

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Silvia E. Heilbut Guillen for the degree of Master of Arts in Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies, presented on May 24, 2016

Title: Sexo en las Márgenes: Troubling Sexuality Education in Colombia and Embracing a Critical Sexuality Education Framework towards Social Justice.

Abstract approved:

Nana Osei-Kofi

This thesis provides a critique of the Colombian Program for Sexuality Education and Construction of Citizenship, and examines theoretical contributions of feminist, queer, and critical pedagogies, in order to create alternatives for practicing a social justice-based sexuality education. Curriculum development and education ideologies are explored from an oppositional perspective, and curriculum transformation is provided as an alternative to develop an inclusive sexuality education that centers LGBTQ young adults and women. Critical sexuality education bridges the individual aspects of sexuality with larger social issues rooted in the social construction of sexuality. Finally, centering discourses of pleasure and thick desire in sexuality education put forth as crucial to build pedagogical spaces that foster resistance, hope, personal and social transformation.

La presente tesis provee una crítica al Programa de Educación para la Sexualidad y Construcción de Ciudadanía en Colombia y examina contribuciones teóricas de pedagogías feministas, Queer y pedagogías críticas con el fin de crear alternativas para la práctica de una

educación sexual fundamentada en la justicia social. El desarrollo de currículo y las ideologías que soportan prácticas educativas son explorados desde una perspectiva oposicional; la transformación curricular se posiciona como una alternativa para desarrollar una educación sexual inclusiva que centra en sus temáticas a las poblaciones LGBTI y a las mujeres. La educación sexual crítica conecta los aspectos individuales de la sexualidad con problemáticas sociales más amplias que nacen de la construcción social de la sexualidad. Finalmente, centrar discursos sobre el erotismo y el deseo grueso en educación sexual es crucial para crear espacios pedagógicos que fomenten la resistencia, la esperanza y la transformación personal y social.

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Sexo en las Márgenes: Troubling Sexuality Education in Colombia and Embracing a
Critical Sexuality Education Framework towards Social justice

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Silvia E. Heilbut Guillen

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APPROVED:

Major Professor, representing Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies

Director of the School of Language, Culture, and Society

Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

Silvia E. Heilbut Guillen, Author

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A las mujeres que han pasado y se han quedado en mi vida.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

At age twelve I came home from school worried, after hearing the stories told by my classmates about tampons being dangerous and robbing virginites; I, who still had not had my first period was trying to wrap my head around these stories. Later that day, during dinner time while sitting at the table with my mother, my father, my younger sister, and my older brother, I asked out loud “how do tampons work?” My father, very calmly looked at me and told me: “I can explain it to you” and shortly after, went to the bathroom to get one of my mother’s tampons. He came back with it, sat down very confidently and dipped the tampon in the leftover salad dressing on his plate. The tampon rapidly soaked up all the content like a sponge and I wowed with excitement and amusement. Afterwards, both my father and mother talked to my siblings and me about the myths of tampons and the inaccuracy of the stories I was hearing.

My parents’ serene, honest and even fun reactions to questions about menstruation and sexuality, not only led me to understand and embrace sexuality without fears and without silence, but also contributed to my becoming a sexuality educator later in life. Moreover, growing up in Colombian society, where it is very uncommon that a father talks positively to his daughters about tampons and other aspects related to sexuality, his impromptu demonstration of how tampons work also became a lesson about gender, and resisting traditional gender roles in relation to conversation in the home about sex.

This was the first of a series of experiences related to sexuality education in my life that led me to develop a strong curiosity and eagerness to discuss and learn more about sexuality. While living in a country where Catholicism is deeply ingrained in the culture, I

was exposed to several messages and discourses that constructed sexuality as something that was about silence, fear and punishment; at the same time, I gradually developed a sense of empowerment when talking about sex in a positive way and by feeling entitled to pleasure. Years later and after coming out as a bisexual woman, I decided to pursue a career in sexuality studies driven by a desire to encourage people to find their sexual selves and fight a culture of punishment, fear, and denial of pleasure and sexuality.

While my personal experiences are a powerful motivation to engage in this work, there are other motivations related to broader social circumstances that severely affect women and LGBTI folks in Colombia. Discrimination and violence occur in different forms. For instance, there are large numbers of deaths and health complications for women due to unsafe abortions; according to a recent study by Profamilia and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) in 2014, 50 percent of the women reported that they encountered barriers when trying to access abortion services. On the other hand, in 2013, 79 police violence cases against LGBTI people were reported and in 2014, this number increased to 143 cases (Colombia Diversa, 2015). Persecutory actions against transgender, gays, lesbians and bisexuals are perpetrated by government officials through limiting access to fundamental rights, by the guerrilla and dissident groups that carry out acts of torture, rape and displacement (Colombia Diversa, 2014), and by the Catholic Church through public condemnations and exclusionary practices in religious communities. In addition, the high number of hate crimes against transgender people oftentimes remain uninvestigated with full impunity.

This project is framed as an effort to bridge sexuality with larger social issues prevalent in Colombia. Furthermore, at the core of this work lies a strong connection

between pleasure and social justice and the belief that sexuality education can be a practice that fosters resistance, personal and social transformation.

My encounter with feminisms, queer theories, and social justice movements inform this work in ways that broaden the notions of sexuality, pleasure and the pedagogies of sexuality by making sense of them from a structural and oppositional standpoint. This means, to challenge and deconstruct language, history, institutions, dominant cultural beliefs, the 'natural' and the 'common sense' discourses that structure sexuality in the Colombian culture. Feminisms and Queer lenses also inform this work by providing a foundation for navigating the complexities of pleasure as possibility, as a starting point for imagining futures, and as a venue to find hope, especially for those communities most injured by sexism, heterosexism, classism, and other intersecting systems of oppression.

On the other hand, this project diverges from mainstream sexuality education discourse in Colombia, which often advocates for a gender neutrality position, focuses on providing information about heterosexual practices, and relies heavily on individual rights and individual aspects of sexuality. As an attempt to move sexuality education away from a perspective that is tainted by heterosexual norms, gender neutrality, and danger, I strongly advocate for centering the Eros and thickening desire in sexuality education. In regards to this matter, bell hooks (1994) and Michelle Fine (2006) are crucial authors that inform the discourse of erotics in my work, by laying the groundwork for understanding pleasure and desire as motivating forces and passions that drive us to achieve our full potentialities, and that energize our critical imaginations. These authors also invite to rethink desire as larger wants of all kinds, for meaningful intellectual, political, social, sexual engagement that are

tied to personal aspirations encompassing justice and freedom (Fine and McClelland, 2006).

Working to advance a transformative sexuality pedagogy means to deeply engage with a critical practice of teaching that lifts forth how oppression operates and impacts disadvantaged communities in relation to sexuality. Paulo Freire's (1993) critical pedagogy is a powerful influence in this task, because it makes oppression and its causes the object of reflection and the starting point for disadvantaged communities to liberate themselves and transform their worlds. The notion of conscientization and praxis as reflecting and acting upon an oppressive system to transform it, is widely applied in this project by making the main goal of sexuality education awareness and development of critical inquiry about a socio-sexual order that positions LGBTI people and women as the targets of an unequal and violent social structure. Furthermore, this project seeks to engage young women and LGBTI young adults in activism through practical exercises within the sexuality education classroom as well as outside of it. Ultimately, Freirean pedagogy, along with other critical pedagogies, guide the creation of the culture specific critical sexuality education that is centered in this work, and that is premised on advocating for an education that is deeply political, contextual and committed to social justice.

By practicing and embracing a critical sexuality education framework, my intention is not to dismiss discourses from comprehensive sexuality education or discourses from human rights frameworks; on the contrary, I believe these frameworks have represented enormous progress in the acknowledgement of pleasure, choice, and sexual freedom. However, I believe in moving beyond the individual character of sexual and erotic justice to address and critically analyze systemic inequalities rooted in the oppression

underlying the construction of sexuality. This model of sexuality education that I advocate for calls for an embrace of complexity, for engaging with the socially constructed, contextual character of sexuality, and the way this looks in the individual lives of people. This work is a call to navigate competing discourses of sex and sexuality, recognizing that all of them might be problematic and useful simultaneously. Yet, it also calls for acknowledging that each of these discourses is partial knowledge that can and should be contested and susceptible to change.

Overall, it is my desire that this work will be used as a guide to transform sexuality education curriculum in Colombian schools and other contexts that might share similarities with this social location. I encourage teachers, peer educators activists and instructors to rethink the spaces for teaching sexuality, to expand the action fields where this material can be used; not only in formal settings of schools, but also in community-based organizations, support groups, and community centers that provide services to women and the LGBTI population.

The structure of this thesis.

In chapter 1, I introduce the purpose of this thesis and discuss the ways my personal interests and my social location inform this work. In addition, I have provided an overview of the theoretical frameworks that inform my arguments and a justification for creating a critical sexuality education curriculum for Colombian youth and young adults.

Chapter 2 provides a critique of the national sexuality education curriculum in Colombia (PESCC), from feminist and queer theory perspectives. Here, I argue that several thematic units and personal competencies that the program seeks to develop in students,

reproduce the current socio-sexual order, by reproducing heteronormativity and reinforcing gender as a binary. Moreover, the connection between citizenship competencies and sexuality influenced by the human rights discourse strongly focuses on individual rights and fails to recognize the systemic inequalities that women and LGBTI people face in the country. The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with a context of the current situation and work on sexuality education in Colombia; as one of the few scholars that has studied PESCC, I draw heavily on the work of Mariluz Estupiñán. Ultimately, this chapter provides a justification for creating and rethinking the pedagogy of sexuality born out of the gaps and the problematic discourse in the PESCC.

Chapter 3 delves into curriculum theory, curriculum development and curriculum transformation. In this section, I discuss the ways in which the conceptualization of curriculum and its creation are ingrained in particular ideologies and belief systems. These different ideologies upholding curriculum and education practices work to reproduce, reinforce and/or resist the social order in different ways. As an attempt to resist dominant ideologies assembled with systems of oppression, such as sexism, racism and heterosexism, I explore curriculum transformation and center it as a strategy to create and practice a transgressive, inclusive sexuality education curriculum. Moreover, the chapter provides guidelines and tools to transform sexuality education curriculum and to develop inclusive and social justice-based sexuality education practices.

Chapter 4 examines and discusses a number of educational approaches under the critical pedagogies umbrella. Here I draw upon Freirean, Feminists, and Queer pedagogies to set the groundwork for practicing critical sexuality pedagogy. I bring into conversation aspects concerning content, teaching practices, and the way the roles of students and

teachers are conceived. Furthermore, I address critical sexuality education as a valuable framework that links social inequalities, social justice and sexuality. This section will provide the reader with an alternative sexuality education philosophy, one that resists social inequalities and centers awareness and transformative actions to change the social conditions that affect teachers and students.

Chapter 5 discusses the complexities of the discourses about pleasure and desire in sexuality education. Here, I bring into play different ways in which pleasure is conceptualized, the problematic and useful aspects of each particular approach. Moreover, I address the thick desire approach to broader understandings of desire as aspirations for having meaningful sexual lives and lives in general. Finally, I dig into a framework of the ethics of erotics as a helpful approach to navigate pleasure in positive, humanizing and fair ways that ultimately serves to make sexuality education a transformative experience.

Chapter 6. Provides the conclusion of this work and discusses the gaps and choices made in the study. In this section I also include a description of the sexuality education curriculum I created for Colombian youth based on the discussions and critiques addressed in the previous chapters. Finally, I deliver some suggestions and guiding questions for activists and educators interested in work engaged with social justice, as well as ideas for developing culture specific curricula from a critical sexuality education perspective.

Chapter 2 A Critique of the Program for Sexuality Education and the Construction of Citizenship (PESCC) in Colombia.

Context and overview of the PESCC.

In 1991 the Colombian constitution was renewed after a hundred and one years. The new Magna Carta became a milestone where sexual and reproductive rights were included as part of the fundamental rights of Colombian citizens. The constitutional court declared sexuality education mandatory in every school in the country and in 1993 the Ministry of Education launched the *National Project on Sexual Education (PNES in Spanish)*, a project, which in structure and form, is similar to the current National program for Sexuality Education and the construction of citizenship. However, years after the initial implementation, several difficulties were identified by the Education Ministry, which led to an updating of the program in 2006 by the Government in partnership with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA).

This update of the program emphasized the link between sexuality education and the development of citizen competencies (Ministerio de Education Nacional, 2008). These competencies are defined as abilities that allow individuals to develop democratic practices in their daily lives, and to practice a commitment to respect differences and advocate for the common good. Ultimately, citizenship is understood as the quality of being an active social agent that recognizes the social order and participates in its construction and/or transformation (MEN, 2008).

