptualization denotes its systemic character as well as its historical and dialectical dimension, which emerge in the relations, contradictions, and oppositions between the different aspects of reality (González Rey 2005; González Rey et al. 2017).

Examining learning as a subjective process makes it possible to transcend the representation of learning that is centered on intellectual, logical, and cognitive operations (Rossato 2009; Bezerra 2014; Oliveira 2017). The emphasis on only these aspects as fundamental elements of the school learning process has historically contributed to the proliferation and trivialization of learning difficulty diagnoses in the context of formal educational institutions (Schalock, Keith, Verdugo et al. 2010; Walsh, Emerso, Lobb et al. 2010; Elliott and Grigorenko 2011).

The concepts of mental disorder, disturbance, and dysfunction were historically characterized by an organic understanding of development that centralized the problem in the student, based on a difficulty or a personal limitation for learning. The naturalist and pathologizing view of learning problems, which are configured in the social subjectivity[1] of various schools, have consequences for understanding and addressing learning difficulties.[2] In schools, this view has encouraged an understanding of learning difficulties as a pathology, which is supported by the biomedical model. The theory of subjectivity makes it possible to advance an understanding of the learning process beyond students' capabilities and abilities to process and store information.

We have defended the need for a theoretical–epistemological–methodological change in understanding school learning difficulties. González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez (2017a, p. 59) argue that this is important for "advancing in understanding the constitutive complexity of learning as a subjective configuration[3] of the learning process, a process in which the learner can emerge as a learning subject," which is mobilized by subjective development. Being a subject in the learning process produces a space of action that moves beyond the representation of knowledge as assimilation, to a more personalized, dynamic, and creative knowledge that includes a constructive and challenging view on mistakes, resources for integrating imagination and reflection on what has been learned (González Rey 2008). "When the student is involved in his/her learning process, learning is evidenced in its constitutive complexity as a process for producing subjective senses and mobilizing diverse subjective configurations" (Bezerra 2014, p. 77).

The relationship with knowledge must be dynamic, thoughtful, creative, critical, and authorial and, thus, it can mobilize subjective development (Rossato and Mitjáns Martínez 2011, 2015). Experiences are subjectivated in different ways by individuals and cannot be viewed as the determining factors of developmental processes. The

[1] Social subjectivity is defined by González Rey as a "complex system of the subjective configuration of different spaces of social life that, in their expression, are strictly articulated to each other, defining complex social subjective configurations" (González Rey 2005, p. 203).

[2] In Brazil, learning difficulties affect thousands of Basic Education students. Data from 2015 indicate that 6.8% of students in the early years of primary school (6–10 years old) failed or dropped out of school, which increased to 14.3% in the final years of primary school (11–14 years old). In secondary school (15–17 years old), this figure increased to 18.3%.

[3] Subjective configurations are complex forms for organizing subjective senses that result from individual and social subjectivation processes. In this sense, subjective configurations are constituted through symbolic–emotional organization, which auto-generates a specific type of psychic process (González Rey 2007).

theory of subjectivity moves away from cultural and biological determinisms that crystallize development and highlights the value of subjective productions that are generated in learning processes. "Culture does not determine subjective development. Culture represents the types of symbolic productions that will emerge, in unity with emotions, in subjective senses that define developmental configurations" (González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2017a, p. 9). Subjective development results from the emergence of subjective configurations capable of generating new subjective senses in other individual or social configurations and actions, promoting important changes in different areas of life simultaneously (González Rey et al. 2017).

> One subjective configuration is a driving force of subjective development when it includes the development of new subjective resources that allows the individual to make relevant changes in the course of a performance, relations or other significant lived experiences within which the configuration emerges leading to changes that define new subjective resources. The subjective configurations on which the development of subjectivity takes place includes changes in individual behaviors and positions that also lead to changes in other spheres of life (González Rey et al. 2017, p. 227).

A child who has learning difficulties expresses effects that are related to different subjective processes, which, in turn, emerge from historical and current experiences that manifest as subjective senses in the child's school experience and interfere with their learning. Highlighting the importance of subjective sense and configuration, González Rey (2011, p. 54) explains that "these configurations represent the symbolic-emotional network that is involved in these actions. Configuration is dynamic throughout the course of the action, and this is a permanent source of new subjective senses".

Analyzing the subjective configurations that are involved in the school learning process allows the understanding of intellectual processes as subjective productions and characterizes the non-linearity of learning and development processes. We emphasize the subjective - and not only operational - nature of learning. The categories of subjective sense and subjective configuration make it possible to understand the generative character of individuals and social groups, which is permanently historically, culturally and socially situated. Thus, the complexity of learning difficulties can be understood by the quality of the subjective senses that the students with learning difficulties can produce at different points in the learning process (Bezerra 2014, p. 60).

School learning is not dissociated from the students' relational systems that are established in their various life spaces. Using this concept, it is possible to understand educational processes through a path that seeks the non-naturalization of phenomena in social contexts, based on their singularity and relational dimensions (Cunha and Rossato 2015; Mitjáns Martínez and González Rey 2017). In our understanding, the other does not occupy a position of externality that determines the child's behavior but is always configured in a way that it is subjectivated by the child himself/herself. González Rey (2004, p. 7) understands the other "as a complex social space, a moment of a social subjectivity that is delimited as a symbolic and meaningful field." Thus, the relationships that are developed in the school context have a fundamental importance for the quality of the learning process.

The professionals who are involved in the teaching–learning process are important for the subjective development of students, for what they teach as well as their ability to integrate communication systems that allow them to find their own space in the classroom. The student's social space in the classroom is important for his/her subjective development at school. Depending on how this other is subjectivated by the student, the relationship with the teacher may or may not encourage learning (González Rey 2016; Mitjáns Martínez and González Rey 2017).

12.2 Overcoming Learning Difficulties Through New Relational Dynamics: Case Studies

The study of subjective processes and formations, as conceived in the cultural–historical perspective of subjectivity, requires a specific epistemology and methodology. The qualitative epistemology,[4] which was developed by González Rey, seeks to legitimize subjective processes that have historically been neglected by most theoretical approaches in the human and social sciences, specifically in psychology (González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2017b).

The methodological definition that sustains this work has a constructive–interpretive character (González Rey 2005, 2014; González Rey and Mitjáns Martinez 2016), which considers the dialogue with students as moments of expression that foster the emergence of new subjective senses that are related to their daily school experiences and other relational spaces.

In both case studies that will be presented, we carried out formal and informal dialogical moments, using different instruments, such as drawings, narratives, sentence completion, and imagination-focused tasks. Both cases emphasize the legitimation of the singular as a source for scientific knowledge production by allowing the construction of theoretical models that advance in new domains of knowledge in the area.

12.2.1 The Case of Daniel

Daniel is nine years old and has never failed a grade based on his school records. He was selected by his teacher to participate in the study[5] because, in her analysis, he had difficulty at interpreting and producing text, at understanding readings in science, history, and geography, as well as at solving problems. Thus, according to this analysis, he was in need of additional tutoring. In the information that was listed

[4]Qualitative epistemology is grounded on the understanding that knowledge production is a constructive–interpretive process. This study is characterized by a dialogical communication process and the singular is legitimized as a source for knowledge production.

[5]The movement of subjectivity in overcoming learning difficulties (Rossato 2009).

in the Student's Report (School Records), we also found notes that revealed a lack of attention when performing activities, a lack of responsibility for homework and resistance to reviewing his mistakes. Field research was conducted at two points that were separated by approximately six months. He lives with his parents and sister and has a stable socioeconomic condition.

Beginning with the researcher's first contact with Daniel, he expressed that he was guided by what his father envisioned him to be—a smart boy—which was recorded in an interview with his family. For Daniel, "*being smart is being active, thinking quickly, doing everything they ask me to do as fast as I can*" (Conversational Dynamics Excerpt—CDE). This desire to be smart is also associated with his school learning, as is shown in the following sentences: Sentence 11: It's easy to learn when "*I am smart*"; Sentence 20: When I can't learn, "*I use smartness*" (Sentence Completion Excerpts—SCE[6]).

The desire to be smart, as expressed through faster thinking, can also be identified in the following excerpt, when he is asked about changes he would like to make in his life: "*To think faster. When the teacher asks a question, I keep thinking about it, and by the time I know the answer, a classmate has already spoken up*" (CDE). School learning is subjectivated by Daniel as a result-focused process through elaborating a response that will be accepted by his teacher, which is the first indicator of his subjectivity.

At another point in the study, when he was asked to choose a person from a drawing based on the instructions in each sentence, we recorded the following expressions:

Sentence 1: To study together: "*Avatar because he has special powers. I like the power of the wind because it's very fast*" (To be as quick as a superhero, the same way that he perceives his father.).

Sentence 3: To help solve math problems: "*The Incredibles because they're smart, so I could do it too*" (If he is not smart, he will not be able to do what he is expected to do.).

Sentence 8: To do something in secret: "*Avatar, he has special powers in case an older person wanted to hit me, he would defend me*" (His perceived limitations emerge again and signal the need for someone to defend him.).

Sentence 9: To talk about his difficulties at school: "*The Nutty Boy* (a Brazilian comic strip)*, he can help me because he's very smart, I like his comics*" (Once again, there is a need for the other as a support in solving problems as well as a desire to be smart.) (SCE).

The desire for quickness and smartness when giving answers, as is shown in the previous constructions, emerges as a second indicator of his subjectivity. Throughout the study, we found that Daniel's desire to be smart and quick is strongly guided by his father's expectations, as the following excerpts illustrate:

[6]Sentence completion includes a group of short incomplete sentences that are organized through direct and indirect contents, which should be answered with the first idea that occurs to the participant.

Sentence 4: I am disappointed when "*I can't win in a game and when I get a bad grade at school, my father is even more disappointed*" (It is clear that Daniel's father's recognition is more important than good school performance.).

Sentence 8: I know I can "*win a game of chess… I'm still going to beat my father. I'm almost there*" (Winning against his father is an expression of his smartness, as he would be an equal.).

Sentence 23: It is easy to learn when "*you have scientific experience in Science in Focus. When my father explains things to me*" (Here, we see the father's legitimacy as a teacher rather than the teacher herself.).

The affective presence of the father as the most significant figure in his relational space is expressed as a third indicator of his subjectivity. In relation with the previous indicators—result-focused learning and the desire for quickness and smartness—we construct the hypothesis that at the beginning of the field research process, the subjective configuration of Daniel's learning was guided by his subjective production related to the pressure of his father's expectations.

In the classroom, we observed that Daniel's relationship with his teacher had been troubled since the beginning of the study, as she believed that her student had a learning difficulty. The teacher attempted to refer him for a psychological assessment, which was barred by the family, as they did not believe that their child had a learning difficulty. It was observed that the teacher focused more on the girls in the classroom, to whom she was more attentive and delivered constant praise. On the other hand, the boys constantly received warnings and punishments without established criteria.

Six months after the field research process began, an episode occurred at the school that had strong repercussions on Daniel's learning quality. A comment on possible family problems that the student experienced due to his parents' separation circulated among the teachers. This news opened the teacher's eyes and left her feeling guilty for having asked so much of Daniel. That day, the teacher approached the researcher in the school hallway and reported the episode:

Teacher: "*I'm feeling really guilty about Daniel, I shouldn't be fighting with him so much. His parents are separating, and that's so complicated. He must be feeling lost, and I'm feeling so guilty about fighting with him so much.*"

Researcher: "*How did you find that out?*"

Teacher: "*The vice principal told me! I need to change the way I interact with Daniel and stop fighting with him so much*" (CDE with the teacher).

The teacher did not approach Daniel about the topic at any point, as she believed what she had heard and did not reflect on the changes that had occurred in her student's behavior in the classroom over the course of the semester. This revealed how Daniel's needs were invisible to the teacher until that moment. His parents' separation was only a rumor, but it mobilized changes in the teacher's relational quality with Daniel. In the classroom, we observed that the teacher began to interact with Daniel in a warmer and more understanding way, as she praised him, gave him more time to respond to what was asked and recognized the potential of his activities.

After this episode, Daniel's frustration with the slowness of his answers—reported above—was gradually overcome as he became emotionally closer to his teacher and felt more comfortable expressing his thoughts, without as much concern for providing

wrong answers. In the classroom, we found that he was much more involved and participated in the activities that were proposed by the teacher. He began to take the initiative in resolving small conflicts, and in group activities he looked for a partner who could work with him, which demonstrated leadership in organizing the proposed activities.

The teacher, in turn, gave him space to talk and clarify his doubts, always made sure he understood, asked him to provide examples to ensure that he was learning and always visually monitored him with affection and encouragement. The teacher's perception was that Daniel had changed, but our understanding was that the subjective configuration of the teacher's relationship with Daniel had changed. "*Daniel is a different boy! He's more hardworking, more involved in classes*" (CDE with the teacher).

The teacher's shift in perspective can also be identified in the student evaluation reports. At the end of the first semester, before the episode that was described above, the teacher wrote: "*He shows difficulty in organizing his school notebooks, he doesn't complete his activities. (…) The student needs tutoring*" (School Records). At the end of the second semester, after the episode that was reported above, the teacher wrote: "*The student demonstrated responsibility with his classwork and homework (…) He is reading well and he produces text with coherent ideas (…) The student showed good progress. I am rooting for his success*" (School Records).

We believe that the changes in learning that were identified by the teacher were mobilized by the subjective senses that were produced by Daniel, which emerged in the new relational dynamic that he established with her. The teacher's new relational dynamic with the student was mobilized by subjective senses that were produced after the supposed separation of Daniel's parents, with the teacher developing a more sensitive perspective toward the student.

The value of the other as a mobilizer of the production of subjective senses is subjectively configured in the space of teacher–student relationships, which extend to other spheres of the child's school and family life, including his/her socialization in school and the beginning of a process of overcoming his/her learning difficulties. In Daniel's case, the other—as an affective presence that mobilized new subjective senses—is represented by the teacher for the student and by the parents' separation for the teacher. It is this process that generates new subjective senses in different areas of life, which are expressed in new behaviors and experiences, which generate a subjective configuration that drives development (González Rey, Mitjans Martinz, Rossato and Goulart 2017; Rossato, Mattos and Paula 2018). In Daniel's case, the development of subjectivity was due to the new relational dynamic that was established with the teacher after she recognized his potential for learning. Daniel began to receive affection from the teacher, which allowed him to feel a sense of belonging in the classroom. This new dynamic was consistent with his desire to meet his father's expectations, which alleviated the pressure for learning outcomes.

12.2.2 The Case of Michael

According to his school records, Michael entered school at the age of two and a half and, early on, drew the attention of teachers and coordinators because of his shy and withdrawn behavior. In terms of learning, he could not keep up with the schedule of the school curricula. He did not read, and although he could write his name, he was unable to name the letters that he used to write it. He had difficulty distinguishing geometric shapes, identifying colors and performing mathematical calculations. When he did his classwork, Michael had difficulties recognizing the letters of the alphabet that correlated to sounds, repeating them randomly, and often said that he was tired or did not know. It was suspected that he had an intellectual disability, difficulty in processing and storing information, as well as family problems. At the time of the study, he was eight years old.

The lack of belief in Michael's cognitive ability was evident in a statement from a substitute teacher during a classroom task: "*You don't have to do that with him. He can't do it. I've already tried. I've been his teacher*" (Oral report from the substitute teacher). The teacher's incredulity about the student's ability to learn impacted the quality of the pedagogical actions that were directed toward him as well as the potential for establishing affective bonds. She maintained her distance and did little to encourage him to participate in activities.

The school did not include the student in projects that were capable of fostering his development, and it did not provide opportunities for him to become capable of making school learning meaningful. This is reflected in the following dialogue:

Researcher: "*Michael, do you know why you go to school?*"

Michael: "*To learn.*"

Researcher: "*And what do you learn at school?*"

Michael: "*What I like is playing. There is physical education. The school park*."

In his subjective configuration of learning, Michael had not integrated formal learning as important, which demonstrates the distance between the formal demands of the school and what he produces subjectively in relation to learning. The learning situation in which Michael was involved did not constitute a space that was conducive to producing subjective senses that would allow him to advance in school learning.

