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# Education in Confessional Schools According to the Speech of his Students

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Additional information is available at the end of the chapter

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## Abstract

This article comes from the research project “Representations of formal and private education in students of Catholic schools in the metropolitan area.” The research analyzed a series of oral speeches, about education in the Catholic school, in students who have been educated for over 9 years in these institutions. The analysis identified representations that young people had built with their learning environment and the values that revolve around his education in schools guided by principles of a religion. A qualitative method was used with ethnographic-semiotic approach that guided the collection of oral statements, through semi-structured interviews and focus groups, analyzed from theories and methods of the pedagogy and semiotics. Thus, an approach was made to the constituent elements (values) of educational practices one of the many training projects and certainly the oldest counts in Latin America in general. It was possible to find answers about the valuation of these phenomena, showing a dichotomy between educating “a good person” to the confessional way and educating a citizen. With these results, it aims to promote reflection about the educational phenomenon from the perspective of the learner, while the theoretical and practical relationship between pedagogy and semiotics is strengthened.

**Keywords:** training, axiology, culture, lifestyles, Catholic education

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## 1. Introduction

The present article analyzes some axiologies on the formal education and the school that the students of Catholic schools in the metropolitan area of Bucaramanga (Colombia) show their imaginary, through oral discourses. This imaginary was constructed from the personal experience that the subjects have had in private confessional institutions, in which they have spent almost all their school life. Hence, the recognition of this value load in the directors involved

in this educational process, students, starts from a symbolic universe acquired in the world of the life of these centers of formation. This symbolic universe is a set of schemes of interpretation and meaning that are socially institutionalized and recognized by each participant; to be internalized determines the visions of the world of each social subject, their orientation in the context, and finally condition of their actions in everyday life.

In order to arrive at the identification of the axiology that orient and enrich the world of senses of the students in the confessional formation, the investigation started with discursive data provided by youths of the 9th and 11th grade, during the year 2014. The students belonged to three schools who share the Catholic faith but who belong to different orders or congregations. The oral discourses were obtained from the use of an ethnographic methodology for the collection of statements. The research used semi-structured interview techniques and focus groups. The choice of these techniques was based on the principle that say oral discourses obtained with this process, without doubt, manifest forms of life and systems of values of the participants. Also, it shows a series of sanctions one-self and others that let evaluating intersubjective relations they have with others and with the environment. These were built during a period that ranges from 4 to 12 years of experience in these educational institutions by the case of the informants. The subsequent analysis of this data started from theories and pedagogical proposals from different authors such as Mélich in his book *"Del extraño al cómplice"* [1], Botero with his work *"La formación de valores en la historia de la educación colombiana"* [2] and semiotic proposals that involve education like as is the case of Cárdenas in *"Hacia una semiótica de la educación"* [3], Hamón in *"Texto e ideología: para una poética de la norma"* [4], and Bourdieu with *"Cultural capital, school and social space"* [5].

The analysis of the information collected led to the recognition of a series of recurrences about the concepts of formal education and Catholic school. That allowed the researcher to identify a series of axiologies present in the formation of these young people and undoubtedly it is influencing their being, thinking, feelings, their coexistence and even their actions inside and outside the educational classrooms. In other words, this is a guide of this religious model. The general result generated a comprehensive report that touches on several constituent points of the field of education and of the senses that the young are building around current educational actions in specific groups in charge of training in a small territory of Colombia, as it is Bucaramanga. The resulted topics analyzed the concept of teaching, acquired skills, objectives, and identity in the process of learning and teaching in these institutions; their teachers and the pedagogical discourses that they used to guide their practices; and the educational institution, its methods, and curricular and extracurricular actions up to the impact of the training on the life of the interviewees. With the above, it was possible to constitute a general and reflective view of the theory about the circulation of meanings that converges in some axiologies proper to an educational model that in Colombia is generating tensions between public education and private education, secular education in comparison with the religious education, and dynamics for the construction of an identity as learners that belong to a culture loaded with sacred ideology.

The research proposes that the results of the analysis of religious educational practices, shared in this chapter, be looked at starting from an effort to construct a general theory of the ways of

teaching and learning today, in which the diversity of concrete cases is assumed as a system of educational alternatives and not as a paradigm that excludes “the educational” from “the noneducational,” because in reality, all the training paths, such as the one studied here, are part of the educational in the country, in the pedagogical history of a community, with all its differences and particularities.

