EDICIONES COMPLUTENSE

Complexities, responsibilities and inventions: construction of subjectivities and rights in the encounter between institutions and young people from popular sectors

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Abstract. In this article we present the results of a social research that analyzes the relationship between young people from popular sectors and institutions that work in the access and in the exercise of rights. For the data construction, we have developed a qualitative methodological strategy, carrying out semi-structured interviews, participant and non-participant observations with young people and referents in six institutions and social organizations of the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires, Argentina. The matter of rights is a construction field, a visualization of the future, which also implies adapting permanently to new tensions in institutional practices and limits, according to singularized ways of relating to young people. In the institutional experiences that we analyze coexist: the worry of making up "different" organizations; the work strategies stressed from good wills and responsibilities of their agents; the complexities to adapt and, at the same time, the transformation of the juvenile subjectivities. Relations of recognition, tenderness, commitment, trust, that transform the individual and collective identities, coexist with a variety of difficulties of different order in the institutional daily.
Keywords: institutions; youth; rights; identity; responsibility.

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Introduction

Persisting inequalities in the Argentine society and in other Latin American countries, as well as the weakening of integration mechanisms focused on stable and protected employment as social organizer, generalize in its individ-uals the *positional inconsistency* experience: the feeling that *everything can change, all the time* (Araujo & Martuccelli, 2011; Kessler & Merklen, 2013; Campana Alabarce, 2018)[3]. In these conditions, young people from popular sectors[4] often experience the city as a major source of positional threat and biographical

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[3]   To deepen the diagnoses on the transformations and characteristics of social structures in this region (something we cannot develop here in all its complexity for space issues), we suggest the reading of: Araujo & Martuccelli, 2011; Kessler, 2014; Chaves; Fuentes; & Vecino, 2018.

[4]   We consider it inappropriate to homogenize the *popular sectors* through categories such as "poverty" or "marginality", which often contribute to stigmatization processes, oversizing their shortcomings and making their individual and collective agencies invisible. The current popular world in Argentina is characterized by its heterogeneity and complexity, generated by the relation among occupational trajectories and consumption strategies of individuals and families, dynamics of the social regime of capitalist accumulation and political ties fostered by various social and state political movements (Semán & Ferraudi Curto, 2016).

vulnerability / destabilization. Some of the public institutions with which they relate, instead of reducing inequities, injustice and the everyday violence, contribute to deepen their weaknesses. Others operate disputing the places of subordination, providing biographical support and building spaces in which the public sphere still has social sense as a builder of the common interest (Di Leo & Camarotti, 2017; Chaves; Fuentes; & Vecino, 2018).

These young people maintain, in their daily lives, various emotional bonds based on trust, which operate as existential supports. Here the neighborhood also occupies a central place: because of the fact that its inhabitants are especially exposed to the instability of their jobs as well as to several state institutions, the set of territorially structured relationships –the family, the group of friends, the neighbors– becomes a basic support which replaces such anchors. In certain occasions, several public institutions –mainly educational– and social organizations with which they relate to, generate possibilities, resources, affective or symbolic supports they consider very valuable in their lives. Based on the bonds of trust they establish with some adults, young people take advantage of innovative tools to build their identities.

This way, in spite of their troubled institutional backgrounds, these young people project and carry out various vital projects: continue or resume their studies; get or change their jobs; support or start a family; participate in artistic, sports, religious or cultural activities. However, the specifications of those projects depend on their production conditions, it means, the itineraries, links and socio-institutional conditions in which they are anchored.

The possibilities of access and exercise of educational, cultural and health rights of young people are strongly conditioned by their class, gender, race, their place of residence, as well as by the material, symbolic and affective supports they have or they can have access to (Di Leo & Camarotti, 2017).