In the conversational dynamics that occurred during the application of an instrument (Illustrated game of feelings[7]), the researcher asked Michael about the emotions that he felt in each context. The student reported that, in the classroom, he was very afraid of making mistakes in his classwork and felt ashamed because his friends constantly laughed or made comments about his learning difficulties. Michael said: "*My friends say I'm stupid, that I don't learn*." On the other hand, in the support class, in which Michael met the researcher, he showed joy, as he was able to learn.

[7] An instrument created by Cardinalli (2006). It asks participants to associate different situations to one or more types of feelings. This activity made it possible to provide information that sustained constructive interpretations on how the student configures subjectively family and school spaces. The instrument was adapted and was applied in the form of illustrated cards.

The absence of an affective bond with the teacher, the inferiority he felt because of his peers' judgment, and the fear of making a mistake are all paralyzers of Michael's intellectual production process. These interpretative constructions led us to consider the hypothesis that the subjective senses that the student was producing in relation to school learning were associated with his feeling of being unable to do his classwork, which compromised the quality of his learning.

Over the course of the study, the nature of the relation that was established with the researcher—marked by affection—mobilized the production of subjective resources that fostered a process of change in the subjective configuration of his relationship with school learning. The meetings with the researcher—at the student's request—began with reading a children's story and ended with a memory game[8] or another game that was chosen by the student, which revealed an active position toward his learning process.

During the first meetings, Michael seemed to be paralyzed by the proposed activities. It was then suggested that he slowly repeated the complete word with the researcher in order to recognize the sound of the letters. This task was performed with several words in a collaborative manner. Later, Michael repeated the names of foods on his own and recognized letters. He established some relationships with other words and letters that were already part of his repertoire. For example, he identified the "*M*" for mouse. Michael made the association between the sound and the letter and then said: "*Miss, this is the letter from your name*" (Excerpt from the Field Diary).

It was possible to perceive that over the course of the activities that were performed by the student, he was assuming an active position in relation to what was being proposed. With the researcher's collaboration, the student was gaining autonomy and organized his own pathways for developing his writing, which occurred when he looked at the word "orange" ("laranja" in Portuguese) and wrote:

Michael: "*Miss, that word is wrong.*"

Researcher: "*Why? What's wrong with it?*"

Michael: "*I don't know.*"

Researcher: "*How can you find out?*"

Michael slowly repeats the word aloud.

Researcher: "*So?*"

Michael: "*I don't know. I think it's missing a letter.*"

Researcher: "*What letter?*"

Michael: "*I don't know.*" (Excerpt from the Field Diary)

The negation of the learning subject—with all his subjective resources, not only his intellect—as a protagonist of learning has historically led to disregarding the subjective dimension that is involved in the processes of intellectual production.

[8]The memory game consists of pieces that have a figure on one side. Each figure is repeated on two different pieces. The puzzle is a game in which a player must solve a proposed problem. In this type of game, reasoning is much more important than a student's responsiveness and can be used to investigate the production of intellectual processes, in addition to traditional school activities.

Although Michael could not identify what was wrong with the word he had written, he was able to use his references to understand that his writing was not yet adequate. The dimension that was assumed by the new subjective productions in relation to school learning generated changes in the student's position as an agent in the learning process. Over the course of the activity, Michael expressed his dissatisfaction with his classmates' comments:

Michael: "*Miss, my friends say I'm stupid, that I don't learn.*"

Researcher: "*And what do you do?*"

Michael: "*I'm going to say I don't know. But that I can learn.*" (Excerpt from the Field Diary)

His confidence in his learning potential emerged from the relational dynamic that he experienced with the researcher, which mobilized the production of new subjective senses. This new production began to assume a dominant place over the fear and insecurity that constituted Michael's subjectivity in relation to school learning. It is in the intrinsic relationship between the intellect and the affective—viewing learning as a subjective production of the learning subject—that we can understand the intellectual production process for students who have learning difficulties.

The production of subjective senses that occurred in the face of Michael's difficulties characterized the study as a process of subjective development that was marked by the emergence of new subjective configurations that were constituted in the researcher–student relational space. The unfolding of new subjective senses that emerged over the course of the study is not determined and cannot be predicted or controlled. The production of new subjective senses and their unfoldings include the possibility of becoming, as no concrete reality can determine a type of subjective production and its potential consequences.

12.3 The Other as an Affective Presence in the School Learning Process: Final Reflections

Studies that include the subjective dimension of the school learning processes, which are guided by qualitative epistemology, have allowed an understanding of processes of intellectual production as a subjective production of the student. Based on the presented case studies, it is possible to broaden our understanding of the importance of examining subjectivity in the learning of children who have difficulties with school content, which reaffirms its heuristic value. The study of actions and relationships in the school environment made it possible to analyze the phenomenon of learning based on the other's positioning as an affective presence. This advanced the understanding of the teaching and learning process based on its dialogical and communicational character, with an emphasis on the subjective senses that led to new subjective configurations of school activities. Such a process influenced diverse areas of the children's lives, and thus became subjective configurations of development.

Daniel's case draws attention to the invisibility that many students experience in the school space. Before the teacher was mobilized by a factor outside of the

school, she expressed little care for the student's needs and judged him as having learning difficulties. By changing her subjective configuration of her relationship with the student, she began to establish another relational dynamic that generated a communicational space that mobilized subjective senses with a quality that was conducive to the students' school learning.

Michael's case reveals a situation that is very common in students who are identified as having learning difficulties, the belief—inscribed in the social subjectivity of the school—that the student is unable to learn. This school condition hinders the potential for constituting a space that is conducive to producing subjective senses that mobilize school learning and the emergence of the subject in the learning process.

The theoretical constructions that were produced during the studies were an important avenue for comprehensive explanations and constructions that generated new interpretative constructions and allowed complex representations about understanding the role of the other in learning development. Based on our analysis, the following points are highlighted:

- What drives school learning is related to the production of subjective senses that are constituted in the teaching and learning process. We emphasize the relationship with the other as an affective presence that can mobilize subjective processes and formations that generate new subjective configurations.
- The relational dimension that is involved in the teaching and learning process integrates emotionality, and the other ceases to be a merely instrumental mediator between the student and the task. Understanding the teaching and learning process through the dimension of subjectivity makes it possible to view this relationship based on the quality of the affective relationship that is established with the student. From this perspective, it is possible to advance the understanding of the teaching and learning process as a communication process.
- School learning depends on the connections between the learner's individual subjectivity, the teacher's individual subjectivity, the social subjectivity of the relationship between the learner and the teacher, as well as other social subjective processes that cross the complexity of the educational process, including the social subjectivity of the school. Thus, the teacher's representations and conceptions of learning and human development affect the actions that are directed toward the students in the classroom.
- In many cases, the social subjectivity of the school configures learning difficulties in a closely related way to the biomedical explanation. Actions are often directed toward identifying a diagnosis that justifies the cause of the learning difficulties, rather than pedagogical actions that can foster the students' development. In these cases, learning difficulties are viewed as an individual deviation from a pre-established norm by the school community, to the detriment of the social and relational dimensions of learning.
- The constructive–interpretative methodology made it possible to recognize the singularity of each case, which contrasts with the psychological tradition of generalizing the processes and problems that are experienced by students in the school context. Furthermore, these cases made it possible to generate intelligibility on

the diversity of the singular in the relational dynamics that are involved in school learning, as well as to understand qualitative research as a dynamic process of constructing different subjective configurations.

- The concepts of subjective senses and configurations represented useful conceptual devices to explain the dynamic processes that are configured over the course of the learning process. Their use points to the need to address the relational space and the other as an affective presence in constant transformation.
- Finally, an understanding of learning's subjective dimension, from a cultural–historical perspective, allowed us to understand learning difficulties beyond the emerging symptoms, which rescued the subjective dimension of the learner, who can emerge as a subject in the dialogue with the other, change his/her social position at school and mobilize a subjective development process that will foster learning itself.

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Chapter 13
Discussing Subjectivity in Undergraduate and Graduate Education

José Fernando Patino Torres and Elias Caires de Souza

Abstract The learning process, whether at the secondary, vocational, undergraduate, or graduate levels, has been discussed through different theoretical and epistemological perspectives in both education and psychology. These approaches have produced rationalist and instrumentalist understandings that generate an idealization and crystallization in reflections on learning and, as a corollary, eclipse the student as a subject in the process. This article is grounded in González Rey's theory of subjectivity and approaches learning as a subjective production. Using two case studies, this work focuses on two categories in the learning subjectivation process: the learning subject and motivation. We used the constructive–interpretive methodology, which is based on González Rey's qualitative epistemology. The following are notable results: (1) motivation is constituted in the subjective configuration of learning and, therefore, is grounded in the subjectivity of each student during learning; (2) each student is constituted by subjective configurations that integrate the social, the family, the professional project, among other aspects, which break with the notion that learning is separate from other spheres of life; and (3) the respective learning subjectivation processes have transformed into a subjective configuration of subjective development.

13.1 Introduction

Researching educational topics that focus on subjectivity have been possible due to the platform of scientific thought that was developed by González Rey, which articulates the theory of subjectivity, qualitative epistemology, and the constructive–interpretative methodology in a complex manner (González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez

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2017a; González Rey 2000b, 2002a, 2005a, 2007; Mitjáns Martínez 2005, 2014; Mori 2014; Madeira-Coelho 2014; Patiño and Goulart 2016). These three elements constitute a unit of knowledge production that is differentiated from other forms of qualitative research through its cultural–historical and dialogical character and the articulation between the social–individual and the emotional–intellectual, which emphasizes subjectivity and the subject who are involved in the learning process (González Rey 2002b, 2016a).

This chapter explains several subjective processes that are involved in two types of educational experiences: musical learning and doctoral training. As such, we based our work on two doctoral theses: (1) Caires (2015), who sought to investigate how three people with motivation for studying music have their respective processes subjectively configured, and (2) Patiño (2016), who proposed to explain the subjective processes that are involved in the investigative training of education and psychology doctoral students, with a focus on the student–supervisor relationship.

The guiding epistemological perspective was González Rey's (2000a, 2007) qualitative epistemology, which is based on three fundamental principles: the constructive–interpretive information process; singularity as a legitimate source of knowledge; and the dialogic and processual nature of knowledge production.

The instruments that were employed in the cited studies were conversational dynamics, sentence completion, essay writing on the topic, "*my history with music learning*," reflexive academic writing and participatory observations during informal moments throughout doctoral training, such as classes, research groups, advice sessions, and scientific conferences.

In the studies mentioned above, the goal was to highlight the heuristic value of the theory of subjectivity and its respective qualitative epistemology as a theoretical/epistemological platform for generating innovative fields of meaning in contemporary educational topics. We were also interested in returning to the category of motivation as a subjective configuration that mobilizes student learning.

According to González Rey, viewing motivation as a subjective configuration implies that it is "a specific quality of subjectively configured systems" (2014b, p. 1). Motivation has a specific subjective quality that is intrinsic to the subjective configuration of any human action. Thus, viewing motivation as a subjective production breaks with the dominant logic in psychological thinking, in which that category has the influential and determinant attributes of the individual's action.

13.2 A Brief Overview of the Learning Category from the Perspective of the Theory of Subjectivity

Two perspectives have been central to psychological theories of learning. The first highlights the logical–cognitive operations through which we learn (Saz et al. 2016; Pozo 1989; Inhelder et al. 1977). In this context, there is a type of autonomy that is attributed to the cognitive–intellectual and logical aspects, which results in a disregard

for the student's subjective character, specifically the singular modes of subjective involvement with learning. The second perspective emphasizes the direct relationship between the individual and the object that is to be learned. Learning is guided by an objectivist, individual, and behavioral dimensions that are established with a desired behavioral change in relation to the environment and the object (Williams 1999; Catania 1999; Baum 1999; Schunk 1997; Bandura 1984; Keller 1973).

The rationalist and behavioral views that dominate most theoretical perspectives on education and psychology have left no space for knowledge formation and construction processes in explaining subjective elements, such as the roles of emotion, fantasy, imagination, and pleasure (González Rey, Mitjáns Martínez 1989, 2017a; González Rey 2000a, 2012, 2014a; Pickersgill 2012; Broncano and Pérez 2009; Polanyi 1970).

From the perspective of the theory of subjectivity, learning is a subjective production. It is a process "that is configured through subjective senses that express multiple sociocultural experiences of the learner on a symbolic-emotional level" (González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2017a, p. 64). Thus, the presence of the learning subject (González Rey and Tacca 2008; González Rey 2012; González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2017a) is a fundamental condition for understanding the subjective configuration of learning.

In this theory, subjectivity is "the complex symbolic-emotional integrations that are simultaneously organized in the subject's lived experience and whose intelligibility materializes in the concepts of subjective sense and subjective configuration" (González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2012, p. 62). In this definition, the cognitive/intellectual aspects—which are prioritized in the dominant approaches—become subjectively configured for understanding the learning subject (González Rey and Tacca 2008).

González Rey states that "rescuing the learning subject implies integrating subjectivity as an aspect of this process, since the subject learns as a system and not only with the intellect" (González Rey 2006, p. 33). Being a subject in the learning context means that one can generate subjective senses about what is learned. The learning process is not limited to the formal obligations of education nor to the cognitive operations involved. These processes appear in subjective configurations that—through emotion, imagination, and fantasy—cannot be dissociated from intellectual functioning (González Rey 2017).

The production of intelligibility of learning focuses on the singularities of students in their respective learning pathways. The route for producing theoretical models starts with an investigation of the plural and systemic relationship between the students on their learning paths, which are not confined to interpretive categories that are defined a priori.

Next, we highlight the category of motivation as a subjective configuration (González Rey 2012, 2014b) that mobilizes the learning of students, which integrates—in a singular way—personality, emotion, fantasy, imagination, and the production of new ideas. We propose the following hypothesis: when a student faces the challenges of learning, from his/her subjective engagement, he/she develops subjective resources that enable the emergence of the subject of this process.

13.3 Motivation as a Subjective Configuration that Mobilizes Learning

Motivation has been a category addressed in psychological theories as being driven by factors that are extrinsic or intrinsic to the individual (Illeris 2013; Hockenbury and Hockenbury 2003; Schultz and Schultz 2002; Gardner, Kornhaber and Wake 1998). However, González Rey presents a definition for the category of motivation in the following terms:

> (…) motivation as a subjective production instead of just another function or operation within the logic that has been widely employed by psychology in the study of cognitive functions. Motivation is intrinsic to the subjective configurations in which the different individual functions and relationships are organized (González Rey 2014b, p. 17).

Our study investigates how learning trajectories were subjectively configured in people with motivation for either the study of music or for a doctoral process. These configurations highlighted the production of subjective senses within those trajectories, which represent the subjective senses that qualify the learning experiences of each individual and are not limited to their respective learning trajectories. The motives that guide an individual over the course of his/her learning process are subjective configurations that organize the multiple subjective senses and are not directly and immediately related to aspects of established learning trajectories (González Rey 2012).

13.4 Constructing the Information: The Cases of Márcia and Juliana

Márcia is 39 years old and informally began her music studies at a religious institution. Over the course of her learning process, she studied at two formal educational institutions: one at a technical level and the other at a higher education level. She was a civil servant in an environmental protection agency and is currently a military musician, who divides her time between being a mother, wife, arranger, percussionist, and drummer in different groups. She continues her music studies to improve her knowledge of different disciplines in that field.

Her first steps in learning music occurred in an unassuming and unintentional way. Márcia commented on this in our first conversation: “my first contact with music occurred in my adolescence in an experimental way, playing with friends from my church in an intuitive way”. That initial moment then turned into “regular classes from a colleague in the church band who was teaching me some things.” About these classes, she said:

> There was a general strangeness because it wasn’t common for a woman to play the drums, right! A woman can play the piano, flute, violin, things like that, but playing the drums, trombone, tuba, instruments that aren’t seen as “feminine,” it generates a certain kind of strangeness.

The strangeness that Márcia perceived leads us to define an indicator of her experience as the social view of the female image that is related to the practice of certain musical instruments. This subjective experience of strangeness, which could have led her to choose another instrument, or even to stop studying music, was not an obstacle for her continuing her musical learning, nor for maintaining her instrument choice.

The flow of subjective senses in the subjective configuration of an experience and their involvement in an individual's actions is neither direct nor conscious. Thus, in the essay, she wrote: "after a year of private instruction, I had the opportunity to study at the Brasília Music School." It is interesting to note the symbolic character that is given to learning in this sentence; mediated by a colleague, it is "instruction," while that which is possible in the desired institution is "study."