## **2. Approach to the concept of axiology**

From different disciplines, the term axiology with the constant convergent around a theory of the systems of moral, logical, and esthetic values has been considered. Therefore, we will not try to retake a reflection around research, studies, current state, or main exponents from the various areas that contribute to the concept; we will return only the relation of the term in the semiotic perspective since it was the basis for the analysis of the discourse of the students. In this way, we must start with the Greimasian conception of the Paris School which rises “the name of axiology to the paradigmatic mode of existence of values ... it can be considered that every semantic category is susceptible to be axiologized, due to the thymic category euphoria/dysphoria” [6].

From the above, it can be affirmed that all discourse presents a series of modalizations that contain information about the subject that is enunciating and of the subjects that are enunciated; that is to say, they allow glimpsing what the subject thinks and believes, the judgments of value, and the values that guide their being, doing, thinking, and feeling. These structures comprise systems of values belonging to deep levels of analysis in the semiotics; these are the main constituents of the ideologies and consequently of the stereotypes assumed by different social, religious, or cultural groups. So, it is suggested that “once someone assumes an option on the valuation of a semantic content (a term, such as: life, death, masculine, feminine, wealth, poverty, etc.), have an axiological structure to an ideological structure” [7]. These positions are those that the student formed in the confessional way allows seeing in his discourse around the education that receives and that is the object was the object of study of this investigation.

## **3. Catholic formal education in Colombia as a text that activates the cultural and social life of our country**

Education in Colombia is a cultural phenomenon that has several conceptions, due to the institutional autonomy established by the Colombian educational law. Therefore, the country has to be particular in individual education processes to train young people in each school at the national level. In other words, individual school has a curriculum that meets the basic minimum required by law, but the entire educational project is aimed at a particular mission and vision of the institution. An example of the above is the student profile; each school has its own different profile. However, these autonomous educational practices aim to converge on a cultural community project established in the general law of education of 1994 [8]. This cultural project in terms of semiotics could be considered as elements that correspond to the

forms of life [9]. Thus, the country, by law would expect an education of citizens with high level of culture, respect for the other, and a person near to science and technology, among other points referred to by degree. Consequently, this should be the guiding thread in each institution and the way of life promoted by the legislation, a series of strategies that would influence all the practices of a social or cultural group of the nation, and at the same time, without forgetting that it is a type of educational action grammar, which is part of the center of the agglutinating projects of cultural life in Colombia.

To understand these various educational practices and their relationship with Colombian society, it is necessary to go to a section of the history of the country, the nineteenth century, an era in which political domination was given in the confrontation of the only two political parties present in the country, the Conservative and the Liberal. When the government was in the hands of one of these, it totally excluded philosophy in the school system of the other. In this way, it is argued that before 1886, the time before Regeneration (from 1886 to 1930), the norm of the day was a compulsory education for all, free, and secular; in that period "The Catholic conservatives established private schools to preserve their ideology and beliefs" because the Liberals were in government power; "same happened during Regeneration, but this time it was the Liberals who founded private schools" since the power changed hands [10]. In 1886, the state completely gave control of education to the church within the moment in that it developed the new constitution of the country, and a year later, 1887, a concordat was signed on the subject. In these documents it was established that public education in Colombia should be organized in accordance with the dogmas and with the morality of the Catholic religion. The educational objective was concentrated on forming straight men for the territory through splint and morals. About this is said that:

*At the end of the nineteenth century ... Pedagogy the body and soul: this is the intentionality of Catholic pedagogy ... moral, good customs, obedience to the state, respect for authority, civility, patriotism, Freedom equality and privileged justice by a strong influence of the Catholic religion, which has been called model of Catholic pedagogy. [2]*

At this point it is necessary to clarify that this set of powers, governmental and educational, has been inherited in the country since the colonization. At this time the country had the arrival of confessional education in opposition with the education of the indigenous tribes of the territory. In the end, Colombia opted socially and politically since 1920 for the organic decree of public instruction (DOIP)<sup>1</sup>, which manifests a free education for all Colombians and secular ideology; so that, Catholic education passed into the private sphere and appeared, apparently, in the peripheral space of culture, while lay and public education was located in the centrality of the system.

