



*Artículo científico Recibido: 24-07-2022. Aceptado en forma revisada: 19-08-2022*

*History of colombian education: A genealogical-archaeological analysis of the configuration of the subjects (teachers and students)*

*Historia de la educación colombiana: Un análisis analógico y análisis arqueológico de la configuración de los sujetos (maestros y estudiantes)*

*Leonardo Alberto Mauris De la Ossa<sup>1</sup>.*

*Universidad Metropolitana de Educación, Ciencia y Tecnología*

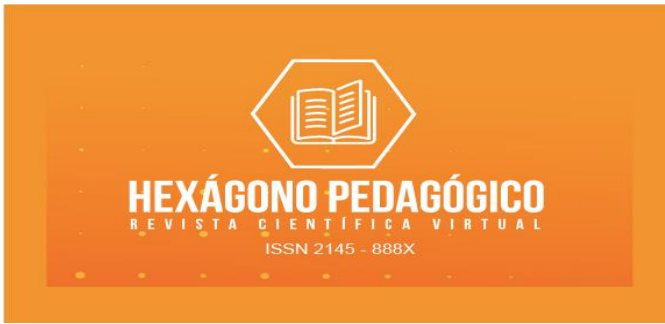
***Abstract***

The history of education has been the scene of struggles and power games that pursue the configuration and delimitation of what should be understood by the subjectivity of teachers and students: in all cases, in order to legitimize economic, political, religious and philosophical structures. In this regard, the country's public education system has been a powerful corrective and disciplinary instrument to mold the citizen desired by the structure. However, a purely historiographic study to determine the ups and downs of the main events, names, decrees and institutions that were forging what is now known as the Colombian education system is not enough to understand the discourses that established the boundaries of what should or should not be accepted as the role of the teacher and the student. That is why this study followed the methodological guidelines of the

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<sup>1</sup> Graduado en filosofía, especialista en Administración de la Informática Educativa, magíster en Proyectos Educativos Mediadados por las TIC y candidato a doctor en educación. Él participó como Co-investigador en el programa ONDAS de Colciencias. Me destacó por realizar trabajos de investigación a mediados de las TIC, lo cual me ha dado el reconocimiento del Ministerio de Educación Nacional. Cuento con la formación académica en la formulación y asesoramiento en proyectos de investigación, liderazgo y estudios mediados por las TIC. Trabajo como docente universitario donde imparto la cátedra de modelos pedagógicos y asesorías de tesis a estudiantes de maestría en la Universidad Metropolitana de Educación, Ciencia y Tecnología -UMECIT-.

[leonardomauris@umecit.edu.pa](mailto:leonardomauris@umecit.edu.pa) <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8247-8723>

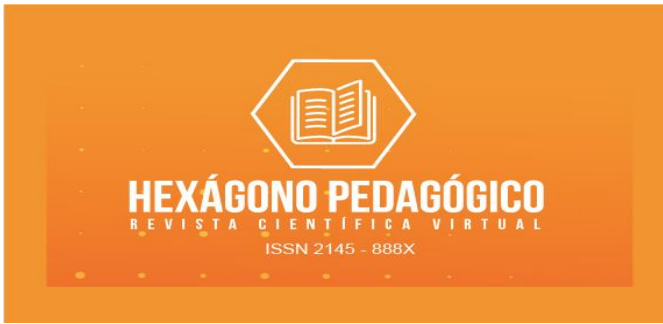


archaeological-genealogical research of the French philosopher Michel Foucault. In this context, it is mentioned as results, firstly, that the formation of boys and girls, in its genesis, was given by the need to give a soul to the newly discovered Indian; therefore, the first instructor was the doctrinal priest whose functions consisted of teaching both the language to the barbarian; like catechesis to man without God. Secondly, the following transformations that public instruction underwent had as their object the service of governmentality. Either to consolidate the colony, or to propagandize the republic; The aim was always to train the body and consciences of the citizens. Thus, the resignification of the purposes of education must begin by establishing epistemological bases that redesign the role of teachers and students.

