RESONANCES OF FOUCAULT'S EPISTEMOLOGY IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

RESSONÂNCIAS DE UMA EPISTEMOLOGIA FOUCAULTIANA EM PSICOLOGIA SOCIAL

RESONANCIAS DE UNA EPISTEMOLOGÍA FOUCAULTIANA EN PSICOLOGÍA SOCIAL

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the epistemological field of social psychology in terms of a poststructuralist matrix based in Foucault. The text develops its discussion based especially on four arguments: (a) there is a wide range of works (research and interventions) in the field of social psychology, which have been formulated based on the contributions of Foucault's thought; (b) the present epistemology operates using the exercise of critical thinking, however it refers to a conception of critical idea different than the one traditionally addressed by critical social psychology; (c) this theoretical perspective relates to the concepts of subject/subjectivity and society that change social psychology itself, and therefore there is basis for legitimacy in this field; (d) Foucault's thinking in the context of social psychology emerges by claiming its own epistemology, since it is not covered by the prospects traditionally addressed.

Keywords: Social Psychology; Epistemology; Foucault; Criticism; Post structuralism.

RESUMO

Este artigo aborda o campo epistemológico da psicologia social em termos de uma matriz pós-estruturalista de base foucaultiana. O texto desenvolve sua discussão especialmente a partir de quatro argumentos: (a) há uma vasta gama de trabalhos (pesquisas e intervenções), no campo da psicologia social, que tem sido formulada a partir das contribuições do pensamento foucaultiano; (b) a presente epistemologia opera com o exercício de um pensamento crítico, porém refere-se a uma concepção distinta da ideia de crítica tradicionalmente abordada pela psicologia social crítica; (c) essa perspectiva teórica relaciona-se com concepções de sujeito/subjetivação e sociedade que modificam a própria psicologia social e que encontram aí os fundamentos para sua legitimidade nesse campo de estudo; (d) o pensamento foucaultiano no contexto da psicologia social desponta reivindicando uma epistemologia própria, já que não é contemplado pelas perspectivas tradicionalmente abordadas.

Palavras-chave: Psicologia Social; epistemologia; Foucault; crítica; pós-estruturalismo.

RESUMEN

Este artículo aborda el campo epistemológico de la psicología social en términos de una matriz posestructuralista de base foucaultiana. El texto desarrolla la discusión especialmente a partir de cuatro argumentos: (a) hay una amplia gama de trabajos (investigaciones e intervenciones) en el campo de la psicología social, que ha sido formulada a partir de las contribuciones del pensamiento foucaultiano; (b) la presente epistemología opera con el ejercicio de un pensamiento crítico, sin embargo se refiere a una concepción distinta de la idea de crítica tradicionalmente abordada por la psicología social crítica; (c) esa perspectiva teórica se relaciona con concepciones de sujeto/subjetivación y sociedad que modifican la propia psicología social y que encuentran los fundamentos para su legitimidad en este campo de estudio; (d) el pensamiento foucaultiano en el contexto de la psicología social aparece reivindicando una epistemología propia, ya que no es contemplado por las perspectivas tradicionalmente abordadas.

Palabras clave: Psicología Social; epistemología; Foucault; crítica; posestructuralismo.

Introduction

The motivation to write this article came primarily from the lack of reference texts that present an epistemological panorama of social psychology in Brazil, considering approaches that work from Foucault's contributions, and from a recurrent question about these works: "this is indeed Psychology? ". The justification for writing this text is due, therefore, to the concerns that the activities of teaching and research in the field of social psychology and dialogue with Michel Foucault reverberate in our daily academic lives.

We develop the discussion from four arguments: (a) there is a wide range of works (research and interventions) in the field of social psychology, formulated from the contributions of Foucault's thought; (b) this epistemology operates with the exercise of critical thinking - but it refers to a distinct conception of the idea of critique traditionally addressed by social critical psychology and also different from Marxist and post-Marxist currents; (c) this theoretical perspective is related to concepts of subject/subjectivation and society that modify social psychology itself and that find there the grounds for its legitimacy in this field of studies; (d) Foucault's thought in Social Psychology emerges, claiming its own epistemology, since it is not contemplated by the perspectives traditionally addressed.