Related to this opportunity, she noted: "I lived in a small town near Brasília,[1] where I had no way to advance in the study of music." In these expressions, there are initial indicators of motivation, which is the foundation for changing her experimental behavior to a study that is oriented to commitment.

With her admission into the desired school, Márcia wrote in the essay: "after a year, I had the opportunity to apply to the lottery at the Brasília School of Music, and I was chosen and, then, began to study." We understand that this excerpt corroborates our earlier initial interpretation regarding the indicator of her interest in and involvement with music, which oriented her new attitude toward musical learning. However, we will present more significant elements, specifically, indicators that sustain our initial hypothesis of motivation as a production of subjective senses, which drove Márcia's musical learning process.

Her unpretentious starting point with learning led to new subjective productions that guided Márcia's motivational character as she deepened her studies. Related to her admission into the aforementioned institution, she commented:

> I came into contact with a dimension of music that I was unaware of; that is, I had to study theory, sing in the choir, attend concerts, a whole world I knew nothing about. Then, I began to like studying in order to learn and to know more.

This extract can be taken as an indicator that Márcia's relationship with music is not limited to playing—the satisfaction of the musical activity itself. Also, such an extract highlights the dynamic of subjective senses in the development of the subjective configuration of her musical learning, which, as we will present, will unfold in her professional career.

As her learning developed, she started to have new musical experiences, such as "singing in the choir," "making musical arrangements for a female vocal group", and "playing as a drummer and percussionist in different groups," which were addressed in the second conversation session.

Also in our second conversation, she mentioned that her parents were concerned with her academic and professional future: "they were concerned about me trying to make a living from music. How would I survive?" To circumvent this concern, rooted

[1] A city located in the center-west region of Brazil that is the country's capital.

in the prejudices of a social subjectivity that defines the social value and importance of professions and gender, Márcia applied for and was accepted into the civil service and attempted to study law and economics but did not pass either entrance exam.

However, the paths for producing subjective senses over the course of an experience follow unpredictable routes that break from crystallized social expectations, despite the experienced events. Her failure to enroll in the intended programs and her acceptance into civil service did not end her motivation for studying music. Thus, given the stability of civil service, Márcia commented: "the fact that I already had a public job allowed me to rethink my aspirations for music, take the entrance exam for music and be accepted."

The fluid and dynamic characters of motivation, which emerge as subjective productions despite multiple life experiences, are not directly determined by the individual's current moment in the course of an experience. We understand that the subjective productions that emerged in the development of Márcia's initial ambitions regarding musical learning, her advances in music making, her acceptance into civil service, as well as the subjective experience of frustrated attempts to enroll in the university programs she had initially planned, recursively unfolded into other subjective processes that were oriented toward developing her musical learning.

In an excerpt from her essay, she addressed her musical learning at the music school and wrote: "my intention with studying music at that school was just to have a little more knowledge and technical mastery of my instrument. I had no great interest in going any further."

Márcia's motivation toward musical learning—now at a university level, and in a recursive articulation with the concrete facts of her life—generated new levels of motivation that developed her subjective configuration in relation to music, which opened another career path by putting her job at that time in question.

During her higher education, there was an opportunity to take a civil service examination after which, if she was accepted, she would combine practical needs with the desire that had gradually emerged in her life story. Practical needs included the financial security of civil service. However, her desire was to work professionally with music. In relation to the new job, she stated: "It was a different kind of challenge. From someone who began playing at a church, I advanced and today I am a professional musician in a military symphonic band."

Márcia's decision to take a new civil service examination—in which there was an intersection between consolidating her professional activity as a musician and her economic independence—unconsciously produced new subjective senses, despite her new life opportunities, which resulted in potential paths that guided Márcia's actions and behaviors along a new life trajectory. Her subjective senses related to economic security from the new activity would qualify and modify her interest in music by centralizing it as her life's project.

Márcia's initial plans for musical learning led in new directions, and something that was not, at the beginning, a central theme in her life—specifically, the depth of musical learning—became a remarkable condition in her biography. In our third dialogical encounter, when she answered the general question: "What are your plans now?" she said: "To continue learning new things in music. This allows me to over-

come my limits. Am I going to face new challenges? Yes. But soon they will be overcome. It's a question of personal growth."

Márcia associates the continuity of her musical studies with her personal growth. Her initial subjective configuration in relation to music transformed into a subjective configuration of her development.

Her challenges are constituted by subjective plots, which—rather than becoming obstacles to her learning process—have become motivational drivers for continuing her studies. In this sense, she responded to the inductor, *my inspiration*, from the sentence completion exercise: "life, people, my life trajectory, when I see everything I've been through. I'm grateful for everything I've achieved, and I can't stop."

Currently, Márcia has a higher degree in music, a public job in the field of music and credits her current life conditions to her musical learning; this life situation is subjectively configured as *achievement, challenge, resilience, pleasure, and satisfaction.* She says:

> It was music, its study, its learning, that allowed me to come this far, with all my achievements, be they material, personal, or intellectual. Musical learning was, is and will be fundamental for me. Through music, I had the opportunity to learn different things about life, which were fundamental to my formation as a person; it helped me grow as a person.

The case of Márcia demonstrates the multiple paths and unfoldings of subjective senses in the subjective configuration of her musical learning. Her personal engagement, dedication, effort, perseverance, and resilience, which constitute her motivation for musical learning, emerge from a configurational logic in the production of subjective senses over the course of that activity. Her active positioning toward her life and issues that encompassed her learning allowed Marcia to advance in developing her activity with music but to subjectively integrate those issues (work, university, employment, family) in a flow of subjective senses that generated new subjective configurations for her learning.

Her musical development has become a subjective configuration of individual development. It engendered new subjective senses that were associated with the subjective configurations of her experiences in other spheres of life, such as her work, profession, social, and family. As indicated by González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez (2017a), the subjective configuration of development involves a process that cannot be dissociated from the individual's context and life history.

Similarly to the case of Márcia, Patiño (2016) supports our theoretical positionings on motivation with the case study of Juliana. She is from Pedreiras—one of the poorest cities in Northeastern Brazil—and lives with her husband and mother-in-law in Ceilândia, a city that is close to Brasília, where she is a doctoral student at a prestigious university. She is 30 years old and, with a lot of effort, studied pedagogy, completed specialist courses, and gained a masters in education, which allowed her to become a public school teacher in the state of Piauí. Regarding her experience as a teacher, she notes:

I was a teacher at a school that had no structure, neither books nor a floor, just dirt… but I created new situations; we used recyclable materials, and I tried to articulate what they had to learn with their own ideas. And the students learned, and I did too.

My life as a state teacher was assured, with a salary and benefits, but I really wanted to go to Brasília to get my doctorate. So, I resigned. Everyone thought I was crazy for leaving a safe and stable job, and no one believed I could be enrolled in a prestigious doctoral program.

Despite the precarious context of the school in which Juliana worked, there was a student–teacher learning process happening. The first indicator we can construct from her statement is her active and creative character, which allowed her to move beyond objective difficulties. Related to this, we highlight that she left a "safe and stable" public job in Brazil, which is a country with a high rate of unemployment. This suggests a subjective positioning that is not institutionalized in the comfort of a certain social/financial position. This active character is articulated with a second indicator, her interest in intellectual growth, which allows Juliana to have a vision of an educational future through the doctorate. In an informal conversation, she commented:

> Juliana: I knew my CV wasn't very strong. And I could have done a doctorate with the supervisor from my master's degree because we already had a relationship. I had a (silence)… a rupture. Everyone who knew me said, "Juliana will never leave her mother." So, I don't know how to describe (silence)… I have a strong relationship with my mother (crying).
>
> Researcher: You had a job in Piauí, your mother and the possibility of a doctorate. But you went to Brasília…
>
> Juliana: (Laughs) Well, in Brasília I had a fiancé, who is now my husband. He supported me so much in that moment, and I feel like a lucky woman. He took all my books to Brasília and I followed behind.

In the previous dialogue, Juliana expresses a self-critical positioning that is related to her professional training in Piauí. It is important to note two aspects in this excerpt. She cannot fluidly express herself, which demonstrates the deep emocionality that was involved in this life transition. On the one hand, she chose to leave Piauí and go to Brasília, a place that would provide the academic training that she desired as well as a relationship with her fiancé. On the other hand, moving away from her mother was something that caused her sadness, which indicates that this is not a simple change. Her affective involvement with her mother is significant. She adds: "I told my mother that I was going to try to get my doctorate. She was devastated, but she said that I should marry my fiancé. We have this, the importance of marriage for a woman from Piauí."

The decision to get a doctorate is constituted by producing subjective senses with a plural and paradoxical flow. The marriage of a woman—as a cultural imperative—is part of the dominant subjective senses that integrate the social subjectivity of northern Brazil, which Juliana does not question. She leaves her mother, a secure job and her culture of origin behind, but she does not give up her doctorate, a project that constitutes—in Juliana—her motivation to succeed in life. Through these subjective productions, Juliana faces the selection process in Brasília:

> My first visit to the university was during the selection process. It was very likely that I wouldn't pass the exam because I came from a very poor and isolated region; I didn't know anyone, and I was competing with strong candidates in mathematics education. What did

> I do? I studied a lot, morning, noon and night. And in the process, I met my supervisor, Luis, who asked at the interview: "You came all the way here, leaving everything behind?" I answered yes and that I was a hardworking woman, and I told him a little of my story. And I passed!

It is important to mention a third indicator in addition to those that were mentioned above, which is her ability to confront and overcome challenges. Although she comes from a poor region and does not belong to the relational fabric of the new university, she participates in the selection process and is successful. She not only has an abstract conviction, but she actively positions herself and studies intensely in the area of knowledge for which she was disadvantaged. Luis's question during the interview presents a supervisor who values her history and her effort to enroll in the program.

Her active character, her interest in studying, and her ability to overcome difficulties can be taken as indicators that Juliana positions herself as a subject at different moments, from when she was a teacher to when she decided to apply for a doctorate. Gains and obstacles are fundamental subjective productions on this path. These elements indicate that the doctorate was a goal that was subjectively configured in her life. After she began the doctorate, new challenges appeared:

> I wasn't from the field of mathematics, and I was welcomed. I come from far away, from Piauí, and I'm nobody here. And Professor Luis helped me, in the sense of saying: 'Juliana, you can do this; besides having potential, you are very dedicated.' I'm not intelligent, but I'm very dedicated.

The field of mathematics is not usually a welcoming field for learning processes, specifically for those who have not studied it previously. We believe that the way in which Juliana experiences not being a mathematician and being "from far away" subjectively composes a certain feeling of inferiority, which can also be a source of subjective senses related to her effort and ability to move forward and transcend obstacles. A new indicator emerges—communication with her supervisor—which has a subjective quality that strengthens her confidence and results in new subjective positionings at the university. Although she does not feel intelligent, she does not victimize herself; as a subject, she is able to create a path with the new circumstances of her life. Recognizing the importance of the advising relationship, we present her sentence completion exercise:

> My supervisor… is incredible as a person, as a teacher, as a mentor, as a friend and as a father.
>
> Me as a student… I'm a poor woman who had just become an educator, and I had an educational experience in a very small city.
>
> The way Luis supervises… is an example to me. I admire his dedication, his commitment as a researcher and his respect for his students.
>
> My main challenge in the doctorate… gaining confidence.

This new information supports our view of Juliana's constant self-devaluation. However, the quality of her relationship with her supervisor and the admiration involved in it foster the production of subjective senses that form the foundation of learning in teaching as well as her ethics. Here, we emphasize how Juliana produces

different subjective senses that surpass the academicist functions of supervising, which triggers new forms of interaction and academic and personal production, which is expressed here:

> My supervisor opened different spaces for me: the EDEM study group, which brings together mathematics advisees at the university; the Brazilian Society of Mathematical Education, which brings together the country's experts. He also encouraged me to teach mathematics education at an undergraduate level, which was something I had never done before. And I even began advising undergraduate students. I cried a lot; I thought I wasn't going to be able to do it, but Luis always said that I was capable.

As the supervising relationship subjectively deepens, new spaces of socialization—such as academic and teaching networks—are generated, and Juliana takes on new challenges. Such a supervising relationship has been subjectively configured, which opens new subjective productions that include forms of subjective development. Although she cries and feels insecure, she does not give up and faces each new moment that Luis proposes, which again shows the paradoxical and contradictory character of the flow of subjective senses in her doctoral training. At this point, we would also like to delve into Juliana's academic productions to highlight the value of the supervising relationship in action:

> At the beginning, I couldn't learn Vergnaud's theory of conceptual fields. I cried because I felt like I wouldn't be able to learn it. And now, in the second year of my doctorate, I was able to write an article about it, you know? Luis is the co-author. I wrote and deleted, wrote and deleted, until I said: no, do it! I sent it to him, writing in the email that if it wasn't good, that wasn't a problem. And can you guess what happened? He responded by saying that it was excellent and makes a contribution as a good mathematician, bringing new contributions to mathematics education. So, I can see an evolution, and I am proud to see that today, a woman with my history, can publish an article.

This last extract, combined with the other aforementioned information and indicators, allows us to create our theoretical model in which we recognize that a supervising relationship—configured subjectively—promotes subjective senses that are the basis for opening innovative processes in knowledge production. Scientific writing, which is a central challenge in the doctorate, is a production that exposes those who write. Writing implies being read and criticized by others. However, Juliana, despite her paradoxical subjective production between her distrust and active character, takes the risk and publishes with Luis. This new achievement is not an unfolding of individualized student or supervisor functions but expresses a subjective configuration of supervising that is enriched through dialogue, mutual provocation, and affective support.

Finally, we note that our interpretations support the hypothesis for the emergence of the subject in Juliana that is based on a motivation that allows her to break with subjective crystallizations (González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2017a). These ruptures are true subjective processes that integrate intellect and emotion into an orientation that promotes subjective development (González Rey and Patiño 2017; González Rey 2016b; Patiño 2016). Because Juliana currently is able to produce successful texts, classes, and lectures, her condition of a "poor and unintelligent woman" is

subjectively reconfigured through new subjective senses that are expressed in the pride she feels for what she has achieved so far.

13.5 Final Considerations

The learning subjectivation processes that were presented in this chapter expand intelligibility for the complex and singular networks that constitute the knowledge production process of the learning subject. By highlighting the subjective processes within a human activity or life experience, the theory of subjectivity and its categories allow an epistemic production that is systemic, open, and processual (González Rey and Mitjáns-Martinez 2017a; Mitjáns-Martinez 2005).

The investigation of learning, as characterized in the theory of subjectivity, places the subject of that process in the epistemic focus. It emphasizes the intricate and intriguing subjective articulation that amplifies and drives the student (or does not) over the course of his/her learning. Under the highlighted theoretical focus, categories such as imagination, fantasy, emotion, and motivation constitute the subjective configurations that drive learning.

In the presented case studies, the motivation category shows that the student's relationship to his/her object of study is not only direct and rational. It does not only involve cognitive conditions and the supposed ideal scenarios that are necessary for learning. We do not disregard these situations. We understand that factors that are external or internal to students do not, in themselves, encourage or inhibit learning. Our theoretical framework of understanding supports the hypothesis that there are no sociocultural or subjective determinations for learning and life trajectories. The question is how these conditions are subjectively configured in the student's singular learning process.

Motivation, as a subjective configuration, is a transformative, integrative system and a fundamental driver of the student in his/her subjective configuration of learning (González Rey 2014b). In the analyzed cases, and as proposed by González Rey, motivation signaled subjective unfoldings in the trajectory of those learning processes and demonstrated the movement and indirect relationships of multiple entities in the students' lives for the subjective constitution of learning. Motivation, as a subjective production, underlines the personological resources that the person has or creates over the course of an activity (González Rey 1985, 1989). As such, it breaks with the concept of immediate social influences and motive as an intrinsic motor for human action (González Rey 2014b, 2016a).

The multiple experiences of Márcia and Juliana, in their respective learning processes, were engendered by subjective configurations at a given time, implications of which, at other times that constitute those processes, are not linear over the course of learning.

Finally, the epistemic support for the theory of subjectivity and its concepts allows us to recapture subject and singularity in learning in different fields of knowledge (González Rey and Patiño 2017; González Rey 2005b) and highlight the value of

motivation as a category by recognizing the cultural and historical dimensions—as well as the individual and socially subjective processuality—that are involved in the challenges and achievements of the learning subject.