**Keywords:** Analogical analysis; archaeological analysis; history of education; teacher and student.

### **Resumen**

La historia de la educación ha sido escenario de luchas y juegos de poder que persiguen la configuración y delimitación de lo que debe entenderse por subjetividad de profesores y alumnos: en todos los casos, para legitimar estructuras económicas, políticas, religiosas y filosóficas. En este sentido, el sistema de educación pública del país ha sido un poderoso instrumento correctivo y disciplinario para moldear al ciudadano deseado por la estructura. Sin embargo, un estudio puramente historiográfico para determinar los avatares de los principales acontecimientos, nombres, decretos e instituciones que fueron forjando lo que hoy se conoce como el sistema educativo colombiano, no es suficiente para comprender los discursos que establecieron los límites de lo que debía o no aceptarse como el rol del maestro y del estudiante. Es por ello que este estudio siguió los lineamientos metodológicos de la investigación arqueológico-genealógica del filósofo francés Michel Foucault. En este contexto, se menciona como resultados, en primer lugar, que la formación de niños y niñas, en su génesis, estuvo dada por la necesidad de dar un alma al indio recién descubierto; por

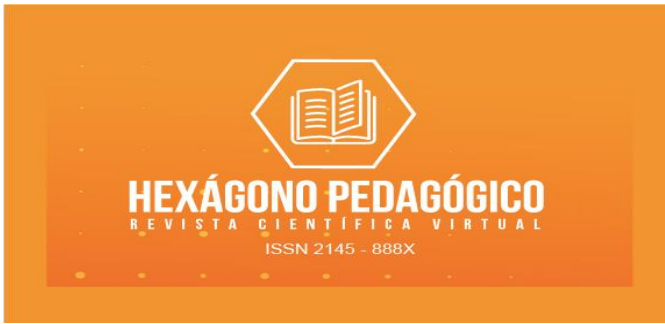


Lo tanto, el primer instructor fue el cura doctrinero cuyas funciones consistieron en enseñar tanto la lengua al bárbaro; como la catequesis al hombre sin Dios. En segundo lugar, las siguientes transformaciones que sufrió la instrucción pública tuvieron como objeto el servicio de la gubernamentalidad. Ya sea para consolidar la colonia, ya sea para propagandizar la república; el objetivo fue siempre formar el cuerpo y las conciencias de los ciudadanos. Así, la resignificación de los fines de la educación debe partir del establecimiento de bases epistemológicas que rediseñen el papel de maestros y alumnos. **Palabras claves.** Análisis analógico; análisis arqueológico; historia de la educación; maestro y estudiante.

### ***Introduction***

The research, as it has been exposed, intended to review the history of Colombian education to make a reading of the way in which forces and powers have been configuring what has been understood as subject; this perceived in a double way: teachers and students. Each era, through a multiform framework, constitutes, thanks to different discourses, collective imaginaries about the functions that teachers must perform and the way in which young people must be instructed. However, in many aspects, this has served to legitimize various forms of instrumentalization and dosage of the will: a fact that is reflected in the disciplines and control systems.

Accordingly, the first step to take in this research was to expose the theoretical bases to support the previous statement. In that respect, this paper tried to develop a resignification of the concept of history and, with it, of Colombian education. To this end, an archaeological-genealogical look has been made of it. For the sake of elucidating the internal facts, the power struggles, the speeches that are shaping, behind the scenes, the contours of the socially permitted and the marginalized.