It is evident from the foregoing sketch that confessional education presents its own educational intentions, guided by particular values that is present and that is evident inside the analysis of different manifestations discursive above the daily life of the main actors in the religious schools: the students; according to the latest proposals of the semiotics on the matter, "courses of action where the horizons of dominant values become evident" [9]. In the case of the country, in recent years, the presence of educational institutions of a Catholic order has

<sup>1</sup>Originally posted in normal school. Official Journal of Public Instruction. Bogotá, Nos. 1, 2, and 3 of January 1871



taken force in the area of formal and private education. Concrete example is the data presented by the Catholic National Confederation of Education in Colombia, CONACED<sup>2</sup>, where they present the current presence of this educational approach in 20 of the 32 departments of the country where they have 29 dioceses<sup>3</sup>. In the case of the territory studied, Bucaramanga and its metropolitan area, it was concluded there were 26 confessional institutions belonging to this confederation in the year 2015. If the surface of the territory studied is 1479 km<sup>2</sup> and the surface of Colombia surpasses it in millions of kilometers, we can determine the complex number of institutions that in the country are educating with the principles of the church.

In the midst of this particularity of cultural organization, from the educational planning and execution, many young Colombians are immersed in a confessional educational process in which they experience a great diversity of institutionalized formation practices and that are coherent with the confessional way of life, for example, the Eucharist and celebrations of patrons or saints. In this course of actions, a repertoire of significant sets that contemplate social representations constituted of imaginary<sup>4</sup> that are part of the horizon of cultural intellection and of the value systems associated to this formation according to the perspective of the learners [11]. This symbolic universe of what confessional comes into tension with the dominant educational discourse of the country, that apparently, it is secular, that is, that it does not have religious principle.

To this extent, the world of life in Colombian education, that is, the world that is urgent and immediate to every person, is proposing a series of experiences and interpretations in the educational field presided over by the religion [12]. It functions as a frame of reference in which the feelings, experiences, thoughts, and actions of a large group of young people of the country pass. In addition, this configures practices of meaning and communication; in particular, this is an object of interest for the cultural semiotics and pedagogy focused on real practices. Therefore, the contributions of the study, from this dual perspective, are important in order to establish a possible response to the complex problem of the construction of senses constructed by young learners from their school experience and the relationship that they maintain with the different actions both inside and outside of these classrooms.

Also, it is possible to extend the frontier of the knowledge on the subject in the educational semiotic field that initiates at the worldwide level. The interest with which the research started focused on recognizing the axiologies associated with the specific interests of the Catholic educational project that is configuring the symbolic universe, the perception of the environment, and the actions in the world of life of the actors involved in this educational project in the metropolitan area of Bucaramanga. In this way, it became possible to show what seems elementary and common, even already known, like the case of some concepts, practices, and educational projects; actually it is based on assumptions, values, hierarchies, and exclusions when they are put as reference of research study of continuous reflection and critical thinking, it evidences unknown and even unexpected results.

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<sup>2</sup>In this confederation Catholic schools of private character are affiliated, official schools administered by religious entities are ascribed, and colleges of laity are also associated but committed to a philosophy inspired by the Gospel and Magisterial Church.

<sup>3</sup>The diocese is the Christian district or territory in which a bishop holds and exercises ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

<sup>4</sup>Landowsky refers to the imaginary semiotics recognized as a figurative component of culture that is used by numerous people and is part of the cultural heritage.

#### 4. The journey in the analysis and understanding of the object of study

The identification of the axiologies present in the concepts of formal education and school in students of private Catholic schools in the metropolitan area of Bucaramanga (Colombia) used a qualitative-interpretative approach that allowed the analysis of the world of the life of these colleges from the recognition of beliefs, prejudices, feelings, and mentalities of human groups (students) immersed in the educational system. The object of study was taken as a phenomenon that requires a rigorous analysis to understand the human reality, the cultural environments, and the diverse forms of social interaction that emerge in this institute. From the research approach, the type was ethnographic research to compile the corpus, and semiotics is taken up to identify, interpret, and understand the values that govern the educational model studied. These types of research allowed discovering, identifying, and describing cultural self-descriptions built on specific practices from proprioceptive vision (interoceptive and exteroceptive) of informants.