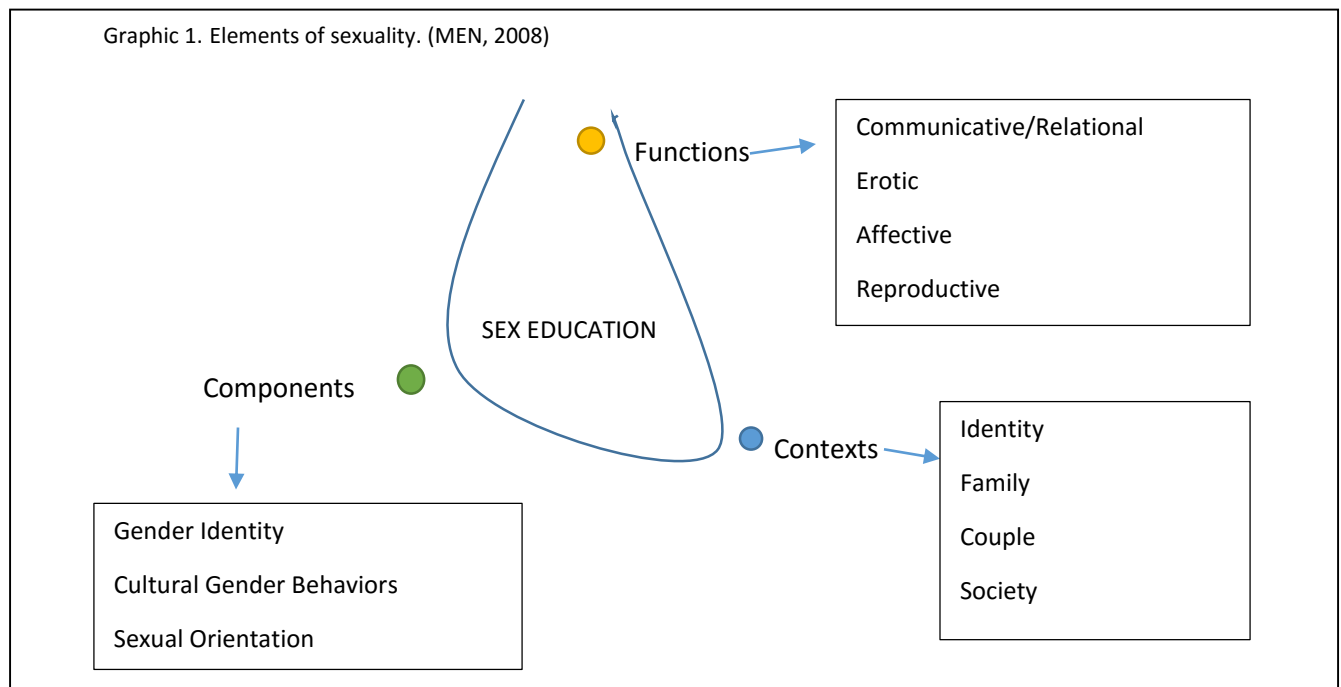
The *Program for Sexuality Education and the Construction of Citizenship (PESCC in Spanish)* understands sexuality as an element of the human realm, a source of health and

well-being that encompasses diverse functions, components and contexts. It offers an opportunity to develop pedagogical practices that do not reduce sexuality education to isolated workshops or lectures, instead it encourages the construction of particular and transversal pedagogical projects in each school that promote students' informed, responsible and autonomous decision-making processes concerning their bodies. Furthermore, it encourages students to value sexual diversity and to engage in democratic and fair relationships throughout their lives (Ministerio de Educación Nacional [MEN], 2008).

The main goal of the PESCC is to implement pedagogical practices that allow students to develop competencies in the areas of sexual and reproductive health, as well as to promote students' sexual and reproductive agency in their daily lives. The development of these competencies are designed to contribute to students' decision making, allowing them to live a healthy, fulfilling, pleasant, and sexually responsible lives, thereby enriching their own lives and those of others (MEN, 2008). For instance, a crucial competency that students are expected to develop is having knowledge about sexual and reproductive rights, family planning methods, sexually transmitted diseases, forms of prevention, and the biological aspects of sexuality. Another important competency is to develop the ability to negotiate birth control methods with partners and the number of children to have. (Ministerio de Educacion Nacional, 2006). Finally, developing personal skills to build loving relationships is considered the foundation for a healthy sexuality and the key to grow a respectful and tolerant culture of difference. (Ministerio de Educacion Nacional, 2006).

Three main dimensions of sexuality (graphic 1) addressed as part of the current national curriculum are as follows: 1. Communicative/relational, affective, erotic and

reproductive functions of sexuality; 2. Gender identity, the role of culture in the construction of gender, and sexual orientation; and 3. The role of sexuality at the individual level, relationship level, family level and broader social spaces. (i.e., individual, couple, family, etc.). In addition to these elements, there are varied thematic units that outline the fundamental topics that should be addressed in relation to each of the aforementioned dimensions of sexuality. The three dimensions of sexuality, the thematic units, and the personal competencies to be developed, work as a guiding matrix that helps to create the sexuality education project for each school (MEN, 2008).



The program provides three written modules that guide the design and implementation of sexuality education projects in schools, using the thematic axis shown in appendix A, and connecting these with specific competencies to be developed in the

classroom. The model helps to articulate the specific education plan made by each school with a transversal sexuality education project (MEN, 2008).

The PESCC does not provide a set of standardized lesson plans for every school, instead it provides guiding pedagogical principles for the implementation of school specific sexuality programs, which are carried out through various stages of training and administrative actions. First, the Ministry of Education coordinates the national sexuality education program, provides professional support and permanent training to the Education Secretariats through the Technical National Team (ETN in Spanish). The ETN then trains regional technical teams (ETRI in Spanish) to provide guidance in the implementation of sexuality education projects to the schools of the region according to their particular education plans. The primary approach to implementing PESCC is through working sessions with the school staff, where the ETRI helps the group discuss and reflect upon the sexuality education topics to be included in their study plans. Ultimately, the working sessions are where final decisions are made about the content and form that the implementation of the national sexuality education program will take in each school (Universidad de Los Andes, Fondo de Población de Naciones Unidas [UNFPA], Ministerio de Educación, 2014).

According to the most recent evaluation of the program in 2015 by Universidad de los Andes, the PESCC guidelines contribute to the promotion of sexual and reproductive rights and are consistent with international standards for comprehensive sexuality education. However, the highest percentage of regional implementation is only 36 percent (Boyacá region) and tends to be lower in many regions of the country. The evaluation report affirms that regions with lower implementation rates tend to be located in areas heavily

affected by poverty, presence of gangs, drug expenditure, and violence. Low implementation rates are also associated with institutions that have a chilly climate where students and teachers are less likely to develop trust and friendly interactions (Universidad de los Andes, UNFPA, Ministerio de Educación, 2014). Moreover, the authors concluded that low implementation is related to the low level of engagement with the proposal from school boards, principals, parents and teachers and might be caused by strong negative attitudes towards sexuality education and the perception that the program is irrelevant (Universidad de los Andes, UNFPA, Ministerio de Educación, 2014).

Problematic Discourses in the PESCC.

In my analysis of the PESCC, I argue that the discourse about the purpose of sexuality education, the content that is considered crucial to be delivered to the students and the personal competencies that are expected to be developed, subtly work to naturalize power dynamics related to sexuality and maintain the current socio-sexual order. Specifically, in what follows, I focus on four aspects of this discourse to elucidate the ways in which the dominant social constructions of sexuality are reinforced: the scientific and biological discourse of sexuality; citizenship and human rights discourse related to sexuality; the invisibility of gender inequalities and underrepresentation of targeted sexual groups; and the connection between love, risk and eroticism.

Biological and scientific discourses of sexuality.

Several thematic units of the PESCC focus on delivering content and promoting knowledge about reproduction, sexual anatomy, sexual functioning, sexual hygiene and family planning. For Mary Luz Estupiñan (2009) the persistent focus on the biological

aspects of sexuality primarily addressing the risks associated with having sex, such as early pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and related forms of prevention, position certain subjects and functions as privileged and/or disadvantaged in the medical/biological discourse. For instance, LGBTI¹ students might be at a disadvantage when the biology of reproduction is the primary and/or only subject addressed in a sexuality education class, while this privileges heterosexual students. Furthermore, when it comes to addressing sexually transmitted infections especially HIV/AIDS in the curriculum, queer students are centered, but only in ways that reinforce social stigma and myths around queer sexual practices (Allen, 2005).

Although the content about reproduction can be valuable for women, since it addresses their reproductive capacity, teaching the mere biological fact of pregnancy (or how to prevent it) is insufficient. I believe that without discussing the ways in which the complexities of political, religious, economic, social and cultural forces inform issues of reproductive justice, this becomes an attempt to simplify conditions experienced by women. Addressing pregnancy without raising awareness about gender inequalities associated with reproduction, helps to keep women oblivious about the relationship between their bodies and the social structures that marginalize them.

I believe, as Estupiñan (2009) notes, that the emphasis on sexual health prevention and promotion is a response to larger political, cultural and economic interests in the Colombian context. The insistent use of medical and sexology discourses in public policy and education programs that focus on birth control, STI prevention, and teenage pregnancy

¹ I use LGBTI term to refer to Colombia's gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex community. The term queer does not exist in Colombia and LGBTI does not fully capture the meaning of queerness, however in other parts of the text I use queer to acknowledge U.S. authors perspectives.

prevention, expose the mechanisms used by the state to control the population growth (Estupiñan, 2009). For instance, during the last five decades communities all over the country have been forced to leave their lands because of the armed conflict in which subversive groups have been at war with the state over land control and control over drug trafficking activities. As a function of these conflicts, displaced young and adult women have been the main targets of state sexual and reproductive health programs, especially programs involving sterilization (Ministerio de Salud y Protección social, 2006). Moreover, Estupiñan (2009) asserts that by focusing on providing some basic needs and superficial remedies to marginalized communities, issues around economic and social disparities are disguised while violence and inequalities are perpetuated. In this sense, by making the biology of sex and scientific knowledge an essential learning goal and a competency that the students should achieve, the disciplining and ‘correcting’ of bodies and sexual practices is lifted forth, not only as a process of schooling the individual, but also as part of a larger and collective way of regulating sexuality through public policies and public health programs.

On the other hand, sex as anatomical and corporeal is presented as two mutually exclusive options, male or female, and it is the starting point from which the social and cultural constructions of gender are legitimized as acceptable (Estupiñan, 2009). This binary of the sexes is always addressed as a clear and defined set of physical characteristics that are considered normal, while obscuring the complexities of a continuum of sexes. Within this discourse, any of the combinations, variations of hormonal levels, genital anatomies, and chromosomic compositions in the sex spectrum are disregarded, therefore individuals with ambiguous sexual genitalia are not only considered abnormal, but are also

invisible (Estupiñan, 2009). The concealment of intersex individuals, the inaccessibility of relatable sexuality education for intersex youth, and the centrality of the discourse about the “wrong/abnormal body” end in up maintaining exclusionary pedagogical practices of sexuality. In other words, the PESCC centers a discourse around the naturalization of biological sex as a binary, reinforcing the idea of “normal” anatomy and reinforcing harmful narratives that continue to marginalize intersex people.

The dominance of a scientific discourse on the biology of sex has gained the status of unquestionable and universal truth that justifies any action in the Colombian social, political and educational arenas. The overestimation of biological discourse in sexuality education has disguised any understanding of sexual practices and sexuality as profoundly social, driven by the political, cultural and historical forces that ultimately become deep-rooted, but are always alterable (Estupiñan, 2009). In addition, narratives of the biological bases of sex and reproduction are used to reinforce essentialist notions about womanhood and manhood, in which biology and genetics are understood as defining factors from birth that cannot be modified and remain stagnant throughout the life course. Hence, no transformation regarding the individual’s reproductive capacity or their biological sex is truly and genuinely possible since “nature” is the ultimate source of truth.

Finally, I believe the thematic unit about the right to life in the reproductive function component is a dubious goal since the Catholic Church and religious anti-abortion discourses have had a long tradition of involvement in the political, educational and social decisions made in Colombia. Stating that “by no means should life be in danger when [students] exercise their sexuality and reproductive capacity” (MEN, 2006, p.16) can be easily interpreted and used as a strategy aligned with religious projects, especially since

several appeals have been filed and strong social resistance exercised in response to the partial legalization of abortion in 2006. This social and religious resistance has also hindered the efforts to educate women about how they can interrupt pregnancies legally and safely.

Citizenship, human rights and sexuality.

At the core of the linking of sexuality and citizenship, is a human rights, sexual rights, and reproductive rights discourse. In this discourse rights and citizenship are strongly aligned with legal and constitutional discourses in which equality is the main goal to be achieved. However, efforts guaranteeing and protecting the rights of the individual do not include arguments that in any way challenge the established order, and this competency is communicated to students in a way that homogenizes people (Estupiñan, 2009).

Moreover, the human rights framework that informs the PESCC focuses on issues around individual liberties that tend to fail to address the systemic nature of larger inequalities in which issues of freedom are rooted. Indeed, according to Brooten (2013) “the focus on individual freedoms and the largely unquestioned notion of the autonomous individual undermines the need for attention to social, economic, and cultural rights” (p. 684). To this matter, Chandra Muzaffar expands the analysis and asserts that human rights are equivalent to individual, civil, and political rights within a democratic order and a nation-state, whereas economic, social and cultural rights such as freedom from hunger and disease, are not even considered rights among certain locations in the global North (Muzaffar, 1993).

In numerous components of the PESCC students are expected and encouraged to behave as citizens, active agents that direct their actions on behalf of the common good. This is the guiding principle for the youth to define the limits of their sexual behavior, to make healthy decisions concerning their sexuality, and ultimately it is expected that this should serve as the moral basis that they apply in order to solve and/or understand sexuality issues.