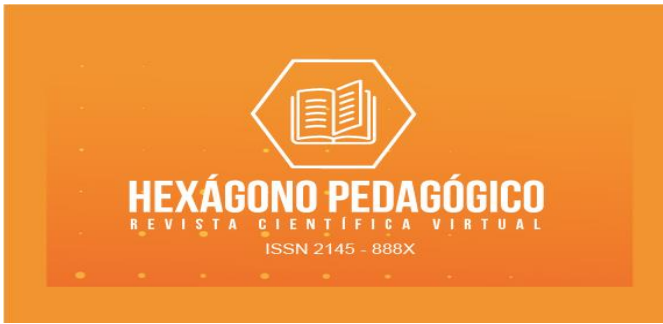
On the other hand, the periodization that history has made, where time blocks are divided within which similarities of events and/or phenomena with more or less equal characteristics are established. As this research understands it, they are unnecessary, if not counterproductive. These periods are arbitrary and do not respond to the true reasons that have shaped the subjectivities, in this case, of teachers and students. Therefore, the analysis of the social, political, economic and pedagogical contexts of each moment is not done to highlight events, facts, dates or names; but, to identify the discourses that were gestating the role that should be assigned to the main actors of the teaching-learning processes: Teachers and students.

Finally, this study does not discard the possibility of rethinking the epistemological bases of the Colombian educational system. Namely, it aims to suggest different ways of understanding the role of teachers and students. The theoretical support adopted is the need to allow the self-definition of the subjects that are part, as main protagonists, of the teaching-learning processes. To this end, the adaptation of the principles of the Theory of Communicative Action of the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas can be very useful.

### ***Methodology***

For this research it is essential to delimit the broad concept of history. This is because, in general, it is understood that a study of this nature must use the analysis of documents and/or archives from the past as a technique and method to expose, as clearly as possible, the facts that have marked the development or progress of humanity. However, an investigation, such as the one proposed here, gets rid of this categorization to return to the study of the archives and unravel the plots of wills to power and the discourses that legitimized the institution of behaviors over others.

The proposal to address, hermeneutically, the discourses that configured the subjectivity of teachers and students in the history of Colombian education, is a previous

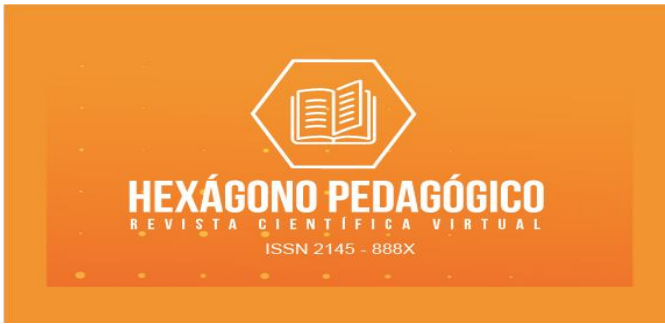


stage to be able to build categories that help teachers to self-understand the role they must assume in society. In the same way, it allows demystifying some concepts that have come to be preserved as immutable and uncritically assumed. Faced with this servile attitude, reflection and criticism based on archeology-genealogy research provides conceptual tools to reinterpret history.

Archaeological and genealogical analyzes of history are a categorical binomial that from two fronts help to understand the game that has shaped the current subject. Foucault (2002) begins by problematizing the periodization of great periods elaborated by historians, the attempts to establish stable balances, continuity or accumulation of events. Also, it rejects the teleological conceptions or the treatises that insist on pointing out the origin and progress of ideas or human institutions. In this sense, archeology is the method by which truth relationships are analyzed, while genealogy tries to reveal power relationships.

Now, truth and power are categories that Foucault (2005) analyzes on the basis of what he understands by discourse. For him: “in every society the production of discourse is controlled, selected and redistributed at the same time by a certain number of procedures whose function is to conjure up its powers and dangers, dominate the random event and avoid its heavy and fearsome materiality.” (p. 10) As a result of a complex framework, behaviors, disciplines, criteria of truth that objectify what is lawful to say and what is proscribed are institutionalized. This framework works with finely constructed criteria to internalize their identity in individuals. The control that the author speaks of is the supervised reproduction of devices that homogenize individuals.