Of the total population of 26 schools in the area, the study counted on the participation of 3 institutions belonging to the same religious faith, but each 1 is part of different Catholic religious communities. Of the participating institutions, one belongs to the diocesans, who could be considered the main branch of the church; it is made up exclusively of priests who direct their life around of Christ as their founder. The population participating in this institution was exclusively male. The other participating school comes from the male order of the mendicants to which the Dominicans, the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor, the Conventual Minors, the Capuchins, the Third Regular Franciscan Order, the Augustinian Hermits, the Order of Augustinian Recollects, the Barefoot Augustinians, the Carmelites, the Barefoot Carmelites, the Trinitarians, the Mercedarians, Mary's servants, and the Order of the Brothers of Our Lady of Bethlehem belong [13]. For the year in which the interviews were collected, at the end of 2014, the school had only a female population in the last years of schooling and a mixed system up to the eighth grade. However, the population participating, in this institution, was of women and men alike. Finally, there is the school run by the Dominican order and by election of the schools which only have women informants.

The analysis of dates began with the compilation of oral discourses through individual interviews and focus groups in students of grades 9, 10, and 11, around the concepts of education, school, learning, teaching, skills, and customs; the speeches included experiences of the young during the preparation they received and are receiving up to the time the moment of obtaining the data. This population sample is selected at random and for convenience under the criterion of having been in the denominational educational institution for more than 4 years. Hence, 70% of the participants have been part of the educational community since the first years of schooling, that is, they have been students of these schools for approximately 10–12 years. The remaining 30% of informants have studied for 4 or 5 years in these schools, and 30% of remaining informants studied for 4 or 5 years in these schools, that is, high school.

From the speeches obtained, through semi-structured and individual interviews and focus groups, it was possible to configure the semiotic level of texts-statements that correspond to the

identification of the product of significant practices [14]. This possesses a cultural heritage in which the enunciation represents, orally, what the pupil is experienced, the symbolic universe of the individuals constructed in the practices and interaction. He himself is able to enunciate by the experiential knowledge with which he counts. In this way, it is investigated in the imaginary impregnated with experiences, in particular, forms of life where it is manifested how the learners perceive their surroundings in the educational process and in the daily school life. The questionnaires used, in the different techniques, had defined three broad categories. The first category denominated as individual representations, the next category is representations in interaction, and the last category is representations with the world. Thus, the study explores from the introspective subject to the subject in relation to the world. Some questions used were:

- What have you learned at school?
- Do you think that reflects in the classrooms and outside of them, the training that the school has given?
- What is the role of teachers in your school? And what is the role of the directives?
- What is the purpose of training in this institution?
- What happens when someone does not follow the rules or guidelines?

The answers to these questions and others will be discussed in some sections of this document. With the obtained record and of the variety of definitions, experiences, and perceptions contributed by the students through the techniques of data collection, we proceeded to the isotopic analysis of the statements and to their respective rigorous study from the methodological proposal of the semiotics of Paris, the generative-interpretative route [6]. With this method the search began for dominant and concurrent features in the statements that made it possible to generalize categories of analysis capable of constructing a metalanguage, defining ideologies, and finally reaching the deepest level of semiotic study, axiologies, that is, the shedding of values, principles, and knowledge, in other words, the educational culture present in the participating Catholic schools. For the moment in this title, we can say that the first results obtained showed without a doubt, the interviewed get a confessional formation according to religious criteria, but with specific requirements of each community; besides this, the isotopies of the discourses allowed to observe a common formation objective: "the catholic identity" and of values in constant tension with the values of the world.

## **5. Education and the Catholic school from the perspective of its students**

Systems of values belong to the deep levels of semiotic analysis. For this reason these are the main constituents of ideologies. From the current theories of discourse analysis, the existence of two basic components in these ideologies is considered. In this measure, you have in the first place the cognitive aspect that impregnates basic principles of social knowledge, judgment,



understanding, and perception, that is, it endows the subject with a knowing and doing in correspondence with what is expected and with what is demanded in a definite core. On the other hand, you have the social aspect, since they are shared by members of groups or institutions and are related to the specific interests of these establishments [15]. In this sense, ideologies are shared socially through the use of “interpretive frameworks” that will allow group members to evaluate, understand, and give meaning to social reality, daily practices, and relationships that each one has with other groups. In correspondence with the above, Catholic education institutions, participating in the research, present an evident ideology that proves the formation given to the student, from the proper values of their religious community and according to the academic action, evaluated by obligatory tests at the national level, as one participant says “In the academic area I have learned everything and the principles of the school, I have learned the values that teach us as humility, respect, honesty, simplicity, all that” (student No. 2).