Despite the intentions of developing values such as caring for others and fostering the larger community, this aim becomes a dangerous one when aspects about who, what, when, and how the common good is defined remain unquestioned. Is the common good what the majority of the people agree with? Is it what is socially accepted? Is the common good defined by dominant groups? Does every group in society benefit equally from what is understood as the common good? Moreover, do the laws and constitution ensure the protection of that common good? In a society where power imbalances are operating through the deep inequalities regarding race, class, gender, it is naïve to assume that the common good is either common or beneficial to everyone.

I believe that the notion of common good is strongly connected to social norms, and it is defined and used in the service of privileged groups. To illustrate this point, it is useful to look at the case of Kim Zuluaga, a transgender girl in Medellin that in 2014 was expelled from her school by her school principal for wearing a girl's uniform. The director of the school, in expelling Zulaga, alleged that he had to comply with the school's manual of regulations (Revista Semana, 2014). Typically every school has a regulation manual, defined by the Ministry of Education as "a tool that gathers the agreements of the school community in order to guarantee harmony in the daily lives of all school members. In this

sense, it is the resource in which expectations about how students and other community members must behave are defined...” (Ministerio de Educación, 2013, p. 26) The aforesaid, epitomizes how harmony for all school members (a common good) is linked to the norms and proper behavior defined by the school; in this regard traditional and binary gender identities are considered normal, expected and common. When Kim disrupted the gender norms in her school she was excluded in the name of the common good, that the school community constructed and legitimized through the school’s manual of regulations.

If we are to educate students to be active social agents, critical of oppressive norms about sexuality and to be autonomous in making decisions about their sexual life, teaching them to protect a common good without questioning it, without resisting the power dynamics behind it, and without identifying its relationship with exclusionary practices, will only prevent them to become transformative individuals.

Another value/right connected to sexuality and citizenship throughout the PESCC is freedom of personal development, which includes freedom of choosing and experiencing sexual orientation and gender identity without discrimination. This is one of the crucial principles underlying several components and competencies and it is usually used in the discourse as a jurisdictional matter, meaning that freedom is always understood, defined and limited by laws. The point where this becomes problematic is when it is assumed that laws are equivalent to fairness and that relying upon legal actions that punish discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity is the proper and effective strategy to solve inequalities and violence towards sexual minorities.

According to Dean Spade (2011) “...seeking inclusion in anti-discrimination laws makes the mistaken assumption that gaining recognition and inclusion in this way will

equalize life chances [of LGBTQ] and allow [them] to compete in the (assumed fair) system” (p.86). Moreover, the author affirms that law (or law-reform) oriented solutions misconceives how violence such as racism, sexism, ableism, xenophobia, transphobia and homophobia operate (Spade, 2011). Systemic violence is embedded in social, cultural, economic and legal systems and more important, it is historical; in fact, as stated by Brown (1995) “the rights discourse in the liberal capitalist culture converts social problems into matter of individualized, dehistoricized injury and entitlement, into matters in which there is no harm if there is no agent and no tangible violated subject” (p. 124).

The discourse of the PESCC about freedom of personal development and sexual rights is compelling the subject to believe not only that homophobia, sexism and transphobia are individual and isolated issues, but also that freedom and fairness are values protected and performed by a legal system that historically has secured heteronormativity. Indeed, the concept of nuclear and heterosexual family is at the core of the constitution affirming that, “family is the fundamental core of society. It is constituted by a natural or legal relation made by the decision of a man and a woman to get married or by the responsible willingness to do so” (Constitucion Política de Colombia, 1999, Art. 42). Despite the efforts to include diverse types of families in the PESCC, these families are usually understood and depicted as similar to the heterosexual family in which an addition or an absence of a traditional member might happen (mother, grandmother, son, daughter, father etc.) but always following the heterosexual model (Estupiñan, 2011).

Furthermore, the program continues to reflect heterosexuality as the structure that organizes social relations, the standard that defines what is understood as a desirable life project and an expected lifestyle. It reinforces a normative and stable notion of a life

course in which there is no room for contradictions, conflicts, tensions, leaps, regressions, fragmentations that individuals might experience throughout their lives in the current times and social location (Estupiñan, 2011).

Even though the PESCC encourages students to transform the laws if they operate against their human dignity or their rights as citizens, it suggests that the way to do it is through the use of existing legal mechanisms within the Colombian legal system. The focus on social transformation as a matter of law reform works to maintain the nature of the judicial system unquestioned, and the violence deployed from the legal institution against targeted sexual groups invisible. Moreover, it encourages the students to be compliant individuals that maintain and act under the judicial order that currently upholds such social inequalities.

In addition, the focus on developing a culture of tolerance in schools around sexual diversity, might be a problematic pathway because the concept of tolerance can be associated with bearing up, withstanding someone or something burdensome (Estupiñan, 2011). Moreover, the discourse of tolerance can become a co-opting strategy used by dominant groups in which tolerance is portrayed a thoughtful gesture towards the targeted sexual groups, yet the approach does not provide the ground for making structural changes needed, nor respect and recognize difference. A transformative approach might use a comprehensive focus that places the political social and historical forces shaping issues of exclusion and marginalization of targeted sexual groups at the center, as well as a genuine acknowledgment of difference, rather than a focus on building tolerance and respect, as a superficial remedy for discriminatory and exclusionary practices in schools (Estupiñan, 2011).

Invisibility of gender inequalities and underrepresentation of targeted sexual groups.

The presence of a gender perspective and the acknowledgement of gender inequalities in the official sexuality education program has been a commendable attempt from governmental institutions to promote an effective sexuality education. However, the adoption of this perspective in policies and sexual and reproductive health programs are facilitated by a need to comply with demands from external funding organizations, rather than an actual commitment from schools to address sexual and reproductive issues through a transformative perspective (Viveros, 2006).

According to Estupiñan (2011) the discourse of the PESCC is often ambivalent and mixes up concepts of equity and equality. The difficulty of defining a clear conceptual framework has significant implications for the outcomes of the PESCC program; if equity is undifferentiated from equality, as it is in the PESCC, it is easy to fall into the glitches of a “gender/class/race blind” logic where the differences that have historically been the foundation for violence against marginalized groups, are erased and assumed to have been overcome. Moreover, it obliterates the point of departure for historical struggles, resistance, and identity politics of marginalized groups.

If the goal of the PESCC is to teach students that men and women are equal when it comes to rights and dignity without addressing the current systemic inequalities that women face, then the PESCC is just contributing to create an illusion of equality that obscures the real and material injustices that afflict women in Colombia. For example, the assumption that women have equal rights or that women are equal to men discards the possibility to engage in conversations about how actual inequalities affect women from

diverse class and ethnic backgrounds, such as the wage gap, domestic and sexual violence, maternal deaths from unsafe abortions and other issues.

In both popular discourse and the discourse of the PESCC, the category of gender has replaced the notion of patriarchy; yet this category of gender (also associated to the gender perspective), is now constructed as a neutral category that allows for the analysis of multiple forms of relations between men and women, including the possibility of relations dominated by women and equal relations between both (De Barbieri, 1992). The 'neutral' character of the gender perspective reinforces the invisibility of the gender inequalities because it covers up the real asymmetries in those relationships under its supposed neutrality. It loses political strength and it is insufficient to understand the social, historical, and cultural construction of sexual difference in the western culture (Braidoti, 2004).

Despite the problematic discourses of the PESCC about equality and gender as neutral, the program has given some recognition and visibility to women by partially acknowledging the disadvantages they face in the culture such as being conceived as inferior and restricted in their professional development because of 'machismo' attitudes and stereotypes. Yet, when it comes to recognizing LGBTI youth, the program embodies a strong underrepresentation.

Gender in the PESCC program is always understood within the limits of the binary men/women. While the program encourages students to question gender roles, to acknowledge gender as flexible and recognizes variations in gender expression, the idea of gender as a continuum is still ignored and the non-binary and fluid gender identities remain invisible and unaddressed.

According to Carlos Garcia (2007) the body is the territory where subjectivity is materialized, the scenario in which discipline and control operate and where cultural practices and norms are personified. The body is also an instrument in which subjects perform what they are and what they wish to be. For queer people and women, the body becomes a site of struggle, a space that is constantly claimed and limited by the constraints of the predominant order that defines stereotypes and authorizes gendered models; models that are reinforced and maintained by the current sexuality education programs in Colombian schools (Estupiñan, 2011). In other words, the PESCC is still aligned with dominant views of sexuality and gender in which non-normative bodies and identities beyond the acceptable bodies are excluded.

Another form in which underrepresentation is evident in the program is through the problematic use of the concept of plurality. In most of the cases when the PESCC advocates for plurality of gender identities and sexual orientations, it presumes that all sexual orientation and gender identities share a symmetrical space and a balanced weight within the social structure. For example, it states that

“[students should] understand that there are different types of sexual, erotic and affective orientations... and [they should] participate in the construction of pluralist environments in which all members can choose and freely experience their sexual orientation without threats, coercion and discrimination” (MEN, 2006, p.12)

This is a statement wherein it is assumed that LGBTI students experience their sexual orientation and gender identity just as heterosexual and cisgender students do, in equal conditions and with the same privileges. The statement disregards the fact that queer students have to experience coming out permanently unlike straight and cisgender students,

it assumes that every sexual orientation and gender identity in the social structure are equally accepted and respected. The plurality discourse makes non-dominant sexual orientations and identities equal to heterosexuality, as though all are equally susceptible to acts of violence and coercion. Thus, it creates an illusion of balance, a presumed scenario of equal conditions for every sexual orientation and gender identity, in which there is a safe and free environment for all. This illusion makes it harder to uncover power imbalances behind the social construction of sexuality and gender, obscuring the systemic harm of heteronormativity and a rigid gender binary to queer communities. Ultimately, heterosexuality and the essentialist categories of men and women are not read as sources of oppression and remain unquestioned.

Finally, not recognizing that non-normative sexual orientations / gender identities are positioned as underprivileged in Colombian society and the limited representation they have in the PESCC align with many other forms of underrepresentation in various realms of social life, sustaining the systemic inequalities that the LGBTI community currently face.

Eroticism, love and risk discourses in the PESCC.

An aspect of the PESCC that is important to highlight is the ways in which eroticism, sexual pleasure and love are conceptualized and the way these conceptualizations align with gender inequalities and treacherous discourses about sexuality. As stated by Estupiñan (2011), there is a controversial connection between love, affection, and sex in the program. The relation between love and sex in western culture has a long tradition of dominance that has resulted in strong disadvantages for women; the depiction of women's sexuality as driven by love and romance positions them as passive, lacking and/or

uninterested in sexual desire. Additionally, this social construction of love have granted men privileges related to social leniency which allows them to participate in several sexual encounters and relationships justified by their ability to engage in emotionless sex and the idea of an uncontrollable sexual desire. In contrast to men, women engaging in similar practices are severely reprimanded and judged (Estupiñan, 2011). Encouraging students to seek relationships based on love, and making love the condition to experiencing eroticism while ignoring the toll that the western notion of love has taken on women, is certainly a dangerous endeavor.

Equally important to engage, is the link between eroticism and healthy sexuality in the PESCC. Throughout several competencies regarding the erotic function, there is a prominent aspect: the recognition of pleasure always followed by a warning of risk and a call for safety. The promotion of self-care, and responsible and healthy sexuality is achieved through the postponement of sexual initiation and the establishment of stable relationships. Being sexually responsible is associated with decreasing the number of sexual partners one is engaged with, and/or reducing sexual activity (Estupiñan, 2011). In this way, risk always casts a shadow on pleasure throughout the guidelines of PESCC.

I believe this approach is rooted in a tradition of moral panic that the discussions of sexual pleasure and eroticism unleash; acknowledging sexual pleasure within the context of danger (pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease or abuse), relegates eroticism to a secondary matter and downplays pleasure as a crucial aspect in ones development of sexual subjectivity. This concept is understood as a “positive resource from which [young people] can emerge as empowered and satisfied subjects” (Allen, 2005, p. 66). If sexual subjectivity is centered at the core of sexuality education through the full recognition of

pleasure and eroticism, the pedagogies of sexuality are more likely to be humanizing and inclusive of communities such as women, LGBTI, disabled people and others who historically have been denied pleasure or condemned by patriarchal systems for embracing erotic sovereignty.

Overall, this chapter contains discussions about the PESCC as an education device that works to maintain the prevailing socio-sexual order in Colombia. The discourse of equality and plurality overlooks current power imbalances in which heterosexual and male identities hold more privileges than women, non-normative sexualities and non-binary gender identities. The lack of representation of LGBTI issues and identities in the program, the strong emphasis on individual aspects of sexuality that relegates broader social issues connected to women's sexuality and the discourse of the erotics tied to danger are some of the ways in which the program reinforces the status quo. The analysis I have provided in this chapter underlies an important question: how can we create and transform sexuality curriculum that fights for social justice in Colombia? The following chapter provides a discussion on curriculum ideologies, curriculum issues and curriculum transformation to inform the creation of a culture specific sexuality curriculum that resists social inequalities.

Chapter 3 Complexities of Curriculum Development.

Defining Curriculum

The definition of curriculum has long been an issue at the center of the discussions of curriculum theory and within the educational field. Certainly, the task of defining the term is a tough one since its nature relies heavily on the particular perspective and the emphasis on specific educational discourses that different stakeholders in the education community consider crucial (Wen Su, 2012). As such, curriculum can be understood better as an umbrella term that includes diverse issues, rather than meaning only one thing. Some of these issues include how teachers work with curriculum, how students learn curriculum, how to assess curriculum, and aspects related to the unintended messages and outcomes that it might transmit. (Wen Su, 2012).

