PERSPECTIVES

ORGANIZATIONAL STUDIES IN BRAZIL: BUILDING ACCESS OR REPLICATING EXCLUSION?

This article reflects on teaching and research in Organizational Studies (OS) in the Brazilian context. The notes worked on here are just a few among many, reinforcing the plurality of views, perspectives, and epistemological foundations that comprise the field. In this sense, we are not looking for a definition of what teaching and research are or should be; rather, we are moving towards a diverse construction of reflexive directions in the hope that these processes can become more inclusive in the face of the unequal Brazilian reality.

In our field of activity, Administration, it is important to reinforce the existence of political subjects and practices whose positioning and construction are determined by structures. A part of Administration must involve the construction of diverse knowledge that enables the know-how and the knowledge-power of the social relations of production (Carrieri, 2014; Faria, 2004; França-Filho, 2009). Understanding that we are political beings allows us to be aware of our positions of power in the scientific construction so that we can question and challenge our own teaching, influence, research, and consulting practices. As teachers, students, researchers, and consultants, are we working on expanding knowledge beyond the already established academic boundaries and helping to compose other ways of knowing the world, or are we just getting our jobs done in an infinite circular movement among ourselves, merely as knowledge replicants, which, as in the film *Blade Runner* (Deeley, Fancher, Peoples, & Scott, 1982), have expiration dates.

The position we seek to rupture in relation to management studies is one that hermetically constructs knowledge which is inaccessible to a large part of the Brazilian population. We consider a scenario in which 6.8% of people over the age of 15, a total of 11.3 million, are illiterate, according to the 2018 Continuous National Household Sample Survey (PNAD Contínua) (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2019). The same survey indicates that Brazilians who have completed higher education degrees comprise only 16.5% of the population aged 25 or over. The "Functional Illiteracy Indicator" report, released in 2018 by Ação Educativa together with the Instituto Paulo Montenegro, states that 29% of people aged between 15 and 64 are functional illiterates (Ação Educativa & Instituto Paulo Montenegro, 2018). Considering these numbers, we must question how accessible our scientific OS work is or how much it seeks to be.

After all, what knowledge are we producing? What, why, and for whom are we researching? Is our criticism of the mainstream in Administration accessible to the 83.5% of the Brazilian population who do not possess higher education degrees? Are we researching for ourselves and perpetuating a kind of knowledge that we then criticize as being exclusionary? If our role is to assist in the

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process of questioning the existing power structures, how are we accomplishing this? Are we simply transmitters of the knowledge that we produce (or replicate) in our universities, or are we carrying out a process of constructing knowledge for a group, in an incessant exchange with the unequal environment that surrounds us?

Ibarra-Colado (2006) and Souza, Costa, and Pereira (2015) state that administrative processes of management and organizational phenomena are naturalized within the traditional theories of Administration. The authors also consider that this process excludes the socio-historical circumstances from their construction. Furthermore, the twentieth-century administrative knowledge unilaterally builds an organizational reality and falsifies reality through the prism of scientific and natural reason.

According to Misoczky, Flores, and Böhm (2008); Carrieri, Perdigão, and Aguiar (2014); Barros and Carrieri (2015); and Wanderley and Barros (2018), the traditional theoretical knowledge on Administration is Anglocentric and Eurocentric, which inhibits the possibility of us being subjects of our own management history, based on the local context. For many of these authors, these administrative theories are based on a kind of "epistemic racism," disregarding the knowledge that is not produced in "central" locations, due to the inability to generalize and universalize the management models.

Research and theories developed in a manner peripheral to European and American dominance are limited by one's understanding of what an organization is. The basis of this knowledge was obtained from the comparison between the features that are common to the analyzed object and the one constructed by Max Weber as an ideal type. Thus, almost any human group can be understood as an organization. Simultaneously, the supremacy of liberal capitalism provides that there are optimal ways to manage these organizations and that they are very close to the hegemonic elaborations in the United States, as described by Grey (2010). In effect, it is common to consider that the American way of managing capitalist companies assumes the appearance of a neutral set of techniques that can be adopted by any "organization." Thus, a management model that was created in the specific context of capitalist companies now serves as the foundation for the conduct of each and every human enterprise.

Grey (2010) explains questioning North-American hegemony in knowledge production in the OS field (as well as others) opens space for works produced elsewhere. For this author, the flourishing of other research reveals the multiplicity of socio-historical contexts in which OS have developed. In complement, it is up to (local) researchers to question the hegemonic construction in this field, which is reproduced daily in specialized media, in the editorials of the journals, in the knowledge produced, in the universities, in research, and even in the writing of the encountered empirical results.

