

A theoretical-conceptual review for the study of subjectivity**Una revisión teórico-conceptual para el estudio de la subjetividad**

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Abstract

Objectives: The objective of this article is to provide a series of theoretical and conceptual elements that, coherently articulated in an object of study, potentiate the study of subjectivity in social agents. For this purpose, sociological, culturalist and epistemological bets are recovered in order to lay the foundations for a reflection on subjectivity. Methodologically, documentary analysis was recovered as the main strategy with the intention of analyzing, comparing and criticizing, among other processes, various documents and bibliographic materials that support an argument about the study of subjectivity. **Contribution:** The findings presented here present elements of analysis for the approach to the objects of study that focus on subjectivity from different approaches and although they are not delved into, they do represent a panorama that guides the methodological perspectives that can be incorporated into research, particularly the relationship objectivity-subjectivity and its corresponding production, co-production and reproduction.

Subjectivities, Affectations, Inequalities, Sociocultural**Resumen**

Objetivos: El objetivo del presente artículo es proveer una serie de elementos teóricos y conceptuales que, articulados coherentemente en un objeto de estudio, potencializan el estudio de la subjetividad en los agentes sociales. Para tal efecto, se recuperan apuestas sociológicas, culturalistas y epistemológicas con la finalidad de sentar las bases para una reflexión ante la subjetividad. Metodológicamente, se recuperó el análisis documental como principal estrategia con la intención de analizar, comparar y criticar entre otros procesos, diversos documentos y materiales bibliográficos que sustenten una argumentación sobre el estudio de la subjetividad. **Contribución:** Los hallazgos aquí presentados presentan elementos de análisis para el abordaje de objetos de estudio que focalizan la subjetividad desde diferentes aproximaciones y si bien no se profundiza en ellas, si representan un panorama que orienta las perspectivas metodológicas susceptibles de incorporar en las investigaciones, particularmente la relación objetividad-subjetividad y su correspondiente producción, coproducción y reproducción.

Subjetividades, Afectaciones, Desigualdades, Sociocultural

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1. Introduction

The separation between the objective and the subjective seems to be the result of a historical process and is not exclusive to any of the branches of the social sciences, it is practically present in all of them, by way of example, it is known that the term education comes from the Latin *educere* which can be interpreted as "to guide", "to lead" but also from *educare* which means "to form", "to instruct"; that is, an internalist versus an externalist positioning. The positioning of agents in the educational field varies, consciously or not, between developing social practices tending towards support or guidance in the construction of each student's learning, as opposed to those agents who assume that their presence is indispensable, since students cannot learn without the intervention of the other. This conception between an externalist and internalist position has been the subject of discussions for many years, although authors such as Corral (2004) establish that the self and the non-self form an indissoluble mixture giving rise to the primary forms of the conscious self and the social self and although in ancient philosophy there is no evidence of such dualism, individuation was not understood as objectively separated from the essential real, but is conceived as emerging without separation from the substratum that produces it, nevertheless:

...it is Socrates who was the first to establish the systematic self-reflection of existential antinomies, such as evil/good, love/hate, truth/error, virtue/vice, pleasure/pain, among others etc.). Socrates thought that the individuated Self produced such dualisms, that by logically questioning the essence one inevitably falls into a dual vision of the universe, reserving to the Self its emanating character (Corral, 2004, p. 186).

In contrast to the Platonic tradition characterised by the conception of a single universal kind of knowledge and a single scientific method, the Aristotelian tradition assumes different kinds of research, concrete and unmistakable kinds and with methods appropriate to the matter and interests at stake, thus assuming a more democratic and less elitist form; this conception rescues the importance of different types of knowledge: the *tekhné*, the *prhónesis* and the *episteme*, unlike the Platonists who only recognised the *episteme* (Cerón, 2017).

With Aristotle, the principle of individuation was established, so that in the end, for his analysis, the Being began to be conceived separately from its existence, however, like Plato, he did not take the essential real into separate parts if not by the mere exercise of abstraction. It was not until the Middle Ages, with the gestation of the separation of the objective from the subjective with Descartes and of Being from thinking with Kant, that it became possible to know separately from the one who knows, the objective over the subjective. It is Arthur Schopenhauer who, in an attempt to reverse this conception, proposes the opposite, the subordination of the objective to the subjective, the view that the objective (*existencia*) is produced by the subjective (*essencia*) (Corral, 2004).

In this sense, the question arises: what are the social, cultural and epistemological approaches on which an object of study focused on subjectivity can be built?

2. Description of the method

Methodologically, documentary analysis was recovered as the main strategy with the intention of analysing, comparing and criticising, among other processes, various documents and bibliographic materials that support an argumentation on the study of subjectivity, and it is in this sense that some important findings are presented for this purpose.

3. Findings

Zabludovsky (1997) considers the need to reflect on objectivity in order to understand subjectivity as its counterpart, which implies positioning the intentional versus the predetermined, the internal versus the external world, the personal versus the impersonal, the individual versus the organisational, the private versus the public, the affective versus the cognitive, the psychological versus the logical and the committed action of the social agent and the sphere of freedom of the same versus the distancing and determinism, just to give some examples.

Although the possibility of conceiving the objectivity-subjectivity antinomy is latent, it is also the fact that approaching the study independently between both positions will provide a limited explanation and/or understanding and to a certain extent it would be nonsense, since the separation between individual and society, at least as it is conceived in this study, should only be for analytical purposes. In this respect, Gutiérrez (1997, p. 2) states that:

Bourdieu's insistence on overcoming the false dichotomy in social science between so-called objectivist and subjectivist perspectives is based on a certain ontological element: the social exists in two ways, as external structures (history made things) and as embodied social structures (history made body).

