The Importance Of Decolonial Narratives: The Case Of Work Psychology In Rio De Janeiro

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Abstract

This paper aims to discuss the importance of decolonial narratives in general and in the field of history of psychology in particular. For this, we take as the starting point the initial results of a recently published empirical study, which investigated different styles of management within the scope of labor in Rio de Janeiro between 1949 and 1965 through the analysis of publications of the journal Arquivos Brasileiros de Psicologia. Such results pointed to an inadequacy between the interpretations of the management styles that are used, on the one hand, in the English and North American context and, on the other, in Rio de Janeiro. The discussion of this article focuses on this inadequacy, underlining the differences between how colonial and decolonial narratives conceive the relationship between empirical data and intelligibility matrices and the historiographical and methodological consequences of this relationship.

Keywords: decolonization, history of psychology, work psychology, historiography

Introduction

This work aims at discussing the importance of decolonial narratives *in general* and in the field of the history of psychology in particular. By decolonial narratives we mean those narratives which, regarding historiographical analysis, not only refuse to merely adopt already established intelligibility matrices[1] in an uncritical way, but also make an active effort to propose new intelligibility matrices for the phenomena that are being analyzed, by taking their local specificities into consideration.

In order to discuss the importance and relevance of these narratives, we will use the initial results of a study we recently published (Ferreira et al., 2019), where we discussed the different management styles proposed by work psychologists in the workplace in Rio de Janeiro between 1949 and 1965 by analyzing the publications of the journal *Arquivos Brasileiros de Psicologia* (ABP)[2]. Regarding this empirical study, the main points on which the analysis of the present work will be focused are the differences observed among the management styles encompassed by Rose's (1999) narrative regarding work in the English and North American context and in Rio de Janeiro; singularities which, ultimately, allow us to propose a reconfiguration of the analytical categories by bearing in mind the empirical material we obtained.

Thus, in order to reflect on the historiographical and methodological aspects from the point of view of the decolonial implications of the empirical study mentioned above, this text is divided into three main sections: (1) A discussion of the problematic aspects pointed out by the decolonial perspective in history of psychology: a collection of works we consider to be aligned with our present work; (2) Presenting the initial results of the recently published study (Ferreira et al., 2019), which raise questions regarding the colonization/decolonization of narratives in work psychology; and (3) A historiographical and methodological discussion based on the previous two sections, emphasizing the differences in how colonial and decolonial narratives envisage the relationship between empirical data and intelligibility matrices, and the consequences of this relation.

Our objective is not to compare the styles of work psychology in the English and North American context with the ones in Brazil, but rather to try to show: (A) how work psychology is produced differentially throughout history in some central places in a global psychological setting; (B) how these work psychologies are imported and recreated in different contexts; (C) how it is important to be attentive to these local detours and recreations of work psychology, especially when they introduce some novelties inspired by local questions; (D) how these novelties and singularities inspire special decolonial narratives, not only because these new discourses are alternatives to critical ones (as proposed by critical authors such as Foucault and Rose) that do not necessarily substitute

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[1] "Intelligibility matrix" is understood as the matrix (the combination of concepts, presuppositions, principles, etc.) which gives a certain narrative its intelligibility, i.e., which makes the narrative have the sense it has. It concerns the material and formal elements which, although not necessarily explicit in the narrative, inform the narrative and its effects.

[2] The journal *Arquivos Brasileiros de Psicologia* or Brazilian Archives of Psychology was a review published by ISOP (Superior Institute for Professional Orientation). This journal was initially devoted to issues connected to psychotechniques or applied psychology and most specifically to work psychology. This is the main reason it is relevant to study tendencies in work psychology in Brazil during the middle of the 20th Century.

them, but they offer ways to complement their critical effort, considering local variations, battles and present questions.

Decolonizing narratives in the history of psychology

In 1987, *American Psychologist* published a provocative article by Fathali Moghaddam in which he pointed out the existence of three worlds in the production of knowledge in social psychology. According to Moghaddam (1987), these worlds are differentiated by their capacity to produce and disseminate psychological knowledge, as well as by defining an outline of psychology. The first world is represented by the United States, the second world by Western European countries ("developed countries") capable of challenging the North American production in some aspects, and the third world is represented by developing countries, which are the consumers of psi knowledge. In accordance with Moghaddam, Pulido Martínez (2021), thinking about psychology in a broader sense, tells us about a fourth psychological world in addition to the others, which is represented by countries such as Colombia, which are assigned a completely passive function in the current psychological world order. This in turn reveals how the current world order has been constituted by the coloniality of knowledge due to its link with global designs that have a claim to universality, but are implemented locally through specific political technologies.