However, all this gets lost in the mist of the past, on which solid plates are created that solidify them and induce them to be considered as the only possible ways to understand reality. That is why Foucault (1980) proposes a genealogy to demystify the idea of the origins of phenomena; because it hides the claim to absolutize history: by giving a single beginning to the facts, it is chosen to see it today as the interrupted result of progress. It is easy to fall in the illusion that human beings, their institutions, their practices and their



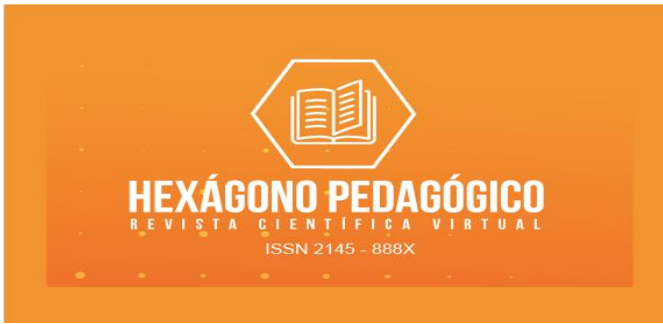
scale of values have been the same in the different stages of history and what has varied are those rudimentary elements that at certain times prevented their improvement. Instead, it has been contradictory forces, devices of power, that impose the discourses that mark the frontiers of the pronounceable. Power, as Foucault (2008) understands it, is nothing more than:

A particular type of relationship between individuals. And these relationships are specific: in other words, they have nothing to do with exchange, production and communication, although they are associated with each other. The distinctive feature of power is that some men can more or less, completely determine the behavior of other men, but never exhaustively or coercively. (p.138)

Therefore, the premises of power is not to impose certain forms of behavior through violence. On the contrary, according to Foucault (2008): “There is no power without potential rejection or rebellion.” (p. 139) Then, what sustains and maintains it are certain forms of rationalization: the generalized justification of the need for them to remain. This is why social institutions, discourses of truth, and human practices are only the tip of the iceberg. Because, behind the scenes there are discourses that rationalize them, validate them, legitimize them. As long as this is so, the problem would be misplaced if one asks: why did an institution as degrading as the encomienda exist in the colony? Instead, the question should be: what kind of rationalization legitimated an institution like the encomienda?

Due to the above points, this research seeks to elucidate the discourses that rationalized the subjectivity imposed on teachers and students in the history of Colombian education. In the words of Foucault (2008): Teaching people that they are much freer than they feel, that people accept as truth, as evidence, some themes that have been constructed during a certain moment in history, and that this alleged evidence can be criticized and destroyed. (p.143)





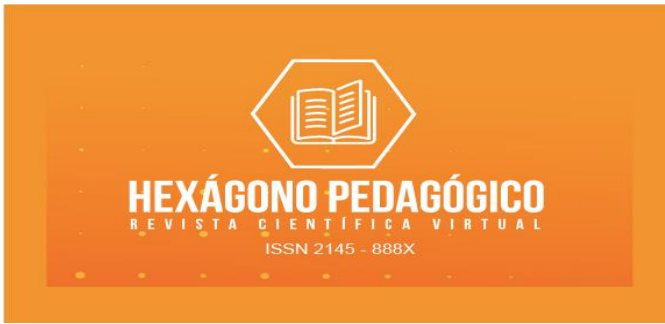
The urgency of this is that the school and the pedagogical knowledge that began to take shape from the fifteenth century based their epistemological bases on scientific positivism. The rationalization that Foucault (1968) had exposed is understood under the scientific views that in modernity were grouped around the analysis of man as a producer, speaker and biological being and that, ultimately, establish the subject as an object of scientific gaze. Essentially, Foucault (1968) states, these are the discourses of economics, linguistics and biology that establish a man who speaks, produces and lives, therefore, as a discursive-epistemic formation, the subject is a prisoner of a network of power relations that pigeonhole him into a certain way of being.

### *Analysis of the results.*

One of the consequences of a genealogical-archaeological study of the history of Colombian education is that the Foucauldian characterization of society, institutions, power relations, science and instrumentalization of the subject have been the theoretical framework for the analysis of the school, the teachers and the students in many investigations. This is how Ball (2001), in his work, tries to highlight how pedagogy has been an heir to this instrumentalizing view that science has made with individuals. The greatest expression of which has been the behavioral model that for a decade dominated, and still does, a large part of teaching practices.