In relation to the above, one of the first findings in the analysis of the discourses was to identify that learners perceive themselves as subjects that they are part of a process capable of molding them, improving them, and contributing them to become people of “good” in the Catholic way. In fact, the word: good, person of good, and similar words in Spanish appear consistently in the discourse of the boys. As stated by student No. 1 (...) pieces of clay, because they take us and they mold them as best person. The recurrence in the statement “to form people of good” allowed us to recognize the implications of the term regarding the Catholic educational ideology and the interpretative frameworks from which young people are evaluated. About this, pupil is presented as a being with deficiencies in the Catholic, but with potential for the future, and those who do not have potential will at least serve something; for this, all try to help them improve in the institute, according to student No. 9.

From the dialogue with the informants, we were able to identify that all they learned the interpretative framework; that is, the students have already assimilated rules, practices, particular form of life in their formative years. This allows them to evaluate, understand, and give meaning to the different practices and actions of their environment. In consequence, the oral discourse obtained exhibits that young people can evaluate their current formation process; so they review their formation as positive and influential, because they consider themselves a little more skilled in academic competencies and with a great advance in the acquisition of values of their institutions. From the personal perspective of the students interviewed, they see themselves as more human and “good” according to the Catholic way that is different from the ways of being in the world, as established in the student No. 3 “look at us as trying to change the mentality of society and that we are different, then as that is what we are trying to explain.” In a critical sense, the answers obtained show a design of exclusive universes that bifurcate between catholic education (euphoric) and the formation of the exterior (dysphoric) associated with unacceptable behaviors.

In addition, in the statements, we evidence the representation of education as a process of the human being. It has capacity, possibility, and competence to influence, modify, and construct the being and at the same time the knowledge, feel, and act of each one of the students; in these statements the subjects recognize the impossibility of resistance to it. Likewise, they reiterate that they still need to continue improving in the process according to the expectations of the institution to which they belong; so, in the statements we have expressions from

the evaluation of teachers and directors toward learners; student No. 1 said “they must see us as vague, the most annoying person, those who always behave badly”.

From the perspective of states described in the statements, we can distinguish that education is conceived as a process: Unfinished, durable, and imperfect, and the school as an institutionalized space for education intentionally. In this sense, as stated by the students, they are in a process of transformation in which they acquire a way of being that is of “good people” or people humanized in the Catholic way. This part of the Manichean idea that before the educational process, the student is a bad person, not because of lack of competence, but because of the nature of the subject who arrives without being a finished subject without knowledge of how to be “good”. In this process, the school acts as a mediator or assistant that helps the subject to make an order in their lifestyle in correspondence with some ideological bases and some particular principles. Accordingly, they lead them to be united to values and principles of a social and denominational type of the institution that would make them the best people the world needs.

In order to achieve this, the school participates in the construction of the competence of the subjects (students) and their interpretive frameworks, offering them the experiences and the proof (among them, the practices of religious rituals outside the interest of several students, they said it themselves) to get the desired identity of the school and family project of each student; in this regard student No. 4 enunciates “Mathematics, Spanish ... the as signature normal and Catholic Eucharist and group direction ... the Eucharist that is not as signature, but is in the school schedule.” It is then reaffirmed that the educational process of this younger generation, from their experience, revolves around the transition from an initial state of disjunction to a final one of conjunction to make them competent or in words of themselves “good person,” but this is a “good person” from the confessional perspective. In this respect, student No. 10 states “education here has always been schematized, mostly because we are very conservative” and said that “we have here to learn this and some external things, as influences are bad. So the simple fact that one does not agree with something that you are living, that the world is governed by that and that kind of thing we could call taboos, here they work very delicately or they do not make this.”