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Part IV
Subjectivity, Psychotherapy and Health Studies

Chapter 14
Subject and Subjectivity in Psychotherapy: A Case Study

Valéria Deusdará Mori and Daniel Magalhães Goulart

Abstract In this chapter, we discuss psychotherapy based on the theory of subjectivity from the cultural-historical standpoint, as proposed by González Rey. We emphasize the importance of new theoretical concepts to signify the psychotherapy field, as well as the need to open new practices supported by the recognition of the individual as the subject of this process. Such practices imply a reflective and critical position on the part of the psychotherapist, in which his/her knowledge is a tool to foster dialogic possibilities with the other, but is never a conclusive interpretation of normalized phenomena. We present a case study that enables us to reflect on the individual and social subjective configurations of human processes. The concept of subjective configuration is central to this proposal, because it implies advancing the possibility of understanding the complexity of subjective processes. In this sense, the idea of mental disorder is not centered on a priori categorizations, but on the way the person produces various subjective senses in living an experience. The case study generates intelligibility on important processes of individual subjectivity and personal resources to open singularized developmental pathways beyond standardized processes of the dominant social subjectivity.

14.1 Introduction

Historically, cultural-historical psychology has not been specifically concerned with the field of psychotherapy. However, the theoretical advancements of this framework make valuable contributions toward signifying this practice. Different authors (González Rey 2007, 2011; Holzman, Mendez 2003; Portes 2011) have produced research that highlights these contributions from this theoretical perspective and have addressed questions that are related to knowledge and practice in the field of psy-

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chotherapy, which leads to new theoretical challenges. In this context, the central objective of this chapter is to advance this discussion based on the theory of subjectivity that was proposed by González Rey (1997, 2002, 2007, 2011, 2017) in order to highlight the value of this theoretical contribution to practice and research in psychotherapy.

González Rey (2007) argues that his intention is not to establish another school of psychotherapy, in the sense of another dogmatic space that does not communicate with other theories. His proposal seeks to understand subjective processes in psychotherapy from a procedural and singular perspective that privileges the dialogicity of its configuration:

> Our comprehension of subjectivity as a process within a dialogical scenario shares the ideas that persons act jointly and that dialog is a fluid process within which many unexpected situations emerge, which permanently implies new positions, subjective senses and ideas in the partners, in a process in which questions and answers are not two separated processes (González Rey 2016, p. 184).

From this perspective, subjectivity is not defined as an intrapsychic process, but as a symbolic–emotional production and organization in its reciprocal constitution of the individual and the social. Both social subjectivity and individual subjectivity are organized in the tension of different processes that are configured in the history of people and culture, rather than in a cause and effect relationship.

The concept of subjectivity, as proposed by González Rey, implies thinking about the complex constitution of humans in the scope of culture. This complex constitution is organized in the different subjective senses that are produced during life. Subjective senses are organized in the relationship between the individual and the social, which are constructed in a singular manner. As expressed by González Rey (2012b): "the concept of subjective sense allowed me to understand human action as the individual's production, rather than as resulting from the multiple external influences that converge and are significant in this production" (p. 56). Different subjective senses organize themselves in subjective configurations that are relatively stable organizations of subjectivity dynamics. From this perspective, psychotherapy is guided by the way in which different subjective configurations take shape in the individual's experience and are organized in relation to different processes. Therefore, this theoretical perspective does not—as a matter of principle—adopt any universal or standardized references for human development, nor does it use any behavioral-based psychopathological categorizations as a foundation for therapeutic diagnosis and action.

The idea of subjective configuration implies understanding the organization of the individual's experience from a procedural perspective, as it is impossible to describe different phenomena according to the way they externally present themselves without an articulation with how the individual feels his/her experience. These are processes that have a subjective character. Subjective configuration is a dynamic and organized nucleus of subjective senses, which, in turn, originates in different spheres of individual and social experience in a process in which the historical is integrated into the actual moment of the lived experience (González Rey 2002, 2007). Therefore, it is never a process that can be defined a priori.

Thus, there is no predefined subjective configuration of "depression," "schizophrenia," or "bipolar disorder," for instance, although these conditions may have common symptomological expressions in different cases. From this perspective, mental disorder is the "emergence of a type of subjective configuration that prevents the individual from producing alternative subjective senses that allow him/her new life choices" (González Rey 2011, p. 21). These are cases in which the individual's subjective organization becomes more rigid through producing reverberating subjective senses, which end up chronifying a situation of suffering.

Due to the permanent presence of social subjectivity[1] in the individual processes of subjective configuration, psychotherapy constitutes an important scenario for understanding the configuration of social subjectivity processes. The idea that psychology essentially refers to the individual implies the reduction of the social to family and group processes and ignores other constitutive aspects of social subjectivity that unfold in different subjective senses. Aspects such as discourse on gender, race, ethnicity, or any social representations that impact how different individual processes are configured have been completely ignored, culminating in individualization and, consequently, in the depoliticization of the phenomena that psychology addresses on a daily basis. Thus, recognizing different processes of social subjectivity expressed in different subjective senses provides the psychotherapist, in addition to a more reflexive and committed practice to the social processes in this context, with actions that facilitate the emergence of subjective senses that imply new configurations of the individual's processes in their relationship with the world.

According to the theoretical framework of subjectivity, the psychotherapist's actions include encouraging the emergence of the other as a subject,[2] rather than constituting a practice that has as a prerogative to submit the other to a knowledge that guides a certain way of living life. In this context, the category of social subjectivity is important to show that, in the context of psychotherapy, the individual is often signified as ignorant in relation to his/her own experience and all knowledge is centered in the figure of the psychotherapist (Neubern 2012; Mori 2012). The theoretical knowledge of the psychotherapist enables actions that are not related to the meanings that the individual generates in psychotherapy and that are not directly related to his/her subjective senses, but to what the psychotherapist recognizes as the best for the other. This "best for the other" is a rational premise that, in fact, leads to the imposition of the therapist's subjectivity on the other in the process of psychotherapy (Gonzalez Rey 2017).

This process occurs in the foundation of practices that, starting from a narrow hierarchical notion of knowledge, end up appeasing the dialogical construction of the psychotherapeutic process and, consequently, removing the possibilities of change in the individual's field of action. One example of this is the centrality of the notion

[1] Social subjectivity represents the articulation of subjective senses, which are produced in different spheres of social life and define the constitution and dynamics of any social group or organization (González Rey 2002, 2016).

[2] "The subject is an individual or group who is capable of generating an alternative path of subjectivation in the normative institutional space in which it acts" (Mitjáns Martinez and González Rey 2017, p. 52).

of "mental illness" as a reference for classifying the other according to strictly established symptomatological patterns, becoming associated with the proliferation of drug practices, currently hegemonic, not only in cases of mental health (Goulart 2017; Goulart and González Rey 2016; Parker 2015), but also in children and adolescents with learning difficulties (Alcântara and Goulart 2016; Bezerra 2014; Moysés and Collares 2011).

Further examples of the "absolutization" of the psychotherapist's knowledge to the detriment of the other's subject condition are: (1) The idea that change in the other depends exclusively on the quality of the psychotherapist's interpretation and action; (2) imposing of abstract criteria of normality which, when based on a supposed neutrality, conceal intersecting moralistic practices; and (3) the individualization of extremely complex processes of social reality, such as poverty, violence, and social inequality. In these cases, the representation of the dialogue as an essential resource for changing the person in the context of psychotherapy is lost.

The dialogue is a tool that allows the psychotherapist to reflect on the processes that are developed in psychotherapy, generating new therapeutic strategies. The quality of the dialogue is fundamental so that the psychotherapist can raise hypotheses and also provoke, with his/her positioning, reflections of the individual in psychotherapy.

Dialogue allows us to create a relationship that is marked by authenticity, which encourages an understanding of how the individual subjectivates different processes in his/her life. This is only possible if the psychotherapist is interested in the other and recognizes that everyone feels what happens in their lives in a unique and singular manner. The production of different subjective senses is not the cause or consequence of abstract situations but is implicated in a processuality that does not explicitly appear in dialogue. It is not the psychotherapist's direct knowledge or action that causes change through dialogue. The knowledge produced by the psychotherapist underlies relational strategies that can encourage this process, but it is the other's production of different subjective senses that makes it possible to generate new options for subjectivation to create new paths of development. Subjective senses can be mobilized by dialogue, but are always beyond it in their form of expression.

As such, psychotherapy turns to an ethics of the subject (González Rey 2011), in order to emphasize the generative character of the other and encourage alternative forms of his/her integration into the complex context of social life. Rather than providing a correct path, the psychotherapist acts as an interlocutor, based on a constructed bond, in order to support, provoke, and stimulate initiatives and positionings that were not possible before this relationship (González Rey 2016).

From this perspective, psychotherapy is not dissociated from research. The practice of psychotherapy is the setting for producing knowledge. In this sense, the way that we understand the process of psychotherapy is guided by the constructive–interpretative and dialogical character of knowledge production (González Rey 2012b). Construction and interpretation include elaborating different indicators, which are the foundation for more consistent hypotheses that are based on the studied reality and that facilitate reflections on the different subjective processes of the person in psychotherapy and improve actions as a psychotherapist in that context.

14.2 Case Study

Inês was 35 years old when she began psychotherapy. She was married and had no children. She thought about beginning psychotherapy after she was diagnosed with panic syndrome and mentioned that she was morally harassed at work. Her conversations in psychotherapy were always focused on her problems at work: very authoritarian bosses and colleagues, with whom Inês felt no connection:

> Psychotherapist – Why did you decide to begin psychotherapy?
>
> Inês – I have a hard time going to work. I feel really bad. After four months at this job, I was chosen by my colleagues to be their representative to the sector's coordinators. This role has generated a lot of unease because in the meetings with the supervisors, I was responsible for bringing up my colleagues' demands. At one of those meetings, my immediate boss became very angry and yelled at me in front of everyone. He yelled a lot. He diminished me. After that, I was never the same when I got to work. I think I got sick after that.

At the beginning of psychotherapy, work appears as an important element in this stage of Inês's life. She blamed the boss for her suffering, but there is no self-reflection about what she experienced, which leads us to formulate an indicator of her victimization in relation to her life at that moment. At this point in her conflict, she did not reflect on other aspects that constituted her experience. This process is also clear in the following excerpt:

> I'm depressed, and I feel a very deep sadness. I can't understand what's happening to me. I have changed my medication and it hasn't had the desired effect. One day, when I was at my night class, I had to go home because I started having a panic attack. I thought I was going to die. I think if I could change jobs I wouldn't feel this way. I work at the worst place in the world. Everyone is morally harassed there. The class that I'm taking is to pass a different exam, but I'm going to have to drop out. At work, the panic is always present. It takes away my concentration, my strength. How can I have the energy to do other things if I'm exhausted from being at a job I hate?

Inês was very focused on her diagnosis, the effect of medication and discovering the causes of her panic syndrome. As stated above, she remains without a differentiated reflection on her own responsibility to change her life, which reinforces the indicator of her victimization in relation to her lived conditions at that time. She does not mention anything about other aspects of her life, which can be seen as an indicator of her separation from the discomfort she feels toward other areas of her life.

This process is an expression of the centrality of the mechanistic cause–effect perspective in the dominant social representation of mental disorders, which completely neglects its subjective configuration. Such dominant social representation considers the so-called pathology as something that is external to the person, making it difficult for the emergence of the condition of subject of his/her own life as in the case of Inês. From this perspective, medication has a role in gaining control over what is happening, but it is not geared toward changing the individual's field of action.

> In another session, the following dialogue occurred:
>
> P – How have different aspects of your life been from day to day?

I – I don't like the people at work. When I get there, I put on headphones and do what has to be done. I'm very good at what I do; I was able to meet my deadlines very well, but right now I'm afraid I won't be able to. There are days when I can't work in the morning. I feel terrible and can't get out of bed.

For a while now, I haven't known what to talk about in psychotherapy. It seems like I'm out of topics. Sometimes I don't come to the session because I have nothing to talk about.

For almost two months, Inês was only focused on work problems and panic attacks that occurred before or after work. Despite being so focused on work at that time, based on the above statement, we formulated an indicator that she was oriented to fulfill formal obligations of her function, according to what was expected of her, but was unable to integrate this work into her personal interests, leading to a distance between work and motivation, with a broad impact on her sociability. It is interesting to note that while the question that was asked refers to different aspects of Inês's life, she does not refer to her husband or to other activities that she has in her life, which allows us to construct an indicator of her unhappiness in those other areas of her life.

Due to her suffering, the way she positioned herself at work was part of a subjective configuration that was dominant at that time and was marked by unhappiness in the different areas of her life as well as by victimization and a distance between her personal motivations and her job. One strategy for this stage was using written instruments, as Inês was unable to reflect on her life.

It is important to highlight that the use of different instruments to facilitate the expressions of the individual in psychotherapy as well as the dialogic process can foster different reflections in this context. These can be written instruments, drawings, or any material that the individual feels inclined to use. From the perspective of the theory of subjectivity, we do not use instruments as homework. The instrument is a mobilizer of subjective processes that can lead to different reflections in the psychotherapy process. No instrument is better than any other, and there is no guarantee that the instrument will be a mobilizer. They are tools that can help the other to explore other areas of their experience. In this sense, the following dialogue took place in a later session:

P – I would like to do an exercise. Could you write a text with the title "I am"? I would like you to read the text aloud. (Approximately 10 min were provided for her to perform the activity).

I – I am cheerful, I am a good daughter.

P – Before you read the entire text, could you explain the meaning of what you just said?

I – I always felt like a very cheerful person, but I don't feel that way now. My studies make me feel more intelligent and capable, but now when I talk about them, I feel sad. I wanted to study fine arts. But I got into something completely different. I didn't tell you something: I took the fine arts college entrance exam in another state without my mother's support. A few years later, I discovered that she has hidden the university entrance exam results, so I wouldn't study fine arts. At the time, I was very sad because she had decided my future career. My father said he knew what she did, but there was nothing he could do. I couldn't do anything when I learned all of this.

What she wrote was not directly related to what she expressed when she commented on the sentences, which shows that the instruments do not have a direct

relationship to the individual's history but are instigators of the other's expressions beyond their intention in the moment that they are writing. Instigators are strategies to stimulate the individual to reflect on different areas of his/her life. The theoretical construction in this methodological perspective is not organized based on what is directly expressed in relation to the instruments, but in the potential for constructing indicators that allow us to advance in understanding the problem.

Examining the different indicators that have been constructed so far, we can affirm that the subjective configuration of Inês's panic consists of different processes in her life that go beyond work: First and foremost, she expresses subjective senses that are generated by a subjective family configuration that seems to be decisive in the subjective senses that she produces in the situation experienced at work.

It seems important that at the age of 35, her pride in being a good daughter is what she highlights when she defines herself, especially due to what she emphasizes soon after, when she reveals perhaps the greatest frustration she has experienced, in which her mother had a central role. In this process, the contradiction between the subjective senses that are produced in relation to such frustration and those produced in relation to her inability to generate an active positioning toward her mother may be one of the most important sources of subjective senses that is at the root of the panic she experiences. This initial hypothesis articulates with another. Once again, when speaking about central aspects of herself, her husband is not mentioned, which in articulation with the interpretive construction previously elaborated on her unhappiness in different areas of life, leads us to construct the hypothesis that she has been unable to open a field of subjectivation with her husband that provides an alternative to the conflict with her original family, which also contributes to her current discomfort.

Regarding the instruments that were used in psychotherapy, it was interesting that the written instrument was first suggested by the psychotherapist but then later became something that was chosen by Inês. These complementary actions demonstrate a collaborative process of building the dialogue, which began to occur more authentically and spontaneously, addressing different spheres of Inês's life while not only centralizing her current complaint: work.

I – I can't say anything. Can we write? That makes me talk.

P – We did a short writing exercise before. My suggestion now is to do another type of written exercise. I would like you to write and then we'll comment on each section.

(The sections below in bold were the instigators that were used for her to complete through writing).

I get: very angry when people don't understand me.

My mother: is an example of the kind of professional that I admire most, hardworking, strong. She is the friend who I love and my companion forever.

My parents are very important people in my life. I feel really bad when I think that my mother didn't approve of my professional choices in the past. I can't stand the idea that my mother defined my future career. I have graduated from a course that I feel no affinity for, and I can no longer do what I always dreamed of, which was fine arts. But I work hard in my current job. I think of other exams I can take to advance in my profession.