Risking an epistemological policy: naming productions in Social Psychology

In a nutshell, the manuals have indicated three main classic epistemological currents in social psychology: the social psychological (or American), the social sociological (or European), and the social critical (or Latin American). In these works we can find a systematization of these three strands or, in some cases, the approach of each separately (Farr, 1988; Jacques et al., 2002; Lane & Codo, 1982).

Some works, such as the work by Garrido and Alvaro (2007), dedicate some pages of their extensive books to what they call "Postmodern Social Psychology", including social constructionism and discourse analysis, among other approaches, but without encompassing post-structuralism. In addition, no reference is made to Michel Foucault's contributions to any perspective of social psychology specifically. However, in the book organized by Jacó-Vilela, Ferreira and Portugal (2006), we find two chapters that deserve to be mentioned because they bring approximations with post-structuralism. One of these chapters historicizes and analyzes, theoretically and politically, the emergence of institutional analysis practices (Rodrigues, 2006) and, although it may be situated in a poststructuralist perspective, it does not concern itself with an epistemological matrix. The other chapter calls into question social psychology today by going through textbooks of social psychology (Spink & Spink, 2006). After analyzing the classical configurations of Social Psychology, this work opens the question to new epistemologies, addressing post structuralism. The text discusses social constructionism and mentions, in a short paragraph, post-structuralism and the influence of Foucault's theorizations on psychology, from the work of Ian Parker.

Without appealing to an exhaustive survey, it is necessary to mention the existence of other productions, mainly from the 2000s, among them collections organized by researchers of social psychology, who publish their investigations carried out by approaches inspired by Foucault (Lemos et al., 2015; Nascimento, 2002; Scisleski & Guareschi, 2015). The own publications resulting from the National meetings of the Brazilian Association of Social Psychology (ENABRAPSO) often bring among their chapters works that cover the theoretical diversity of the field and are related to Foucault's poststructuralist perspectives in social psychology (Accorssi et al., 2015; Bock et al., 2015).

However, in these productions we do not see the demarcation of Foucault's epistemological policy. We understand that this non-naming, on the one hand, expresses the author's own positioning, which refuses totalizing classifications, and we agree with Rodrigues (2015, 2016) that connections with different fields of knowledge, such as those expressed by the connective "and" (Foucault and Psychology, for example), often point more to a stratification (of knowledge and author) than to an opening of disciplinary boundaries. However, on the other hand, we also understand that non-nomination produces an important political effect: despite the relevant production linked to this perspective, in classical references it is as if it did not exist. Moreover, these works are often mistakenly taken as belonging to the Latin American critical perspective, without regard to the specificity of the notion of critique of each of these approaches, or not recognized as productions of Psychology[1].

In addition, if we look at published articles, particularly in the journal Psychology & Society, linked to the Brazilian Association of Social Psychology (ABRAPSO), we can find numerous productions that constitute and legitimize a perspective in social psychology in close dialogue with Foucault's thinking.

In this respect it should be noted in this regard that it is not only social psychology that has sought in the dialogue with Foucault's tools for his analysis of contemporary phenomena. As indicated by research conducted by Cavalcante, Silva, Gomes and Hüning (2016), from the 2000s there was a significant increase in publications of articles in Psychology in Brazil that dialogue with Foucault's referential. Among these, those that come from Social Psychology stand out.

It is noted, however, that even though many works operate from Foucault's perspective and their broad production can already be considered as significant in itself of relevance and legitimacy for this field of knowledge, they are not enough to systematize what we a Foucault's perspective of Social Psychology, since they do not problematize the epistemological relations themselves. In many of these publications, we find revisions that support the articulations made from this field of knowledge, even posed as justifications for such interlocutions. However, we understand that a gap in relation to the emergence of a perspective that consolidates in Brazil, especially since the 2000s, deserves attention as to its specificity, for an analysis of the current social psychology epistemological panorama.