However, Zuluaga et al. (2014) highlight the positivization that pedagogy received from the 20th century, since then called the science of education. The intention was that the method used in the natural sciences for analysis and research was the correlate of all other knowledge, including pedagogy. This is how the epistemologies of sociology, psychology and administration were the discourses that were implemented to explain the teaching phenomenon.

The consequences of this fact, according to Zuluaga et al. (2014), were several. In the first place, the teachers were subjected to a continuous loss of knowledge and



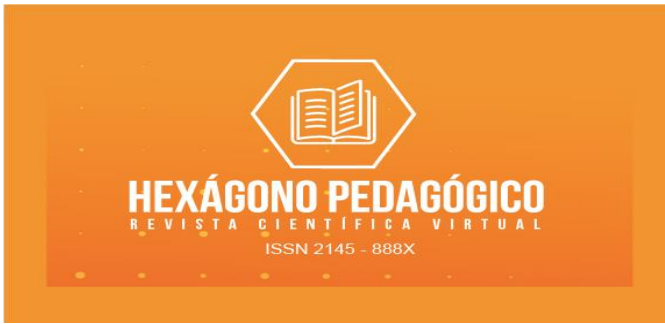
intellectual devaluation since his role was reduced to that of an operator: a subject whose main function is to discipline, correct and monitor that the learning processes are carried out as designated by the State. This leads to the replacement of his social relevance and his role as an agent of transformation, besides the nullification of his intellectual and investigative functions because: "what is taught is based on sociological and economic criteria and interests, not derived from the specific knowledge taught, nor from the didactics correspondent." (p.25)

Secondly, the curriculum is reduced to the instrumentalization of the students. To the extent that classes, as a space for interaction between teachers and students, have the sole purpose of providing material for consumption by young people, cyclical practices of repetition of content and a space for seclusion and surveillance by adults. In this sense, the exam, as a method to verify the appropriation of knowledge, acquires a legal, procedural parliamentary in order to reward or punish according to the result. But each of these facts that are reproduced in a micro way in educational institutions obeys a logic finely chained to broader phenomena. This is how Zuluaga et al. (2014) argue that the:

Surveillance functions are not only exercised by the teacher over the student, but also by the school over the teacher, and in turn by the State over the school. In each of these hooks, knowledge is located as a guarantee and justification of said validity and inspection. Thus, the State-school link is installed in the sociology of education, the teacher-student relationship in educational psychology, and the school-teacher relationship in educational administration. (p.27)

In short, the outline traced by Foucault in his diagnosis of modern societies, their epistemological constructions, power relations and instrumentalization of individuals has its materialization in the school. They are scenarios where training and discipline are





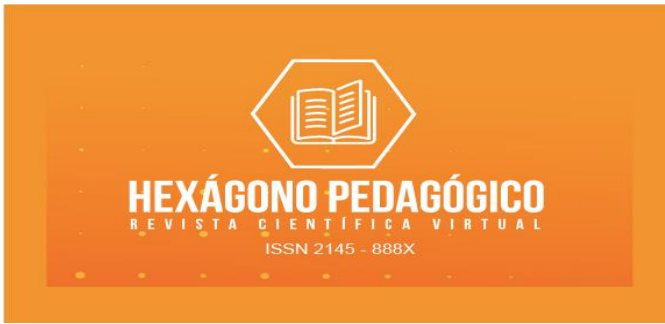
reproduced in the young generations. Educational institutions, in the words of Grinberg (2014), create pedagogical devices or: "educational programs that suppose a story that guides, orients and, to a certain extent, functions as a skeleton that articulates and directs the will, the production and regulation of the conduct." (p.95)

### **The genesis of Colombian public instruction: the soulless Indian and the lazy man.**

The first public institution created in the new Granada for the purpose of instruction was the encomienda. According to the Compilation of Laws of the Kingdoms of the Indies. — RLRI— (1998) the speech that legitimized it was: “the spiritual and temporal good of the Indians, and their doctrine and teaching in the Articles, and precepts of our Catholic Faith.” (p. 263) In it, the Spanish settlers were assigned a territory for which they had to watch over. In addition, the evangelization of the neophyte settlers in Christianity was recommended to them. For this purpose, the encomendadero, as an administrative delegate, had to have the services of the doctrinaire priests who were in charge of catechisms and the celebration of the sacraments.