Consistent with the hypotheses that were constructed above, this last piece of dialogue allows us to construct the indicator of her dependence and subordination in relation to her mother, who is simultaneously the main affection in her current life. Her inability to position herself in relation to the conflict that she once again reported leads to a persistent tension, preventing her from undertaking initiatives in the professional field, which culminates in a state of apparent resignation, which, far from helping Inês in her subjective development, paralyzes her in a framework of passivity and suffering.

At this point, the psychotherapist asks her how she feels when she reads what she wrote. Inês begins to cry: *Remembering and talking about all this is like betraying my parents. They always wanted the best for me. But at the same time, I feel very sad about this situation.*

Some aspects of the social subjectivity of Inês's family are taking shape through the constructive–interpretative process. Her mother centralizes decisions and is not challenged by other family members, including Inês. Although they feel bad, they do not express their desires and aspirations when they are not in agreement with what the mother thinks, nor do they engage in active positioning to create their own paths of the development. This is an expression of how social subjectivity is organized in Brazil. In different regions of the country, parents wield a power, due to their expectations, that often dominates the paths of their children's lives.

The individual is not subordinate to social subjectivity in a linear manner but is constituted by it. Therefore, these processes are configured as different subjective senses that mobilize the person in frequently contradictory directions. This is evident in the case of Inês, who expresses that her mother is her companion at the same time that she feels anger and sadness because of her betrayal. As stated above, the impossibility of authentically positioning herself in relation to this process is a potential source of recurrent subjective senses in the subjective configuration of her symptoms. Inês's individual subjectivity expresses subjective senses that are strongly associated with the processes of her family's social subjectivity, such that she cannot take the place of subject nor agent in her life plot. Such processes have paralyzed her and generated a conflict that has taken time for Inês to recognize in her history.

In another section of dialogue:

P – You have focused on your relationship with your parents, but what about other people in your life?

I – My husband is my love, my faithful friend and companion. Without his support, I would feel really bad about what's happening. He understands me and doesn't ask anything of me. My friends are what I hold dear in my life. We spend a lot of time together, but lately, I don't feel much pleasure in going out, not only because of the panic but also because I'm embarrassed by my weight; I always imagine that they're thinking about the changes in my body.

At this point in the conversation, the psychotherapist chose not to directly ask about her husband and to see how he would appear, or not, in her expression. The husband appears to be a valuable person for Inês, but he only appears when she is asked to speak about other people in her life. Furthermore, her husband emerges in her statements as being associated with understanding but without any expression

that is specifically related to deep affections for him, which is consistent with the previously constructed hypothesis related to the absence of a field of subjectivation with her husband that provides an alternative to the conflict with her original family. This is an indicator that he is subjectively configured as a fulcrum in her life, but not as a figure who is capable of mobilizing deep affections in Inês. In general, Inês appears to be unable to develop deep affections for other people, which leads us to believe that the contradictory subjective senses produced in relation to her mother are an obstacle to generating alternatives in her life. Thus, subjective senses of the relationship pattern with her family have unfolded in her current relationships. The quality of her relationships with other people is based on what is asked of her. Her husband is good because he does not ask anything of her; she has difficulties with her friends because she is worried about what they think of her. Inês does not have her own criteria for orienting her life, which is subjectively expressed in the configuration of her disorder.

It is important to emphasize that a conflict does not have a single cause. Subjective processes are organized from an individual's multiple experiences and not in a cause and effect relationship, but through the way in which different experiences are subjectivated by the individual in the process of living life. Inês's current conflict originates in several different moments of her life, from which she has produced subjective senses related to her inability to react in different situations that are important to her, both at work and in her relationship with her family, culminating in a feeling of failure. The subjective configuration of Inês's panic is expressed through the contradictory production of subjective senses that are related to her mother, which leads her to a state of dependency, subordination, and passivity. Such a situation prevents her from opening significant fields of subjective development in her life, either at work or in her relationship with her husband. These are processes that mobilize her subjectively, deeply affecting her daily life.

In another section of dialogue:

> P – Tell me more about your marriage and your daily life.
>
> I – I feel uncomfortable with my body; I gained a lot of weight with the medication. I used to go to the gym, but I don't have the energy to go after work anymore. My husband understands what is happening to me, but I'm unhappy that I haven't told him what my mother did.

The section of dialogue above is another expression of how her relationship with her husband was subordinated by the subjective configuration of her mother. Recognizing her discomfort with her own body and her unhappiness does not mobilize alternative subjective processes, even though this affects her relationship with her husband. On the contrary, such recognition is integrated into the dominant subjective configuration in her current life and is associated with her victimization and the suffering that she experiences in the most diverse areas. The emergence of new options of subjectivation implies the individual's involvement in the space of reflection and the generation of new subjective senses in this process, which is in fact the main contribution of psychotherapy in this theoretical perspective. Her positionings in relation to what she is experiencing and her ability to recognize her limits and possibilities are subjective processes that can facilitate the emergence of new subjective resources.

In another section of dialogue from a later psychotherapy session:

P – Inês, you say that your husband is the most important person in your life, but why doesn't he know about your past conflict with your mother?

I – I'm ashamed of this. I'm ashamed that I didn't do anything. When I discovered what she did, I didn't say anything; I was quiet. I wasn't able to tell my mother about the severity of what she had done.

At that moment in the conversation, Inês's reaction was full of emotion. The shame that Inês reports expresses that her attitude was not compatible with what she felt at that moment. This shame is at the foundation of the subjective senses that configure her history, for example, in her difficulty in coping with what other people think about her and her inability to have her own criteria. Furthermore, omitting her husband from something so important in her life is another indicator of her husband's secondary character in her life, due to her attempt to protect her mother from his judgment. These subjective senses are configured in her current suffering and have unfolded into other areas of Inês's life.

The psychotherapist's provocation is guided by hypotheses that are raised throughout the process. From the perspective of the theory of subjectivity, the psychotherapist's action is based on the idea that subjective senses are procedural and are articulated in the subjective configuration of symptoms, rather than causing the symptoms. The subjective configuration of a mental disorder has a complex organization that can only be analyzed through different hypotheses that are raised through dialogue.

After this session, Inês goes to her mother's house and confronts her with what she felt when she discovered that her mother hid her exam results. This process expresses her capacity for subjective mobilization that was provided in the dialogue in psychotherapy, leading not only to differentiated self-reflection but also to taking important initiatives based on her own positionings. In the following session, she said:

Last week, after I left here, I went to my mother's house. I told her that what she did to me was very cruel. I told her that, at that moment, I was very angry with her and couldn't forgive her for what she did. I asked her to explain her attitude, and she told me that she always wanted the best for me.

When I left, I felt so light. A weight had been lifted from my chest. I told my husband, and he supported me and was a great friend.

This positioning, in which she expressed for the first time an authentic and firm attitude toward her mother, a once feared figure to which she had been subordinate for so long, allowed the beginning of her therapeutic change. This positioning was a mobilizer of the subjective senses that opened the way for new reflections on her life. Her active positioning that day was marked by an emotionality that accompanied Inês for a few days:

It was great to tell my mother everything. It seems like the world has opened up. I feel like I can see things from another perspective. At work, I've tried hard to go in and do things calmly and with tranquility. Some things that annoyed me, like listening to my boss's voice, no longer cause me so much annoyance. I still can't go to the gym, but I'm thinking about finding a nutritionist to help me lose weight.

The happiness that Inês felt when she was able to express herself to her mother corroborates the hypothesis that was previously constructed in relation to the contradiction between the subjective senses generated in relation to her mother and her inability to position herself in the face of what she felt as a permanent source of discomfort. This experience of confronting her mother was a mobilizer of reflections, which encouraged new questions and positionings in her life and represented the possibility for new options for subjectivation. Although new possibilities of subjectivation began to be configured, this did not imply the disappearance of her suffering at once. In psychotherapy, change does not occur suddenly or linearly. Change occurs as side effects of new subjective productions that are procedurally configured from the psychotherapeutic relationship as well as from what, starting from this relationship, begins to mark the individual's life. These are moments marked by contradictions and tensions that are part of living life and subjective development.

The dialogue in psychotherapy favors reflections that enable the individual to generate new alternatives, not so that he/she knows the cause of suffering, but to advance beyond his/her current subjectivation processes. The different instruments used in this process provoke the other's expression, stressing his/her differentiated reactions in a relationship that is marked by mutual interest. In other words, it is based on an ethics of the subject, which, contrary to victimization, seeks to create a condition for the person to generate and cultivate alternative subjective productions to his/her present suffering.

After this period, Inês still had panic attacks but was able to control them so that they did not paralyze her. She began to feel more confident in herself and expanded her field of action in her daily life. Thus, she decided to resume her physical activities, although irregularly. Her relationship with her husband was gradually resumed in an atmosphere of trust and openness that allowed them to express how they felt about what they experienced in this process. Interestingly, in the final stages of psychotherapy, her work was no longer a relevant topic.

14.3 Final Remarks

The presented case allows us to consider the value of the theory of subjectivity in the development of the subjective configuration category. Its definition as a dynamic process allows us to advance in the symptomatological aspects of an experience, which implies breaking with defining mental disorders in universal terms. Thus, their analysis is configured by the different individual and social processes of the individual's life.

A subjective configuration may be dominant in some aspects of life, but the individual may generate alternatives in his/her life that enable alternative productions of subjective senses that facilitate progress in relation to his/her limitations. This is a tense, contradictory process, but it can be a path of personal development. The subjective configuration of the mental disorder is an element that prevails over other subjective processes in Inês's life. But the configuration can never be seen as a peren-

nial thing in an individual's life, for to the extent that different reflections or positions are mobilizers of diverse subjective senses, new options can be configured. Thus, this study allows us to consider that subjective configurations exist in an ongoing process, resulting in their heuristic value as a category to give visibility to different subjective processes that are configured in the dialogical space of psychotherapy.

From the perspective of subjectivity, psychotherapy enables us to reflect on the complex configuration of both individual and social subjective processes, as well as on the importance of reflective and active positionings of the people who are involved in this process. We would also like to highlight the inextricable connection between theory, practice, and knowledge production in psychotherapy research.

Similarly, the psychotherapist has an ethical commitment to the people in psychotherapy. His/her actions are based on favoring the other's condition as a subject. The psychotherapist does not occupy a hierarchically differentiated place, but is part of the dialogical process. Dialogue is a fundamental tool in this perspective, since it allows the other to open his/her reality, making new subjective configurations possible, depending on the way in which people are involved in this process.

The production of knowledge about the different subjective processes that are expressed and configured in psychotherapy is essential to advance in theoretical productions that generate visibility and reflections on the practice of psychotherapy. This practice is still fragmented by theoretical disputes that require additional research for it to permanently reconfigure itself in a more consistent and attentive manner to the different forms of organization of human processes.

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Chapter 15
Health and Performance: The Omission of Subjectivity and Education in Sport Practice

Laura Rojas Vidaurreta and Jonatas Maia da Costa

Abstract Many studies in the area of physical education and sports psychology marginalize the production of subjectivities as intrinsic to the sport practice. The effort to challenge this omission is the primary motivation for this chapter. The studies on which the chapter was written were conducted and were addressed to the use of the sport and physical education as a device of inclusion in two different contexts and countries: the institutional context of mental health in Brazil and with Paralympic athletes in Cuba. The researches allow to conclude the importance of considering the physical education and the sport not only as complement activities in the mental health's attention, but as one important activity for the education and subjective development of both, users of the mental health services and the professors, who frequently feel themselves as a secondary professional in the mental health services. At the same the study hold in Cuba with Paralympic athletes showed that the training cannot be center only on high performance; it should attend before all the subjective development of the athletes.

15.1 Introduction

From an epistemological perspective, positivism dominates knowledge production in sports sciences, which "justifies" the lack of interest from physical education and sports psychology on producing subjectivities. The studies that we will discuss seek to produce science from an alternative epistemological perspective, which is opposed to biological, naturalist, and positivistic epistemological positions. The theory of subjectivity and the Qualitative Epistemology proposed by González Rey (1997, 2002, 2015, 2017a) is the theoretical, epistemological, and methodological foundation of

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our studies, which occurred in a Brazilian graduate program in the field of public health and in the context of Cuban high-performance para-sports.

From our theoretical perspective, the motivations of sports practitioners transcend an objective purpose and, consequently, should be viewed as configurations of subjective senses (González Rey 2014). An understanding of the categories, subjectivity, subject, subjective senses and subjective configurations,[1] allowed us to generate intelligibility about moments in the lives of individuals in which they have decided to be sports practitioners, as a way of empowering themselves as human beings.

From our epistemological framework, the knowledge production process advances through dialogic relations that advance throughout the research process. It is within a dialogical climate that the different moments of the methodology develop, which are oriented to examining both individuals and their social processes.

Unlike the canons of sports sciences, the singularity, from this epistemological perspective, represents a permanent moment of openness and confrontation during which the participants´ subjective engagement becomes the main condition for advancing the kind of information of which the construction of subjectivity can be done (González Rey 2015, 2017a). Our analysis is guided by the maxim that "outside" of practitioners—without examining their subjective productions—the possibilities of intelligibility about the sports phenomenon are minimal in any context.

15.1.1 Methodological Approach

We approach to the subjective dimension of sports practice on the basis of our understanding of sports and physical activities as a dialogic and integral space for the subjective development of its practitioners.

The criteria for the legitimacy in the constructive, interpretive studies are not supported by the number of participants—as is so common in "empirical" studies based on representative samples that are dominant in the sport sciences, the legitimacy of the studies is based on how different indicators are assembled as part of the theoretical model that resulted from the research (González Rey 2005, 2007; González Rey and Martínez 2017a, b). In contrast to current main methodological representations in the study of sport and physical activities that have mainly a descriptive and instrumental character (Balaguer et al. 2002; Carless and Douglas 2012; Chan and Mallett 2011; Smith and Sparkes 2012; Tubino 2001, among others), the Qualitative Epistemology understood generalization as a theoretical process, through which on theoretical model expressed an explanatory capacity for advancing by different ways on phenomena that were not intelligible before the model appearance. Based on these principles, the singular cases become very important by the richness of qualitative elements that they provide for the construction of one theoretical model (González Rey and Martínez 2017a, b)

[1]These categories are developed in Chapter 1 of this book, *Subjectivity as a new theoretical, epistemological, and methodological pathway within cultural historical psychology*.

The construction process occurs over the course of the fieldwork and through it the indicators are produced, on which hypotheses are advancing in living paths from which the theoretical model will appear. In fact, indicators—in their hypothetical fabric—are motivators for dialogue and depth through instruments that foster interaction and communication over the course of the study. The idea of continuity and rupture is central for this method.

One study, that was done in Brasilia, was held at a Psychosocial Care Center (CAPS), which is a Brazilian institution that is responsible for the mental health services to individuals who suffer from severe mental disorders according to the dominant criteria centered on mental pathologies on which the psychiatric practice is oriented. A therapeutic workshop organized as a game of soccer was the main ground on which the research was done. Two of the participants in the game were selected as the participants of the two case studies advanced in depth during the study. The fieldwork implied the full presence on the researcher in the institution for 1 year; for 5 months, the weekly soccer workshop was monitored.

In the case of the research with Cuban Paralympic athletes of high performance, we will discuss a case study of a member of the athletics sportive preparation to Rio Paralympics. This study is part of an ongoing research process that is based on direct involvement in sports training developed in Cerro Pelado High-Performance Center of Havana, Cuba, which allowed us to construct sports practice as a subjectively configured space that moves beyond a "pure" moment of high performance.

In the theory of subjectivity framework, dialogue is a process that includes individuals as active agents, and is characterized as a subjective production. In the promoted dynamics, there are noteworthy dialogues during formal moments of the soccer workshop and the athletic team's training sessions as well as informal moments at CAPS and the Cuban High-Performance Center. Both choices were marked by the need to examine a spontaneous environment for the study's participants to express themselves without obligation from many directions (González Rey and Martínez 2017b).

In our case studies, conversational dynamics allowed us to identify research information. These imply that "the other" has a moment of expression, in which the participants' presence in a dialogue leads them to understand it as a subjective configuration of a constantly shared and moving space. This type of dialogic space encourages the participants to reflect and focus on their perceptions of certain experiences, which enables us, as researchers, to construct what we want to understand (González Rey 2011, 2014).