The transition from one state to another as referred by the learners is a process of transformation that depends entirely on external figures of the transitive type; since they appeal to actors different from themselves for the performance, always these external persons are in the statements as teachers, directors, and God. Precisely, the achievement of the objective of formation in the way of the object of study is based on the dependence of another who orients, orders, and thinks, sometimes even does it for me. According to the recurrence in the speech, the main actors are the teachers who guide the process. However, as a collective actor will be located to the educational institution that encompasses the different involved in the process (rector, coordinators, teachers, and god). In this way, it is formulated from the semiotic actantial level the following narrative structure where S2 will be the educational institution, S1 the student, and Ov is to be the “good person”:

Transitive type relationship

$$PN= H2 (S2 \rightarrow S1 \cap Ov).$$

In this way, the narrative structure expressed by the informants (students) has figures such as injecting principles, instilling something that suddenly does not please others, and taking us to shape ourselves as a better person. This allows us to observe the constant transitive relationship associated, by students, with the concept of education. But this is not experienced always euphorically by the subject who feels like the object of “injection” of something that must be incorporated inside. On this, it is proposed that the education should be the main generator of centripetal forces that counteract the laxity of the family system, so that the learner must be related with practices different from those of the home, such as practices of the interior of his/her culture [16]. In the case of confessional formation, the subject is coming together with practices in which he does not experience being an actor responsible for his own formation and, therefore, is not aware of the indispensable autonomy in the process, so that he appears limited in his performative competence, and they give the responsibility to the teachers and the Catholic school institution.

This formation of the catholic identity, orientated by the “to become good person,” has values, principles, and some knowledge that the school establishes as condition of the competitions of the subject, and this presents like a lifestyle of the student. They provide the basis for judgment about what is right or wrong and provide basic guidelines for social perception and interaction [15], so that the values that the school has selected are considered as the basic criterion to evaluate the actions of each person in these ideological systems and the other surrounding ones. These normative models are based on specific axiologies of this type of education and of the proposal of Hamon about this; we identified in his article “texts and ideologies,” where he proposes four axiological axes that are represented thus, “the hand that puts into play the technological; the look, the aesthetic; the voice, the linguistic; the displacement, the ethical” [4].

Of the four axiological axes: linguistic, ethical, technical, and esthetic, the statements that were analyzed allowed recognizing the existence of an evaluation standard that tends to focus primarily on the ethical when proposing the formation of a Catholic identity that converges in the being and secondly, the esthetic with the personal presentation. That exposes a care of the body that is imposed by institutional and confessional rules. About this issue, the school demands to student that this uses colors and objects that were not striking and different, like the black or white colors. Cleanliness is vital. Inclusive hair style; for example, men should preferably have short hair.

The statements in general show the concrete forms in which the principle of esthetic homogeneity in the students is positively valued; the order, the personal cleanliness, the dressing, and the use of colors and objects that are not striking and different from the other actors are highlighted. On the contrary, differential, provocative, disorderly, dirty, noninstitutional identity is valued differently. In terms of technology, it is considered as knowledge of the student that must change as the world transforms, but its use is regulated by the tools and values that the institution gives it. In the linguistic axes, the college values the use of non-rude expressions or that slanders the religion or its beliefs.