According to Bohorquez (1956), there were two main objectives of the encomienda. In the first place, subjecting a group of Indians to the surveillance and control of an encomendero, who watched over their conversion and well-being. Second, to provide the colonizer with labor for agriculture and mining, essential for the economic development of the newly discovered territories. From this perspective, while the conqueror, who was generally a soldier, taught the rudiments of agriculture or mining, the doctrinaire priest, in the chapels or places consecrated to preaching, carried out his evangelizing trades with which he sought to raise the encouragement and instill faith in heavenly realities in the Indians. Or, in the words of Gonzalbo (1990):

Religious teaching was considered essential, foundation and goal of all the efforts of the missionaries; but along with it there was the persistent penetration of a new worldview, which not only affected religious beliefs, but also manifested itself in the ways of speaking

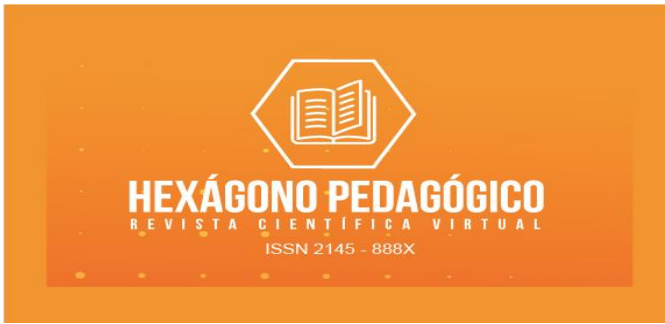


and behaving that, according to their teachers, must have come to constitute a second nature in the docile neophytes. (p.235)

In this framework, the axiom from which the educational ideal was based, in the genesis of the colony, was the need to educate residents who were not only minors, in Kantian terms (2004), but who did not even have age, they were not to blame for their incapacity through laziness or entrusting their guardianship to authorities. Simply, they had not taken the trouble to reason, their state of nature places them in a pre-scientific stage and, therefore, the instruction had to start from complete elementality. In short, castellanization and indoctrination were the first subjects to be widely taught to a spiritless population.

Nevertheless, as it has been indicated, if anything has been demonstrated by the historical facts, it is the way in which governmentality has been privileging some discourses to the detriment of others. This does not mean progress of the institutions; but only the emergence of different ways of defining the subject and the relationships that configure it. Thus, in the middle of 1767, with the expulsion of the Jesuits from New Granada, a different way of defining students began to spread. According to Martínez and Bustamante (2014), from that moment public instruction became a state issue for at least five reasons:

- a. The school did not arise out of necessity but out of an urgency. It was an urgency that later became a necessity.
- b. The public school was born as a place of seclusion for poor children who were picked up from the streets to imprint moral maxims, life in politics and the rudiments of trades that would make them useful.
- c. The first function of the school is more of a political and moral order than of teaching knowledge or a place of education.



d. The moral maxims, police practices, civilized ways of life and teaching in trades; they are the first objects of school knowledge and, therefore, there was more talk of political rather than pedagogical knowledge.