Towards these processes of de-standardization of the transition to adult life and the emergence of increasingly unequal and fragmented social and institutional conditions, the notion of youth associated with a predictable and linear journey to adulthood has lost its explanatory power. (Vommaro, 2015). Under these circumstances, and taking up again the analysis of Chaves, we consider that we must understand young people as "(…) complete social actors, immersed in class, age, gender, ethnic relationships, whose analysis has to be addressed from a triple complexity: contextual –spatially and historically located–; relational –conflicts and consensus–; heterogeneous –diversity and inequality" (2010, p. 37).

Our interest in the institutional dimension of public policies and social interventions with young people –specially those which protect or enable rights–, responds to the premise that their access and exercise of rights require rules, norms, budgets, willing people, schedules, that is, institutions. Simultaneously, institutions tend, several times, to violate rights. Much of the production of social policy research with young people fully highlights this reality. Critical traditions of the Social Sciences recognize the place of institutions as reproducers of the system in general. Breaking or exploding the institutions seemed to be part of the repertoire of revolutionary or, at least, progressive actions, and, undoubtedly, in several cases it was.

However, on the new conditions of social integration, characterized by *deinstitutionalization* processes (Kessler & Merklen, 2013), addressing the forms of reinstitutionalization is a relevant commitment: without reflections, policies and institutional practices, it is impossible to modify these realities. In this sense, we attend a time when these frameworks are put into doubt, permanently questioned and, at the same time, demanded by the new realities. We ask institutions to comply more and more relevant tasks, while we distrust them and their ability to fulfill the difficult achievement of forming subjects and establishing useful and fair frameworks. Simultaneously, in our region, the recognition of new social and cultural rights is put in tension with the government policies of reduction of social budgets. In this scenario, the individual and collective actors of our societies "build" institutions.

Here we approach the institutional from a double register: We start from the analysis of singular organizations, experiences and practices and, from them, we dare to ask a question considering the institutions as great regulators of social practices. Or, in other words, when we refer to institutions, not only we mention the particular organizations that carry out different relevant social tasks, but also the socially constructed forms with which we organize and project our biographies.

In this line, Dubet (2006) defines them as *cognitive and moral frameworks*, ways of understanding and organizing our life and even ways of feeling. Institutions have a fundamental paradox: in the same way that they form subjects (they hold) according to the institutional mandate (and this implies a form of social control), they also generate possibilities of freedom and autonomy.

In this article, we present the results of a funded research whose main aim is to analyze the links between young people from popular sectors and institutions that favor the exercise of rights in the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires (MABA), Argentina.

We start from the following problem-questions: What are the institutional formats that have a relevant place in the organization of life, in the access and the exercise of rights of young people from popular sectors? How are institutional identities constructed from experiences, agencies and links between their referents and the young participants? How are the senses stressed around rights in such institutional experiences? What forms of tenderness, recognition and responsibility emerge from these bonds?

Below, we present the methodology with which we work and then we develop the results obtained, grouped around the following four emerging categories of analysis of the experiences of young people and institutional references: "different" institutions; transform (or are transformed into) subjects of rights; the others, the tenderness and the extension of barriers; responsibility between personal choice and re-institutionalization. We close the article presenting some conclusions to which we arrived.

1. Methodology

For the construction and analysis of the data, we developed a qualitative methodological strategy, since it is the one that best articulates with the interpretive paradigm, enabling us to approach the construction processes of the social experience of subjects in the institutions, and the links between agencies and structures (Vasilachis de Gialdino, 2007). For the selection of subjects and institutions to include in our study, we follow the proposal of *theoretical sampling* in *grounded theory* (Strauss & Corbin, 2006). Unlike statistical sampling, which seeks to collect information to quantify the distribution of a specific phenomenon in a given population, through theoretical sampling, researchers select cases to study, building and comparing data to help refine and articulate categories, in order to develop the theory. Therefore, returning to this proposal, we carry out the fieldwork, the coding, the comparison and the analysis of the data simultaneously.

In this way, we ask ourselves: what information from groups or subgroups of subjects, situations, activities or discourses do we have to gather in order to develop these categories or theories? We continue this simultaneous construction and data analysis work until we reach *theoretical saturation*: the moment in which no new properties of the categories appear from the data analyzed, it means, it is not necessary to include new cases.