This presupposes that man is constituted both objectively and subjectively as a social being in a process where society and other forms of social consciousness are catalysts of individual consciousness, in this sense affectivity, understanding and meaning represent an integration and interconnection that needs to be known and recognised in the agents.

Thus, it is possible to conceptualise the relationship between the agent's own subjectivity, with the subjectivity regulated by the objective conditions imposed by national and supranational policies (suprasubjectivity); the subjectivity derived from interactions with other social agents (intersubjectivity) and the subjectivity originated by the agent's own individual processes (intrasubjectivity). It is important to mention that general and particular objective conditions are associated with each type of subjectivity.

Thus, when recapitulating on the objective conditions of the supranational, the current economic model tends to favour transnational integration, but at the same time a gradual national disintegration as part of the distribution of wealth, power and commercial freedom; however, such conditions would not be viable if the weakening of nation-states were not involved, so that the states considered as welfare states and/or welfarist states are gradually disappearing.

These facts are present in different spheres of world society and are manifested in the formation of economic and trade blocs and agreements, which is how the operation and control of the value chains of different products collaterally violate the sovereignty of countries. In addition, IOs such as the World Bank (WB), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) issue various recommendations, including those concerning higher education policies in member countries. These recommendations are operationalised through "concepts" such as quality, evaluation, diversification of educational offerings and funding sources, competency-based curricular models and university-business links, to name but a few, which represent a subtle but at the same time efficient form of intervention in the education system of the countries.

This has a direct and indirect impact on the formative processes of university students in Mexico and other countries by virtue of the fact that they regulate the adjective and substantive functions of the university system by implementing pre-configured schemes in the financing, accreditation and certification of administrative and academic processes, which are consequently regulated by the achievement of national and international indicators and benchmarks that not infrequently have a homogenising character demanded by a globalised world.

However, the demands of the so-called market economy tend to subject students to conditions similar to those of a productive system, which can lead to depersonalisation, where there is a risk of uncritically adopting such recommendations in order to comply with economic requirements and their respective pre-established indicators, thus ignoring cultural differences, the risk of uncritically adopting such recommendations in order to comply with economic requirements and their respective pre-established indicators, and consequently ignoring cultural differences, local conditions and the subjectivity of the agents who occupy the physical spaces where HEIs are located, is that these conditions of suprasubjectivity can reify the agents, predetermining their education and consequent incorporation into the global economic model.

With regard to intersubjectivity and the objective conditions that produce them, studies tend to highlight the scarce social mobility, the possible perpetuation of the environments of origin and the corresponding reproduction of their social practices, since the predominance of the maximisation of productivity in the frameworks of the market economy favours the perception of an alteration of space-time and where the agents "live" circumstances where time passes in a "different" way, thus, for example, the classical conception of separate countries is moving towards a transnational interdependence where standardisation facilitates the flow of information, economic transactions, supply and demand of goods and services, but also the flow of people with capital demanded by the productive sector.

On the other hand, the approach to the phenomena from a causal perspective where the explanatory variables are approached in isolation differs from the comprehensive perspective in which the social, cultural, emotional conditions and the will of the subjects are arguments to recognise the importance of the processes of subjectivity and intersubjectivity in the formation of students, moreover, there is a need to articulate the objective conditions (economic and political field) in addition to the production of subjectivity with the intention of understanding and explaining the corresponding educational practice.

Now, for Berger and Luckman, socialisation is an ontogenetic process, a broad and coherent induction of an individual into the objective world of a society or a sector of it, and can be divided into two:

Primary socialisation is the first that the individual goes through in childhood; through it he becomes a member of society [and that] secondary socialisation is any subsequent process that inducts the already socialised individual into new sectors of the target world of his society (Berger and Luckman, 2001, p. 166). Therefore, the family and the institutions (the school in this case) play a leading role in the formation of the agents, thus, the analysis of the school space as well as the processes of reproduction of the social practices that favour differences such as inclusion/exclusion that tend to reproduce in a dialectic relationship the objective conditions and the generated subjectivity.

But at the same time are generators of such conditions not only in the field that precursor but also in other fields where the agent is inserted, take on importance. Regarding intrasubjectivity and, in some way, its relation with intersubjectivity, there is a tendency to explain academic performance in terms of the socio-cultural conditions of the students; however, there are cases in which this correlation is broken in students who, in the face of unfavourable conditions, present satisfactory academic results. These mechanical-causal approaches, while recovering the socio-cultural context, are complemented by studies that recover the individual conditions of the agents through the analysis of cultural, social and emotional categories; thus rescuing features of intersubjectivity and intrasubjectivity in the recognition of the relationships between socialised and socialising agents.

However, it is worth mentioning that this complementarity in the studies was based on the epistemological positions addressed in previous paragraphs; in the works, a certain disarticulation is observed between the objective conditions and the production of subjectivities at the different levels of analysis. From this arises the need to recognise the integration of elements from different disciplines, where the cognitive, social, cultural, economic, political, and individual, would allow a broader understanding of the educational reality to be articulated.

However, if one starts from a critical epistemological stance, the priority interest is to frame the problem in the context where the subject-object relationship is of a situated nature and to assume a critical reflexive orientation. In this stance, the temporal relationship is characterised in a dialectical manner and consequently focuses on subjectivities closely linked to objective situations and conditions (Mardones and Ursua, 1999).

Concretely, Pasek de Pinto and Matos de Rojas (2006), state that:

Science is generated from interaction, participation and inter-subjective dialogue that propitiates reflection on social contradictions and consequent transformative action [...] As far as axiology is concerned, the values and interests of the actors are taken into consideration during the research process, as the transformative actions are sustained by them.

Thus, it can be observed that some of the values to which importance is attached within the paradigm are the following: transformation, participation, dialogue, autonomy, reflection and self-reflection, commitment, criticism, among others (p. 115).