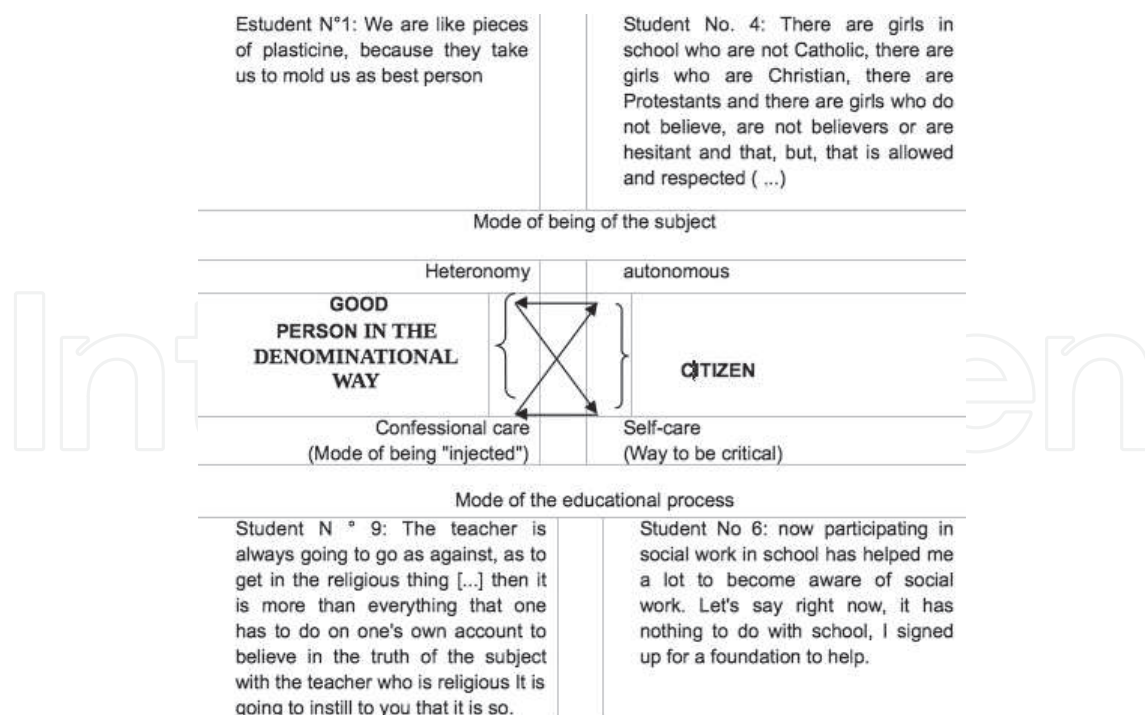
Of the previous criteria, in only one of the three participating schools, an explicit vision of inclusion of the other was evidenced, but under the criterion, I respect what the other thinks,

if this one respects mine. As one participant says “there are girls in the school who are not Catholic, there are girls who are Christian (not Catholic), there are some Protestants and there are girls who do not believe, or they are not believers, or they doubt, but here, that is allowed and respected (...)” (student No. 4). In the other two schools, the discourse of the difference between us and them like a society that we must change and not follow is more marked.

## 6. At the heart of confessional formation

After analyzing the discursive data and categorizing them, according to Hamon, one arrives at what is the heart of the interpretative process that puts into semiotic terms as “minimal armor of the story” [14]. This is where the most conceptual and deep structures of thought are organized and the values that guide the levels of further analysis are present. In this sense, the analysis showed a clear tension between autonomy and heteronomy of the individual. It indicates that the relationship of subjection of the student subject by the action of the Catholic institution is to educate not only a good person in terms of autonomy but also a good obedient person, to the norms, rules, customs, and ideologies that religion demands. The following diagram shows the voltage between these values (**Figure 1**).

The previous figure shows that a heteronomous individual that is receiving a critical formation can reach a state of autonomy, as this learns to include with others, caring for oneself by



**Figure 1.** Semiotic square of formation in Catholic schools. *Source:* carried out by Diana Marcela Pedraza Díaz in the framework of the research Representations of the students on the education and the catholic and private school.



conviction and in the use of their full rationality, that is, a subject that obeys a care of itself and, of course, a care of the other from a more inclusive view. This autonomy makes the individual act by the well-being of himself and those around him. For its part, a subject in the middle of an imposed formation, without a volitional tendency and that must assimilate an injected ideology, ends up forming as a heteronomous subject. In this way, it can be deduced that an autonomous subjects due to rational freedom can be considered a citizen, the citizen that many educational projects claim to form.

However, the subject educated to be governed by imposition or mandate of another without rational will would be a good obedient person. Subjects are acting under inflexible and fixed norms. Consequently, when they are in new situations or times not contemplated by their rules, they face conflicts with themselves and with the eventuality faced. It is more difficult to think outside the evaluative framework that they have acquired, and they have difficulty opening and accepting changes in lifestyles because others define what they should think and do. It is precise in the midst of the two modes of being and the ways of perceiving oneself and to the others that the educational process moves in our country and could be said in the world [17].