This article aims at discussing the circulation of psychological devices, experiences, and practices in non-central places in the global stage through a political and decolonizing perspective. To that end, it is important to view the modes of *translation/circulation* between the centers where knowledge is produced from different frames of reference. In past works (Ferreira, 2001), we proposed that the workings of psychology resemble multiple capture machines, whereby psychological knowledge and practices, which were born from collective and concrete experiences, appropriate instruments and concepts from other types of scientific knowledge, circulate them and return to these same experiences with the power of scientific knowledge. We consider that this circulation of psychological experiences is not only accomplished differentially due to its scientific power, but also due to the local dynamics of its production, according to the psychological worlds (Moghaddam, 1987). To describe this process in detail, in this article we will discuss this topic through a historic lens, which is used by authors such as Brock (2006), Danziger (1994), Garcia (in press), Moghaddam (2013), Pickren (2012) and Pulido Martínez (2019; 2021).

Pulido Martínez (2019) points out that, in order to examine these chains of circulation and psychologization, it is necessary to approach them from the perspective of science, technology and social studies, besides also making use of a critical method. More specifically, the author (Pulido Martínez, 2021) emphasizes that the unit of analysis of this process of circulation touches not only upon academic psychology, but also on a wider psychological field (*psychological complexes*)**,** where the local processes of production and hybridization are crucial, and he points out that these complexes are the products and the producers of culture. In this process it is also possible to consider the asymmetry between these worlds, which according to Moghaddam (1987) is crucial to understand psychology`s aspiration to universality.

In the history of psychology we can focus on two aspects that characterize the circulation of psychological models, practices, concepts and methods: 1) their rarity and singularity in comparison with other human groups that are not modern westerners (Danziger, 1994) and 2) the process of indigenization, i.e., the process of assimilation and change of perspectives

which is produced in the spaces that are central in generating psychological knowledge and practices (Danziger, 1994). By taking into account the different versions we use to constitute ourselves in our production of subjectivity, not only do we need to consider other versions of human phenomena, which compete with psychological phenomena, but also other local versions of the emergence of psychology and its devices.

In this sense, it is important to recognize the importance of a transnational history in a global scenario of the production, transmission, circulation and appropriation of psychological components (García, in press). However, the concepts of indigenization and a polycentric distribution proposed by Danziger (1994) are limited when we presuppose equal conditions in the circulation of psychological components. In contrast, it is necessary to distinguish the center from the periphery, where asymmetry is central. Independently from the property of the concept of indigenization and the use of polycentrism or center and periphery, every one of the authors we present here in this section about decolonial history of psychology agrees with the singularity of each psychological complex regarding its local and asymmetrical production and hybridization, considering its process of circulation (through national and international ways). By taking these aspects into consideration, this method avoids any historical approaches that are based on the hypothesis of the local restatement of universal lines in the production of psychological knowledge, rather producing a situated history that is open to the possibilities of contrast and comparison (a comparison which nevertheless does not possess any evolutionary or moral sense). It also avoids the diffusion model, where universal productions are only confronted with obstacles caused by local social processes. Consequently, we follow the concept of translation proposed by Actor-Network Theory (Latour, 1987), where the circulation of knowledge occurs through a complex socio-technical negotiation, which does not separate the scientific from the social aspect.

We propose the hypothesis that the emergence of these psychological experiences does not follow a necessary or unique script, but rather historical contingencies that are materialized in unique local conditions. Thus, at the same time that we seek the application of models that originate from more central locations, even in a critical perspective as proposed by Rose (1999), there are also a series of accidents, deviations, and hybridizations, which point to a decolonizing and non-conceptualized resistance that can nevertheless be analyzed.

Hegemonic and counter-colonial historiographies

The long-established narrative in the field of the history of psychology present specially in some manuals goes as follows: Scientific psychology was established with Wilhelm Wundt's "first" experimental psychology laboratory in Leipzig in 1879; researchers from all over the world who were interested in psychology travelled to Leipzig to pursue their post-doctorate degrees in Wundt's laboratory; Wundtian experimental psychology was criticized by schools originating from other traditions (e.g., Franz Brentano's act psychology, Gestalt psychology), as well as former collaborators (e.g., Külpe, Titchener); a great debate took place between Titchener's structuralist psychology and functional psychology, especially in the beginning of the 20th century in the United States, regarding the way in which psychology should be practiced and how to apply psychological knowledge; the migration of Gestalt psychologists from Germany to the United States; the predominance of Behaviorism in the middle of the 20th century, which suppressed mentalist analyses; a cognitivist revolution in the '70s, which opened the "black box" of consciousness and increased the popularity of mentalist approaches, etc. This is the narrative contained in

countless manuals on the history of psychology, including most of the current ones (Boring,1929, Heidbreder, 1933, Gardner, 1985, Schultz & Schultz, 2011).