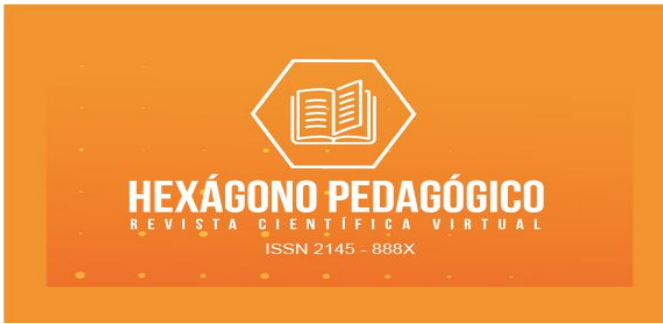
e. Poor children, and not childhood in general, are the central object of the public school. (p.43-44)

As it was exposed, the subjectivity that was assigned to students during this period prescribed the instruction of an unemployed, lazy, poor, and vagabond individual. That is to say, the students were assumed as state issues due to the social and political problems that they were generating, which is why Martínez and Bustamante (2014) affirm that: “Today we know that the school was not born to illustrate but to discipline.” (p.57)

In such manner, as observed in the abundant literature of the time, (Alba, 1969) leisure was linked to misery and, although the first is the original cause of the second; the basis of the whole problem was ignorance. In this sense, a direct relationship is established between ignorance and poverty. As a consequence, the central concern had its center of gravity in the children who swarmed in the streets of the viceroyalty without any type of trade or occupation, prefiguring schools as reclusion centers to discipline and train the increasingly growing social problem of poverty. idle childhood. Similarly, the teacher is assigned the role of moral instructor and operator of watchful power.

### ***Conclusions***

The history of Colombian education, and perhaps of all educational systems, has been a propitious place to embody the most sophisticated techniques of control and discipline. In



all of it, the principle that is established is the governmental need to train and dose both the body; like consciousness. In this sense, it would be a mistake to think that the State and all its instrumentalization apparatus are external to the formation of subjectivities that benefit it. Silva (1989) is right when he states that: "if there are two fields that initially have a strong link... These are politics and education." (p. 61)

Then, the power that institutionalizes the discourses is not identifiable exclusively with the dominant classes of political and economic style; they are social practices that endow certain behaviors with meaning and will demonstrate what is valid from what is not, what is moral from what is immoral, what is true from what is false. In short, they demarcate the borders of socially valid and pronounceable criteria in the order of events. In relation to education in Colombia, the first speech of a pedagogical nature focused on the need to instill a soul in the newly discovered Indian, his barbaric language and spirit without God placed him in the category of non-man. As such, education humanized, in the literal sense of the word, this being very close to the beasts or, as he was called: the "noble savage." That is why the entire institutional framework designs control, surveillance and training devices, the encomienda being the main instrument of power that it tried to internalize, both in the encomenderos; as in the entrusted ones, the vision of subject and society that the political-economic order needed to establish. In this aspect it is a mistake to think that the role of the church was merely evangelizing. It was really at the service of governmentality.

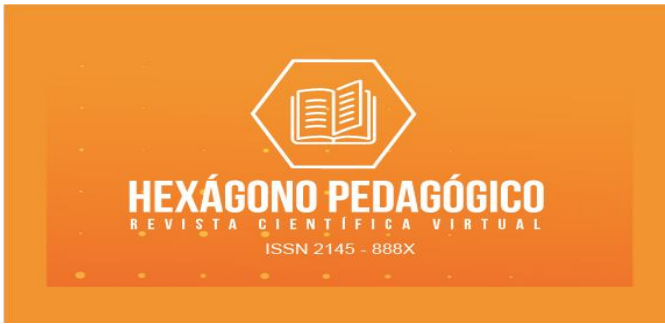
Because of that, once the Jesuits were expelled from the colonies of New Granada, the State had no problem taking on the issue of education. The point that proves this change of institutions in charge of administering public instruction is that, for the discourse that from the year 1767 interprets the role of teachers and type of subjectivity of students, religious orders were not as effective as the instances of the government would become: men with souls were no longer needed; but skilled labor. In short, institutionality, in general, goes in symphony with the discourses that establish what is socially valid.



That is why a change in discourse about the understanding of teachers and students will generate a different type of understanding of their role in society. The epistemological resignification of the definition of the subjectivity of the main actors in the teaching-learning processes is urgent in a society that considers itself post-methic and liberal.

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