15.1.2 *Technicality in the Construction of Knowledge: Omitting the Singularity as an Explanatory Possibility in the Complexity of Corporal Practices*

Corporal practices as a space of possible subjective productions do not underpin the deterministic logic of biological benefits that induce the individual to believe that performance would improve their health condition. This perspective resulted from the common sense and has been incorporated into the current theory on physical education, which posits that physical activity is a primary determinant for "becoming healthy." For us, health is a process and not a product. A person does not become healthy but lives a health condition that is subjectivated in their history and culture, with all the possibilities that this engenders (González Rey 2007, 2011; González Rey and Martínez 2017a; Costa 2016).

The ideas of both social and individual subjectivity indicate that there is an inseparable relationship between the social and individual dimensions of human developmental processes in sports. In its relationship with education, it is possible to understand the specific dynamics of subjective development through the sport and physical education in an integrated manner to generate the capacity of practitioners to be subjects of their experiences and, therefore, move beyond approaches that fragment these processes.

At CAPS, corporal practices are first legitimized by patients who experience the next representations of health. After 4 years at CAPS, E.A., who is 38 years old, understands the soccer workshop's "effects" on his life in the following way:

> I hadn't played soccer for a long time. But when I was younger, I always played in the street and it was a great time. I've always liked soccer, and playing with my CAPS colleagues has been great. Mainly because I feel better throughout the day.

For E.A., soccer was in his life at a certain moment. He nostalgically remembers a time when it was possible to play soccer in the street and recapturing that recreational activity appears to make him feel happy to share this with his CAPS colleagues as a new experience. However, E.A. continues his statement by suggesting that he feels better because playing soccer in the workshop contributes to improving his physical fitness, which leads him to face—and be better prepared to face—the problems in his life, which characterize the shared social subjectivity in spaces where the practice of sports is directly related to improvements in practitioners' general condition. It appears as if E.A. is guided by the hegemonic discourse on the value and impact of physical activity on people's lives, which has extensive coverage in the media. Based on his statement, it is worth beginning to question—in a provocative way—the extent to which his well-being is no longer tied to the process of feeling and recapturing a happy life moment through soccer.

Although soccer is a recreational activity, we run a lot, we sweat, and this improves our fitness, which is good for facing life problems.

When observing E.A. during the soccer workshop, there were no indications of good physical conditioning or him showing concern about his health. Rather, it

seems to be more of a discourse that is referenced by the idea of physical activity as synonymous with health. The perspective of leisure and the benefits of good social coexistence appear to be more important for E.A. We can assume that soccer—a corporal practice—emerges as a subjective production in E.A.; we believe that he actually feels a sense of well-being that is not merely due to the biochemical effects of exercise. In E.A., soccer has integrated configurations in his life history that allow us to highlight the subjective character of this space for someone who decides to return to corporal practices. Furthermore, it is configured in his interactions with his CAPS colleagues in a recreational and pleasurable manner.

The idea of physical fitness that is extracted from the dominant discourse is weak due to some questions that escape E.A.'s cultural framework. Even from a biological point of view, the CAPS soccer workshop has few gains for physical fitness. This becomes clear as there is no dynamic in the workshop that aligns their practice with the basic principles of physical training, such as the volume and intensity of the exercise. Furthermore, they play once a week, and this low frequency of physical activity has few benefits for physical fitness. Thus, we can hypothetically construct that playing soccer translates as a space of subjectivation for E.A., as subjective senses from other areas of his life—such as those that are associated with the desire to integrate and interact with a group of people—are configured; at the same time, they have a singular organization that causes the workshop to become significant to him, with repercussions beyond improving his physical condition.

However, a different statement under the same fulcrum that represents physical activity as a product for health was provided by B.L., who is 20 years old and has been involved with CAPS for a year:

> I barely come to CAPS. I really come because of soccer. My mother would like me to participate in other activities. She thinks that other activities will help me with my depression.

B.L.'s expression of his teleological representation of corporal practices allows us to reflect on other elements that are included in discussing corporal practices, such as the production of a subjective sense. This is because B.L. seems to care very little about the maxim that physical activities contribute to better health. Therefore, B.L. is not concerned with the (eventual) "effects" of exercise on his body. His desire to participate in the soccer workshop is subjectively configured in other directions. When observing the context in which B.L. became involved at CAPS, the production of subjective senses when playing soccer is not a small thing in his life, as the soccer workshop is the only opportunity for accessing B.L. in his therapeutic process at CAPS. B.L. does not attend other CAPS workshops, although he is extremely participative in the soccer workshop.

B.L.'s expression on a corporal practice in the context of mental health—which is associated with our perceptions of B.L. when he participated in the workshop—allows us to hypothetically reflect on the scope and impact of corporal practices when they are subjectively configured in CAPS patients who have disorders. Unlike the traditional benefits of physical education, which is related to common sense and media discourse, the scope of corporal practices in mental health may have less of a biological impact on the body than expected. The tradition of physical education—specifi-

cally in the field of health—places biology at the forefront of the process and guides its educational practices (Carvalho 2004). Should this logic not be inverted? Likewise, think about an educational practice that—because it is educational—allows for the emergence of practitioners as subjects[2] who configure their subjectivities in the space of corporal practices and who—guided by a physical education teacher—promote healthy life habits to transform their way of life and, consequently, promote health.

> I don't like (*other workshops*[3]). I prefer to only come for soccer. She (*his mother*) doesn't complain because she thinks soccer will at least help me lose weight. I think she's right about that, but my weight has never stopped me from playing well. I play soccer well even though I'm chubby.

Another important point in B.L.'s case is related to the potential of corporal practices as important contributions for establishing ties with CAPS patients. Generally, patients who seek out CAPS are suffering and experience acute and immediate distress. Their state of apathy and vulnerability challenges mental health professionals to guide these patients and begin the process of constructing a therapeutic relationship. In practice, it is common for the mental health professional to prompt this relation. B.L. is having difficulties incorporating CAPS into his life, and the avenue that manages to connect him has been the soccer workshop.

By observing most of the CAPS workshops, specifically those whose operationalization was grounded in psychiatric or psychotherapeutic work, we understand that it is necessary to reflect on how the characteristics and dynamics of these workshops open spaces for producing subjective senses for the participating patients. When they do this, we understand that they create environments of subjectivation for the patients who start to live in a space in which there is the potential for becoming a subject in their therapeutic process. However, many psychotherapeutic workshops avoid this logic and focus the work on the health professional while encapsulating patients in the workshop; i.e., the workshop does not provide spaces beyond the workshop and does not open new alternatives to be developed by the participants inside and outside of the institution, keeping narrow and immediate medical goals. In other words, the patient hermetically experiences the workshop; outside of it, the tasks do not make sense to them. However, many patients only enter in contact with the representations that base the psychotherapeutic work after the disorder. Their life histories have few ties to the discussion of their subjectivity. This makes the challenge of mental health work even more complex in the context of interventions by psychologists and psychiatrist, for whom the clinical work is separated for its educative function.

In contrast to this context, corporal practices emerged in the practitioners' lives since childhood. Games and play are activities that forge children's social spaces.

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[2]The category of subject allows the individual in his/her capacity to open new singular paths of subjectivation that translate into new spaces as an alternative to the pre-established or standardized spaces. Chapter 2, *The Theory of Subjectivity in the Current Moment: implications for research and the psychological practice*, in the book *Subjectivity: Theory, epistemology and method,* by González Rey & Martínez (2017b) theoretically advances the concepts of agent and subject.

[3]In the three cases, italics and parentheses mark some explanations, descriptions of physical expressions, and other details that are relevant for the construction under development.

From our theoretical perspective, these practices are developed through experiencing these social spaces, whether they are institutionalized (at school) or non-institutionalized (in the street). In our view, corporal practices are important in mental health work because they can emotionally engage practitioners. From the perspective of corporal practices as productions of subjective senses, a physical education teacher working at CAPS can provide patients with an alternative space for subjectivation, which—from a strategic perspective on mental health care services—can lead to a relational environment that other spaces cannot.

15.2 Omitting the Athlete´s Subjective Condition Due to the Preponderance of Performance: The Potential for Sports Practice as a Multidimensional Space that Is Subjectively Configured

In the high-performance sport, homogeneity in the form of "living" the sports experience is assumed and dominates representations that operate from the non-legitimation of the level of the singularity in knowledge production (Rojas Vidaurreta and Vidaurreta 2015). In this scenario, González Rey's theory of subjectivity suggests that subjective processes are first recognized and valued for them to be viewed from a cultural-historical and eminently qualitative perspective, which differs from the psychological processes that are involved in sports activities. Thus, it is possible to recognize the generative character of subjectivity and avoid the reductionist determinisms that have traditionally attempted to explain the sports experience.

In our proposal, sports are a multidimensional, multi-determined space for protagonists' subjective productions, where the sports practice for people who are living with a disability may move beyond traditional explanations that summarize it as a space for social inclusion with benefits that are restricted to personal advancement. For R., a 28-year-old Cuban Paralympic high-performance sprinter,[4] sports have a singular connotation: They allow him to be the "man" he longs to be.

> My greatest dream in life is to be an Olympic or world champion (…)[5] to be someone, to command respect.
>
> I come from the street, my mind is from the street, and on the street, a man is a man, a guy who isn't afraid, who does what he wants and doesn't let anyone gossip about him, who commands respect.

The acts of an individual—actions in a concrete social space—are consequences of the other social spaces that affect them (González Rey 2017b). This fabric of interconnected social spaces allows us to examine high-performance sports and the practice at CAPS that was mentioned above as not only spaces for expressing the

[4] R's disability consists of decreased mobility in his right arm that resulted from an atrophy caused by improper handling during birth.

[5] In R.'s statements, the symbol (…) indicates pauses in his expressions.

individual subjectivity of their practitioners—those who make it a way of life or a space of recreation—but also as subjective configurations in the subjective social dimension of people, groups, and institutions, which appear at the individual level through individual subjective configurations.

> R. I'm on the disabled team, but I don't feel disabled. A disabled person is someone who doesn't have the ability to live, and I have more than any normal athlete. I haven't had relationships with any disabled women. Not for any reason, but I don't like it, I just don't like it. When I went to the first national athletics championship, I couldn't even eat with those people (*referring to the team's athletes*) because one was missing one arm, the other a leg. No. No. No. It looked like a bomb had fallen!! (*Expression of dislike*) (…) I came from the street, from normal schools; I never went to special schools, I was always with the normal ones and being with those people was honestly something that shocked me. Not now, you end up getting used to it in the end.
>
> Researcher. What does it mean to be normal?
>
> R. Oh, I don't know, I said that like…That's the way I say it, normal…Being normal? Being complete.
>
> Researcher. Are you complete?
>
> R. Yes, don't you see?! (*Enthusiasm*)

It is interesting how R. organizes and delivers his statement, which reveals the impact—on a subjective level—of being a person who is living with a disability. Viewing himself as a person with a disability leads him to think of fewer possibilities, of limitations, and of diminishing his own masculinity, which is not consistent with R.'s idea of a "man." In turn, this condition generates subjective senses that are connected to aggression, denial, a harsh way of speaking and rejecting conditions that imply weakness, the subjective states that influence his current way of life. Thus, the subjective configuration of disability would constitute itself from both difference and limitation.

> R. How would I describe myself? A tall, thin guy with a problem in his arm. I don't know (…) a good guy, happy, yeah.
>
> Researcher. What does "a problem in his arm" mean?
>
> R. Nothing (…) this right here (S*hows his right arm, where his disability is*).

His disability is barely noticeable from a physical standpoint. This "helps" him express it as only a "problem," which implies a less serious situation. A problem can be transient and has a solution in the medium or short term. His disability is permanent. This singular way of describing his condition indicates that there are important tensions and conflicts when thinking of himself as a "different" man.

> I know I have a problem with my arm, but it never made me feel bad, let alone like I'm not someone. On the street, we have to be a man in everything.[6]

[6]Culturally, the concept of *manhood* in Cuba has a determining influence on the socially shared "environment." González Rey & Martínez (2017a) define it as "a system of values and norms organized around man as value within an imaginary crossed by the strong presence of the sect of African origin named '*abakua*' in the Cuban popular culture, as well as well as by the many epics starring heroic Cuban warriors throughout the history of Cuba, and more recently with the Cuban Revolution (…) (p. 15)."

From his association of living with a disability with stress-generating experiences can be considered an indicator of suffering that he experiences when he feels when he is identified as a disabled person; it is this tension of being identified as a disabled person an indicator that he cannot be integrated his disability to its identity. As such, it is possible to construct the hypothesis that R.'s way of living with a disability represents an integral expression of a network of deeply interrelated affects, relationships, and ways of living. The idea of a man, a "macho," someone who is important on the streets, is articulated in other spaces of R.'s subjectivation, such as in his romantic relationships. He does not feel that he has to "settle" for girls who have a similar condition of disability.

R.'s singular manner of subjectively lived as disabled person is a good example of how the problem is not the disability in itself, but the way it is subjective configured by individuals. The concept of subjective configuration allows to understand contradictory expression that has to be deciphered in order to assemble subjective senses that are beyond what is conscious and directly expressed by individuals. As much as he wants to minimize his disability, it exists. Therefore, this permanence has a specific subjective implication, which is evident in excerpts, such as those that were presented above. Thus, we understand that the subjective organization of disability is related to specific historical processes in education and socialization. Because the subjective dimension is accounted for, there is a difference between traditional positions in the space of sports psychology, which, when faced with expressions such as R.'s, would try to explain the "phenomenon" through specific factors that characterize his personality or externally affect his "psychic disposition."

We recognize that sports include challenge and assertion as well as an overcoming of the other in which—under specific physical conditions and within the norms of each sport—an individual asserts themselves and achieves the best performance with more stable and efficient actions. The way in which R. acknowledges and reacts to failure in sports also encompasses other dimensions beyond high-performance sports practice. The first time he participated in the International Paralympics Games, R. ran the 800 meters and finished in 9th place. He did not make it to the final and experienced this as a bitter defeat. He hungered for a medal, even though it was not possible for him to perform at the level that was required at that moment because of concrete factors such as having little systematic practice time and other specific training conditions that were beyond his control. As a result, he left the sport for 2 years. He returned with a different coach, and no longer competed in that event. Although he claims he is a "man" (forged in the street, from the "environment"), he "runs away" when he is faced with an adverse and unexpected outcome, to the point of abandoning his training. This contradiction demonstrates a subjective configuration in which the subjective resources to overcome the failure are closely related to subjective senses related to living with a disability, and subjective senses he permanently produces related to it in different spheres of his life.

R. Why continue? I thought I'd do my best, but that isn't what happened. I wanted to win. My coach didn't even support me. I know I didn't do well. But he didn't recognize that I worked hard in training, he didn't defend me in that difficult moment.

Researcher. Defend what?

R. I don't know (…) saying that I was a good athlete even though I didn't win.

Researcher. Did someone say otherwise?

R. No, but I knew that they (*referring to the coaches and the rest of the team*) were thinking it…

Researcher. How could you have known that?

R. I don't know how to explain it, but I knew (…) and he did nothing.

Researcher. What did you do?

R. Nothing, I wasn't the one who needed to do anything!!

A "man" who still needs to construct arguments in others' voices to defend his attitude: justification for defeat. Based on this condition, it is possible to define another indicator of the information construction process: low tolerance for an adverse outcome, which leads to giving up in a situation that demands effort and sacrifice. The complex subjective configuration of this process collapses when he is confronted by the impact of his defeat. He is not as brave as he believes himself to be; one thing is what I think, and another one is the subjective processes that resulted from subjective configuration that are beyond conscious representations and control. Another related indicator with the previously defined indicator can be formulated on the basis of his narrow way to understand his final results in terms of success or failure, rather than as performance, which has close ties to indicators that reflect experiencing disability as a diminishment, in contrast to the condition of masculinity.

Articulating what has been constructed thus far, we advance our ideas by stating that R. does not have the capacity to produce subjective senses that break with the natural actions that define his current way of life. The bold and manly statements that he makes have no real value for his behavior, which became clear over the course of the constructive-interpretative process. This failure closely aligns with the previous hypothesis on the experience of disability as an integral expression of a subjective network of affects, relationships, and ways of living.