Finally, we could not fail to mention that a more direct approach on the interlocutions between Foucault and Psychology can be found in two collections that bring this proposal in its title (Guareschi, Azambuja, & Hüning, 2014, Guareschi & Hüning, 2009). Such texts undoubtedly broaden the dialogues of Psychology (taken broadly as a discipline and institution) with Foucault's thinking and signal potentialities in this interlocution. However, even in these works, there is no strict concern with social psychology, nor a systematization of the epistemological panorama of this field of knowledge from Foucault's thought approach.

The thesis of Silva (2005), which inverts the proposal of thinking about psychology, traditionally understood as a priori scientific knowledge, postulates it as a field of intervention that simultaneously produced the relevance of being configured a science that could know the social. In spite of the relevant impact that Silva's (2005) work unfolds in Social Psychology, indicating an approximation with Foucault's thinking, there is an important difference to be considered that his work does not address (Silva, 2004): if, on the one hand, to refer Thomas Ibañez as a thought that helps in the deconstruction of what can be taken as evidence of what would be social psychology and, in this aspect, contributing to the enunciation of a problematization, on the other, it does not deal with the difference of

constructionism – attached to Ibañez's thought- of the Foucault's genealogy. By not making explicit this difference, constructivism could be linked to Foucault's post-structuralism, as indeed some authors do (Íñiguez, 2002) [II].

More recent articles that propose to approach the contemporary scenario of social psychology, such as the work of Ferreira (2010), categorize the publication analyzed by the division initially pointed out, without, however, mentioning Foucault's thinking. However, there is an article by Almeida (2012) that draws attention to us because it seeks to systematize theories of this area also in the classical division, but joining the work with Foucault in the so-called sociological social psychology, which is, in our view, a misunderstanding. We justify this understanding because this sociological strand is somehow the heir of Durkheim's thought (Farr, 1988), which is definitely not the case with the Foucault's perspective. In addition, the author's argument (Almeida, 2012) is based on the attribution of Foucault's investigations, together with those of Deleuze and Guattari, based on the focus on institutions and power, without highlighting relevant differences between these thinkers. We stress that the emergence of a theory in Europe is not necessarily linked to social sociological psychology, which applies to geographical demarcation in other perspectives.

The considerations made so far allow us to affirm that researches and other works developed from a Foucault's referential are at present a gray area in the panorama of current perspectives in social psychology. Thinking with Foucault and considering his criticisms of the disciplinary demarcation of knowledge, we could say that this must be his place, thus reiterating his critical position, and even a refusal, to scientific domains demarcated by disciplinary boundaries. Nevertheless, we assume in this work a "dangerous" task in seeking to delimit or even "classify" a perspective of social psychology from the thought of an author who vehemently refused the classifications. We consider important the systematization and even the appointment of a way of knowing and doing already consolidated and that can no longer figure only as that which does not fit in the classic perspectives, like another doing that isn't denominated. This task is also consonant with Foucault's thinking as a subject at the same time epistemological, in that it seeks to fill a gap in approaching perspectives in social psychology; and politics, for the relevance of affirming and substantiating the legitimacy of these modes of producing knowledge. We understand that this position evokes an epistemological policy. Even knowing the risks, we assume this proposal considering some

guidelines established by Rodrigues (2015) in his own investigation:

> To avoid *a priori* wholeness ... to de-analyze both Foucault's thinking and the different spheres of knowledge and/or practice with which it relates; to discard the categories reception, penetration and diffusion, since they explain less than what needs to be explained; to prioritize annexations and rejections, inevitably partial and averse to syntheses. (Rodrigues, 2015, p. 40)

We understand that it is necessary to point out Foucault's resonances in social psychology, in what it breaks with and in what it establishes again, which certainly is not finished nor can it be totalized or disciplined.

Post-structuralism and Foucault: for another epistemology in Social Psychology

A brief explanation must be given before we advance in our discussion: it is essential to emphasize that post-structuralism is not synonymous with postmodernism. These are two distinct movements that refer to completely different theoretical concerns.