Curriculum is used both in limited and broad contexts, for instance it can be seen as a set of objectives and goals, a checklist of outcomes that the students must achieve, or a guideline that focuses on products or ends. It can also be understood as a “plan of instructional acts for a sustained process of teaching and learning” (Pratt, 1994, p 5.) with an emphasis on the content and the process of teaching and learning. According to Beauchamp (1977) curriculum is a process of selecting content for a course of study, whereas Marsh (2004) defines it as an intertwined sets of plans and experiences, meaning that all the interactions that students experience in an academic environment count as part of the curriculum. One thing is certain, when theorizing about curriculum, one can say that

it is a complex set of aspects taking place in the educational practice which are always ingrained in particular ideologies and/or belief systems (Schiro, 2008).

Michael Schiro (2008) affirms that the diverse views on curriculum embody distinct beliefs regarding the kind of knowledge that should be imparted, the nature of the students, the way instructors should teach and assess students and the purpose of school education. Moreover, each particular view reflects a specific value system, its goals of education, its own language and the meaning of the words. Each perspective on education portrays “its own heroes whose beliefs it repeats and its own villains whose beliefs it rails against” (Schiro, 2008, p. 2).

Four types of ideologies that shape curriculum are described by Schiro:

1. The main goal of the *scholar academic ideology* places emphasis on helping students learn accumulated knowledge of the culture in specific academic disciplines; ways of thinking, conceptual frameworks and content related to those disciplines should be imparted. The academic discipline becomes a hierarchical community driven by a search for THE truth, teachers are seen as holders of that truth, students are learners of that truth and climbers on the hierarchical ladder of the academic community. Thus, curriculum provides the method by which to transmit the accumulated knowledge and the main concern is to develop curriculum that effectively reflects the essence of the particular discipline (Schiro, 2008).

2. The *social efficiency ideology* sees the purpose of education as training youth and building skills so that the students become able to meet the needs of society in effective ways. According to this ideology, providing instruction and procedures to apply in the

workplace and at home will ensure that students live productive lives and perpetuate the functioning of society. This view positions scientific procedures as crucial to construct curriculum that effectively change human behavior, which is ultimately the nature of the learning process (Schiro, 2008). This ideology strongly fits the structure of the PESCC, which centers its efforts on developing competencies related to democratic practices and exercising sexual and reproductive rights in the daily lives of the students. Living a fulfilling, healthy and responsible life along with developing skills for making healthy decisions will contribute to the student's well-being and to protect the common good of society.

3. The *learner centered ideology* focuses on the needs and concerns of individuals, its goal is the growth of individuals, always departing from their unique intellectual, social, emotional, and physical characteristics. Education involves the prolongation of those innate capabilities of people and learning is considered a mediator in the interaction between the particular individual and his/her environment. Curriculum is understood as the context that provides students with experiences in order for them to grow, and to construct meaning and knowledge for themselves by interacting with teachers, peers, ideas and things (Schiro, 2008).

4. The *social reconstruction ideology* is heavily conscious of the issues of societies and the injustices experienced by its members on the bases of their racial, gender, social and economic attributes. The purpose of education, based on this perspective, is to facilitate the construction of a more just system or a new society that provides the highest fulfillment to all its members. Because of the need for reconstructing society, curriculum is premised on the notion that society is unhealthy, that something can be done to keep society from

destroying itself and that actions must be directed to reconstruct society based on a social change perspective. Therefore, curriculum is the instrument through which individuals learn about their societies so they can become aware of its flaws, develop a vision of a better society and act to bring that vision into reality (Schiro, 2008). From the social reconstruction ideology there is no such thing as a good individual, a good education, a good truth or a good knowledge since they are all products of cultural assumptions and they are all results of a society undergoing crisis (Schiro, 2008).

Whether it is one or another ideology holding up curriculum, there is a crucial aspect: it mirrors cultural beliefs and reflects the social structure in which it is embedded as well as its political and social values (Wen Su, 2012). However, these values are not always explicit or consciously taught. The unwritten, unofficial, unintentional lessons, values and standpoints that students learn at school are part of what is called hidden curriculum (Abbott, 2014). More specifically,

“While the “formal” curriculum consists of the courses, lessons, and learning activities students participate in, as well as the knowledge and skills educators intentionally teach to students, the hidden curriculum consists of the unspoken or implicit academic, social, and cultural messages that are communicated to students while they are in school.”

(Abbott, 2014)

A useful example that illustrates the nature of hidden curriculum is the case of the PESCC. Despite the explicit goals and supporting discourses about gender equality, plurality of identities and sexual orientations, the unwritten values around heterosexuality are reinstated through subtle ways, such as placing strong emphasis on reproduction, the normative portrayal of the nuclear family and the underrepresentation of queer people.

Equally important, segregation practices occur within Colombian schools; Eric Cantor (2008) documented homophobia in high school settings emphasizing the role of both students and teachers in perpetuating harmful attitudes and behaviors. For example transferring queer students to night school, sport teachers asking students to join rows of girls or boys or “the others” and constant jokes about LGBTI people in the classrooms are some of the discriminatory actions happening in the school environment. I claim that such actions can be seen as expressions of the hidden curriculum that embody homophobia and the “othering” of non-normative sexualities.

If cultural values are reflected and embodied through school devices and practices such as the curriculum, these same devices and practices also embody power imbalances in the social structure and reflect systemic inequalities based on race, class and gender. In this sense, sexism, racism, heteronormativity and colonialism are forces that are institutionalized in the education system through educational practices. Ursula Kelly (1997) affirms that traditional notions of curriculum are framed in western ideals of authoritative and objective knowledge, rationality and scientism. These curricula present predominant histories that strengthen social models and serve to control individuals in the interest of political projects. Through education institutions, curricula become the vehicles through which some discourses become dominant and others become silenced and marginalized; they define forms of relationships and power dynamics between teachers, students and particular forms of knowledge. Eventually the curriculum itself is an active process in the production of subjectivities (Kelly, 1997).

Understanding curriculum from a feminist perspective and/or reading it as a gendered text means examining the relationships between gender and curriculum, to read

its discourses through the lens of gender and queer theories, pointing out the ways in which people are considered in unequal ways as a result of their sexual orientations and gender identities. Additionally, it calls for an understanding of the ways in which those categories are constructed by the dominant system of gender and sexuality (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery and Taubman, 1995).

As stated by James Macdonald (1988), sexism is pervasive in all aspects of the school life. It is involved in the organization, status hierarchy, and curriculum. Teaching and learning objectives, instructional methods, competency analysis and other practices work to upkeep the institutional values pervaded by patriarchal systems. In agreement with Macdonald, Heather Robertson (1992) mentions that the inequalities embodied by the curriculum include issues of male-centered education that values the world from a male perspective and adopts it as a universal experience; also, schools keep focusing their efforts on achieving equality through establishing teaching programs claiming gender neutrality (Robertson, 1992). More specifically, when analyzing sexuality education curriculum and practice in the U.S. James Goodman (1991) asserts that the dominant sexuality discourse promoted is detrimental to the well-being of most adolescents because traditional sexuality discourses severely hinder the access to information for youth and create an oppressive environment of isolation and mistrust.

The ideologies described above provide a panoramic view of the philosophies underlying curriculum. It is my intention to bring these in to play with one another as a ground that supports my critique and as a starting point to develop my own work on transformative sexuality education curriculum. However, I consider with special interest the social reconstruction ideology because it is attuned with feminist, queer and critical

pedagogies which are grounded in the need of transforming the status quo and in the cause for social justice.

Transforming curriculum

How might we transform sexuality education curricula in order to disrupt dominant cultural beliefs about sexuality? How can we make it a practice engaged in developing awareness about social justice issues affecting targeted sexual groups? Moreover, how can we use it as a device that centers subjugated discourses and practices concerning sexuality?

A starting point is defining curriculum from a critical perspective and a framework that provides the grounds for a radical and inclusive sexuality education. In what follows, I propose that in order to position sexuality education within a critical lens, we must rethink curriculum as Colin Marsh (2004) suggests, “the questioning of authority, and the searching for complex views of human situations.” (p. 6)

Ellen Hedges (1996) affirms that curriculum transformation with attention to gender inclusion is a process in which members of an education institution study the new body of knowledge on women, emphasizing the diversity of women in order to integrate the insights from the field into their courses. These projects usually involve and put in conversation different disciplines and professionals to discuss readings, revise courses and create new ones. The transformations can take place as a range of changes regarding modification in course content and structure, inclusion of new material or embracing new teaching methods (pedagogy). Ultimately, curriculum transformation requires an increasing

focus on issues concerning plurality and the connections between race, class, gender, ethnicity and other forms of difference (Hedges, 1996).

The effects of curriculum transformation projects on students may vary in a range of ways, including the achievement of new knowledge and change in perception, attitudes and values (Hedges, 1996). Other significant impacts on the students are: raising awareness and familiarity with feminist knowledge, recognizing gender and knowledge as social constructions, acknowledging women's empowerment and understanding the intersecting forms oppression on women's lives and lived experiences related to patriarchy. Experiencing learning as a linkage between the personal and the intellectual, gaining a sense of voice and empowerment, developing critical thinking and acknowledgment of difference and diversity (Musil, 1992).

On the other hand, James Sears (1992) asserts that developing critical sexuality curriculum means "to challenge the heterosexual agenda in school and society" (p.147). In the first place, educators must question themselves about their attitudes, feelings and values about sexuality as well as their thoughts on education, and address political questions related to sexuality curriculum. Furthermore, the role of the teacher is to promote intellectual flexibility, to nurture analytical thinking about issues concerning sexuality, and to become agents who embrace social responsibility by encouraging human dignity, which ultimately involves supporting the fight for social justice for queer people (Sears, 1992). Further, curriculum should provide a learning environment free from physical and psychological abuse. It should genuinely represent the richness and the diversity of humanity, nurture the understanding of human sexuality, integrate queer topics and issues

in the curriculum, support youth who may have a different sexual orientation than heterosexual, and support queer instructors (Sears, 1992).

Robert McGarry's article about inclusive sexuality education curricula (2013) brings attention to the LGBTQ sexuality curriculum developed by Montgomery County Public Schools in 2007 as an example. The curriculum contained LGBTQ-relevant content, refrained from presenting family and relationships in heterosexist terms and incorporated lessons addressing the effects of stereotyping and harassment. It also focused on examining gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation and their relation to discrimination practices based on harmful stereotypes. McGarry (2013) establishes that beyond the written curriculum, teaching practices and the messages that educators deliver to students have a great deal to do with LGBTQ inclusion and the creation of safe and respectful spaces for learning sexuality. He provides the following guidelines for educators engaged in inclusive sexuality education:

- Make sure the analogies used when teaching don't express heterosexuality as a given, instead of being one of many possibilities
- Use inclusive language when referring to students, families, or other outside of the classroom
- Use student's preferred names and gender pronouns (although caution should be used when speaking to parents/caregivers so as not to "out" the student).
- Build knowledge of vocabulary ally, respect, diversity etc.
- Use gender-neutral language, such as partner when appropriate
- Consider and control the ways stereotypes are perpetuated and intervene when students or other staff perpetuate them (McGarry, 2013 p. 31).

Developing curricula that centers subjugated discourses about sexuality requires bringing to light topics and dimensions of sexuality that have been forbidden, disregarded and silenced by mainstream and dominant discourses of sexuality; these discourses are the ones concerning pleasure and desire. Centering pleasure and desire in the sexuality education practice entails not only a shift in the conception of youth and young adults as sexual selves (Allen, 2005) but also the understanding of pleasure and desire as a political standpoint and as a form of resistance. Although the complexities of the pleasure and desire approach to sexuality education will be discussed in depth in Chapter 5, it is important to highlight that a pleasure framework provides meaningful guidelines to transform sexuality education curriculum. Kirsten DeFur (2012) expresses that “The Pleasure Framework for Sexuality Education is an approach that actively affirms sexual pleasure as beneficial to an individual’s overall sexual health” (p.151). The framework brings to the center positive and pleasurable aspects of sexuality, ratifies the individual’s desire to experience pleasure and analyzes the challenges related to experiencing pleasure. It also explores the wide range of meanings of pleasure for individuals, it encourages the understanding of the motivations for seeking pleasure and supports open communication about experiencing pleasure. Finally, it incorporates the concept of pleasure in holistic ways covering all contents and promotes decision making in order to achieve positive outcomes. (DeFur, 2012).

The incorporation of positive messages about pleasure in sexuality education reframes sexual pleasure as a crucial component of sexual health (not just as the absence of sexual diseases or sexual risks) under consensual circumstances, but most importantly it fosters the growth of sexual agency (Fine & McClelland 2006). An approach based on pleasure offers hope that when individuals decide to be sexually active, they will feel

confident in expressing their wants and their boundaries. Ultimately, that confidence will be likely to have an effect on maintaining the decisions individuals have made and will result in a greater satisfaction about their sexual experiences and about themselves (DeFur, 2012).