Now, in the social construction of reality from a sociological perspective, it is of interest to focus on those processes through which a pre-established "reality" becomes concrete for a particular individual or society, specifically interested in the development of "knowledge", its transmission and its permanence in a given society without questioning whether that knowledge and that reality are valid from a philosophical point of view (Berger and Luckman, 2001).

It is therefore assumed that the investigation of invariant forms of perception or construction of social reality conceals different vicissitudes:

Thus, the search for invariant forms of perception or construction of social reality masks different things: firstly, that this construction does not operate in a social vacuum, but is subject to structural constraints; secondly, that the structuring structures, the cognitive structures, are themselves socially structured, because they have a social genesis; thirdly, that the construction of social reality is not only an individual enterprise, but can also become a collective enterprise (Bourdieu, 2000a, p. 134).

3.1 Objectivity and subjectivity. A dialectical positioning

In a historical review, Zabudovsky (1997) reviews subjectivity in sociology on the basis of the work of Durkheim, Simmel, Weber, Horkheimer, Parsons and Elias. From this analysis we recover some ideas that allow us to construct a dialectical relationship between objectivity and subjectivity.

Durkheim (1997) conceives that the particular consciousness of the agents is to some extent a reflection of the collective consciousness and that it is in turn the set of feelings and representations that are highly present in all the members of the group.

He deals with aspects of social life and subjective existence in man on different levels, such as "man's moral behaviour: the spirit of discipline, the individual's adherence to the group and the autonomy of the will which he develops as an effect of growing rationalism and individualism" (p. 6).

In Simmel, a separation between the objective and the subjective is found as a result of a historical process, this tension takes a relevant role in the rationality of the modern world, in which the foundation of subjectivity originates from two factors, the universalisation of money and the existence of the metropolis (underpinning of the monetary economy), these factors are what keep the personalities of individuals out of transactions (what matters is the quantifiable that makes money). For Simmel, subjectivity takes the place of the religious styles of life in earlier times.

Weber conceives of a formal instrumental rationality, which is conscious and deliberate and is therefore separate from those that are unconscious, traditional or habitual, in that subjective manifestations are guided by a commitment to a value system and not by impulsive or emotional actions.

For Horkheimer, the subjective world in human knowledge is more than a whim of the agents, it is part of their aptitudes, of their education, of their work, thus, calculable rationality finally has a subjective character by virtue of the fact that it responds to the interests of a determined group with a determined cause, consequently the predetermined actions of institutions are a subjective rationality and, in any case, if an objective rationality exists, it is that which refers to contents with universal values.

In this sense, Parsons' contribution consists of assuming an objective rational perspective in the sphere of structure or institutions and where rationality and social action are presented at three system levels, the social, the cultural and the personality, emphasising that the latter has two subsystems, one totally rational and the other affective.

In a similar approach, Elias states that, above the economic, there is the cultural and the symbolic, and where subjectivity cannot take shape unless it is with an idea of self-control on the part of the agent, in this sense, rationality is configured on the basis of perfectly delimited coercions for the control of affections, this transformation of external sanctions into self-coercions ends up being a condition for the production of forms of behaviour.

With this background and under Durkheim's conception that the social fact is not equal to the sum of its parts and that the former is explained by another social fact, Bourdieu's approach is recovered to overcome the false dichotomy between the so-called objectivist and subjectivist perspectives, which lies in a certain ontological element, where the social exists in two ways: as social structures (history made thing) and as embodied structures (history made body) respectively (Gutiérrez, 1997).

Even when the analysis of objectivity and subjectivity is presented separately, it is important to remember that they are relational and such a separation would in any case be arbitrary since in social phenomena they coexist and maintain a dialectical relationship, "true scientific theory and practice must overcome this opposition by integrating in a single model the analysis of the experience of social agents and the analysis of the objective structures that make this experience possible" (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 80).

3.2 Objectivist perspective on social practice

The sense of the objective presupposes the recovery of structures, laws, norms and objective regularities, which in turn are conditioned by the social structures of the field but which also condition social practices, and therefore impose conditions and have a specific time for the development of these practices. The relations presented from this perspective suggest an independence of the individual will and consciousness of the agents.

Thus, objectivity demands a view that reality exists independently of consciousness, so that knowledge of reality implies focusing attention on the facts, on the outside, knowledge is subject to regularities, can be explained and predicted through the use of techniques or methods to quantify, measure, discriminate, correlate social practices as if they were things, so that the aims of research must make the results intelligible; this perspective suggests a mechanical and casuistic treatment of the subject to determine his or her behaviour. This conception is due to the fact that objectivity in the social sciences is taken from the natural sciences, where a stable and homogeneous order of reality is established, thus, the researcher assumes a neutral and impersonal position before the object of study, there is a separation between the analysing agent and the analysed agent, they are separate entities, which results in a neutral and impersonal position of the former in relation to the latter.

3.2.1 Comte and the origins of positivism.

The origins of sociology are attributed to Comte and Saint Simon, it is these theorists who conceive that "the knowledge and explanation of the new object of systematic study - society - has to be founded on a scientific approach" (Fernández, 2008, p. 33) establishing that it is in society itself where its explanation and foundations are to be found, for which they recover models available (at that time) from physics, biology, physiology and the encyclopaedist method.

Comte establishes that intelligence, having overcome both the theological (fictitious) and the metaphysical (abstract) state, has finally reached the state of rational positivity since those so characteristic of vague and arbitrary explanations succumb to "true observation", the only possible basis for the knowledge demanded by real needs:

Speculative logic had hitherto consisted in reasoning, with more or less subtlety, according to confused principles which, offering no sufficient proof, always gave rise to hopeless disputes. From now on he recognises, as a fundamental rule, that any proposition which cannot be strictly reduced to the mere statement of a fact, particular or general, cannot offer any real and intelligible meaning (Comte, 1980, p. 27-28).