Postmodernism concerns a movement that occurs both in the field of Arts and Philosophy (Peters, 2000). In the first case, it refers to the artist's disruption with classical and traditional methods, in the sphere of the Arts, but also of architecture, for example. In the field of Philosophy we see a critique of the thinking of modern authors such as Descartes, Bacon and even Kant, and all theories that preach "grand narratives" to account for cultural and social phenomena (Lemert, 2000, Peters, 2000). As written by Charles Lemert:

> if modernism is the culture of the Modern Age (or simply *modernity*), *postmodernism* is related to the collapse of modernism ... postmodernism is a culture that believes in the existence of a better world than the modern ... Postmodernism is a culture that prefers to break things down, to respect the various parts of the social world. In speaking of culture, postmodernism prefers to speak of cultures. (Lemert, 2000, pp. 43-44)

Postmodernist discourses focus on the appreciation of local aspects that are linked to the production of knowledge, not its generalization. However, Foucault rejects the idea of postmodernity (Foucault, 2008a), understanding it as a vague and confused expression. Foucault's studies tend to think about the present inspired by the proposal of how it is inaugurated by Kant (Britto, 2005). Thus, it becomes relevant to briefly present Foucault's conception of

modernity. In many works, Foucault will adopt the division between the classical epoch, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and modernity, from the late eighteenth century to the present day (Castro, 2009). But his study of modernity unfolds in other directions: as a historical period, it involves the end of the eighteenth century to the present day; from a political point of view, it begins with the French Revolution; taking philosophy as a reference, it begins with Kant (Castro, 2009). As for this last aspect, from the Kantian text "Answering the Question: What is Enlightenment?", Foucault understands modernity more as an attitude than as a current of thought or historical landmark: "Referring to Kant's text, I wonder if we can not see modernity more as an attitude than as a period of history "(Foucault, 2008b, p. 341). By this logic, Foucault's thinking takes modernity as a productive field of questions about the present. In this respect, the peculiarity of approaching modernity as an attitude will be taken up later in this article, as it is fundamental to the direction of what Foucault understands as criticism.

In turn, Michael Peters (2000) identifies post structuralism as a scientific movement aimed at responding to the philosophical pretensions of structuralism, especially from France in the 1960s. In short, we can say that structuralism was a movement that initially contemplated the search for general and structural laws that explained a certain universality of language characteristics, from the thought of Saussure and Jakobson. Subsequently, this movement beyond linguistics inspired other branches of the human sciences, in order to identify the irreducible elements of social organization (Peters, 2000). Thus, if structuralism aimed at identifying and understanding the structural phenomena of language and society, post-structuralism emerges as a critique of structuralism.

It is interesting to refer to post structuralism as a "movement of thought [...] which embodies different forms of critical practice. Post-structuralism is decidedly interdisciplinary, presenting itself through many different currents "(Peters, 2000, p.39). Moreover, it is crucial to mention that the poststructuralist strands belong to the thinking of Nietzsche and Heidegger. Synthetically, it is noted that the contribution of Nietzsche would be given to think the decentered, embodied, temporal subject and subjected to the strategies that normalize him as an individual in the face of modern institutions. In its turn, Heiddegger's thinking becomes relevant for post structuralism, based on Heiddegger's own re-reading of Nietzsche (Peters, 2000), thus developing

concepts related to the idea of technique and the limits of scientific knowledge (Williams, 2012).

Nietzsche's legacy is striking in Foucault's thinking. Concepts such as genealogy, ideas about corporeity, as "docile bodies", discipline, among others, refer to Nietzsche's thought, which are present in the conception of the French philosopher. Although he understood Foucault as a poststructuralist thinker - which the author himself did not do - as far as our work is concerned, we do not do so in order to classify him into a sort of epistemological taxonomy, but because his thinking is influenced by Nietzsche and his conception of the subject, and because he questions the limits of the production of knowledge, therefore adjacent to what Peters discusses about post-structuralism (Peters, 2000).