In their great majority, the discourses analyzed showed, isotopically, that the subjects obey the will or principles of imposed form by others, manifesting that the education that they are receiving tends more to the heteronomy, that is, it focuses in the learning of confessional care and the practices rituals and beliefs, in a process in which an individual submits to being led by others to be a “good Catholic person.” Nevertheless, some discourses allowed to identify a tension in the axiology, since they point to cases of order of specific schools in which one is trying to promote the critical care of the yes and others, but still it is limited by the ideological biases; for example, in the social workings in which the confessional principle is to help the poor and needy because the institution raises it, now, “I am participating in a social work in school. It has helped me a lot to become aware of social work” (student No 6).

Other points in which the two great forces present in confessional formation (autonomy and heteronomy) are evident in some actions and moments of school life; as student No. 3 says, “I am here because I like the ground, because one can run and enjoy, this is outdoors, the soccer field is big and I enjoy in the break.” In this case, this informant is there by selection, and his permanence in the institution is to free election. But, the bond with heteronomy is stronger in especial case of some activities out of playtime; the same student says “you rarely say I go to some activities because I want it and not because it touches me, especially regarding religious activities”.

It is possible to recognize other axiologies linked to the already mentioned in relation to the modification of power and the being of education and school. The categories obtained were power-being (p/s) and duty-being (d/s), power not-being (p/-s) and duty not-being (d/-s), non-power not-being (-p/-s) and non-duty not-being (-d/-s), and not power-being (-p/s) and non-duty being (-d/s). All were evidenced in some institutional norms such as do not say rude; wear uniform with shirt inside and polished and color shoes established; keep classrooms clean; and no love relationships at school. Finally, student No. 11 says that in school the



teachers and managers tell them that they should not follow the things of the world because this is bad. Hence, a regulation on the behavior of students both inside and outside the institution is perceived. Besides, the difference between a “we” with of a Catholic identity and a “them,” called people disjointed from the Catholic profile who should be tolerated and who should be helped since they are in the wrong, is clear.

Thus, in the ideal of the institution and in the statements of the students, the euphoria is a positive valuation, facing the values of goodness, rectitude, dialogue, collaboration, moral conscience, and a love of God, embodied in the object of an educational profile and an identity around the “being good person.” The coercion established on the individual to “it makes it be” according to the ideals of a project preset and fundamentally heteronomous with certain visions of autonomy is reiterated.

## 7. Conclusions

The discourse of the students allows recognizing that the education that they are receiving tends to be a great extent to the heteronomous, traditionalist formation, in which the individual is submitted to be directed by others. The student is under inflexible norms and values proper to the mode of being confessional. This puts in trouble the two modes of realization of the Colombian education project. On the one hand, there would be a belief system of a religious nature, with a strong tradition, which claims the leadership of another as a guide to action, while in the constitutional order of the country, the mandate is clear in the defense of critical education. It should promote autonomous people and a community with citizens and should be competent and open to changes, at least in the theory.

With the above, it is possible to observe in the subject discourse that education is thymically dysphoric when from the heteronomous view they are imposed forms of being and do not relate to their interests and needs, when the imposition is prime, and when they are considered being passive and exclusively receptive entities. However, when young people recognize in their life, for example, outside the school or in times of leisure, the initiative to be a competent subject in society, a being able to participate and make decisions, active and creative, they show euphoria and satisfaction. Thus, it seems that in the development of confessional formation, the axiologies present in the process tend to alienate the subject from the reflexive and critical relationship expected in the school spaces, which contravenes the Colombian national education project that enshrines the formation for the exercise of citizenship from the exercise of critical thinking and the defense of fundamental rights.

Thus, it is necessary for those in charge of formal education and school management to stop and think about what they do, how they do it, why they do it, and for what they do; this is not just to act without recognizing how we are doing the things and how we are balancing education and school. It is enough to ask if in fact the educational intentionality is leading to an education from and for autonomy, or we continue repeating the educational models that have done so much damage to Colombia, and as the history of the last 115 years of the country

shows, it needs a real “Regeneration.” It can be seen that this semiotic and pedagogical analysis of educational and cultural practices evidences belief systems where moral, spiritual, political, esthetic, mercantile, and other moral values are established and consolidated. These regimes are part of a historical tradition and symbolic configurations of life forms of education that will have to be studied more widely in the current knowledge of various training projects that in this moment are offered to children and young people in different countries from particular ideologies, parallel to the established in the grammar of the state educational laws.

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