In this positioning, the diverse natural connections for the fulfilment of social phenomena are important to the detriment of the conditions or factors that originate them, that is to say, the investigation of the laws or constant relations existing within the observed phenomena is privileged, regardless of their origin or their destination, for example:

The general law of the fundamental movement of mankind consists, in this respect, in our theories tending more and more to represent exactly the external objects of our constant investigations, without, however, the true constitution of each of them being fully appreciated, since scientific perfection must limit itself to approaching that ideal limit as much as our various real needs demand it (Comte, 1980, p. 30).

For Comte, the word positive refers to four meanings, the first distinguishes the real as antagonistic to the chimerical, the second contrasts the useful from the useless, the third meaning recovers certainty as opposed to indecision and finally the fourth in contrasting the precise to the vague (although there is a fifth meaning which is uncommon but equally universal in opposing the positive to the negative).

All these meanings distinguish the new construction from previous modes, whether theological or metaphysical. In this logic, the positivist spirit is conceived as the only possible support for the solution of the crisis which then burdened society "considered then especially as regards Order, the positive spirit offers it today, in its social extension, powerful direct guarantees, not only scientific, but also logical, which could soon be judged as far superior to the pretensions of a retrograde theology..." (Comte, 1980, p. 74).

1. Comte's proposals to recover the experimental method, so successful in the natural sciences, motivated him to propose the need to apply it to human knowledge and to consider it as a method capable of guaranteeing, what he called, scientific validity, and thus his aim was to construct a social physics which would eventually be called sociology.

In this context, "judgements of fact" take a privileged position and, being susceptible of scientific validity, are considered objective, while "judgements of value" associated with social and spiritual matters are considered subjective and therefore lack such validity.

2. By assuming that reality is subject to natural laws that are independent of any will, Comte specifies: a) the use of what he calls the Law of Classification where an order requires the convergence of two conditions, the dogmatic and the historical, the first referring to the order of the sciences according to their successive dependence and the second implying always arranging them from the oldest to the most recent, b) the requirement of a double preamble, relating to man as such and to the external world, assuming the essential division of natural philosophy in order to prepare social philosophy in its organic and inorganic branches, and c) the importance of the encyclopaedic law as a concretisation of the two main ideas, so that the theories of classification and evolution must naturally be considered inseparable (Comte, 1980).

3.2.2 Durkheim and his sociological method

It is Durkheim who considers that social phenomena are to be considered as an external influence exerted on people, and therefore establishes as a social fact any "way of doing, established or not, likely to exert an external constraint on the individual; or also, that which is general in the extension of a given society, having at the same time its own existence, independent of individual manifestations" (Durkheim, 1997, pp. 51-52). This notion is the preamble for the application of the scientific method of the natural sciences to the social sciences through the reification of the initial object of study which is the human being and the social interactions he establishes.

Social practices, acting on subjects from the outside, have an independent reality and consequently an existence of their own, they have an objective reality.

These conditions allow the conception that sociology is the science of social facts, facts considered as things and as a product of human activity, determined from "outside" the subject and therefore beyond his control; from this premise, what Durkheim calls corollaries follow: 1) one must systematically remove all prenotions, 2) define the things he is dealing with, in order that one knows and that he knows what he is referring to, and 3) retain those data which present a sufficient degree of objectivity while eradicating those sensible data which, being subjective, are too personal. Thus, for Durkheim, "when the sociologist sets out to explore any order of social facts, he must endeavour to consider them under an aspect in which they are presented in isolation from individual manifestations" (Durkheim, 1997, p. 89).

With respect to the generality of the phenomenon, another of the characteristics of the scientific method that is sought to be recovered, Durkheim (1997, p. 111) establishes the following three rules:

1. A social fact is normal for a given social type, considered at a given stage of its development, when it produces in the average of the societies of this type, considered at the corresponding stage of their evolution.
2. The results of the above method can be checked by showing that the generalisation of the phenomenon depends on the general conditions of collective life in the social type under consideration.
3. This verification is necessary when the fact relates to a social species which has not yet effected its integral evolution.

From this position, a causal relationship is then sought as an explanatory argument for social phenomena, assuming that causal laws have been verified in the field of natural sciences, discarding individualisation in order to achieve objectivity by treating social facts as social things.

3.2.3 The Vienna circle and the commitment to logical empiricism

The inductive approach states that universal statements can be obtained from singular statements, i.e. a scientific law can be derived from a finite number of proofs, i.e. a generality can be obtained from particular cases; in this way, scientifically valid knowledge comes from experience:

Fact is the only scientific reality, and experience and induction the exclusive methods of science. The doctrine of the Vienna circle is the verificationist principle of meaning, whose thesis states that a statement or hypothesis has meaning if there is some verification procedure that can, by means of empirical operations, decide on the truth or facility [sic] of it (Rincón, Silva, Gaiot, Urdaneta & Machado, 2001, p. 103).

For Hegselmann (1996) the theoretical core of logical empiricism can be analysed from the historical-philosophical, sociological and systematic points of view. In the first case, it represents an attempt to extract the philosophical consequences originated by the cognitive revolutions emanating from the natural sciences, mathematics and logic; from the sociological point of view, the philosophical crisis that detonates logical empiricism was only palpable for a cognitive development that had both logical-mathematical knowledge and physical theories and an interest in the epistemological reflection and analysis of particular scientific theories; from the systematic point of view, it is characterised by:

- a) A fundamental elucidating interest. It implies clarity of concepts and arguments, reconstruction, intersubjective control and contrastability, (self-)transparency of thinking and saying.
- b) Three basic assumptions. Knowledge can only be attained through experience, there are statements that are only apparently meaningful statements, modern logic is an irreplaceable instrument of analysis for the reconstruction and explanation of concepts, statements, arguments, theories and particularly for the identification of pseudo-problems and pseudo-statements.