Foucault's own perspective operates in a policy of "thinking about the present that we are today" (Foucault, 1969/2010). Such reflection moves us to ascribe a fundamental (and growing) importance to the thought of the French philosopher: what is our present in social psychology? It is no longer a matter of speaking only of the three classical conceptions. These strands no longer seem enough to account for what we do. Nor would it be enough to amplify and complicate the thematic or methodologies of our research. By shifting the questioning to the conceptual tools about what we have produced, Foucault's thinking instructs us to problematize. The encounter with Foucault's thought produces a subversion to the traditional forms of thinking, confronts us and calls us to reflect that another social psychology is necessary if we are to produce another understanding of "social". The power of genealogy as a tool in research in Social Psychology in Brazil expresses the need for this effort. Genealogy operates in the logic of the analysis of the production of discourses that orchestrate ways of governing oneself and others from a denaturation of the present. However, although we recognize the importance of genealogy as well as archeology, in Foucault-inspired works we emphasize here the marking of the contribution of this thought as an epistemological policy in the field of Social Psychology.

In this sense, thinking with Foucault, the discourse is political. And although the author does not consider his work as the domain of epistemology, we understand that it is fundamental to mark what is produced in social psychology from Foucault's work as an epistemological policy. Therefore, naming what we do is a political action that places us and brings us closer (and therefore also distances us) from certain ways of thinking and acting, which brings us back to invention: the invention of another way of thinking and intervening in Social Psychology. So if we prefer to name what we are producing in social psychology as an Foucault-based epistemology, we do not do it in order to seek a membership or matrix of total theoretical reference, but to bet and engage in a methodological and ethical-political strategy committed to constantly rethinking what is produced and problematizing the effects of these productions in the social field. We understand that it is indispensable, if we want another social, an epistemological affirmation that refuses to work from dichotomous operators, often referenced in this field: "oppressed versus oppressor," "rich versus poor," "men versus women", "individual versus society". Foucault's thinking destabilizes these Manichaeisms by challenging them to problematize them; that is, to think about how these pairs were produced and configured in the social context that we have today, as is the case of the problematizations from archeological and genealogical perspectives.

For an alternative conception of criticism

By mentioning the word "criticism" in social psychology, our thinking is almost automatically linked to Marxist and post-Marxist conceptions. However, we emphasize that the idea of criticism here lies in another theoretical-political bet, away from this naturalized conception. In May 1978, Foucault gave the conference "What is Critique? (Critique and *Aufklärung*)" in the French Philosophical Society (Britto, 2005). The fundamental reflection of this conference concerns "what is criticism?". In his argument, inspired by Kantian philosophy, the French philosopher writes in a general definition that criticism implies a refusal not to be governed in a certain way. Foucault focuses on three anchoring points of criticism: (a) criticism of religion (refusing a certain doctrinal conception of the Bible), (b) criticism of law (refusing certain laws because they are unjust), and (c) criticism of authority (refusing what authority says only because it occupies such authoritarian position). That is to say, the criticism would be, in Foucault's words: "the art of voluntary instillation, of reflected indifference. Criticism would have as its main function the unsubjectivation in the game of what could be called, in one word, the politics of truth" (Britto, 2005, p. 77).

According to Foucault, criticism is directly related to the idea of government, and this for the philosopher does not necessarily refer to the State, but to a wide range of relationships that weave the social context in its most diverse and everyday forms. It refers particularly to the forms of governance of conduct, subjects, and their relationships with

each other and with themselves. We can understand government as an exercise and also effect of power, which for Foucault (Foucault, 2014) is not a property, but a common practice that we all deal with. We can affirm that criticism refers to a form of disobedience from a reflection that generates resistance to the way of being governed in a certain way, to an exercise of power that does not submit to the ruling rationality. It is important to note that the idea of disobedience referred to does not refer to common-sense conceptions, or to what could naively be taken as a simple opposition or a call for a *non-government*. The criticism lies in a political position that requires an ethical implication that negotiates with the norm and with the normalizing and normative procedures; criticism, therefore, is also present as part of the history of subjectivity.