When we reached the theoretical saturation, the sample of our study was constituted by fourteen young people, eight women and six men, aged 16 to 24, who live in various popular neighborhoods of the MABA, and fourteen agents or referents that participate in six institutions: Two young-adult popular secondary schools –that define themselves as self-managed, with political and pedagogical autonomy with respect to the State (Said, 2018)–, one of them located in a marginalized neighborhood of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (ACBA) and another in Berazategui, Greater Buenos Aires (GBA). A day-care center that works with young people in a situation of social vulnerability located in González Catán (GBA). An organization that promotes access to cultural and sports activities in the ACBA. COP, an institution dependent on the Government of the ACBA, dedicated to job training. A public secondary school with an institutional educational project with an innovative format that incorporates non-formal education, vocational training and the integration of young people in contexts of social vulnerability in La Matanza (GBA).

We used the semi-structured interview, because, through such technique, we were able to build data around the individual and group experiences of the subjects, inquiring about their perceptions, practices, meanings and reflections around themselves, others and the social and institutional spaces in which they develop their daily interactions. We also implemented the participant and non-participant observation techniques in events and routines

of the institutions, in order to capture tensions among the discourses of the subjects, their practices and the contextual conditions of access and exercise of rights (Guber, 2001).

Throughout the investigation, we followed the rigorous ethical safeguards to preserve the anonymity, identity and moral, social, psychological and cultural integrity of the subjects who agreed to participate in the study in an informed and voluntary manner, also ensuring the confidentiality of their answers (CONICET, 2006). In the presentation of the results, we preserved the identity of the subjects and institutions that participated in the research, replacing all proper names with pseudonyms.

Following the guidelines of the *grounded theory*, through the strategy of constant comparison, we collected, coded and analyzed the data simultaneously, using Atlas.ti software as an aid.

Applying the criteria of *parsimony* –maximizing the understanding of a phenomenon with the minimum possible concepts– and *scope* –widening the scope of analysis without separating it from the empirical basis. In dialogue with the current situation of the art and the conceptual framework, we identified and deployed the emerging categories that we will develop in the next section (Strauss & Corbin, 2006).

2. Results

2.1. "Different" institutions

In the institutions with which we work, the identity issue is central. This is expressed in the accounts of various situations in which we can call the difference between the normative correspondence that is estimated as "common" or "normal", and the experiences in which the institution is defined as different. This is how an institutional referent expresses this difference:

> How are we [as an institution]? [This institution] is very special in this sense. Let's see… we are very different, there are very different profiles, but we have the experience of building community. It was a great learning experience for me, because each one gives, in some way, what they can and what they want and what they have inside of themselves and…and there something is constructed, that is not only the

sum of individual contributions but also the collective experience. That's the idea. (COP referent, ACBA).

The ways in which this difference is presented in many of the speeches is associated to the socioeconomic conditions of the youth of the neighborhood. Poverty and marginality conditions appear as a context that makes the experience different, compared to a model of normality, which is not explicit but referential to that of the middle class contexts. In other accounts, the difference appears in relation to the institutional format presented as standard, "traditional" or "common." This difference is valued as positive when referring to the institution, but not when describing the contexts of young people. The difference appears as identity or, in other words, it appears as the possibility of identity versus the common.

Institutional referents participate in a disenchanted analysis about the institutions, they identify what is considered to be established as a little cozy place, little conducive to enabling practices, so their own experience is presented as different and this gives them values which are considered positive.

Individual and collective identities are strategic and positional constructions. The emerge and they are transformed from processes of identification, adherence, subjection and narrative articulation (not unilateral) to norms and speeches, in which there is always "too much" or "too little", but never an adequate proportion, a closed totality (Hall, 2003). The identity of the actors is not only an effect of the integration processes, but also a set of resources mobilized in particular social situations and exchanges (Dubet, 2010). Referents, as we will see, young people, build both individual and institutional identities from exchanges, comparisons and, in contrast, to other subjects and institutions with which they are linked. It makes those institutional identities in constant formation from differentiation: "to be is to differ" (Latour, 2008, p. 198).