Finally, sexuality education curriculum compelled by social justice is a window that provides opportunities to understand and/or relate with experiences of historically marginalized sexual groups. When educational practices and content of sexuality education resonate with LGBTQ youth and women's experiences it validates their existences and aligns with the endeavor of breaking the concealment of these communities (McGarry, 2013). Teaching about LGBTQ and women's related issues, bringing the marginalized sexualities to the center of sexuality curriculum not only will offer a framework to recognize sexuality as a realm in which issues of power and discrimination are at stake, but also will provide a space to build a community that cultivates sexual/social justice, a space where satisfaction and hope can flourish.

Throughout this chapter I have pointed at the complexities of defining and transforming curriculum. The ideologies that uphold curriculum mirror particular system of beliefs and reflect the inequalities of the social structure; transforming curriculum is then a crucial aspect to position sexuality education towards social change and social justice. Centering women and LGBTQ issues in the content of sexuality education, using counteracting narratives about gender, questioning heterosexuality and other naturalized aspects of sexuality are some aspects to take in account when transforming and/or creating sexuality education curriculum. To align sexuality education with a social reconstruction ideology of curriculum it is necessary to look at teaching philosophies grounded in social justice. The following chapter digs into Critical, Feminist and Queer pedagogies which

provide a theoretical framework to practice education that resists inequalities and commits to social transformation.

Chapter 4 Critical Pedagogies and Sexuality: Teaching Social and Erotic Justice.

Throughout the past chapters I have pointed to several critical issues of concern with the current Program of Sexuality Education in Colombia (PESCC). I have also discussed the ways in which curriculum and education can work to reproduce the dominant social order and/or to transform it. The following section engages scholarship on critical, feminist and queer pedagogies in order to provide a theoretical groundwork for practicing critical sexuality education. Drawing on these pedagogies, I intend to provide alternatives to create oppositional and transformative spaces while teaching sexuality and addressing its complexities in the classroom.

Teaching critically.

“No one is going to give you the education you need to overthrow them. Nobody is going to teach you your true history, teach you your true heroes, if they know that that knowledge will help set you free” (Shakur, 1987, p. 181). This words from Assata Shakur, reminds us that education is a practice that ingrains power imbalances, that knowledge and teaching are far from being neutral, and at the same time knowledge and education embody the path for liberating ourselves.

Paulo Freire’s work powerfully critiqued education as a practice aligned with the status quo, a practice that reproduced inequalities, injustices and oppression. Simultaneously, he provided a framework to position pedagogy as a radical and revolutionary practice in the service of people to transform their worlds and escort them through their struggle for liberation. As Freire (2000) states: “this pedagogy makes

oppression and its causes objects of reflection by the oppressed and from that reflection will come their necessary engagement in their struggle for their liberation”(p. 48).

Both, Freire’s and Shakur’s statements emphasize the role of knowledges and education in serving people to free themselves from social injustices. In this sense, positioning social justice as the purpose of education represent the teaching philosophy of critical pedagogies. Developing critical thinking and raising consciousness are the fundamental processes of education, because these processes lead people to perceive the contradictions of their social, political, economic realities and to take action against the oppression embedded in that reality (Freire, 1993). Furthermore, the awakening of consciousness becomes a condition to achieve freedom, but only if it questions the status quo and if it is followed by action. In other words, a pedagogy of the oppressed requires first, that the subjects uncover systems of oppression and commit themselves to change the social world through conscious actions; second, once the oppressive realities have been transformed, it is necessary to keep confronting the previous social order by expelling the ideals created and maintained by it. However, these ideals are pervasive and try to reinstate into the emerging social order that comes after a revolutionary change. Ultimately, liberation is a permanent process that demands the confrontation of the culture of domination through profound actions (Freire, 1993).

Another crucial aspect of Freire’s work is a critique of what he describes as the banking concept of education (Freire, 1993), which positions students as passive receptacles waiting to be filled with knowledge as if they were storing deposits. This model seeks to make students into adaptable and manageable individuals who conform to the system in place, having only a fragmented perspective of it, and never questioning it.

Furthermore, knowledge is considered a gift conceded by the ones naming themselves educated to those who they view as knowing nothing; this ideology defining the opposing relationship knowledge/ignorance-teacher/student mirrors the ideology of oppression when it casts absolute ignorance onto others and denies education and knowledge as a process of interrogation (Freire, 1993). Thus, banking education works to suppress the creative power, the critical abilities of students, and instead it motivates their belief in the established order and encourages them to support the interests of the oppressors (Freire, 1993).

As a result of this power imbalance operating through education systems, the teaching and learning process and knowledge itself are never neutral or objective. To this matter, Freire (1993) expresses that education is mediated by the world, it is impregnated with doubts, anxieties, hopes and hopelessness; it is imbued with opinions, infused by specific views of reality that are rooted in the content of what is taught and the way the curriculum is constructed. Moreover, Freire argues that to make education a humanizing practice that raises awareness and liberates people, it is necessary to embrace bias and subjectivity. It is through perceiving and positioning oneself in the reality where one exists that one finds education meaningful to discover the path to liberation. The following quote reflects the close relationship between the nature of knowledge and the positionality of people who produce it, teach it, and learn it:

The starting point for organizing the program content of education or political action must be the present, existential, concrete situation reflecting the aspirations of people...we must realize that the aspirations, the motives, and the objectives implicit in the meaningful [themes of education] are human aspirations. They are as historical as human being themselves, consequently, they cannot be apprehended apart from them. To apprehend these themes and to understand them is to understand both the people who embody them and the reality to which they refer. (Freire, 1993, p. 107)

Each classroom, regardless of social location, level, or discipline, is a political space in which people and society are constructed. Politics constantly pervades the subject matters, texts, assignments, grading, teaching practices, ground rules and turn them into micropolitical moments (Shor & Pari, 2000); micropolitical moments that are crucial in the production of consciousness in students and teachers. A critical classroom embodies social justice as a political posture, it refuses to construct vertical relationships in which students are subordinates and teachers authorities, on the contrary, it is committed to address students as authorities that share the responsibility for their learning and for the questioning/confronting of their social reality (Shor & Pari, 2000). Micropolitics of teaching from a social justice stance means to connect the academic to the social and to the personal, it means to question the status quo through diverse teaching practices, it involves teaching from the bottom up and it offers positive orientations to make change.

This political character of education positions teachers as political agents. When they find themselves as such, they have to question the politics they are advancing in the classroom and in favor of whom they are teaching what they are teaching. The teacher always works in favor of something and against something, hence, the ultimate inquiry they must address is how to engage in a teaching practice that is consistent with their political values (Freire & Shor, 1987).

Embracing critical pedagogy requires understanding education as deeply rooted in context; pedagogy as a liberatory practice is always defined by the social location and can only make sense when it is thought and driven by the social conditions affecting the particular members in the classroom. It is responsive to the way social and political contexts map the relationships between everyday life, language, knowledge and the

machineries of power in play (Giroux, 2011). Furthermore, the transformative practice of teaching uses personal experiences as a valuable resource that gives students the chance to connect their own stories, social interactions and history to what is being taught. Thus, experience becomes a starting point, an object of inquiry that can be acknowledged, questioned, and used as a resource to understand issues and information in broader forms (Giroux, 2011).

Feminist Pedagogy.

Although Freire's work sets the ground for developing a critical education able to grow resistance to social inequalities, the particular conditions oppressing women in a male-dominated system are not addressed in his work. As a woman developing my career in sexuality education, feminism not only has been a powerful framework informing my practice in particular ways that deeply align with a critical pedagogy perspective, but also it has provided a more extensive lens that addresses gender inequalities and a particular pedagogical approach.

Feminist Pedagogy transfers the contributions of feminist theory and movement to the education setting. According to Briskin (1990), feminist teaching centers relations of power grounded on gender, class, race and sexual orientation and involves becoming aware of how these power relations take place in the classroom. Feminist pedagogy is based on the ongoing women's liberation movement, and acknowledges the deep-seated connection between changing curricula and changing teaching practice. Overall, "feminist pedagogy makes visible the real experience of gender [race, class sexual orientation] in society, in the school and in the classroom. It unmask the dynamic of power/powerlessness, the

devaluation of women [and targeted groups] and the invisibility of their experience (Briskin, 1990 p. 1).

Two crucial aspects guide a feminist practice in education. First, the acknowledgement of power/empowerment and shifting authority, and second the inquiry of knowledge and reflexivity.

Power/authority: From a feminist perspective, it is important to recognize the implications of power in traditional schooling as well as the limitations of the traditional meaning of power as a motionless relation of domination. Feminist pedagogy embodies a concept of power as something that is exercised, rather than something that is permanently possessed; it is an energy, and a potential rather than exclusively a matter of domination (Shrewsbury, 1993). This notion of power allows for a more complex understanding of the way power intervenes in keeping communities together, moving, changing conditions for the benefit of those in disadvantaged positions; understanding power as a capability makes it a goal to increase the power of all actors, not to limit it to a few (Shrewsbury, 1993).

Ultimately a view of power as a shared and creative energy would suggest that we need to develop collective strategies to counteract unequal power arrangements in society. According to Becky Ropers-Huilman (1998), the implications of conceiving power in this particular way, deeply challenge traditional models of authority and vertical relationships in the classrooms. Sharing power with, or empowering students is a crucial goal in feminist pedagogy because it is an attempt to make classrooms a space where authority is more evenly distributed; it is also an effort to reduce the potential negative effects of traditional hierarchies in the classroom.

Empowering strategies facilitate students finding their own voices and discovering the power of being authentic; at the same time these strategies enable them to find closeness with others and to discover ways to act on their understanding. Empowering classrooms are places to confront differences, to enrich everyone rather than to retract some and although empowering pedagogy does not dissolve the authority of the instructor completely, it does move from power as domination to power as shifting and creative energy (Shrewsbury, 1993). In this sense, the teacher's knowledge and experience is recognized and used with the students to increase the legitimate power of all. In the end, this teaching philosophy acknowledges the anti-hegemonic potential of liberatory education and offers a model of interaction within the classroom that encourages a shift from hierarchical oppressive teaching to a vision of education that works for autonomy, community building, and the celebration of difference (Shrewsbury, 1993).

Reflexivity and knowledge: The role of reflexivity and inquiry about the socially constructed character of knowledge is also a core principle of feminist pedagogy. Mary Fonow & Judith Cook (1991), recall the notion of reflexivity referring to it as the “tendency to reflect upon, observe critically and explore analytically the nature of the [teaching process]” (p. 2). The feminist premise that educators cannot separate themselves from what they teach, that the process of teaching is never objective because it is never devoid from power, points at the involvement of power relations in the construction of knowledge. Teaching students to be reflexive means developing abilities to recognize multiple truths and multiple ways of knowing, encouraging them to critically observe themselves as [subjects] in their own cultural context (MacDermid, Jurich & Myers-Walls, 1992). For instance, Katherine Allen & Elizabeth Fansworth (1993) applied reflexivity strategies in a

family studies course by having students critically examine knowledge in published texts and in their personal experiences with their families. They provided multiple texts about family issues from different perspectives, invited several guest speakers to the class- multiple voices and encouraged students to write journals that connected their family stories with the course content.

Feminist teachers using reflexivity advocate for being explicit about one's perspective. This practice disrupts the belief that knowledge is pure and absolute, untouched by personal bias and experience, untainted from a particular world-view. Simultaneously, bringing different viewpoints from speakers, authors, students, and teachers help students to understand the partiality of knowledge and the importance of contesting all knowledge claims. The value of reflexivity lies in uncovering multiple truths and ensuring that many perspectives are voiced and heard (Allen & Fansworth, 1993) especially the ones that have been historically suppressed by dominant groups.

Finally, in feminist pedagogy it is vital to avoid reinforcing systems of dominations while teaching, however it requires to take risks throughout the creation of oppositional spaces to reclaim subjugated knowledge, unearth the untold and under-told stories and embrace self-actualization to make education a site of resistance (hooks, 1994).

Engaged Pedagogy

The work of bell hooks has been deeply influenced by Freire and other critical educators. Departing from a teaching philosophy grounded in the practice of freedom she powerfully elaborates on an engaged pedagogy that calls for embracing the human wholeness of students and the collective growth in the classroom. By practicing collective

teaching, students and teachers share and grow intellectually, emotionally and spiritually, rather than becoming participants that are fed with information (hooks, 1994); the idea of a collective and engaged classroom requires radically changing traditional understandings of the relationship between students, teachers and knowledge, where the lines of hierarchy are constantly blurred, knowledge is questioned, constructed and tied to life experiences of all members in the classroom. The classroom is a space where building community happens through the creation of environments of care, respect and healing, which ultimately becomes the location for a deeply and intimate learning process. From this standpoint, learning is an act that makes us vulnerable because it requires from us to make connections between the academic, social, and political with our deepest lived experiences; thus, to make learning truly transformative it is essential that participants in the classroom community take risks and be open to changes that disrupt their own beliefs and their own constructed knowledge (hooks, 1994). Moreover, empowerment cannot happen if students are conceived as the only subjects of learning or the only ones who take risks by sharing and open themselves. Teachers must be willing to take those same risks and encourage themselves to be vulnerable for the sake of growing collectively and challenging vertical power relations in the classroom (hooks, 1994).

The responsibility of learning and teaching relies upon everyone in the class, however, this implication points at a crucial aspect: participants will not always accept guidance or take the learning route and pace that the teacher wishes to, yet the greatness of teaching as a practice of freedom allows students to be responsible for their own choices (hooks, 1994). That is to say, engaged pedagogy values the diversity of student's voices, choices and expressions; to make a meaningful learning experience it is needed to embrace

conflict, opposition and diversity in the classroom while keeping intellectual openness. Transforming educational practices means to welcome and work with the discomfort, dissent, struggle and sacrifice in creative ways that engage learners in the construction of collective truths (hooks, 1994).