The idea of Foucault's criticism will thus place a new task on social psychology, linked more to an orientation of thought - in this sense, what Foucault defines as an attitude, mentioned earlier - than to a theory (Hook, 2004). It concerns a critical perspective concerned not with the offer of answers by its knowledge, but with the questioning of its forms of construction and the examination of its disciplinary power, putting under suspicion what it produces.

We point out, once again, that this idea of criticism is not a Marxist legacy, as in the case of Critical Social Psychology developed in Latin America. Understanding Foucault's criticism involves the constant activity of thinking and reflecting on ourselves, not only pointing to the effects of what we produce, but our own relationship of obedience to certain ways of governing and being governed, to the way we exercise power and the way power is exercised over us. Foucault's critique (Britto, 2005; Foucault, 2008b), based on Kant, becomes a reflexive exercise that invites us to problematize, rather than resign ourselves to the experience of what we are, or rather, to accept the discourse of who we are.

There is more than one response to the crisis of Social Psychology in Brazil

One cannot think of the constitution of a field of knowledge and its contours in a way dissociated from social and political events. For this reason, it is important to point out the emergence of this social psychology based on Foucault, in Brazil, intertwined with events that stress the knowledge already constituted of this field of knowledge and science in a more comprehensive way. In order to do so, instead of situating an authorship, a date or an object from which it is constituted, we point out elements that we

consider to constitute conditions of possibility for the construction and consolidation of this perspective in Brazil.

In this sense, the work of Rodrigues (2016) on the presence, effects and resonances of Michel Foucault in Brazil in the 1960s and 1970s is fundamental. The author's visits to Brazil during the military dictatorship, especially the lectures given by him in 1974 at the Institute of Social Medicine of Rio de Janeiro, create the conditions so that "our first historiographical works" inspired by Foucault, "come not from historians, but from philosophers, doctors and psychology professionals" (Rodrigues, 2016, p. 22).

However, the relevance of his thought to social psychology could not be reduced to the presence of the "Foucault-body in Brazil" (Rodrigues, 2016, p. 30). The political and social crises that marked and still mark the country boosted the search for new forms of knowledge and production of knowledge. However, in the classic versions of the history of social psychology, these problems were almost exclusively related to the development of critical social psychology. We refute this perspective and point out here the non-unity of the paths that constitute from these questions and ask how we convert the different responses to the so-called "crisis of Social Psychology" into a single one: Critical Social Psychology markedly influenced by historical materialism. Works such as Rodrigues (2006) indicate that other paths have been followed, such as the institutional analysis and the resonance of Foucault's thinking in the Brazilian scenario. The coming of Foucault to dictatorial Brazil produces an intervention not only by the arrival of another theoretical perspective, but also by the very militant position of the French philosopher in relation to the freedom of thought curtailed at that moment. It is worth mentioning his visit to the University of São Paulo in 1975 and Foucault's statement in the report issued by the National Information Service, an institution that supported the authoritarian regime of the time, reproduced by Rodrigues (2016, p. 119): "It is not possible to teach under oppression, it is not possible to speak before the walls of prisons; one cannot study when threatened by weapons".

Just as reducing the response to the crisis to a critical perspective does not account for the different paths of social psychology in Brazil, restricting its crisis to the 1970s is insufficient to keep up with the transformations that have been occurring in the discipline until today, insofar as that new social, political and economic configurations reverberate in new configurations of the fields of knowledge. The very expansion of debates in science, including

ruptures with universalizing and hierarchical epistemological models, such as those introduced by post structuralism, create conditions for multiple paths within Social Psychology.

The set of conditions approached constitutes, particularly but not exclusively, in Brazil an episteme committed to another posture of knowledge production (Foucault, 2007). That is, a welcoming episteme for the constitution of a new form of criticism and, consequently, for a social psychology that operates in the logic of a Foucault-based problematization, which, if on the one hand, finds approximations with some of the critics related to the so-called "crisis of Social Psychology "of the 1970s (such as the production of a hegemonic and depoliticized knowledge), on the other, is not restricted to it and radically breaks with its conceptions and referrals.