- c) Desiderata and resulting problems. Logical empiricism "logical analysis" includes the analysis of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic aspects of language, and that includes scientific language and theories formulated in such language; on the other hand, unified science becomes the successor project of philosophy, unified science consists in the gathering of all sciences on the basis of a common language and method (Hegselmann, 1996, pp. 116-119).

In this way, the Vienna circle seeks to reconcile the results of individual researchers with the other fields of science, i.e. a unified science is intended, but the emphasis is also on a neutral formal system characterised by a symbolism freed from historical language. The use of this model of "logical analysis" is a distinctive feature of previous positivist approaches since, through this analysis, both scholastic metaphysics and the hidden metaphysics of Kantian apriorism were overcome, and the aim was to recognise those statements resulting from experience about objects of all kinds in relation to the statements of logic and mathematics.

3.2.4 Popper and the deductive approach

Popper's philosophy is deductive, opposing empirical sciences which are characterised by inductive methods and consequently suggesting an identity between scientific research and inductive logic, he states "it is common to call an inference <<inductive>> when it moves from singular statements (sometimes called <<particular>> statements), such descriptions of the results of observations or experiments, to universal statements, such as hypotheses or theories" (Popper, 1980, p. 27). Popper exemplifies his critique by stating that regardless of the observed number of white swans, one cannot justify the conclusion that all swans are white.

Popper establishes only one valid way of reasoning about a fact, thus avoiding the risk of making reasoning an unjustified and irrational activity, and suggests a method of testing theories, which must always be followed:

Once an idea, not yet justified in any way - be it an anticipation, a hypothesis, a theoretical system or whatever - has been provisionally presented, conclusions are drawn from it by means of logical deduction; these conclusions are compared with each other and with other relevant statements, in order to find the logical relations (such as equivalences, deductibility, compatibility or incompatibility, etc.) that exist between them (Popper, 1980, p. 32).

Contrasting - Popper states - involves a four-step procedure: 1) the logical comparison of the conclusions with each other, 2) the study of the logical form of the theory, in order to determine its character, 3) the comparison with other theories and 4) contrasting the theory by means of the empirical application of the conclusions that can be deduced from it (Popper, 1980).

Regarding the temporality of the examined theory, he considers that other negative decisions can be presented that can overthrow it and if it is the case that it resists demanding and thorough testing it is said to be <<corroborated>> or has <<proven its mettle>>, the opposite suggests that those theories that do not pass the tests should be eliminated and replaced by others that evidently pass such tests; the separation between sciences and pseudo-sciences is given.

So for Popper, the condition of falsifiability is a positive attribute - unlike the inductive method which requires greater certainty in the hypotheses - where those hypotheses with a greater content of affirmations will have a greater opportunity to demonstrate that they are false by submitting them to more tests; this position, far from presenting a contradiction, seeks to eliminate more quickly those statements that are false and in the event that they resist more tests demonstrate their capacity for greater generality and consequently explain a greater number of objective situations.

For Popper, it is vital that the system called empirical science represents the <<real world>> or <<world of our experience>>, in this sense there are three requirements he puts forward for his theoretical-empirical system:

First, it must be synthetic, so that it can represent a non-contradictory, possible world; second, it must satisfy the criterion of demarcation [...], that is, it will not be metaphysical, but will represent a possible world of experience; third, it must be a system that is distinguished -in some way- from other similar systems by being the one that represents our world of experience (Popper, 1980, pp. 38-39).

Specifying that such a system will represent the world of experience, it is necessary to have been subjected to contrast and to have withstood the tests. Thus, for Popper a subjective experience - in reference to Kant who applies the word «subjective» to thoughts of conviction - is never feasible to justify a scientific statement. By way of closing this brief review of some authors in relation to this current, we have the definition of positivism according to Von Wright quoted by Ulin (1990):

One of the basic principles of positivism is methodological monism, or the idea of the unity of the scientific method among the diversity of subjects of scientific research. A second principle is the idea that the exact natural sciences, in particular mathematical physics, establish an ideal method or standard that measures the degree of development and perfection of all other sciences, including the humanities. Finally, a third principle is a characteristic view of scientific explanation. That explanation is, in a broad sense, 'causal'. More specifically, it consists in the subsumption of individual cases into hypothetical general laws of nature, including "human nature" (p. 101).

Therefore, the analysing agent, when deciding to approach his object of study from an objectivist perspective, is delimiting or biasing his research on the social field from the beginning and consequently tends to seek a rational explanation using technical-instrumental means that lead him to a determinism, to the cause-effect concreteness of the reality he intends to explain. However, by ignoring "representations, perceptions, lived experience, it is also unable to account for the meaning of the social game, which is explained by the dialectical relationship between those objective regularities embodied in structures, institutions, etc., and those same realities embodied in individuals" (Gutiérrez, 1997, pp. 2-3).

3.3 Subjectivist position of social practice

Approaching social practices from the perspective of subjectivity suggests the recognition of an order that is plagued by the particular and diverse traits of the agents, is consequently multiple and complex, focuses attention on the different and the diverse, so that regularity is not important. On the other hand, the symbolic recovers the representations inherent in the material, a system of relations that assign value and significance to it.

The particular gaze of the agents is constructed as a product of their daily activities and they turn out to be deeper and more significant for the natural approach to the reality of the social world, such constructions are mediated by the representations and meanings of their practice. They are not linear or dogmatic views, on the contrary, they are particular, flexible, creative, because that is how the trajectories of the agents in a given social field have been.

In this perspective, the analysing agent cannot separate himself from his object of study, which is constituted by his gaze, his beliefs and interests. Although the methods used are less dogmatic and conventional than those used by the objectivist position, they allow us to observe and understand the social world with greater proximity and naturalness; this condition does not limit methodological rigour and structuring, although it is evident that their pretension is not generality but particularity.