Another key aspect that hooks draws upon her pedagogy is the place of eroticism/Eros in the pedagogical process. Eroticism in the classroom must be understood as a motivating force that moves beyond sexual connotation, however it is necessary not to deny this dimension. Embracing the Eros means to use that motivating force to energize and excite the critical imagination, to propel efforts in achieving our full potential in the process of questioning and constructing what we know and how we know (hooks, 1994). In other words, “Erotic potency is not confined to sexual power, but included the moving force that propelled every life-form from a state of mere potentiality to actuality.” (bell hooks 1994, p.194) Engaged pedagogy advocates for the recognition of students and teachers as whole human beings, subjects that bring to the classroom their whole selves, spiritually, emotionally, erotically, intellectually and bodily. Contrary to traditional notions of education where body and mind are split and disconnected, where the role of the erotic is denied and blatantly avoided, this pedagogy acknowledges wholeness and eroticism in ways that challenge the dichotomy of mind/body, the disconnection between passion, pleasure and learning. Ultimately, this premise allows us to be whole human beings in the classroom and as result, whole wholehearted (hooks, 1994).

Education that deeply connects theory and practice (ways of knowing and habits of being), that ties the will to know with the will to become in one passion is the fundamental ground for facilitating personal transformation. Finding and reclaiming the Eros in teachers

and students mean to cultivate the love for ideas that inspire the classroom to transform themselves, to discover themselves in relation to knowledge, higher powers and community. In the end, the purpose of education is that teachers and students mutually assist one another in defining themselves genuinely and freely in relation to the world. To find the Eros within ourselves and within the classroom is to allow body/mind and spirit to know desire and pleasure which eventually will guide students and teachers to personal transformation (hooks, 1994).

Queering Pedagogy.

The work developed by queer theorists on the education field have been particularly attuned with critical and feminist pedagogies because it positions education as an oppositional space to challenge the dominant order and to grow social transformation. However, this specific approach offers significant contributions that feminist teaching and Freirean pedagogy have not dug into or have partially examined in their analysis. In regards to create transformative sexuality education curricula, queer pedagogy offers the useful notion of fluid identity, fluid gender and sexuality, and a strong critique of the dominant sexual norms. The following paragraphs delve into some of these concepts and framework to inform the practice of oppositional sexuality education.

According to Marla Morris (1998), we need to understand meanings of queerness in order to practice queer pedagogy; first, queerness can be understood as a subject-position that takes distance from the normalized inflexible identities that conflates sex and gender, often placing gay, lesbian and transgender people as a category that look alike. Second, understanding queerness as politics means to contest the status quo and reject assimilation into the dominant sexuality and gender norms; incorporating the political character of

queerness requires that we examine cultural codes and discourses that the dominant groups use to maintain heterosexuality and binary gender as the norm (Morris, 1998). By all means, the refusal to be normalized becomes a political position (Morris, 1998).

The strong emphasis on political resistance that queer pedagogy embodies is explored in the work of Nelson Rodriguez (1998). The author asserts that working with queer youth is both a political and pedagogical effort in consonance, aimed to support the struggle for radical democracy and a civic position that takes seriously the issue of difference and confronts the violence of normativity. Moreover, approaching youth as political and pedagogical opens an opportunity to teach youth in critical languages that allow them to connect their work with a broader democratic vision; it also enables them to identify and challenge dominant ideologies that try to homogenize and eliminate difference (Rodriguez, 1998). In agreement with Rodriguez, Morris (1998) advocates for aligning this particular teaching philosophy with digressive politics that must question cultural codes and discursive strategies of the dominant groups in an attempt to elucidate the ways in which individuals have been produced by these codes. Expressly, to digress is to draw back from mainstream discourses, to critique and disrupt those dominant discourses always at the center (Morris, 1998).

A queer project in education is directed to unrest curriculum, to queer texts; a queer curriculum makes bizarre the categories of gender, identities, politics and aesthetics, it troubles the everyday of the school life, turning it upside down, inside out and backwards (Morris, 1998). A queer curriculum worker digress her/himself from the mainstream 'official' discourse, contests the status quo by reading texts with a queer eye and that means to point out silences or absences of marginalized groups in the content. The queer

curriculum worker recognizes that the curriculum is gendered, political, historical, racial, classed and aesthetic; he/she sees herself/himself as a co-learner with students. Overall, the queer educator is conceived as someone who might trouble curriculum and by doing it inevitably ends up troubling the everyday experiences in the school (Morris, 1998).

As an attempt to imagine queer pedagogy, Susanne Luhmann (1998) suggests that the main goal is the deconstruction of binaries central to western culture that define dominant ways of meaning, teaching and learning. However, rather than presenting and exploring particular queer subjectivities as normalized, queer pedagogy advocates for subverting processes of normalization and prompting the unlimited generation of new ways of performing gender and embracing sexual subjectivity. In addition, Luhmann positions the learning process and the act of knowing as a matter of implication with the content rather than a matter of detached approach to the content. This means that learning goes beyond a series of encounters with information and knowledge, it is a more conflicting, messier and less predictable process of becoming involved with knowledge. Implicating in the content requires to question how does the reader insert him/herself into the text? What identifications happens in this process and which do not? What prevents that some identifications make learning possible or impossible? Queer pedagogy embraces knowledge as an endless question, and learning turns in to a process in which teachers and students risk their selves and their identities (Luhman, 1998). Finally, Luhmann points out that this pedagogy is not exclusively about presenting a new curriculum or innovating methods of instruction, it is about an examination of the conditions that make learning possible and the conditions that prevent it; it encourages discussions about what becomes bearable to know for students and what is refused to know when certain identifications are rejected. The

center of this pedagogy is the profoundly social and discursive situation of individuals on formation, “the processes of how we make ourselves through and against others.”

(Luhmann, 1998, p.153)

Critical Sexuality education and Social Inequalities.

The diverse critical pedagogies above-mentioned serve as a basis for a different understanding of sexuality education, a lens through which is possible to develop an oppositional practice, a critical sexuality education. According to Sears (1992), sexuality is more a construct born from ideology and culture than a compilation of facts and materials about biology and bodies; control and power are fundamental to understand sexuality in the current times and society and to understand ourselves as sexual beings. Furthermore, the ways in which individuals express and define their sexuality have substantial political implications because norms and values about sexuality rest at the heart of the legal system, policy making (absence of strong anti-discrimination policies for LGBTI people in the work place and in prisons), institutions (public hospitals in Colombia severely lack of trained staff who can provide comprehensive health care to LGBTI people) and other social spaces (Sears, 1992). In this sense, norms and values about sexuality define access to privileges and reinforce social inequalities.

Sexuality education is a mechanism for social control and a practice where socio-sexual injustices take place through stereotyping women’s sexuality, ignoring the relations between sexuality, gender, race and class, obscuring queer sexualities and denying young people’s sexual subjectivity (Sears, 1992). An example of this can be seen in the discourse of the Colombian national sexuality education program (PESCC) discussed in Chapter One, which ends up reinforcing heterosexuality as the norm, obscuring pleasure and reifying

gender inequalities by relying upon a gender neutrality premise. Moreover, prophylactic sexuality education that focuses on the prevention of diseases and stresses on the risks of sex, results in reinforcing the popular idea among students that they cannot expect to learn much about sexuality in their schools because the material that is presented within the classroom is usually disconnected of their lives or of the real world (Sears, 1992).

Jessica Fields (2008) states that the discussions around abstinence-based programs versus comprehensive sexuality education often ignore forms in which sexuality education reinforces social inequalities and obscures more complicated issues. These issues include the silence regarding gays, lesbians, and bisexuals; the affirmation of traditional gender roles, the assertion of the white/able bodily norms at the expense of people of color and disabled youth. The recurrent harassment of women and girls in schools and the absence of a consistent discourse about sexual agency and subjectivity in young people's lives.

Despite the harmful impact that these models mentioned above might have on women, queer youth and people of color, sexuality education can also be a potential instrument for liberation. As a way of connecting critical thinking with sexuality curriculum Sears (2012) encourages students to analyze and trace the origins of their sexual beliefs, feelings and values; he provides the following questions as an example of this practice: "what does it mean to be "male" and "female?" Why are certain sexual practices preferred in our culture? Why do I feel uncomfortable talking to my parents about sexuality?" (p. 27). Additionally, personal insights must not be detached from social analysis, teachers and students must engage in dialogs that bring light to the personal and social ambiguities of living in a society that represses libido, a society that have silenced the discourse of desire for decades. More concretely, Sears (1992) suggests that statements

such as: “I feel more comfortable with my sexual desires’ must be accompanied by ‘I understand how groups manipulate my sexual desires for their own end” (p. 27).

Furthermore, sexuality education should not only be a ground for personal, political and social examination but also a place to raise questions about competing sexuality discourses and ideologies. This means, to identify and analyze dominant discourses in the field, bring to the center critical conversations (usually absent) that question how sexual knowledge is conceptualized, what sexual knowledge is more valued and who should have access to specific types of sexual knowledge (Sears, 1992).

Fields (2008) argues that in order to resist traditional models of sexuality education and simultaneously embrace a model that fights for social equity we need to challenge social inequalities connected to sexuality. It is also necessary to make sexuality education responsive to the student’s experience, who should be seen as agentic sexual subjects; being and becoming a sexual subject is a crucial piece for developing a fulfilled and healthy sexuality (Fine, 1988). Sexual subjectivity consists in becoming aware and valuing the tensions between pleasure and danger when facing, navigating and claiming our sexual lives. A critical pedagogy of sexuality that encourages critical thinking, appreciates subjective knowledge, combines it with cognitive knowledge and contributes to grow and maintain one’s sexual subjectivity and agency. Once a person becomes a sexual subject he/she experiences, knows, feels entitled to and reflects on his/her sexual desires, passions, fears, agency, identities and curiosities (Fields, 2008).

A liberatory sexuality education works for creating spaces within the classroom that value and make visible oppressed and non-conforming sexual identities. Similar to critical, feminist and queer pedagogies, this approach to sexuality education embraces

conscientization, shifts authority in the classroom, deconstructs sexual identities and strengthen targeted communities. This model allows teachers and students to foster inclusive models of sexual well-being, belonging and community building; it offers an opportunity to seek structural changes necessary to an open honest and transformative sexual communication (Fields, 2008). In a critical sexuality education program students and teachers might defy and interrupt-even momentarily- gender, sexual, racial and class injustices that they deal with inside and outside the classroom rather than consistently ignoring day to day issues about violence and sexual desires in schools (Fields, 2008).

Likewise, non-discriminatory critical sexuality education demands attention and acknowledgment of the students as the very sexual subjects with multiple identities at the center of the discussion. At best, this pedagogy offers to all the participants in the classroom the possibility to wonder about sexuality, to ask, and talk about subjects that might feel dangerous; it validates and rejoices sexuality and inquiry by recognizing the desire to know, to ask, and to learn about being sexual (Fields, 2008).

This chapter covered key aspects of critical pedagogies and its relation to sexuality education: raising awareness about the oppressive character of the social order, pointing at the ways in which certain communities face systematic exclusion and violence based on their race, gender, sexuality and class; the practice of reflection and inquiry about power dynamics present in school and within the classroom. Critical sexuality education embrace these aspects and connects them to the construction of heterosexuality, the repression of women's sexuality and the marginalization LGBTQ people. This framework bridges the individual lived experiences related to sexuality with larger forms of injustice and violence in society. A crucial goal of critical sexuality education is to grow agency and encourage

students to take actions to transform their worlds. Pleasure and desire are key pieces to achieve this task and to grow hope among marginalized communities. The following chapter draws upon understandings and uses of pleasure and desire in sexuality pedagogy grounded in social justice.

Chapter 5. Desire and Pleasure at the core of sexuality education

Along with hooks' idea of reclaiming the Eros in education and using it as guiding force for personal transformation, I believe that pleasure and desire in sexuality education can have a significant impact in the process of personal transformation. Advocating for centering pleasure in sexuality education curriculum requires to recognize and understand different competing discourses about pleasure and desire. Although I will elaborate on a particular sexual ethics framework (including the role of pleasure in it), that supports my approach to sexuality education practice, I believe it is necessary to explore different notions of pleasure that can inform, improve or be problematic in the sexuality education practice.

Embodied Pleasure: This particular approach, often addressed by feminists include thin and thick forms of the discourse. The thick form of it refers to a holistic embodiment of pleasure; embodiment is described by Deborah Tolman (2012) as the ability to feel and name sexual experiences alone or with another person. Tolman's explanation about thick embodiment, claims that being feminine is associated with a disconnection of the body, hence girls and women's loss of awareness of their own desires and hungers ends up in a unauthenticity of their sexuality performances in their relationships. Teaching about embodied pleasure means to make a positive discourse of pleasure accessible to girls, it is an attempt to help them name and embrace their sexual experiences, thus connect them to their own bodies. Ultimately, it is an effort to connect knowledge to feeling (Tolman, 2012).