In the narratives about their institutional experiences, young people first highlight their surprise by discovering places which are totally different from the institutional spaces they go through in their daily lives, and which they did not know that could exist in their neighborhoods. As Fatu (woman, 18 years old) said, those unexpected spaces are contrasted with two areas they know well: *the street* and *the school.*

Fatu (F): For me it is safer here, because it is not the same. Because there [at the school to which she assisted] everything they taught me, and specially, the street…I didn't like that.

Interviewer: Why?

F: Because it was very dangerous… As I assisted to the night shift and you were robbed there…

Besides, I didn't like the way they taught me in the other school. Because there they tell you, they explain and, if you don't understand, well, screw you. They don't care, and here [at popular secondary schools] they do. Here, they explain you 50 times if you want, until you understand. And when a classmate understands it, he explains you, in case you don't. If not, we do it all together until you understand it. It does not happen in normal schools: they explain you once or twice and that's all, and if you did not understand, well, it is your business.

As in the narratives of institutional referents, experiences in these institutions are narrated by young people as exceptions, shelters in which they choose to participate every day because they feel recognized "as people and not as another number", enabling, on the one hand, various affective and symbolic supports that participate in their individuation processes, and, on the other hand, repertoires of non-violent or discriminatory action to (re) link with others and, in general, with educational institutions. References arise in which the respected or pleasant experience appears as an exception to an imaginary of hostile spaces.

Although institutional experience is lived as far from normative mandates of the traditional ways of working on each other, as we will develop in the following sector, the searches to transform others-focused on the modifications of juvenile subjectivities, is identified as the most meaningful part of the institutional practice. Therefore, what makes the experience as something "different"? The fact that it seems like it is produced in situ, not pre-processed. And the institutional experience seems to need to rework on the tradition inherited, either by conviction or need, but the model seems not enough. The ways in which these young people are acknowledged from a singular approach, valuing them positively, however, does not mean they are not seeking to operate in them with the aim to generate changes, a type of subject, of an emancipatory agency. Those changes are presented connected to the

fact that this subject may face injustice identified on their neighborhoods.

2.2. Transform (and "be transformed into") subjects of rights

Institutional referents focus their expectation of intervention in the transformation of young people, and that transformation is strongly associated to enhance their capacities or attitudes with the aim to guarantee their rights. Especially they value the work that affects the strengthening of their subjective support which makes them subjects demanding rights. This way, a teacher tells us how she defines, from their experience, the expression "to be empowered":

It sounds as something so simple to approach books, Doesn't it? An approach to reading, to the knowledge of other authors. Reading literary texts and perhaps other non-literary texts and start relating them; help them create an opinion based on what they read, the fact that they can write them, they can read what they write, the whole process. I think it collaborates with the fact that they feel closer. That's why I say, I do not want it to sound bad, like "taking power" but to "empower themselves from knowledge" (Professor of popular high-school, ACBA).

As we can see in the interview fragment, having access to books would not be a right itself, but mainly a way to influence the ability of subjects to build rights. This strengthening of "awareness" in some narratives, in others of "knowledge" and in others of values centered on personality, in issues such as self-esteem or self-worth, are considered as the topics which mostly affect the relationship of institutions with rights. Institutional practices as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself, seem to dominate these senses strongly identified with the forms of treatment of poor or marginal populations (Arias, 2012).

Coincidentally with what was raised by Merklen (2013) about the *policies of the individual*, the activation search is especially valued even more than the change in the rules system or the specific accessibility to certain resources, such as providing access to knowledge in itself, or bringing space for recreation, or to simply be present. This does not invalidate the fact that organizations mostly make a clear demand to the State as guarantor of social rights, howev-

er, they do not recognize their practice as part of the task of state protection, but as a means to achieve it. No doubt, organizations working with young people strengthen this idea, both in centered-education practices as citizen shapers and with the idea to shape the future.