Foucault's concepts and resonances in Social Psychology

We can affirm that a Social Psychology with inspiration in Foucault arises in a relatively dispersed way, with the gradual inclusion of conceptual tools derived from the author's work and placed in dialogue with this field of knowledge (especially his genealogical and archaeological proposals), and the expansion of themes that it covers, without it being possible or even desirable to delineate a beginning. But if we name this set of works as a new perspective in Social Psychology, we should point out, although not definitively, some of the conceptual elements on which we construct our argument. We consider as fundamental the approach of concepts of subject/subjectivation and society, essential to social Psychology and, for this, we cover some of Foucault's texts.

In a text originally published in 1982, Foucault asserted that the aim of his work was not to analyze the phenomena of power, but rather "to produce a history of the different modes of subjectivation of the human being in our culture" (Foucault, 2014, p. 118), going through "three forms of objectification that transformed human beings into subjects" (Foucault, 2014, p. 118): the forms of objectification by scientific discourses; "divisive practices" (between mentally ill and sane; sick and healthy, etc.); and the ways in which the human being comes to recognize himself as the subject of a sexuality.

In 1984, under the codename Maurice Florence, Michel Foucault wrote an entry about his own archaeogeneal work, about his concern with the mutual relationship between the processes of objectification and subjectivation by the games of truth that put the subject as an object of knowledge: "It is certainly not a matter of knowing how a 'psychological knowledge' was constituted during history, but how various games of truth were formed through which the subject became an object of knowledge "(Foucault, 2006a, p. 236). The author goes on to say that it is a "history of subjectivity", if we understand this word as the way in which the subject experiences himself in a game of truth in which he relates to himself "(Foucault, 2006a, p. 236). In the same year, in an interview published in *Concordia, International Review of Philosophy*, he defined the subject as follows: "It is not a substance, it is a form, and it is not always, above all, identical with itself. … And what interests me is precisely the historical constitution of these different forms of the subject, in relation to games of truth" (Foucault, 2006b, p. 275).

However brief, the reference to these three texts by Foucault allows an approximation of the author's conceptions of subject and subjectivation, which significantly marked their relevance to social psychology, to the point of constituting a new epistemology for this field of knowledge. Such epistemology is linked to an ontological conception that rejects the idea of subjectivity as synonymous with psychological interiority, placing it in relation to discourses and practices that affect the constitution of the subjects.

The analysis of the forms of objectivation/subjectivation mentioned by Foucault permeates the productions in social psychology that dialogue with the author, amplifying phenomena and devices of analysis as new social configurations are processed. The reciprocity of the processes of objectification and subjectivation, as well as the historical conception of subjectivity, will define the mutual relation between subject and society, thus placing the subject as an effect, not as the origin of these relations, blurring the dualism "individual versus society" present in other perspectives of Social Psychology.

At the same time, attention to the different social struggles and the effects of power signals Foucault's conception of society as constituted by a complex network of relations of force. From the analysis of disciplinary societies to security societies, Foucault poses as a question the strategies of governance of life in society: "the exercise of power consists in 'conducting conduct' and arranging for probability" (Foucault, 2014, p. 133). In his last works, the question of government was marked by the analysis of the taking of biological life by politics (biopolitics), and the analysis of knowledge as the counterfactual of power, the author added the importance of economics

in the constitution of a model of subject and society (Foucault, 2008a; 2008b). On this last point, Foucault signaled the change in the rationality of population management, first based on the logic of State reason - in which the life of the population would be fomented for the strengthening of the State itself (Foucault, 2008b) - for a market-reasoned logic - in which the life of the population would be invested to strengthen the market itself (Foucault, 2008c), culminating in the surfacing of the subject as *homo economicus*.