Moreover, the analysing agent is not free of presuppositions, preconceptions and prejudices regarding his own practice and the field in which the analysed agent is inserted, with all this, it is in his interest to understand social practices by investigating those motives that guide the why and wherefore of the meaning that orients the acts of other subjects and his own.

However, ignoring the objectivist perspective in the construction of subjectivity runs the risk of only having a "description of that experience of the social world, and therefore does not take into account the conditions of possibility of that experience, that is, the relationship that exists between the objective structures and the incorporated structures that generate them" (Gutiérrez, 1997).

3.3.1 Subjectivity and cultural studies

Aquino (2013) considers cultural studies as one of the most fruitful fields for the study of subjectivity and establishes three important moments, the first of which is presented under an influence of Marxism (Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams and Edward Thompson) that seeks to overcome the imposed limitations of the economic infrastructure, so it seeks to address the "living" cultural forms arising from the subjective experience of people. The second current highlights the work of Stuart Hall, whose main contribution is the experiential and cultural perspective, as this is what provides manifestations through which unconscious identifications are made, where "Experience is revealed as a process of signification and interpretation of our personal and collective experiences. It is also seen as a discursive space where different and differential subjectivities and subject positions are inscribed, reiterated or repudiated" (Brah cited by Aquino, 2003, p. 265).

A third contribution focuses on the assertion that "it is positions that define us spatially in relation to others, as involved and separate; it is worth saying then that subjectivity describes the points of adhesion from which we experience the world" (Grossberg, cited by Aquino, 2003, p. 266). This last contribution aims to articulate the theorisation of the concept of subjectivity and the associated concepts of experience and identity.

For Geertz (1988), culture is the genesis of meaning or value through which we grant meaning to human behaviour, that is, culture acts as a regulator of meaning that allows us to understand the fabric of symbolisms specific to each society. Geertz's proposal lies in what he called "dense description" with the intention of interpreting the meanings that are a function of the cultural codes and symbolic systems that a given society possesses and develops, in other words, the significant action of the subjects to fix meaning. Ortner (2006) states with regard to subjectivity:

By subjectivity I mean the ensemble of modes of perception, affect, thought, desire, and fear that animate acting subjects. But I always mean as well the cultural and social formations that shape, organize, and provoke those modes of affect, thought, and so on (p. 114).

The complexity in the way of approaching subjectivity and the dialectical construction proposed by the author suggests an analysis of the primary socialisation of the acting subjects in terms of cultural formations and their consequent stages.

In response to the question of why it is important to recover the question of subjectivity in social theory, Ortner (2016) states:

In part it is important because it is a major dimension of human existence, and to ignore it theoretically is to impoverish the sense of the human in the so-called human sciences. But it is also important politically [...] In particular I see subjectivity as the basis of <<agency>>, a necessary part of understanding how people (try to) act on the world even as they are acted upon. Agency is not some natural or originary will; it takes shape as specific desires and intentions within a matrix of subjectivity -of (culturally constituted) feelings, thoughts, and meanings (p. 116).

The proposal includes then, not only a positioning that recovers an anthropology of subjectivity but also the mental state of the subjects that are inserted in the social world and how culture constitutes and regulates this state, but also establishes that the forms of power configure and reconfigure the daily life in which the acting subjects (as she calls them) find themselves, with all these elements it is possible to understand subjectivity.

3.3.2 Subjectivity and politics

Foucault (1999) refers to subjectivation as the process from which the conformation of a subject is acquired, therefore:

The question is to determine what the subject must be, to what condition he is subjected, what status he must have, what position he must occupy in the real and in the imaginary, in order to become a legitimate subject of this or that type of knowledge; in short, it is a matter of determining his mode of <<subjectivation>> (p. 16).

For Foucault, objectification and subjectification are dependent on each other, what he calls truth games, born of this mutual development and linkage not so much of the discovery of true things but of the rules about what a subject can say about what is false and what is true. Subjectivation is thus the constitution of the subject through the way in which the subject makes its experience in a truth game, a history of subjectivation:

To historicise the notion of the self, to problematise the relations established, is also to produce a history of the different modes of subjectification and, at the same time, of the modes of objectification that transform human beings into subjects. In this way, the historical constitution of the self and the constitution of the self as subject are linked (Foucault, 1997, p. 24). Jódar and Gómez (2007) establish that the methodological keys that support Foucauldian research into subjectivity as a result of the sociological fabric of a range of technologies are: rejecting the assumption of the invariant subject, investigating the historical constitution of subjectivities through the study of concrete practices, and the analytical centrality of the domain of practices, seeking to break down the set of historical practices associated with power and knowledge through which the profiles of the real are constituted.

In this way, it can be established that for Foucault there is a relationship between the practice of knowledge and power, in which subjectivities are formed and shaped; this conception refers to the notion of governmentality as the set of technologies, as well as political and social forms tending to lead individuals, thus making possible the analysis of the historical formation of rationality in the practices of government:

Thus, the rationality of government is an expression of the complex historical conjunction of powers-knowledges as well as of the effects - of social and mental order- that the techniques linked to them produce in the experiences that constitute us as subjects. Through technologies, political rationalities are deployed (Jódar and Gómez, 2007, p. 385).

In this context, the configuration of the subject is shaped, governed, oriented and controlled by a certain rationality of government, a rationality regulated through the functioning of institutions and operated through certain technologies, policies, norms, statutes, regulations and, evidently, power relations.