Coinciding these policies of the individual propitiated by the institutions, when narrating their institutional experiences, young people point out various significant events that marked a before and after, biographical turns. Around them, they modified their senses and their practices with regard to themselves, others and the institutions, valuing them positively and considering them as enhancers of their abilities and possibilities. From her institutional experience, a young woman reflects:

The boys around here…I feel that I see the assistance in the fact that it makes them all feel capable. Because we are all able to do something, perhaps there are boys that come with the idea of finishing the secondary school, and that's all. However, they realize that they are capable of doing many things and they are interested in that.

It recalibrates their mind. "I can do this" or "I think I am good at this" or "I am interested in this". I think that the way "Bachi" [Secondary school] works with the boys and girls is crucial, because I feel he is related to them (…) [At the popular secondary school] I found myself again, and it was very positive for me because I realized a lot of things I felt but I wasn't able to understand at that moment, and I started to understand as long as I saw that I was provided emotional support, that they explained things to me, that there was something else than washing the dishes and taking care of your daughter at home. I became much more independent and I found myself (Carla, 24 years old).

Carla feels that, thanks to her participation at the popular secondary school, she managed to carry out the separation from her partner, who used to limit her possibility of autonomy, her opportunity to act differently. From that institutional experience, she redefines what is worth doing in her life. In this sense, Taylor (2006) points out that the *referential frameworks* are constitutive of individual identi-

ties. When asked, "Who am I?", We usually respond by mentioning what is important to us, what gives meaning to our lives. The self defines in different moments of their life with regard to the commitments and identifications that are provided by the language, the framework and the horizon from which it establishes, case by case, what is good, valuable, what is worth living, what needs to be done, what it defends or what it opposes to. In summary, the referential frameworks are the underlying assumptions and the contexts in relation to which the ego can take a stand, identify itself, act and formulate moral judgments.

As we continue to delve into the next section, young people continue (re)defining their referential frameworks –what is important for them, what is worth doing– not in a solipsist or isolated way, but based on various experiences, significant events where other people and institutions occupy a central place. This way, more than by abstract and universal normative conceptions, they intersubjectively construct the conceptions of justice, welfare and rights that they defend and exercise by anchoring them in their personal experiences and referential frameworks, shaped or transformed from experiences in these institutions.

2.3. The others, the tenderness and the extension of the barriers

In these institutions, working with young people from popular sectors is the big goal. As we showed above, operating on their socialization is the possibility of their success. In this sense, they are the main "other" of the institutions in terms of a subject that appears permanently raising novelty in their characteristics, always different from what was expected and, if everything goes well, the main institutional achievement. Although in the native language it is never named as "other", extension of the institution itself is one of the main characteristics that allow to permanently adapt the practices according to these young people. To consider them different, with its own identities, needs and capacities, in our language is to consider them as "others," it is a condition for *tenderness*[5] processes, while if they are not considered as "others," the adequa-

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[5] Ulloa (2012: 122) defines *tenderness* as the founding psychic instance of the human condition: "Being in fact an ethical instance, it is initial renunciation of the seizure of the subject child". The renunciation of the seizure of the other as another, the *look*, presented as the loving interest to a foreign person, different from oneself, and empathy are components of tenderness, which for this author is the foundation of human rights.

cy of the links to them cannot be problematized as subjects (Ulloa, 2012).

The approval of the others of the institutional task is complex. Getting the other "want" to be transformed and adhere to that transformation is a great challenge for institutions and also a place of limitation. A teacher recounts in this way how he raises this bet in his practice:

(…) first of all, it is like generating a space so they can find something they are interested in. Let's say, looking for personal motivations as a gateway for a lot of other things let's say, in principle to generate a bond, so that they care to come here, generating a significant space (Professor of popular secondary school, GBA).