Undoubtedly, Foucault's resonances in Social Psychology extrapolate much the conceptions of subject, modes of subjectivation, government, society, etc., which would, in any case, be impossible to be operated in isolation. However, we understand that these mark in a significant way the construction of an epistemological policy for social psychology based on Foucault's theories, proposing new conceptions for those who have been the main operators on which the knowledge of social psychology has been consolidated: the subject and society.

Finally, it is worth noting that the set of theoretical and conceptual tools that we inherit from Foucault constitutes, interwoven with a new epistemology and ontology, other methodological possibilities in the production of knowledge (Ferreira-Neto, 2015). It is, as Rodrigues (2015, p. 49) states, the "inseparability between its concepts and its investigative procedures". If there was no prescription by the author on method, certainly the clues, or methodological precautions, addressed in the archeology and genealogy of Foucault, have been constituted as important tools of one, among many possible, already consolidated Social Psychology.

The conceptions of subject/subjectivation and society, along methodological proposals such as archeology and genealogy, have inaugurated new ways of constructing their problems in social psychology, new methodological paths and research fields, as well as introducing new theoretical and conceptual tools in approach to the social and the present. If Foucault did not postulate a psychological theory, its uses in social psychology certainly transformed this field, composing a new and fruitful approach that, due to the characteristics discussed in this paper, cannot be included in the classical approaches of the discipline, deserving to be named.

We may conclude: this is Social Psychology as well

The existence of a Social Psychology based on an epistemology based on the work of Foucault is expressed by the numerous and relevant contemporary academic texts and productions that seek in the thought of the author the tools to think the social and the own psychology in the present. Despite their non-appointment in textbooks or didactic texts that systematize the history of Social Psychology to date, such works indicate that there is a body of knowledge constituted and relevant, giving new shapes to Brazilian social psychology. Thus, in addition to the perspectives considered classic in social psychology, we must follow the emergence of new configurations in the field, at the same time that we keep it open for new productions.

The contemporaneity of Foucault's work reaffirms the power that his thought represents for the analysis of the present, while at the same time distancing him. The resonances of his work in social psychology converge to the production of critical knowledge, which thinks against the present and that rejects the individual versus society dichotomy. Foucault's own notion of criticism, brought to social psychology, imposes such openness on this field of knowledge. Silva (2003, p. 34) states: "social psychology deals with the modes of production of subjective experience, that is, the way in which a certain set of social practices produces a certain form of relation with itself and with the world". Such definition demands from our strategies of knowledge the constant questioning, considering that our objects will always be in transformation (Silva, 2003). Our crisis, as Social Psychology, will therefore be permanent.

In addressing Social Psychology from Foucault's epistemological policy, we emphasize the importance of marking the place and legitimacy of this type of production, and we pose the challenge of, in doing so, undisciplining it. Although marginal due to the resistance it expresses, it is a Social Psychology that is constituted from the refusal of many truths consolidated by the classical perspectives and from specificities shared by other fields of knowledge allied in the construction of a critical, political, open and in the making knowledge.

Naming what we think and do imposes risks, especially when referring to a thinker who has always shied away from any classifications. Nevertheless, we reiterate that by indicating an approach and a way of thinking and reflecting about ourselves in Social Psychology by assigning a name, we do not do it to stifle thinking to a classification, but to demarcate an ethical-political position. An ethics and an epistemological policy that aims to air new routes, new practices, new ways to resist, refuse and disobey in social psychology.

Notes

I   We have illustrated this situation with two opinions received
      by the authors in distinct processes of article evaluation.
      In one, the relevance of the work was affirmed because it
      contributed to the research in the field of Critical Social
      Psychology. In the other, it was alleged: "we cannot see what
      the actual contributions of this article are to Psychology,
      given that, despite proposing this, the focus of analysis of
      the data units constructed was Foucault's thought, and not
      necessarily the Psychology".

II   Íñiguez (2002), for example, lists several constructionist
      authors and among them he includes Foucault, "who I
      consider to be constructional even though many people
      disagree" (Íñiguez, 2002, p. 147).

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