The obligation we have as researchers immersed in a system that preaches, propagates, and replicates inequality is to bring our research closer to the popular, to our reality. This "popular," or even the "small" from a historical point of view, and the movements that connect to the "lesser" literature (Deleuze & Guattarri, 2014) resist the impositions of the subjects of greater power who insist on prescribing and establishing the paths for the organization of life. Our OS research must be involved with this popular that resists and suffers, but also plays with oppression through tactics (Certeau, 2012). With such exclusion from formal means of knowledge, we disengage from maintaining mainstream Administration; and this is the least we can do. Studying through process and dialogue will assist the field on a path towards understanding alternative ways of management; similarly, it will establish our role within the hierarchy of knowledge and power so as not to replicate the exclusionary system that we seek to criticize.

The impacts on current societies, such as global economic crises, development of production units that foster slavery and child labor, fires instigated by land developers in places that are considered the lungs of the planet, constant development of science and technology, increasingly rational and mechanized production, political pursuit of knowledge, and resurgence of ideals that value hatred and intolerance, can be represented by elements such as:

> [...] relativism and cultural pluralism— which in turn would be characterized by the dissipation of objectivity and rationality; by the spectacularization of society; by mass culture; by the naturalization of the ephemeral and transitory character of all things; by the commodification of knowledge (Carrieri et al., 2014, p. 699).

In view of this social scenario, OS seem to naturalize organizations and their processes, seeking rational effectiveness and performance in organizational management, with no interest in the various determinations of practical life. In many studies, the abstract concept of organization is transformed into a real object, into reality. According to Berger and Luckmann (1998) and Souza et al. (2015), it is naturalized and becomes an entity, not a creation. In discourse, "organization-abstraction" receives a name, a personal pronoun, and becomes an actor. The organizational life of human beings, such as life in society, is no longer important, diluted in discourses, and ceases to exist.

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When discussing OS, we must keep in mind that we are dealing with a field that has several epistemologies and worldviews. According to Thiollent (2014), we are faced with research in organizations, as well as their cultural, economic, political, and social specificities. The research covers not only companies and public, political, or social institutions but also organized social life and diverse organizational practices. Therefore, it perceives organizations as composed of subjects, thereby not dislocating the organization from the practices of these same subjects. This conception also helps us rethink what management is, and manage and administer without a totalizing perspective.

The scope of the study of the ordinary must be considered as a work of lesser literature confronting the dominant mainstream of Administration. For Deleuze and Guattari (2014), the lesser literature opposes the dominant literature, not for reduction or for its size, but because of the value it receives from the writing of what is taken for granted, the everyday, the daily. The lesser literature speaks of the daily activities of people who do not occupy important positions or differentiated power, and who belong to the non-privileged classes and backgrounds. The lesser talks about the ordinary life of the common person. It talks about the passion for small and insignificant things in which possibilities for resistance still survive (Benjamin, 1987).

OS, as an interdisciplinary area, has an important ally, the field of history, in the process of reflection that seeks to build pertinent and accessible knowledge at the local and ordinary levels and moves away from a generalizing perspective. The path we propose here involves the historicization of research and teaching in and of OS. It is necessary to rethink the sources, the subjects with whom we are working, and our practices to focus our intentions on the broad and accessible debate on the knowledge of organization for society.

The historical perspective within the scope of OS can help approach daily life and the knowledge developed without the excluding logic of academia. In this sense, we highlight the value of locally constructed and disseminated knowledge, focusing on investigations that elevate the ordinary, in contrast to the hegemonic view of Administration that seeks to silence knowledge arising from experiences which it considers less valuable. The choice of the historical point of view helps us understand the anonymous actions that compose Brazilian diversity, as opposed to the predominant studies that deal with the "magnificent" and "grandiose" but ahistorical subjects and events.

OS can adopt the understanding that history is dynamic and reconstructed in the present time (Neves, 2010). It serves the interests of the most powerful subjects who, under a justification of neutrality, impose and perpetuate the exclusive prescriptions of what should or should not be considered legitimate knowledge. The path of ontological and epistemological questioning of research in Administration was followed by Joaquim and Carrieri (2018) in a critique of so-called sociological functionalism. In our research, rethinking management techniques different from those taught by Brazilian business schools, that is, imported from North America, reconstructs and questions the regimes of truth for organizational phenomena, which have been unquestionable until recently.