Many times in the extension of the limits, or rather in the modification of the limits is that the institution is built. Permanently tensing to get along with others, young people and in turn, working on their processes of growth and change, appear as a rather harmonious but possible task. Presence, being there, is a fundamental condition of the link, which permanently stresses institutional spaces and times. A director graphs us in this way how this tension is presented in his experience:

(…) There are many things about school regulation. At least, the discourse of regulation is to ensure the right to access to education, when putting that regulation into play, access would not work. Then you have to think of multiple accesses, multiple paths, although sometimes we are sloppy, careless (…) At some point we start saying "no; the kid must be inside, then we see what we do". But inside. Does he arrive at 10 a.m.? Yes, he arrived late, obviously. But he is inside, not outside. Do we see him in the street? If someone sees him, he has to say: "Please, come on in". Invite him: "we are waiting for you", Have you come another day, well, It doesn't matter, come in anyway" (Professor of secondary school, ACBA.)

What appears as a generalized condition in these institutions is the idea of "all inside", raised by the leader. It is not an option for expulsion, therefore this idea considers the work based on the conditions that the subjects bring, which should adapt to the characteristics of the young people. This raises a break and involves adapting to others, but by recognizing that "it is not what traditionally had to be."

Being recognized as a singular person is one of the aspects of institutional proposals especially valued by young people like Mariana:

The most important aspect [of Circo Social] is the supporting space it has, it means, since you arrive and basically you are like another person, you are yourself. You can express yourself, you can say what happens with you, you can get angry, cry, be happy and nobody will judge you for that. I mean, they will support you or they can give you a hand, so that is the supporting space they have by listening to you, by giving you a hand when something happens to you, beyond all the structures and everything (Mariana).

As we began to develop in the previous section, in the narratives of Carla, Mariana, Tincho (18 years old), Juan (21 years old) or Bautista (15 years old), several spaces and times of encounter, care, tenderness, are presented as triggers or engines in the formation of their personal identities, as well as working with other young and adult people with which they feel heard and recognized as singular beings ("not as a number"). These spaces favor the construction of "trust" relationships.

Self-trust, as well as *trust* in institutions and in others, constitutes a crucial dimension in identity-construction processes. It enables agents to construct their ontological security, it means, its sense of *being in the world,* without which it would be impossible for them to act and inhabit the same social universe with other human beings. It is developed in conjunction with the formation of an internal sense of reliability, which subsequently provides a basis for a *stable self-identity* (Giddens, 1991).

According to Honneth (1997), in the processes of construction of subjectivities in the current context of modernity, three great forms of recognition occupy a central place and are presented combined, in the individual and institutional experiences: *Affection or love*, the search for construction and maintenance of trust in affective relationships, in the same sense as Giddens (1991), it constitutes the basis of the processes of subjectivation and constitution of the ontological security or self-confidence. *Legal-moral*, individuals strive to be considered holders of the same rights and moral status as other people, thus building his or her self-respect. *Ethical-social or solidarity,* feeling socially valued and appreciated in their

particularities, their abilities, their ways of life, subjects can build their self-esteem. In the narratives of young people, the bonds and spaces in which they feel recognized –in the ways analyzed by Honneth (1997) often combined–, are presented as extraordinary experiences of subjective appropriation of themselves, of the others and of the institutional environment, which enable possibilities to act and project in other ways.

2.4. The responsibility, between individual choice and reinstitutionalization

In these institutions, the referents assume that responsibility in relation to young people as a personal choice. They choose it, and that is what makes this institution, as we said, in something different. Responsibility appears mixed with militancy and as a choice, associated with personal commitment. A teacher thus expresses this relationship:

> An example, the biology professor, which will teach in third year, has to prepare a class, or the annual project, but he also has to prepare a different project for the boy that has to take a previous subject test of Biology of third year, which is something completely different, I mean, because the student will not have a new explanation from the teacher…Although he will be with the tutor, he won't have that explanation; It has to be something more detailed, I mean, the person who reads it, should understand it. And that task has a huge amount of responsibility. The truth is that professors who work here often do much more than their share, obviously, compared to their salary. Nevertheless, they do it anyway. I don't know if there is a record of it (Professor of a secondary school, GBA).