The fact of historicising subjectivity has relevance for understanding the transformation or mutation of the types of societies and how these have influenced the processes of subjectivation, by analysing the transition from societies of sovereignty to societies of control, passing through those societies of benefactors and later into disciplinary societies, one understands in a "natural" way the technological evolution of power and how each type of society regulates the processes of subjectivity in the subject, moving, for example, from a technology that seeks to correct and "channel behaviours" in order to transform the socialised biological body into a usable, efficient, docile and disciplined subject (in a disciplinary society) to a subject that takes charge of its own risks, training, dynamic and autonomous engagement, innovative and creative capacity (in a neoliberal society). Policies implicitly carry a subjective meaning that is not established in the discourse or in the declared intentions, but that does not imply that they do not have effects on the processes of subjectivation of socialised biological bodies, whose social practices are not totally free by virtue of the fact that lifestyles or existence are in turn determined by policies. Subjectivity is then the concretisation of the processes of normalisation in the subject and of the objective conditions prevailing at the time, which shape a type of mentality congruent with these conditions.

3.3.3 Subjectivity from the sociological perspective.

For Weiss (2012) there is nowadays a revaluation of the uniqueness of the individual and subjectivity, where "emotions and intimate relationships have become a legitimate object of sociology" (pp. 138-139), the author also highlights the relationship between the processes of subjectivation (attributable more to sociology), individuation (attributable to psychology) and individualisation, although both positions point towards the development of the person.

Weiss, citing other authors (Taylor, Ferreiro, Dreier, Rockwell, Dubet, Martuchelli, Hernández, Bruner, Gadamer, Schütz, Giddens, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim), states that subjectification implies (pp. 139-140):

The development of individual tastes, interests and capacities.

The internalisation of norms and values - a postulate of the concept of socialisation.

From the cultural perspective of ethnographic studies, the sense of the transformative nature of the subject, the coercive and instrumental character of cultural inheritance is recovered.

Emancipation from dominant norms and values, a process of taking responsibility for oneself.

The ability to reflect on the various demands of the "generalised others" and on one's own position vis-à-vis these demands.

The sense of agency of the self, agency understood as the human capacity to make and decide how to use cultural symbolic resources to construct one's identity and reconfigure the practices and spaces in which one participates.

Emotional self-awareness.

It is then recognised that emotions, feelings, personal relationships, the capacity for agency, among others, constitute an object of study that recovers subjectivity and the adoption of concepts such as experience, individuation, subjectivation and reflexivity.

To affirm oneself as a subject, according to Touraine (1997), implies the capacity to reflect on others and also on oneself, to recognise that there are areas in life in which one has the possibility of agency, as a creator of meaning and change in various spheres of life, but there are other spaces in which the conditions imposed from birth that one does not control or regulate exist. These conditions somehow combine the capacity for agency and submission to what is established by society, that is to say, he suffers a kind of "reification" and even when the latter conditions weigh more heavily.

The subject in his own search - through the capacity for agency - transforms the society in which he is immersed without realising it and without intending to do so. It is on the basis of the production of meanings by individuals that subjectivity in interaction and within different social spaces has been studied, regardless of whether different theorists consider individuals as subjects, actors or agents and social spaces as structure, system, field or configuration; the radical difference is the degree of relative autonomy granted to individuals and to the relationships generated in these spaces, which consequently leads to a greater or lesser degree of subjectivation with a greater or lesser capacity for agency as producers of meaning.

3.4 Dialectical relationship between objectivity and subjectivity

The meaning that subjects give to their social practice in a given field is the product of a particular way of experiencing, of "living" that reality, but it is also the product of the common material conditions that can be objectified through institutions, rules, norms, etc. This is the basis of the dialectical relationship between objectivity and subjectivity.

The social agent who belongs to a social space acquires from it, certain ways of understanding and perceiving its reality, but through his social practices which are guided by these modes and valuations, they allow him to position himself and through his capacity for agency and modify this field at least partially.

By adopting this positioning, it is possible to discover the systems of relations that organise agents in more or less legitimised positions in the social space, but these agents in turn, through their actions, feelings and orientations, acquire value and transcendence in that social space and regulate their social practice.

This implies recovering the objective regularities and realities embedded in individuals. The recovery of the objective conditions (structure) and the way (practice) in which people construct and operate social reality, orients the conception of a positioning which, although analytically separated, must ultimately be understood and explained relationally.

In other words, the analysis of objective structures is inseparable from the analysis of the genesis of agents whose cognitive, emotional and volitional structures are to some extent the product of the incorporation of those objective structures.

The recognition of the existence of objective or material conditions in the real world but defined and constructed by historical subjects is a conception adopted by several authors, in this case Gramsci states that "man is the one who knows, but in that process knowledge becomes "objective" in that it is real knowledge for the whole of mankind unified in a unitary cultural system" (Gramsci, 1986, p. 276). This recuperation specifies the notion of an objective, but at the same time historical reality that is subject to the will of subjects historically constructed by objective spaces; in this dialectical relation Gramsci establishes that the objective means "humanly objective" with correspondence to "historically subjective" or else "universally subjective".

In this way, far from taking a position on both positions, attention is focused on a dialectical relationship between objectivity and subjectivity, a co-dependence and co-construction of objective structures and subjective constructions where even experimental science is the more objectified and universalised subjectivity concretely, thus:

Not the materialist nor the idealist, but identity of opposites in the concrete historical act, i.e. human activity (history-spirit) in concrete, indissolubly connected to a certain organised (historicised) "matter", to nature transformed by man. Philosophy of the act (praxis, development), but not of the "pure" act, but precisely of the "impure" act, real in the most profane and mundane sense of the word (Gramsci, 1986, p. 337).

In a similar position, Giddens (1995) questions both the functionalist and structuralist positions whose preference for objectivism and insistence on privileging the pre-eminence of the social whole over the human subjects that constitute it is evident, and the traditions of hermeneutic thought where subjectivity assumes a fundamental role in the experience of culture and history, constituting the foundation from which the social and human sciences are constructed.