The thin version of this discourse places the attention on the mechanics of arousal and pleasure. Teaching embodied pleasure from this angle, makes a central objective to

provide information about the female orgasm and to advocate for female pleasure and its worth in promoting safe sex practices. However, this kind of medicalized information although a well-intentioned aim, it strongly reduces the concept of embodied pleasure. In this regard, Iris Young's work offers a more comprehensive notion of embodiment that describes it as a full-bodied, unashamed, ownership of one's sexual feelings instead of acknowledging what genitals do (Young, 2005). This also implies that teaching embodied pleasure must include cultural lessons about control and shame prescribed norms (Lamb, 2014).

Transcendent pleasure: This perspective asserts that sex and pleasure transcend the physical and material base of orgasm; it responds to an experience that moves beyond the body and focuses on the 'mystical ecstasy' of sex. This notion of pleasure can be very problematic, because it reinforces the popular western idea of female's pleasure as mysterious-more mysterious than men's orgasm, that women's bodies require hard work by a skillful male to reach orgasm, and that romanticism, love and intimacy are the key to make pleasure transcendent for women (Lamb 2014). Additionally, this approach easily aligns with religious discourses (Lamb, 2014) that supports male permissiveness and the 'double standard' that is justified on the idea that women's sexuality is based on love and romanticism, while men's is based on an uncontrollable sex drive and the ability to engage in sex without emotional attachments.

Pleasure as a Right: The premise that pleasure is a right is based on the principle of freedom and the framework of human rights. Here, pleasure is viewed in terms of the right to enjoy sex without interference of government, the right to keep parts of the body connected to sexual pleasure and the right of girls and women to experience and enjoy their

sexuality. The goal of this approach applied to sex education curricula is to make education an emancipatory and anti-oppression practice in which is discussed how cultural forces deny certain groups of people (young, gay, and women) the entitlement to sexual pleasure (Lamb, 2014). While this vision can be very helpful to promote pleasure as something that everyone deserves and is entitled to, it has limitations concerning the over-individualization of the self, which leaves aside important conversations about executing rights in relationships and the situatedness of people and their communities when claiming rights (Lamb, 2014).

Pleasure as fun and masculine: Lamb (2014) asserts that the discourse about pleasure as fun is not typically advocating for inclusion in the sexuality education curricula. It is very widespread and represented in the popular media in the form of ‘hook ups’, one-night stands, friends with benefits and it centers a particular group of people (single, not knowing each other or who have sake of sex’s sake), excluding many other subjects and ignoring the complexities of pleasure. While this specific discourse is not explicit in the sexuality education curricula, it can be present in the hidden curriculum. Including this perspective in sexuality education has the risk of reproducing stereotypes of the “fun-loving boy” and the “good girl”; it also runs the risk of depicting all boys as heterosexual and with no need to education of pleasure. Finally, this approach is extremely centered in intercourse and strongly limits the diverse and complex sources of pleasure (Lamb, 2014).

Dangerous Pleasure: The discussion of pleasure within a context of risk prevention has been a constant in the sexuality education practice and curricula. Pleasure is framed as something that leads to taking risks (STI, pregnancy, peer pressure, regrettable sex) and also leads to exploitative and abusive practices that severely harm others. Lamb (2014)

states that sexuality education must work against pain, exploitation and abuse, however if one wants to truly acknowledge pleasure without the shadows of fear it is necessary to make a shift in the sexual ethics that one teaches. Educating in mutuality and ethical erotics asks for embracing a positive approach of pleasure, one that positions the joys of pleasurable sex as a source of prevention and opposition to sexual violence (Lamb, 2014).

Thick Desire.

The concepts of full-bodied experience of pleasure and ownership of one's sexuality that goes beyond the physical described by Young and Tolman are a starting point for bridging embodied pleasure with larger forms of desire and agency. In the same way that the notion of Eros is understood by bell hooks as a motivating force, passions that propel the achievement of one's potentialities, Michelle Fine delves into the notion of thick form of desire. Fine developed this idea after studying the way sexuality education discourses continually missed the discourse of the erotics and analyzed its effect on the lives of young women. In her first essay, the author articulated how teenage sexual desire existed at the intersection of schools, home, public and private, language and silence, bodies and cultural anxieties (Fine & McClelland, 2014). Furthermore, Fine connected how young women learned to be silent about their sexual desire in schools and its relation to a systematic loss of personal pleasure which extended to a loss of their citizenry; this sexuality education discourse missing the erotics placed girls as victims of male sexuality, maintained the passive/active dichotomy that corresponded to women and men sexualities and overstressed the dangers of sex.

In the midst of restrictive sex education policies, sexual research and health services in the U.S. influenced by religious and conservative ideologies (like Abstinence Only Until

Marriage), people and young women of color along with queer youth were systematically held accountable in law, popular media and empirical research for making “wrong decisions” and having poor moral judgment. These particular communities were and are still held responsible for preserving their own sexual health while living and growing up impacted by racist, heteronormative public policies that shape the resources they have access to. While being impacted by what others think about their bodies and what they think about their own bodies as they navigate dangerous social spaces (Fine & McClelland, 2014).

Thick desire conceives sexual desire not only located in the hearts, genitals and minds or as bodily experiences with other individuals, but also outside of the self, connected to larger wants of all kinds; this concept refers to “a broad range of desires for meaningful, intellectual, political and social engagement, the possibility of financial independence, sexual and reproductive freedom, protection from racialized and sexualized violence and a way to imagine living in the future tense” (Fine & McClelland, 2006, p. 326). Thick desire encompasses links between power, gender, sexuality (including sexual satisfaction and sexual health), bodies, violence and personal aspirations; it deeply connects the flesh and the bodies with structural powers coming alive through policies, ideologies, institutions which produce cultural anxieties about pleasures and desires happening in those bodies. In consequence, those institutions and social forces attempt to silence and/or vilify certain sexualities (Fine & McClelland, 2014).

Reclaiming and centering desire and the erotics in sexuality education can enable powerful linkages between pleasure, agency and justice especially for women, queer youth and youth of color whose sexualities have been systematically stereotyped, constrained and

marginalized by dominant groups in power. In this sense, critical sexuality education must work to develop language to name wants, aspirations and urges in the student's sexual lives and their lives in general. Choosing a framework of thick desire over a framework of sexual danger places sexual bodies into a geographical and political matrix of history, economics, gendered and racialized politics (Fine & McClelland, 2014) instead of reducing sexuality to a series of individual, isolated actions to prevent sexual, health and 'moral' risks. I believe this framework powerfully challenges systems of oppression operating within our sexual lives and contexts, it provides a space to foster resistance by growing satisfaction and pleasure for our own bodies and by keeping up the fight for recovering the desires and hopes that dominant groups have historically denied to women, queer, disabled folks and people of color.

Towards an ethic of erotics in sexuality education.

Throughout the past sections I have presented a series of perspectives and authors that in different ways contribute to what I believe is crucial to make sexuality education a transformative practice. Critical pedagogy, feminist, queer pedagogy and critical sexuality education set the groundwork for my own teaching practice, at the same time I consider pleasure and the ethics of erotics fundamental in the task of making this pedagogy meaningful and transgressive. Unless we make a shift in the way we conceive the ethics of sex and sexuality, I believe one runs higher risks of reproducing unfair and unequal views of sexuality that harm women, LGBTQ, disabled and racial minority communities. The perspective on sexual ethics I am suggesting here is not a definitive solution or exempt of limitations and possible problematic outcomes, yet, it is an attempt to provide a more sound and affirmative framework that allows discussions on the complexities of human sexuality,

one that sees in pleasure and sexuality a possibility to grow hope in the midst of a world that compulsively grows injustices.

The work of Heli Alzate on human sexuality advocates for an ethical system called responsible hedonism. This particular ethical system fully recognizes the erotic function of sexuality and acknowledges sexuality as a legitimate source of satisfaction for the self and for others regardless of the presence of love and/or wedlock. For Alzate (1987), the ethical premise that should guide the behavior and the seeking of pleasure must be acting in a way that does not harm others. Although Alzate's definition leaves out discussions on many complexities regarding the meaning of harm, pleasure and consent, I believe it is a useful starting point to develop a more comprehensive framework supporting the ethics of erotics.

On the other hand, Moira Carmody's (2005) work draws upon the dynamic character of negotiating pleasure and danger. She suggests moving beyond the fixed idea of some desires and acts determined by gendered expectations which often become universalized as good/bad, risky/pleasurable, natural/unnatural. Sexual needs, desires and what is considered pleasurable are fluid and changing, just as power relations and agency are within the context of sex. This mobile character of pleasure and danger have the potential to develop ethical erotics that

Involves negotiation in which care of the self is linked to care of the other. For either to be missing or limited tips the balance from mutual pleasure to dangerous sex either physically or emotionally. This then would be unethical and would significantly increase the risk or danger for the individuals concerned. (Carmody, 2005, p. 477)

Furthermore, a connection between ethical erotics and pleasure acknowledges the infinite possibilities and shapes of pleasure, and it allows for exploration without the constraints of heteronormative discourses (Carmody, 2005). In agreement with the

aforementioned, William Schroeder (2000) expresses that is necessary to build sexuality education based on ethical sexual subjectivity in order to counteract the ethics based on fear and pathology that end up focusing sexuality on control and surveillance. Similarly to Carmody's concept of ethical erotics, Schroeder (2000) centers the ethics of sexuality education on caring for the self, considering the impact of one's desires over the others which ultimately requires a process of dynamic and mutual negotiation and reflection.

Finally, in agreement with Lamb (2014), I believe that justice and caring should be at the core of sexuality education and at the center of an ethic of pleasure. Despite the difficulties and complexities that come with defining pleasure and navigating the competing discourses of pleasure in sexuality education, I advocate for an acknowledgement of pleasure as fluid and holistic. Pleasure understood as physical (genital and whole bodied) emotional, psychological, spiritual, social and cultural; pleasure within all its complexities belonging to all human spaces. Pleasure as mobile, ever changing in one's life, exceeding the norms, reinventing the norms, and bouncing between the thick and thin forms of the discourse. Therefore, the ethics of pleasure that I suggest here is one that functions on a continuum; from taking responsibility for the sexual pleasure of others and the sexual pleasures of the self, to be accountable for becoming aware, critical of the social forces that use and/or take away pleasure from certain groups of people to oppress them in benefit of others; to take responsibility for experiencing the possibilities of pleasure in fair ways and let ourselves be driven by the reins of a transformative desire.

I have pointed and analyzed in this section ways in which discourses of pleasure and desire can be centered in sexuality education to grow resistance and agency. Thickening desire allow students to expand the meaning of desire and connect it to aspirations for a

meaningful life; ultimately this approach bridges sexual pleasure with the pleasure of freedom individually and socially. Finally, embracing a framework of ethic of erotics inform ways in which people can navigate pleasure and use it in humanizing and just forms within their sexual lives.

Chapter 6. Conclusions

Summary

The purpose of this thesis was to critique the Colombian Program for Sexuality Education and Construction of Citizenship (PESCC in Spanish), as well as to provide an alternative pedagogical framework to develop a transformative curriculum/pedagogy of sexuality.

In my critique of PESCC I argue that the discourse of this program obscures systemic inequalities affecting women and LGBTI people. The focus on individual rights often times leaves aside structural issues around social, economic, and cultural justice related to sexuality, such as: economic access to birth control and safe abortions; violence and exclusion based on sexual orientation perpetrated by religious and educational institutions; and the possibility for parents to raise their children out of poverty and war conditions. Moreover, the emphasis on biology and the scientific discourse of sexuality that focuses on anatomies and reproduction reinforces heterosexuality as the norm and the belief that ‘normal’ anatomy corresponds to a binary of the sexes—female genitalia or male genitalia. This approach particularly conceals intersex people, strengthens the ‘wrong body’ narrative and overlooks LGBTI sexual practices. Through this emphasis, the PESCC embodies heteronormativity; by overestimating the role of biology in sexuality education, the program masks the understanding of sexual practices and sexual bodies as profoundly social, deeply rooted in culture and history and susceptible to change (Estupiñan, 2011).

Despite the efforts to recognize gender inequalities ingrained in the culture, the PESCC adopts a perspective of gender neutrality informed by a confused discourse that

does not differentiate equity from equality. Concepts such as patriarchy and sexism are replaced by the neutral category of gender which fails to recognize the prevailing asymmetries of power in relationships (Estupiñan, 2011) and supports a gender blind position. In similar ways non-normative sexual orientations are addressed from a plurality discourse that obliterates how LGBTI people are underprivileged in a heteronormative society.

On the other hand, sexual pleasure and eroticism often times are linked to love and/or sexual health risks. According to the PESCC, the ideal circumstances to engage in erotic behaviors are situations where love and stable relationships are present, yet this view erases the history of dominance ingrained in the connection between love and sex, a paradigm that has come at the expense of women in the western culture. Moreover, when eroticism is recognized in the PESCC it is frequently followed by a warning of danger and a call for safety, which exposes the moral panics around pleasure and sexual enjoyment.

The gaps and problematic discourses that the PESCC includes point at the need for embracing a different model of sexuality education. I advocate for a pedagogy informed by a social justice perspective, and this means to move beyond a human rights discourse of sexuality to a human justice discourse of sexuality. This pedagogy is one that addresses systemic inequalities as well as individual freedoms and rights; a discourse that recognizes that social and sexual justice is individual, collective and structural; and that sexual freedom also means freedom from sexual, gender, race, economic and religious violence.

'Sexo en las Márgenes': A Critical Sexuality Curriculum for Colombian Youth.