In the same sense, these institutions seek, as one of the main subjective transformations in young people, the internalization, the personal assumption of responsibility towards others and towards the organization as a collective identity. Responsibility is not something to be imposed but something to be built, it must be assumed by young people as a process of personal growth. A teacher reflects on the idea of "limit":

> Sometimes they also need limits; they don't usually have them at home for several rea-

sons, so they need one to set limits; one who tell them: "well, I can understand you in many things, but that does not mean that you have to comply with this, with this, with this…" More than anything, considering that the society in which they are going to be inserted has rules and that they have to learn little by little to comply with those rules. That is, one can support them, one can accompany them in a lot of things and understand them in a lot of things, but one also tell them: "Well, I got up to here!" (Professor of the Secondary School, GBA).

And setting this limit helps reinforce the learning processes of young people, as it is also a responsibility that workers have. The greater the emphasis on the group, the less institutionalized the organization is, the more important is the construction of responsibility with the others, with the institution, as a collective. In a popular high school they tell us this way:

> At the beginning it costs a lot because, at some point, it happens that they ask us a certain rigor or a certain structure, and it is logical also because they come with that. And then, at the beginning it is hard to understand that you can speak directly with the teacher, that you can discuss it directly and that the same teacher takes care of a thousand things, and everyone takes care of everything. But I think that, after a while, they understand why and they also understand that it is possible that way, and that there is nothing that makes this relationship impossible, so I think it ends up being something positive and it is accepted. And it also seems to me that it positions them differently. It emancipates them much more than the state school. They begin to take roles and participate in things that they have not done so far. Up to the moment, they have not believed they could, so it is something great (Professor of the popular secondary school, GBA).

For Carla, Alberto, Fatu, Bautista and Mariana, the support, the empathic listening, the work, the responsibility with and for the others constitute highly valued referential frameworks, in relation to which (re) define their moral orientations, their projections towards what is worth doing and living. One of the young people expresses it this way:

> Fatu (F): When I finish high school, I'm going to keep coming, I'm not going to leave this place.

Interviewer: Why?

F: Because I like it, I will come and help school mates that are starting this year,

I will come and help professors. We had a school mate who finished last year and came to help the math teacher. As he likes maths, he helped her, and I also can come here to help someone, I don't know…anyone.

Foucault (1996a) analyzes four large dimensions of the ego construction process, which could be associated to young people institutional experiences: a) *Determination of the ethical substance*, the way in which the individual must shape a part of himself. For example, in order to achieve or sustain their right to education, their participation and commitment in the classes and other activities proposed by the institutions is required. b) *Modes of subjection*, the way in which the person establishes his relationship with the rule and recognizes himself bound to it. For example, the adoption and respect for institutional rules and roles that were previously considered outsiders. c) *Forms of ethical work*, practices aimed at becoming an ethical subject. For example, helping other young people to sustain their schooling. d) *Teleology of the moral subject,* a moral behavior, beyond its singularity, is located in the set of moral behaviors, of the referential frames that give meaning to life. For example, young people orient their identities and personal and collective projects around the responsibility with the others and the commitment with these institutions.

In these youth narratives, the construction and transformation of the self is only possible from a simultaneous work on oneself and on others. Returning to the term worked by Foucault (1996b), such ethical work can be associated with *parrhesía*: self-care that is, at the same time, care for others[6] The referential frameworks that guide the (re) identity construction and the (re) moral orientation of these young people function simultaneously as (re) ethical counselors, that is, around these institutional experiences of responsibility they constitute themselves as *ethical-moral subjects*.

In this sense, Alberto (21 years old) synthesizes in the possible title of a book, "Orgul-lo de rubí", written with other young people and teachers in the popular high school, the strength of the *us*, of the collective identity that is still being held despite having suffered a fire that completely destroyed their facilities:

Alberto (A): We are now writing a book, with the Language Professor. And we are all desperate to write the book…

Interviewed: What will you write?