The differences between the two positions - for Giddens - are not only epistemological but also ontological, which is why he proposes a hermeneutic point of departure in recognising the familiarity with the ways of life of human activities, these differences being the precursor for his description:

If the sociologies of understanding are founded, so to speak, on an imperialism of the subject, functionalism and structuralism propose an imperialism of the social object. One of my main ambitions in formulating structuration theory is to put an end to these two imperial ambitions. The primary domain of study of the social sciences for structuration theory is neither the experience of the individual actor nor the existence of some form of societal totality, but social practices ordered in space and time (p. 40).

In this way, space-time occupies a fundamental axis in the Giddensian positioning since it confers an ontological conception of social practices for the idea of structuration and, starting from a temporality, recovers, in a certain sense, a "history".

Complementing the positions between objectivity and subjectivity from a dialectical relationship lies not only in recognising that the disadvantages of one perspective are at least partially resolved by the other, but also in the importance of their simultaneous dependence and construction. "Just as objectivism universalises the learned relation to the object of science, subjectivism universalises the experience that the subject of learned discourse makes of himself as a subject" (Bourdieu, 2007, p. 74).

But the recognition of both positions is not enough; it is necessary to consider that both the construction of objective relations and the experience of meanings make up the totality of experiential meaning, in such a way that overcoming a dichotomous vision between the explanation and understanding of social practices motivates us to consider that the objective conditions exist in the internalisation of these conditions in the subjects as a product of where:

Sociology that is less suspicious of subjectivism resorts to intermediary and mediating concepts between the subjective and the objective, such as alienation, attitude or ethos. It is up to it, in effect, to construct the system of relations that encompasses and the objective meaning of behaviours organised according to measurable regularities and the singular relations that subjects maintain with the objective conditions of their existence and with the objective meaning of their behaviours, a meaning that possesses them, insofar as they are dispossessed by it (Bourdieu, 2003, p. 40).

3.5 Position of the researcher

When analysing the social practice of the agents, there are at least two established "times", one in which the social practice of the agents itself takes place and another that refers to the practice of the researcher himself, the latter from the perspective of science and with respect to the time of the practice is "timeless", that is, the researcher has the ability to reconfigure time according to his needs. However, this timelessness has its own restrictions that are inherent to the researcher's field, who in turn has certain conditioning factors in his research practice, even more so if he is inserted in the same field where he carries out his research.

In this respect Gutiérrez (1997, p. 3) establishes that in the referred time of science the researcher, being outside the game of the social practice analysed, can synchronise it where "he can give himself and give a synoptic vision of the totality and the unity of relations, he can synchronise even what is not in a practical state, he makes urgencies, threats and fears disappear"; on the other hand, the researcher can also totalise, which supposes on the one hand "the practical neutralisation of the practical functions [...] on the other hand, it implies, on the other hand, the implementation of instruments of eternalisation, accumulated throughout social, academic history, as a researcher...".

Moreover, the researcher belongs to the field of research (although he/she can also belong to the field where the social practices he/she researches are carried out) where he/she occupies a certain position and is subjected to a certain time, to objective and subjective conditions, to the game and to his/her own history and social trajectory proper to that field.

This situation implies that the researcher analyses the social practices of other agents who belong to a specific field, being part of that same field or of another one, and that in any case he is part of the game, "in this sense, those instruments, those concepts, those hypotheses, like those other ways of perceiving and evaluating, of classifying and constructing the real, are linked to the position we occupy in the social world" (Gutiérrez, 1997, p. 5).

As far as possible and with the aim of objectifying social experience, the positioning of the researcher, as the analysing agent, is required to be based on a process of differentiation of the mechanisms and conditioning factors that separate him from the analysed agent whose social practice he seeks to explain and understand, i.e. to keep a "healthy" and due distance, but also to analyse his own position with respect to other agents in the scientific field and even more so, if the field he is researching is the same as the one to which he belongs.

3.6 The processes of subjectification and objectification

Subjectivation is understood as the process by which we constitute ourselves as subjects, i.e. the constitution of subjectivity. By being conceived as a process, subjectivation moves away from the false position of considering it as a situation, a state or principle of being, and consequently has a construction process that is neither universal nor timeless, but is historically situated; thus, the "current" or "present" subjectivity of the agents is diverse and varies according to particular contexts.

Regarding objectification, this can be understood as the objective or impartial treatment of an issue or idea regardless of personal or subjective considerations, however, in attempting to objectify the "present", it is done from a relative and consequently fragile and to some extent biased point of reference. For Berger and Luckmann (2001) there is a dialectical and spiral process between social structure and individuals, at first, individuals construct the social reality (externalisation), then this reality is objectified and takes on a life of its own (objectification) and, finally, the social acts on individuals (internalisation). Consequently, the process of objectification occurs when the productions of human activity are externalised and attain the character of objectivity.

For his part, Radford (2014) assumes that we are faced with a world populated by material objects, but also by systems of ideas, which has been transformed by the work of previous generations and which in itself is already impregnated with meanings, so that objectification is "the social, corporeal and symbolically mediated process of awareness and critical discernment of historically and culturally constituted forms of expression, action and reflection" (p. 141). The author emphasises his position on consciousness, which, far from being understood as a metaphysical, inaccessible entity, should instead be conceptualised from a dialectical-materialist point of view, so that consciousness is relation to the concrete world-relation.

4. Conclusions

Speaking of the construction of the object of study focused on subjectivity, at least from the approach discussed here, implies a series of theoretical, epistemological and methodological constructions, deconstructions and reconstructions in which spatio-temporality plays a determining role; but no less important is the construction of the data, which requires the interconnection of methodological moments and a systematic recovery that facilitates the explanation and understanding of empirical evidence and its consequent transformation into scientific data, all in the light of the selected epistemological positioning.

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