In an effort to provide an alternative to PESCC, in what follows I present *Sexo en las Márgenes* (Sex in the Margins) a sexuality education curriculum that is based on the content and analysis covered in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. *Sexo en las Márgenes* is attentive to creating an understanding of the relationship of sexuality to social structures as discussed in Chapter 3 and 4. It draws on Critical, Feminist, and Queer pedagogies and Critical Sexuality Education by raising awareness about systemic discrimination and violence against women and LGBTI people in Colombia. Its content is meant to develop critical thinking about values, feelings, beliefs and issues related to sex and sexuality and it is especially concerned with connecting personal experiences and insights about sexuality to broader social analysis (Sears, 1992). Drawing upon Fields (2008), this curriculum is an effort to make visible oppressed and non-conforming sexual identities in the classroom as well as directing sexuality curriculum to challenge social inequalities based on gender, class, gender, and race. Its main goal is to advocate for social equity.

For instance, one of the sections in the curriculum engages data showing the increasing number of hate crimes against transgender women in different regions. I also include recent information about the situations that transgender men and women experience in prisons; I address information about how LGBTI people are affected in war zones, the persecutions and tortures they suffer at the hands of subversive groups. All this information is analyzed and connected to heteronormativity. Another way in which the curriculum connects social issues with sexuality is by having reflection and research activities at the end of each section. Assigning students to analyze how HIV and STI's rates of infection affect women, African Colombians and poor communities more severely. Writing

reflections about how gender inequalities are present when women face barriers while trying to access abortion services in the country help students to engage in broader analyses of social inequalities.

The curriculum is also attentive to make educational spaces that grow agency and resistance, and to acknowledge pleasure as a crucial aspect for developing sexual subjectivity. The notion of thick desire coined by Michelle Fine and the engaged pedagogy proposed by bell hooks represent a call for embracing the discourse of erotics in sexuality education and the Eros in education practice. These concepts point at broadening the notion of desire and pleasure, understanding them not only as sexual but also as motivations and passions for knowing and learning, as aspirations in the student's sexual lives and their lives in general.

Several sections in *Sexo en las Márgenes* embrace pleasure in different ways. For example, sexual practices that are usually not addressed in sexuality education in Colombia such as BDSM practices are addressed in positive ways with humor and related to local foods. Moreover, in this piece students are encouraged to think about new possibilities of experiencing pleasure in their sexual lives through creating recipes of sexual acts. The section on menstruation strongly advocates for body awareness and for experiencing periods as pleasant, fulfilling and meaningful events. The piece about gender identity encourages students to find ways of telling stories about their own gender in creative ways and it also encourages them to play with gender expression in the classroom or in the student's privacy.

Throughout chapter 5 I also discussed an ethics of erotics framework that acknowledges pleasure as fluid, as thick and thin forms of enjoyment. Here, I suggested

that teaching from this particular ethic aims to make individuals accountable for their own pleasure and the pleasure of others, for taking care of themselves and the others. It encourages accountability for being aware and critical about the social forces that use or take away pleasures for certain groups of people to oppress them in benefit of others. This framework is heavily used in the consent section of the curriculum and it relies on a 'Yes means Yes' or Enthusiastic consent model that advocates for mutual pleasure as the key element for understanding agreement in sexual practices. Although I heavily rely on this perspective rather than using one based on fear and danger, I do not discard entirely information about a model based on 'No means No' to address issues regarding sexual abuse and sexual violence.

All the topics and issues I chose to include in the curriculum centered LGBTI people and women. Most of the themes incorporated are usually topics that get little attention in the mainstream sexuality education in Colombia or include a different approach to address certain topics. The sections on gender, menstruation and abortion use legends and storytelling to provide information to the readers, and the portrayal of sexual anatomy focuses on a continuum of biological sexes rather than binary representations of genitalia.

Overall, this work offers a theoretical groundwork to implement oppositional and transformative sexuality education curricula. Feminisms and Queer theory helped me address sexuality and pleasure as complex realms intertwined with oppression, resistance and social justice. Moreover, the practice of teaching sexuality is also enriched and informed by these frameworks which encourage us to rethink the figure of the teacher/instructor. They invite us to make a shift from an authoritative figure to an ally and a participant in the classroom who learns and facilitates learning sexuality to others.

Ultimately, the figure of the instructor is conceived in this work as a person who joins the cause for social justice for LGBTI people in Colombia and other similar contexts, and as someone who reinvents sexuality education curriculum and makes it a tool for resistance and hope.

Gaps, Choices and Future work.

While developing this thesis, I found several gaps in the literature engaging critical analysis of the PESCC as well as literature from Colombian authors that provided tools for developing critical sexuality curricula. Simultaneously, I found challenges in making sense of U.S. based feminisms, queer theory and other U.S. based pedagogies in a different culture and context. This became an important question during the process of developing a culture-specific curriculum for Colombia because I was aware of the risks of importing certain kinds of knowledge from the Global North to disadvantaged locations without falling into colonizing forms of education. However, it is my hope that this work contributes to the body of knowledge of education in Colombia and it is also my expectation that the U.S. based content of the study provides opportunities to mutate and recycle these ideas to make sense of them in useful ways for growing transformation in this particular context.

The particular choices that guided this study left some aspects out of scope. One of these aspects is the place of asexuality in critical sexuality education and its relation with thick forms of pleasure and desire. Likewise, sexuality and disability are not addressed, nor are topics concerning sexuality and aging.

On the other hand, I recognize that the changes in the constitution and the legalization of gay marriage in Colombia took place while I was finalizing this project. However, the implications of this change will be addressed in the future implementation of the curriculum with especial attention to the intricacies of homonormativity and heteronormativity. I strongly encourage sexuality educators in Colombia to look at this changes with a critical lens and to question if marriage equality is attuned with a radical social transformation that eradicates current systems of oppression in place.

I believe that future work in critical sexuality education must engage in questions around who is being underrepresented, and questions about why and how different oppressed communities are usually left out of sexuality education. Future work also must focus on connecting sexuality with other systems of oppression such as capitalism and colonialism in particular contexts and social locations. Finally, I encourage sexuality educators and curriculum developers interested in working from this perspective to engage in other research areas such as involving parents in critical sexuality education, training educators, and training staff in sexual health settings using this framework.

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Appendix A. Module 2 of the PESCC: Pedagogical project and its thematic units.

COMPONENT



SEXUALITY COMPONENTS

SEXUAL ORIENTATION	
Sexual, erotic and affective orientation	I understand that there are different types of sexual, erotic and affective orientations which include a variety of manifestations of attraction and levels of love and arousal.
Right to freedom of choosing and respect of the differences.	I understand that we all have a right to choose freely our sexual orientation and to experience it in a respectful environment.
Valuing diversity	I understand that all people have a right to participate in the decisions that can affect them. I appreciate and include the suggestions of all members of the community in a decision-making process regardless of their sexual orientation.
Building respectful environments	I participate in the construction of pluralist environments in which all community members can choose and freely experience their sexual orientation without discrimination, risks, threats or coercion.



THEMATIC UNIT



COMPETENCY

GENDER IDENTITY	
Recognition of dignity	I understand that all people are an end in themselves, therefore they are valuable for being humans. I engage in actions to make this a reality to me, my family, my partner and my society.

Plurality of identities	I understand there are different forms of being a man or a woman. I respect them, value them and act in accordance to that.
Value of the self	I recognize myself as a valuable and unique being that deserves to be respected and valued. I reach institutions and proper people that can help me to defend my rights when these are violated.
Development of moral judgment.	I make autonomous decisions based on the respect for human dignity and based on the care of the common well. Those decisions are born out of the analysis, argumentation and dialogues about daily life dilemmas concerning sexuality and dialogues oriented to pursue healthy life styles.
Life Project	I direct my life towards my well-being and the well-being of others. I make decisions that contribute to the freedom of my personal development based on my life project and the ones I build with others.
Freedom of personal development	I understand that each person has freedom of personal development and I act within the limits imposed by the right of others and the judicial order. If those limits threaten my dignity and the dignity of others I use the judicial and democratic mechanisms to transform them.
Identity and Sexuality	I understand that sexuality is a dimension of human identity and I know how is constituted.
Right to Access information.	I understand I have the right to freedom of expression and that right includes freedom of searching, receiving and spreading all types of information and ideas without barriers. That information can be accessed and spread orally, written or printed in artistic ways or any other media I choose.

CULTURAL GENDER BEHAVIORS

Culture and Gender behaviors.	I understand that culture has assigned behaviors to each gender. I can modify those assigned behaviors to make them more equitable in order to allow women and men to develop as active members within a relationship within a family and within a society.
Critical analysis of gender behaviors	I critically analyze the established roles for each gender in my culture and other cultures. I engage in actions to overcome gender stereotypes and prejudices.
Flexibility in gender behaviors	I participate in the construction of flexible, egalitarian and dignifying gender behaviors that allow women and men to have different life options framed in equity.
Gender Equity	I understand that women and men are free and equal in dignity and rights. I engage in actions that promote respect and value for diverse forms of being a man or a woman that allow the development all human potentialities in different contexts.

FUNCTIONS OF SEXUALITY

EROTIC FUNCTION	
Recognition of Pleasure	I understand that sexuality is a source of pleasure and we all have the right to choose how to live it without harming others.
The body as a source of well-being	I understand that my body is a source of well-being. I take care of it, I feel good in it and I choose healthy lifestyles.
Erotic Expressions.	I understand that diverse erotic expressions are a source of pleasure and well-being; I recognize them in me and others.
Eroticism Language	I understand different symbolisms and social representations about the erotic. I recognize when these representations are against my dignity and others' dignity and I engage in action to protect that dignity.
Right to intimacy	I understand that I have full right over my body and no one can access it without my consent. I reach people or specialized institutions when the right over my body and

	other people's right over their bodies is threaten.
Sex equality	I understand that men and women have the right to participate in decisions concerning the way of experiencing eroticism, without harming myself or others. I engage in actions to make this possible in my relationships.

AFFECTION FUNCTION

AFFECTION FUNCTION	
Bond development	I understand that emotions are communicated through sexuality and they make possible the creation of relationships based on love and care.
Building caring relationships	I understand that there are different types of relationships and I engage in relationships based on the respect and care for myself and for others.
Identification, expression of one's emotions and the emotions of others.	I identify my emotions as well as the emotions of others and I express them in assertive ways. I empathize with people's emotions and this allows me to cheer up for their successes, feel bad when others are hurt, ask for forgiveness and engage in repairing actions.
Expressions of Affection	I understand that expressing affection and receiving it contribute to my well-being and to strengthen my relationships.
Right to choose the marital status.	I understand that I have the freedom of choosing the type of relationship I want to establish with others. This includes the right to have a family or not and the right to choose my marital status

REPRODUCTIVE FUNCTION

Biology of sexuality and human reproduction.	I understand the biological functioning of sexuality and human reproduction. Understanding this helps me and help others to live a healthy and satisfactory sexuality.
Psychological and social aspects of reproduction.	I understand that human reproduction involve psychological and social aspects. Besides the biological aspects of conception, pregnancy and birth there are social representations about motherhood and fatherhood. I critically analyze these social representations and I actively participate in their transformation in case they counteract my rights and the rights of others.
Sexual and reproductive health	I understand the importance of sexual and reproductive health which is understood as the physical, psychological and social well-being related to my reproductive system and the reproductive system of others. I engage in actions to keep myself healthy.
Sexual and reproductive health services.	I am informed about the sexual and reproductive health services that are offered in my community. I make contact with these facilities to get health services as well as save, effective and acceptable birth control methods.
Right to have physical, social, and psychological integrity.	I understand I have the right to live free from coercion and sexual violence. I engage in actions to prevent any kind of manipulation for sexual purposes that threatens the physical, psychological and social integrity of myself and others.
Decision Making	I make decisions about my sexual life based on universal ethical principles that support the respect for human dignity and consider the well-being of others. In order to do this I use the scientific knowledge about birth control, the consequences of drug abuse and methods to prevent STD and HIV.
Right to freedom	I understand that all the people have the right to enjoy a satisfactory sexual life without risks and the right of making decisions about when, and how often procreate or not doing it at all. This allows me to exercise my sexual and reproductive rights in my relationships, my family and as a member of a society.

Right to life	I understand that all people have the right to live and by no means should life be in danger when I exercise my sexuality and reproduction capacity.
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COMUNICATIVE/RELATIONAL FUNCTION.	
Peaceful coexistence and dialogue	I solve conflicts in peaceful ways through dialogue. I find fair balances that connect my personal interests with my partner's interests and the interests of my family and society.
Horizontal participative relationships	I engage in democratic relationships with my partners and my family in which all participate in decision-making processes. Their contributions and needs are valued and included in this process.
Value and respect for identity and difference	I recognize that there are many forms of experiencing sexuality. I respect and value the differences.
Agreements related to sexuality.	I make agreements about my sexuality with my partner, my family and other society members in a consensual way, without coercion and regarding my well-being and the well-being of others.
Right to personal safety	I understand I have the right to be part of democratic environments within my family and school, free from threats and fears derived from harassment and sexual abuse in my public and private life. I participate in the construction of safe environments.
Right to education	I understand I have the right to have a good quality education that allows me to live a fulfilling sexuality and the right to have an education that helps me to develop competencies to exercise my sexual and reproductive rights. I engage in actions when my right to education and the right to education for others is threaten.