A: I want to propose the issue of equality, telling how I arrived to the popular secondary school, and how I was informed by my brother's friend. And I was not studying, I was working until he told me to enroll. I told him: "well, yes", "yes, I`m going to study," We put on the cover: "Orgullo de rubí" (Pride of ruby) because it is strong, indestructible. The ruby represents the professors that are here and the pride is ours, because we keep on studying. So the ruby represents…even the school is on fire, we will continue being hard like the ruby, and that connects us. We have also started drawing a hand, to show a woman holding a ruby, to have equality.

3. Conclusions

The writing of this article found us, several times, describing what was happening compared to several formats of institutions that we considered "traditional". Alternatively, translating the definitions that the interviewed people raised, also, in comparison with what is considered "traditional" or directly "normal". And it brought us many problems because we confronted ourselves about what these "normal" were, how class biases were leaked, expectations that, without being explicit, hindered our analysis and left these experiences valued in relation to others that did not convince us.

What does the "traditional" mention, both for the people interviewed and for whom we investigate? Which are the normal institutions? Regardless of whether there was a past in which this institution existed or not and whether or not it is desirable for the future, we found it relevant to identify on what is-

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6   Foucault (1996b) takes up the definition of parrhesia from Greek antiquity: commitment, act of trust, promise, listening, search to synthesize language and behavior, from which a mode of subjectivation arises, a form of the subject's relationship with himself, which puts otherness at the center. *Parrhesia* allows thoughts to coincide with practices, but only to the extent that it is action on itself together with others.

sues the interviewed people base their way of building different institutions. Building these institutions is a challenge that needs a lot of commitment by the individuals that build it, it has a very high personal involvement burden, it requires a permanent singularization of their contributions.

The discovery and participation of young people in these institutions is also undergoing personal searches. Facing multiple narrow circumstances and violence that live in their biographies and family and neighborhood settings, they find in these organizations and their referents different types of supports (symbolic, material and, fundamentally, emotional) that are lived as true subjective shelters. They find in these institutions spaces for dialogue in which they feel recognized - in the affective, legal-moral and ethical-social spheres. This way, from relationships of trust, commitments and identifications with others, young people build their ontological securities, their self-confidence, their self-identities and agencies. Around these institutional experiences they re-signify and narratively re-articulate the referential frameworks that orient their personal identities and define what is worth doing and living.

Likewise, in these institutions, the issue of rights is a field of construction, an image of the future and they also involve permanently adapting to new tensions in the forms and limits of the institution according to ways, also singularized, of relating to young people. Managing to set the institutional in some way implies attempts to particularize practices, to enable the recognition of singularities. However, the coexistence of these forms of recognition can generate tensions in institutions, even in their ways of guaranteeing rights. If rights imply norms, permanent adaptation often challenge standards considered valuable. In these spaces, young people build their personal identities from dialogue, or, rather, a permanent tension between their internal and external perspectives and interests, singular and collective.

Thus, they emerge in some people –in line with the work of subjectivation propitiated by the institutions– conceptions of power and agency based on living and acting in common, as a potential to create a "we", a community, with which they can transform their realities, recreating new forms of equality. Here, *parrhesía* acquires centrality as a referential framework, which synthesizes the care of oneself and others, morals and ethics, based on listening, helping, accompanying other people with experiences or problems similar to those experienced for them.

However, the enormous place given to the will or personal involvement is also evidenced in the way responsibilities are assumed. It is not that occupying a place requires certain responsibilities, but that they appear to be derived from the political or personal affiliation of referents and young people in the institutions. Singularized obligations also build institution. This tense place of singularization shows processes that challenge and imply deinstitutionalization, as well as others that re-institutionalize. Even the relevance of the institutional place as a promoter of knowledge and critical awareness appear as an operation search on singularities. It should be noted that, as we noted, it is complex that public institutions are obliterated to be guarantors and not only as rights enhancers.

4. References

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