I wanted to win the world championships; it was my dream, but when I finished the semifinal, my feet felt heavy, I felt bad, very bad (…) I got a time close to my personal record, and I qualified for the final, but no, I felt bad (…) I knew it wouldn't go well and I felt that (…) well, it didn't go well…

I have experienced failure, yes (…) in the world championships, I failed, I was frustrated because I was hoping it would go well, no one likes to lose and listen to comments from other people. (…) no one says anything, but you can tell from their faces (…) I knew what they were thinking.

The hypothetical subjective configuration that we are constructing suggests that the experienced "limitation" would not solely be from R.'s life story, or as result of the specific context in which he acts and develops, it is an expression of his incapacity to generate subjective processes that allow him to overcome the challenges and difficulties he faces and generate anguish and suffering. The idea of subjective configuration suggests that R.'s positioning in an area of life, such as sports, is only a moment in his subjective configuration, which simultaneously acquires congruent or different forms across spaces in his life.

> Failing in life is having no one who cares about you, no one who gives you a hug on your birthday or spends the day with you, instead of giving you an expensive present, a cell phone or something like that. Failing in sports is not winning (*in competition?).* Yes of course, training matters, but what counts is the competition.

We argue that all human experience is complex and multi-determined and is constituted by subjective productions that preserve the human singularity (González Rey 2011, 2015). R.'s case explains how an experience can prevent the emergence of other subjective states that differ from these dominant experiences, such as frustration about failure. These states express a subjective configuration that is susceptible to deeper development by continuing to work with R., with possible unfoldings in different alternatives for his life (González Rey 2007; González Rey and Martínez 2017a).

Rather than delimiting a set of potential universal causes for being "eliminated," the subjective productions have to be singularly captured within the way they are subjectively configured; these subjective configurations may be dominated by core of subjective senses that only could be changed through the emergence of new one that their interwoven can lead to a new subjective configuration. This process only occurs within new dialogical alternatives with coaches and professional of the sport in training changes under new educative and relational strategies. The athlete would lose the ability to act as a subject when he/she is faced with the incapacity to generate new subjective senses at moments of crisis. In other words, in his current subjective configurations, R.'s subjective processes—the sources of subjective senses that are organized in different processes and behaviors that nurture his experience of living with a disability and sports failure—are strengthened in the subjective configuration of his daily acts, which nullifies his capacity to generate alternatives to the dominant affective states.

It is not a simple task to construct studies from this "subversive" theoretical focus. It implies willingness and intentionality on the part of both the researcher and the participants. As we demonstrate with R., the phenomena cease to be operational in their concrete forms of expression, which prevents them from being classified into universal categories, as is customary in sports psychology. Thus, it is important to definitively embrace uncertainty.

15.3 Final Remarks

These studies defend the thesis that research in physical education and sports that have been hegemonic in psychology until today marginalizes the subjectivity and then important educative role of the dialogue as inseparable from the physical performances. Instead of subjectivity and the dynamic approach that it allows in the research and practice in this field, it has be used to standardize the athletes in personality traits and patterns as directly responsible for their failure and achievements in the sport practices. In this context, the theory of subjectivity in a cultural-historical perspective contributes to an important inflection in knowledge production in these areas.

It advances theoretical reflections and elaborations that other scientific approaches are unable to achieve, and allows new paths of professional practice and research that turned into inseparable in the fieldwork.

Differences in the processes that nourish the subjective configurations of E.A., B.L., and R. represent an important aspect of this concept's heuristic value for explaining—in a differentiated way—the subjective processes that are under development, which are responsible for the multiple subjective states and behaviors that are configured in the sports experience in different people. This concept is qualitatively different from those that operate with the logic that a corporal sports practice is universal, having their own aims and results regardless of their practitioners.

The proposed perspective has benefits for physical education and its intersection with health that have not previously been explored in the scientific literature. This is particularly important when the objective of physical education is mental health. Actually, most of the researches in physical education investigate the "benefits" of physical activity on the bio-physiological functioning of individuals who have psychological disorders. Subjectivity is completely overlooked in these studies. Corporal practices take place though subject for which these practices evoke different subjective senses organized and self-generated as subjective configurations. Depending on how these corporal practices subjectively would be experienced by individuals so will be their effectiveness for health, sport performance, and subjective development. For the work of the physical education professional, the intervention must respond to the patients, with an aim of extending their objectives in developing corporal practices that promote the patients' production of subjectivity. The patients' culture and history—that is subjectively intersected when they experience corporal practices—should be the focus of the physical education professional who is responsible for advancing actions that could be intrinsically associated with the mental health care.

In contrast, in sports psychology, the search for immediate data on psychological orientations for sports coaches has led to approaches that value the athlete's psychological singularity despite the focus on usual professional practice, which reflects an epistemological construction that is based on positivism and a biological conception of practice. For us, it is the task of sports psychology to approach this singularity, which transcends the idea of individuality. The sports world is differently constituted by each practitioner, and this construction is not static. Rather, it is emerging and produces itself and is replaced over the course of the action, where it ultimately acquires its significance for research and practice.

The case studies attempt to advance theory that can generate multiple intelligibilities on the problem. In the study of the subjective configurations, there are aspects of social subjectivity that are configured in all cases, but that appear through different subjective senses in each individual subjective configuration. The concepts of subjective senses and subjective configurations come to life through the multiple experiences that people live in their life contexts and history and do not allow for conclusions outside the complex and specific network of subjective configurations and processes that are part of the experience of each person. Representing sports practices through this theoretical perspective legitimizes and consecrates the presence

of qualified professional work and demonstrates the ways in which the practitioner shapes corporal practices in his/her life, at CAPS, in high performance and beyond.

We do not attempt to make our theoretical construction absolute, as we understand that the above considerations are subordinate to a broad epistemological rupture, which—rather than scientifically validating the phenomena that is experienced in corporal sports practices through the instrumentalization of technique and objectivity—emerge as constructive, interpretive processes for producing the studies' information. From our perspective, this would be a large step toward the effort, *ad aeternum,* of understanding human complexity.

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Chapter 16
Studying Subjectivity in Mental Health Services: Education, Subjective Development and the Ethics of the Subject

Daniel Magalhães Goulart and Fernando González Rey

Abstract This chapter discusses the relevance of the theory of subjectivity for simultaneously advancing research and professional practices in mental health care. The context of such a discussion is the emerging challenges of the Brazilian psychiatric reform. Based on the constructive-interpretive methodology, this discussion is underpinned by the results of original research addressing the professional team of a Brazilian community mental health service. The researcher participated in several daily activities of the service, which allowed the creation of an authentic bond with the professionals. Dialogue is discussed as a key device for the epistemological and methodological frameworks that sustain this approach. It implies the creation of relational spaces in which individuals emerge as active agents, expressing themselves through speech, gestures and postures in a subjectively engaged way. In this perspective, theoretical construction is simultaneous with the therapeutic process, both being grounded on an ethics of the subject as well as oriented towards the articulation of mental health, education and subjective development. Theory is a process in permanent development, which feeds and is fed by new domains of practices.

16.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the relevance of the theory of subjectivity for simultaneously advancing research and professional practices in mental health care. Dialogue is discussed as a key device for the epistemological and methodological frameworks that sustain this approach (González Rey 1997, 2003, 2005; González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2017b, 2018). The context in which such discussion is presented concerns the emerging challenges of the Brazilian psychiatric reform. Drawing on empirical findings from original research undertaken in a Brazilian community mental health

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service, this chapter focuses on the work with the professional team and emphasizes the articulation between mental health, education and subjective development.

The psychiatric reform movement began in Brazil in the 1970s and was formalized as a reference for the National Mental Health Policy in 2001 (Lancetti 2012). Inspired by various deinstitutionalization movements within mental health care around the world (see Cooper 1967; Foucault 1961/2009; Szasz 1960), especially by the Italian Democratic Psychiatry (see Basaglia 1985), the Brazilian psychiatric reform has set itself against dominant psychiatry and the very existence of traditional mental hospitals. In such a process, work focused on the multiple ways of relating to service users, according to their concrete forms of life, was emphasized.

In this context, Psychosocial Care Centers (CAPS) constitute the main strategy of the Brazilian psychiatric reform, being defined as community mental health services that should substitute mental hospitals. These services aim at moving mental health care out of the hospital towards the existential territory of service users. The different types of CAPS vary according to their physical structure, the diversity of the activities offered, the number of professionals and the specificity of the demand (Brazil 2004).

Despite the various advancements in Brazilian mental health care after the formalization of the National Mental Health Policy in 2001 (see Pande and Amarante 2011; Pitta 2011), several difficulties and challenges remain in this context today. In previous papers, we emphasized the new institutionalization phenomenon, understood as an expression of the "mental hospital model" in community mental health services (Goulart 2013, 2016, 2017; Goulart and González Rey 2016). The new institutionalization phenomenon represents the maintenance of unilateral, hierarchical and crystallized relationships between service workers and service users. It is an institutional subjective configuration that cultivates the focus on the notion of "mental illness", understood as an objective reality to be defeated.

The new institutionalization phenomenon refers to subtle forms of symbolic violence, which operate, despite the frequent good intentions of service workers, by the permanent association between mental disorder and social exclusion (Goulart and González Rey 2016). This picture is expressed by the lack of dialogical spaces, which could favour processes of subjective development of service users, who often end up being placed as objects of professional intervention.

In this chapter, special emphasis is given to the relevance of the theory of subjectivity for advancing both research and professional practices within this context. In doing so, the notion of subjective development (see González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2017a) is taken as the main goal of mental health care, considering the individual at the centre, instead of standardized techniques, such as medication and universal forms of assessment. The ethics of the subject (González Rey 2011; Goulart and González Rey 2016; Goulart 2017) are presented as an essential value through which such a proposal obtains an important political value.

16.1.1 Implications of the Theory of Subjectivity for Mental Health Care

González Rey's theory of subjectivity (1997, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2014, 2015, 2016) is used in this study as a platform of thought to advance dominant practices and knowledge within the mental health care context. As discussed in the first chapter of this book (González Rey 2018), from this theoretical perspective, subjectivity, whether individual or social, is not a reflection of any given objective order, nor is it determined by external conditions, but represents a symbolic emotional production by living such conditions.

Such symbolic emotional units form a new qualitative phenomenon, the subjective phenomenon, allowing the traditional intrapsychic reductionism that has characterized individualistic approaches within the mental health field to be overcome. At the same time, it overcomes the social reductionism that has prevailed within some critical approaches, which have emphasized social symbolic constructions to the detriment of the individual dimension and its capacity for rupture and change.

The study of subjectivity is important, not only to offer another dimension of theoretical explanation of the new institutionalization phenomenon, but also to support new forms of diagnostics and professional practices oriented towards overcoming it. Such diagnostics and practices are based on the production of subjective senses and subjective configurations of individuals and social groups involved in this context. In this sense, they extrapolate the naturalized taxonomy of mental illness, as well as the centralization of medication and symptomatic control. At the same time, they shift the gaze from explicit intentions and formal delineations of public policy (González Rey 2007; Goulart and González Rey 2016; Goulart 2017).

As also discussed in the first chapter of this book (González Rey 2018), subjective senses appear through an endless and unconscious chain, within which one subjective sense articulates with others to form subjective configurations. In such a dynamic process, subjective configurations represent self-regulatory and generative formations, either individual or social, which, in turn, become a permanent source of subjective senses in ongoing human performances. Subjective configurations are not static; they synthetize the plurality of experiences of a singular history, as well as the multiple social contexts that are present in an individual's or social group's current experience.

Instead of mental illness, subjective configuration emerges from multiple subjective senses related to social and individual histories that are embedded in the current complex social networks within which individual and social life occurs. In this way, these concepts allow behaviours and symptoms, which have traditionally been engulfed by pathological labels, to be understood as subjective productions through which individuals and groups enter into a vicious circle of suffering, losing their capacities to generate alternatives to it.

From this theoretical perspective, mental disorder is conceived of as the "emergence of a type of subjective configuration that prevents the individual from producing alternative subjective senses that could allow him/her new options for life before

the rituals perpetuated by this configuration" (González Rey 2011, pp. 21–22, our translation from Portuguese). That does not mean reducing all dimensions of such a complex phenomenon to subjectivity, but emphasizing the subjective production embedded in living it. That implies understanding it as a singular process that can never be defined a priori. In this sense, there is no general a priori subjective configuration of "depression" or "schizophrenia", although they might have some common symptomatologic expressions.

Differently from subjectivism, subjective senses and subjective configurations are never detached from action (González Rey 2014). On the contrary, they represent the subjective nature of human action, being able to articulate dimensions of social life that are artificially separated because of their formal differences, such as mental health and education (González Rey et al. 2016; Goulart and González Rey 2016). A complex articulation between mental health and education is important for advancing practices within mental health care on the basis of individual and social subjective productions. In this sense, it is important for constructing a theoretical and political position with respect to the "de-pathologization of life".

16.1.2 Education, Subjective Development and Ethics of the Subject Within Mental Health Care

Differently from the traditional pedagogical perspective, which associates education with specific contents to be learned, cognitive functions and behavioural adjustment, from this theoretical perspective, education is understood as a dialogical process addressed towards subjective development in any relational context (González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2017a; González Rey et al. 2017). In this way, education is related to fostering the creation of new possibilities of life, through the opening of critical paths towards social change. The possibility of approaching those apparently distant spheres in the emergence of the same subjective production can shed light on new strategies that simultaneously advance the field of research and institutional practices.

Educational practices geared towards subjective development imply fostering possibilities of the emergence of subjects, both in daily institutional practices and within the diverse practices that define scientific research. From this point of view, the concept of subject refers to the momentary condition of an individual or a social group, in which it is possible to generate a singular chain of subjectification beyond established formal norms (González Rey 2003, 2007, 2014, 2016). Thus, being a subject is not an inherent attribute of an individual or of a social group, but a specific quality of that individual or group committed to their actions in a certain context. Such a concept is associated with reflexivity, which embodies a subjective configuration that is inseparable from the emergence of an active and differentiated development within a complex social fabric.

It is worth emphasizing that the emergence of the subject expresses the rupture not only with social norms, but also with processes of crystallization of his/her own individual subjective configurations, as in the cases of mental disorders. In these situations, the emergence of the subject would occur when the individual becomes able to create alternative spaces of subjectivation to the situation of suffering, actively positioning himself/herself in important dimensions of his/her life, generating different pathways of subjective development (Costa and Goulart 2015; González Rey 2007, 2012).

Also, as we have argued elsewhere (Goulart 2013; Goulart and González Rey 2016), the concept of subject within this theoretical reference has heuristic value for advancing reflections on the process of deinstitutionalization within mental health care, because it allows the generation of intelligibility about the singularization of broader social processes and their unfolding as different individual and social changes. While deinstitutionalization refers to the construction of new alternatives to institutional violence (Alverga, and Dimenstein 2006), aiming to produce different possibilities for individual and social development, such work should favour the emergence of the other as a subject of his/her own life.

In this process, professional practice and research should emphasize the promotion of individual and social subjective development. As argued elsewhere (González Rey 2012; González Rey et al. 2017), the notion of subjective development represents a way to overcome unilateral and absolute criteria, which tend to standardize people in universal stages. Subjective development is a singular and non-predictable process that implies the emergence of individuals and social groups as subjects and, therefore, the development of new subjective resources that impact different spheres of their lives. It is a process that results from the articulation of different subjective configurations, which are closely interwoven in both social spaces and individuals (González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2017a).

That means the establishment of an ethics of the subject (González Rey 2007, 2011; Goulart 2017) as a basis for mental health care and research, reversing the dominant logic in the context of the new institutionalization: instead of the service user being framed by the formalization of an a priori therapeutic setting, the therapeutic setting is what must be oriented towards the emergence of the other as a subject. Emphasizing such ethics of the subject demands primary consideration for the singularity of the other, who is seen as the permanent reference for research and practice, considering his/her constitutive historical, social and cultural dimensions.

16.1.3 Mental Health Services as Social Subjective Systems

Generating consistent theoretical models with the principles of this perspective implies addressing the complex subjective social processes that cross institutional dynamics in terms of the actions undertaken. Such a proposal seeks to overcome the dominant research and practices in mental health institutions that are oriented towards interventions focused on solving specific problems.