The joint study of history and OS can assist us in researching marginalized practices, investigating multiple forms of meaning, moving away from deterministic patterns, and highlighting the expansion of knowledge in alternative perspectives (Barros & Carrieri, 2015). In this sense, the historical perspective helps to recognize the inconsistencies of totalizing narratives and to demonstrate the narratives that do not meet the dominant logic. Thus, we can research and teach practices that historically went "unnoticed" in the eyes of management. The "unnoticed" has been the repressed, violated, silenced, marginalized, and demarcated as the "other." Therefore, it had lesser scientific value. Historicizing Administration turns our eyes to social practices, popular knowledge, experiences, affectivities, etc. that do not agree with instrumental rationality and instead focus on diversity.

With views influenced by the historical perspective, great achievements, theories, monuments, subjects, and practices are placed in the background to highlight the singular ways of thinking about organizations. In this sense, local stories and memories become protagonists, and local forms of management and theories are erected and adapted. This trend, as suggested by Wanderley and Barros (2018), considers social and cultural contexts in OS research.

Wanderley and Barros (2018) encourage the possibility of reconciling the debates on history with studies that avoid the large centers, by mobilizing management and organizational knowledge for more diverse issues. The authors support international studies that recognize the knowledge produced in Latin America, diversifying historical knowledge and fostering investigations that can create decolonial possibilities. The authors question whether the historical turning-point has achieved the proposed objectives, bearing in mind that other possibilities were not opened for debate outside a United States or European hegemonic position. Thus, the knowledge at the margins remains underestimated and plays a supporting role, causing the authors to move towards "a geographic turn" that includes other spaces for discussion and challenges dominant knowledge.

Gouvêa, Cabana, and Ichikawa (2018) present the relevance of articulation in the fields of History and Administration

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to reveal new ways of performing research, of considering historical contexts, and of conceiving previously disregarded subjects. Furthermore, we believe that this stance as highlighted by the authors is also connected with the forms of teaching and studying OS. Listening to the views that are brought to life for being excluded by mainstream studies can stimulate actions that review and re-frame works related to management. They emphasize the following:

Therefore, it becomes essential to understand history, based on the multiple voices that make up the organizational environment. Not just the reality of the numbers but of the subjects who are part of the organization and who, through their daily practices, build the organizational routine. In view of this, we understand that the dialogue between history and administration is an important tool in order to enable new voices to be heard within the scope of management (Gouvêa et al., 2018, p. 300).

In the same line of research, teaching related to history can reconsider the way in which knowledge about management is discussed, questioning the influence of the most powerful subjects and the locations considered "central" that control the transmission of knowledge. Thus, selected discourses and memories should be perpetuated while certain knowledge should be forgotten, as developed by Pollak (1989). Why do most Brazilian business schools adopt general management theory discussions with Weber, bureaucracy with Taylor, scientific administration with Fayol, and classic administration with Ford and his "prosperity principles," but fall silent on works that discuss the degrading conditions of workers in each of these periods? Why do we not discuss and teach the specifics of Brazilian management and the influence of Portuguese colonial exploitation on the country? For what reason does the environmental devastation that annihilated our native forests not appear in the problematizations about Brazilian management? Why are forced labor and the extermination of indigenous tribes not even mentioned? Why not historicize Administration based on our slave heritage and reflect on OS from the perversity and cruelty that were naturalized in our territory against the population of African origin?

Management education needs to consider that our history is full of silences and repressions that influenced the specific character of the research work in our territory. Unlike the great narrative and the official history that portrays our people as peaceful, Brazil is and has always been full of tensions, wars, and repressions that influence, even now, our labor regimes, social practices, ways of relating to others, and ways of managing. We must keep in mind that the majority of people in our country, that is, women, the poor, people of color, and the working classes, have been silenced by a powerful minority, occupying the forms

of communication considered legitimate (media or scientific). Therefore, taking the opposite view is important. Instead of remaining aloof in our academic bubble, we should go out into the streets and attempt to know, to speak, to build new paths together "with" society, not "about" society.

Our main contribution to the field is reflected in our title: Are we making our research and teaching methods accessible? Are we replicating exclusion, reinforcing inequality of opportunities through our production or even our classes, and ignoring what is considered important in our localities? Far from establishing a path, we believe that it is an opportunity to perform self-criticism in relation to the breadth of our practices and our field of knowledge. In this way, we can continue to consistently question our actions and increasingly dissolve the structures and hierarchies of knowledge and power. Finally, our ways of teaching and researching in OS must focus on the absence of barriers. Replicating exclusion, and inaccessibility to knowledge, through language, practices, and objects that are distant from local realities contributes nothing to an uncomplicated management.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

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