From this theoretical perspective, mental health services, such as the Brazilian CAPS, are understood as social subjective systems, within which various social subjective configurations are closely interwoven with each other through language, discourse, interactive practices and social representations. However, differently from some social constructionist approaches (see Gergen 1996), such understanding does not imply the neglect of the individual. Individual and social subjectivity, as discussed in the first chapter of this book, represents different reciprocal and inseparable dimensions of the same system; they are two sides of the same coin.

It is worth mentioning that social subjectivity operates by configuring different forms of institutionalization. In this sense, institutionalization as such is not a consequence of social subjectivity, but one of its central processes. There are no social spaces that do not function through different forms of institutionalization and, consequently, mechanisms of blocking certain expressions of individual subjectivity. This is precisely the dynamics of cultural processes, which if they act on the one hand as limiting individual experiences, on the other they are the subjective organizations that provide references for any social group within any historical practice.

However, at certain times, this process of blocking individual subjectivity becomes extreme, leading to the paralysis of its emergency possibilities. As there is no dynamics and renewal of social subjectivity without innovative productions of individual subjectivity, these extremes culminate in situations of crystallization of social subjectivity itself, resulting in the normalization and stagnation of its possibilities of change. Such situations often lead to naturalized institutional processes, within which object-based relations, as well as instrumental prescriptions and standardized procedures, emerge as central practices, to the detriment of the human beings to whom these practices are addressed. An example of this process is precisely what was previously discussed as the new institutionalization phenomenon in the Brazilian CAPS (Goulart 2013, 2017; Goulart and González Rey 2016).

This process should be accompanied and supported by research studies capable of generating consistent theoretical models with the principles of this perspective. The search is for the promotion of a logic of transformation, to the detriment of a logic based on mental illness and social exclusion. That is the theoretical demarcation upon which this chapter is inserted.

16.1.4 Case Study

Drawing on these ideas, the case study of a Brazilian CAPS professional team was part of a research project conducted between 2012 and 2016 in the Federal District of Brazil (Goulart 2013, 2017). The main objective of this research project was to elaborate a theoretical model that supported educational practices aimed at the subjective development of service users and of the service's professional team. In this chapter, we will emphasize precisely the work done with the professional team.

The professional team that participated in the research had seven psychologists, two social workers, three psychiatrists, two occupational therapists, two nurses, four

nursing assistants and five administrative assistants. In addition to these professionals, the service also operates with two clinicians, who provide weekly services there.

The research involved fieldwork based on qualitative epistemology and constructive-interpretive methodology (González Rey 2005; González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2018). During this process, the researcher[1] participated in several daily activities of the service, which allowed the creation of an affective bond with the professionals. The idea was to overcome instrumental perspectives of research, in which participants are seen as mere "data" providers, in order to constitute dialogic relations permeated by a type of bond that provokes its actors to take active and critical positions in the course of the conversational processes that characterize the research.

In the process, we highlight an especially important moment: the sessions organized to discuss the partial results of the research we were developing in the service. Instead of simply providing "feedback" sessions, in order to offer explanations and reflections based on the academic work carried out in the service, we tried, from the beginning, to coordinate meetings in which, rather than conclusive reflections, we emphasized ideas and fundamental questions that invited them to participate.

In the meetings, we at first proposed critical joint reflections about current challenges within the service, as well as about case studies developed throughout the research. The initial sessions were marked by defensive positions, resisting entering into dialogue about those issues. As we tried not to impose our view in those meetings, but to advance their understanding of the topics we were discussing, gradually we managed to create a conversational dynamic, fostering their spontaneous engagement in the sessions. At this point, one of the psychologists said:

> We still have this old vision still, right? "I have to take care of the patient", "the patient is mine". Sometimes the patient is shaped up by the way the professional is. This happens a lot. It's a change of mind and this is very difficult (Clara).

Clara's comment on critical aspects of their work, after those initial sessions marked by defensive positions, can be seen as an indicator of the generation of a social space of authenticity and subjective engagement in the discussion. This position generated tensions that contributed to the emergence of a reflexive dialogue. Regarding the content of her comment, the assumed condition of feeling that "the patient is mine", despite the good intentions that might underlie such a position, can be taken as an indicator of discredit for possibilities of the subjective development of the other, who is treated as an object to be monitored and conducted, therefore becoming a professional's responsibility.

The latter indicator is strengthened by an extract from a dialogue on the institutional discharge process that took place in a group session within the service between an occupational therapist and a service user:

> OT: We are here to talk about the treatment, but it's very important that you get active outside the CAPS to increase your autonomy. For instance, looking for activities in the

[1]The research was conducted by Daniel Magalhães Goulart and supervised by Fernando González Rey.

> community, sometimes in a primary care unit, in popular gyms, in churches, and even looking for strategies for you to get a job, some source of income… all this is very important for the CAPS discharge process.
>
> Júlio: But, then, when we are discharged from the CAPS, will we stop the medication and the psychiatric consultations?
>
> OT: No, when we talk about discharge, we refer to the discharge of other therapeutic activities, but psychiatric consultations continue and the medication is for the rest of your lives because the mental illness is chronic.

This brief dialogue, alongside the latter constructed indicator related to the discrediting of possibilities of the other's subjective development, can be seen as an indicator of the centrality of medication and of the notion of "mental illness" as a chronic condition in the institutional practices of the service. More than the chronicity of the so-called mental illness, the institutional resources to work with these cases also seem chronified in such a way, as previously mentioned, to chronify the other as a perpetual object of psychiatric intervention. These articulated indicators sustain the initial hypothesis of a dominant social subjective configuration within the service closely linked to the new institutionalization phenomenon (Goulart 2013, 2016), as previously presented in this chapter.

It is worth noting that, in this case, such a dominant social subjective configuration is articulated in explicit discourses focused on the relevance of autonomy and social rehabilitation. In this sense, discourses that are apparently divergent (autonomy/pathologization) converge in the crystallization of a social subjectivity that, although assuming new formal features in the studied CAPS, cultivates important characteristics of the traditional psychiatric hospitals.

As the meetings with the professional team evolved, the professionals themselves started to bring their experiences and cases too, in order to raise collaborative discussions for the service. Such a process reinforces the first constructed indicator of a social space of authenticity and subjective engagement that such meetings acquired, advancing the dialogue to different spheres of the institutional routine. An interesting dialogue between a nurse and a psychologist happened in one of these meetings:

> Auxiliadora: Sometimes I see this person we just mentioned, Sebastian. After the work done with him, I see a huge difference! He expresses a more confident posture, talking to us looking us in the eye, besides taking better care of himself… it's exciting! I really see that our work cannot just be inside here, we need to go into the community, to know what is going on there. So, I went to talk to some colleagues to suggest more community activities, because it makes a lot of difference!
>
> Fabiano: That's what I think we need to do in the service. We cannot have only these activities here within the institution, otherwise we become an asylum. That's why two groups that I helped to create were the football group and the "going out group". Both happen outside the CAPS.

Auxiliadora's speech is interesting for the singular aspects of Sebastian[2] that she emphasizes when evaluating how the service user is "different"—radically different

[2]Sebastian's case study has been discussed in a previous paper (Goulart and González Rey 2016).

from the frequent representation that "the patient is mine", as Clara pointed out. The emphasis given by her in this case may be taken as an indicator of her capacity to generate alternatives to the dominant social subjective configuration related to the new institutionalization phenomenon, by considering aspects that represent Sebastian's subjective development. Such emphasis goes beyond the symptoms of his so-called mental illness, extrapolating, therefore, to the focus on the control of the symptoms and the effects of medication.

In the previous dialogue, both Auxiliadora and Fernando not only clearly recognize the importance of generating alternatives to the new institutionalization phenomenon still present in the service, but they also express concrete initiatives that are directed at overcoming it. These processes appear as expressions of the existence of differentiated strategies in relation to the dominant social subjective configuration of the service. They also express the relevance of individual initiatives to generate social subjective alternatives to different forms of institutionalization. As previously discussed in this chapter, individual and social instances are inseparable dimensions of the same system: human subjectivity.

Such topics would probably not have been raised and discussed in this way if we, as a group, had not created the dialogical character that continued being permanently constructed throughout the meeting sessions. Still, a significant part of the discussions in the meetings focused on specific dimensions of the service agenda and on specific changes, to the detriment of broader strategic reflections. Thus, following the course of the construction, the following question was raised:

> Researcher: I have seen that, whenever you talk about changing the service, you stick to the agenda, to discuss the specific activities within the service. Hence, as time passes, such changes are the problem, in such a way that you discuss the agenda again. Aren't we dealing with a broader problem here? Aren't you going to fall into the same trap again?
>
> (Silence)
>
> Deise: That is so true! We take activity, put activity, change the day, but I think that's not the problem.
>
> Marília: What if we, before talking about the agenda, talked about the changes that are important in the CAPS for each one of us and only then we start proposing specific changes?

The proposed question operated as a provocation, in order to destabilize the focus on the agenda, as well as the pattern of communication the professional staff usually sustained. The responses to the question can be seen as an indicator that such a provocation, as opposed to bringing greater difficulty in communication at that time, supported the positioning of people who shared misgivings about how discussions mostly took place. In addition, this process favoured the emergence of new ideas, such as that expressed by the psychologist, Marília, to talk about what changes each person's thought of as important to bring greater quality to the institutional dynamics.

Subsequently, this provocation fostered an approach to sensitive ideas and themes in the interaction among professionals in the institutional daily life:

> Mara: One important thing is to see each one's commitment to what they do here. Because there are people who let trainees run the groups that they are responsible for. I find this very problematic and unethical.

Ina: I don't let it happen. They come, they participate, but I am responsible for the group. At most, they participate with me, but always under my guidance. I find it awful when these things happen too.

Marília: I think we need to talk things out here, directly, without hiding names and words. If we air our dirty laundry this way, we won't move forward!

It is important to note that this piece of dialogue occurred after the aforementioned provocation, when new themes and positions emerged in the discussion. This can be understood as an indicator that such provocation, at first, also led to subjective productions associated with exaltation, anger and awe. In this case, the unravelling of hidden conflicts within the dialogue was brought to light through new provocations delivered by the professionals themselves this time, bringing up sensitive and extremely important aspects of the institutional daily life, and generating visible discomfort among those present. Such a process expresses the unpredictability of the dialogue, which is permanently subjectively configured throughout the participants' actions. Far from being considered a linear and always comfortable process, the dialogue also implies the emergence of conflicts and contradictions as a dynamic result of the authentic emerging positions throughout the process.

The unravelling of conflicts and the provocations were not punctual and continued to occur after the meeting. Deise, a nurse who was temporarily in charge of the service, called me to talk about this:

Deise: Daniel, I'm calling you to help us think through and solve the situation that has settled here.

Researcher: What happened, Deise?

Deise: The weather turned bad after the meeting. We need to get back to normal. I think tempers were raised and there is a bad atmosphere in the team now.

Researcher: And what do think could help in this situation?

Deise: I think we need to think about a strategy now. (…) Can you help us to organize an activity?

Firstly, Deise's initiative to call me in order to think of some collective strategy for the team can be seen as an indicator that the dialogical process we were constructing as a group led not only to the emergence of conflicts and contradictions, but also to different strategies addressed towards dealing with the new demands the professional staff were facing. In this sense, as a group, we were producing new subjective resources through the process of generating new positions and forms of communication. Such a process, articulated with the previously elaborated indicators, brings us to an initial hypothesis about the service's subjective development based on the collectively constructed dialogical educational practices, which is an interesting expression of the indissoluble link between subjectivity and action (González Rey 2014, 2016).

Yet, it is worth pointing out that such an initiative to seek alternatives to the conflict is articulated with the objective of "returning to normal", as if the so-called normal represented any alternative to the difficulties being experienced. Such a process is

deeply articulated with the dominant social subjective configuration linked to the new institutionalization phenomenon, as previously hypothesized. In this regard, not only is the service users' subjective development neglected within such a dominant social subjective configuration, but also the possibilities of the professional team to develop subjectively are deeply discredited by the professionals themselves. In this way, such a position can be seen as an indicator that, within the service's still dominant subjective configuration, the crisis is represented as a necessarily negative process to be avoided. The behavioural "destabilization" is not only avoided at all costs in relation to the service users, but also at the core of the professional team itself. However, a pertinent question about this process is: Could it be possible to transform the social subjectivity of the service, marked by the crystallization of the new institutionalization, without any crisis? We do not think so.

The recognition of the value of the crisis implies avoiding "normal" meaning the annulment of the conflicts and contradictions. This is articulated with what is considered as dialogue in the theoretical perspective of subjectivity (González Rey 2016; González Rey and Mitjáns 2017b). The dialogue implies not only the consensus or absence of conflicts, but precisely the sustaining of a path of subjective development that tolerates the existing contradictions and differences in the positions of its actors. Such a process unfolds into different new positions that contribute to the development of the dialogue in depth and also to the development of the participants. The search, in this sense, is for the creation of subjective resources that support the coexistence of such conflicts, without necessarily culminating in the collapse of interpersonal relationships.

Thus, the work in a crisis situation should not be based on the search for a return to a state prior to the crisis itself, but precisely on the dynamics generated at the core of the experienced conflict, which can be supported to favour the service's subjective development. In this perspective, crisis in an organization is seen as a social subjective process, permeated by provocations of its actors, which stress relations and demand reciprocal, and subjectively engaged contradictory positions.

Without entering the minutiae of the work that was carried out with the team at that moment, a frank and face-to-face dialogue between the participants took place in the subsequent meetings. That brought a change in the tone of the discussions and the quality of the constructed dialogue. An example of this occurred in the discussion of changes in the university training process in the service—the same issue addressed during the conflict between professionals in the previous meeting:

> Marília: I think we could rethink the training process in the service. It has been a while since Gabriela and I created a protocol, but that was abandoned on the way. We can resume such discussion among all of us and generate a new document that guides both the service, the trainees and supervisors.
>
> Olivia: Very interesting… because it bothers me deeply when someone comes and stands there just watching a group I coordinate.
>
> Gabriela: Another thing is that I spend a lot of time with the trainees, organising exercises, supervision. I often work at home to give them feedback! And that is never institutionally recognized!

Clara: It would be so important because it is a recognition of the work that we do.

Mara: Absolutely. Talking like this, I think we can get a deal and can improve a lot.

This piece of dialogue, articulated with the hypothesis of an initial moment of the service's subjective development, can be understood as an indicator of an active integration geared towards a new institutional project among the professional staff based on the critical discussions that we started to construct together. In this sense, such discussions favoured the emergence of the professionals as subjects of their own practices, which is an important condition for the service's subjective development to evolve.

Dialogical educational practices, in this context, constitute an important subjective basis upon which individuals actively engage in a changing process that may end up transforming the dominant social subjectivity within any institution. That is, those "individual nuclei", when articulated together, may configure social subjects of an institutional change. That is why these dialogical educational practices should be based on an ethics of the subject, fostering the opening of paths of development within a social fabric, which culminate in alternative institutional projects to those that resulted in the normalization and narrowing of their possibilities of renewal. The unexpected subjective productions in this process, far from being considered problems to be overcome, are the raw material on which professional and research actions should be based.

16.1.5 Final Remarks

This chapter has discussed the heuristic value of the theory of subjectivity for advancing simultaneously professional practices and research in mental health care. The dialogical character of this theoretical proposal, as discussed in the second chapter of this book (González Rey and Mitjáns Martinez 2018), is itself an expression of the unity between research and professional actions or, in other words, the unity between theory and practice. Dialogue implies the creation of relational spaces in which individuals in dialogue emerge as active agents, expressing themselves through speech, gestures and postures. Theory is a process in permanent development, which feeds and is fed by new domains of practices.

Such a process implies that theory is not an a priori set of concepts to be applied to the empirical field, but a conceptual source to be creatively used. Theory, and therefore research itself, is a living process that is never detached from the subjective resources of researchers and participants. That is why its theoretical construction is not neutral, object-based or solely a cognitive operation.

This chapter has focused on the work with a professional team at a Brazilian CAPS and has emphasized the articulation between mental health, education and subjective development. In such a process, theoretical construction was simultaneous to the therapeutic process, both being oriented towards an ethics of the subject.

From this point of view, affirming an ethics of the subject does not mean denying rules, social parameters and institutional references, but recognizing them in order to favour the opening of new avenues of life. In fact, this is linked to a political position that is not that of a militancy for an ideal of a rigid and reified society, but which refers to openness towards non-stagnation of the permanent possibilities of change in social processes.

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