For some time psychologists have been aware of the fact that this narrative also has a history, and that it emerged according to a certain historical configuration and certain demands. In the last instance, this narrative has its origin in the classic *A History of Experimental Psychology* (1929) by E. G. Boring, who—we should remember—was not only an experimentalist, but one of Titchener's main students. Titchener, in turn, was one of the most enthusiastic defenders of experimental laboratory psychology in the United States in the first quarter of the 20th century. Despite the historicization of the established narrative, only recently more substantive efforts were undertaken to expose the consequences stemming from the predominance of this narrative. This narrative was sustained by some works (text-books, articles, courses and meetings) and it was strongly present until the 1960's when it appears an heterogenous movement of critical perspective that we can name "new history of psychology" with different authors of different countries (Young, 1966; Furumoto, 1989; Guthrie, 1976; Danziger, 1994; Smith, 1988 and others).

Among these efforts, Brock's analysis (2006) is one of the more precise ones regarding this established narrative. This historian of psychology draws attention to the fact that the history of psychology presented in North American handbooks is exclusively focused on the United States. This focus, according to Brock, is established through the following acknowledged or implicit inclusion/exclusion criteria (which are inevitably present in any narrative): (1) "If your work did not have a major impact on American psychology, however influential it might have been elsewhere, it does not count" (p. 3); (2) "If your work had a major impact on American psychology, even though its influence was limited or nonexistent elsewhere, it is an important part of the history of psychology" (p. 4) ; and (3) "Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania do not exist" (p. 4).

As a consequence of such a focus that emerged from these inclusion/exclusion criteria, according to Brock (2006) we have a situation where: (1) The history of psychology is confused with—or rather reduced to—the history of psychology in the United States, which is a peculiar result, given that such a confusion does not occur with any other country in any other time; (2) Works of psychology produced in countries that are not or have no relationship with the United States are not taken into consideration.

Brock's diagnosis is interesting for exposing the reasoning permeating this focus regarding the history of psychology, i.e., the reasoning underlying colonizing narratives, so to speak: "We know nothing about the history of psychology in these countries and therefore assume that there is nothing to know, or at least nothing of any significance" (Brock, 2006, p. 5). The expression "at least nothing of any significance" can be understood in two ways: (1) In the sense that differences, even when they may be great, are not by themselves interesting (that is, they are insignificant) to the dominant narrative and can thus be ignored; or (2) in the sense that differences, by being so small (that is, insignificant), can be ignored without undermining the narrative. No matter how it is understood, the consequence is that local differences can be ignored in favor of adopting the established narrative, even though it was developed elsewhere, with another context and regarding other issues.

It is precisely on this point that the problematization we wish to discuss hinges upon: The relationship between imposing established colonizing narratives and ignoring local features of different places where the phenomena of interest take place. Regarding this relationship, we consider that it is also partly established through the historiographical work which is

developed in colonized countries, when researchers of these countries uncritically make use of dominant narratives as a basis for their work (even when their work deals with local phenomena), because in doing that, their works consolidate and perpetuate such narratives, thus suppressing local differences. In this sense we consider that a process of decolonizing narratives cannot be undertaken by simply—or even mainly—making a plea not to create great narratives that impose themselves onto other contexts. Instead it is necessary to develop local narratives which respect the specific differences of each place through an act of active effort, exposing and emphasizing that they cannot be reduced to dominant narratives developed elsewhere. The decolonization of narratives can only be achieved through the creation of counter-narratives which respect local differences.

We are aware that the elaboration of decolonizing counter-narratives is already being undertaken in different areas of the field of the history of psychology. For example, Pickren (2012), by countering the established narrative in text-books which was summarized in the first paragraph of this section, points out the different ways in which laboratory practices, which were developed in Germany at the end of the 19th century, are indigenized to the same extent as they are imported into other places; in this way the author shows how these practices have been adopted in countries such as the USA and India, with the result of having been modified so that they could be incorporated into the specific problem-solving mechanisms of these places.

Regarding the non-central parts of the globe, recent studies have also been focused on local specificities, in order to problematize the mere application of conceptual frameworks or foreign narratives to locally studied phenomena. In this vein, Madariaga's (2018) study about Chile problematizes the reduction of the history of psychiatry to a Foucauldian narrative, or one that is only centered on institutionalization; in opposition to this reduction, the author illustrates and exposes how discourses about the modernization of the country, in the context of a period of transition from being a colony to becoming a republic, impacted this history.

In the same way, Brazilian studies have been exposing the dangers of applying foreign narratives to the history of psychology/psychiatry in Brazil. Engel's (2001) study, which focuses on Brazilian specificities, proposes at least two counterpoints to Foucauldian narratives: (1) That the introduction of psychiatry into the legal field, even though requested, was considerably more difficult than in the French context, a fact borne out by frequent cases in which psychiatric discourse, even though it was requested, was not taken into consideration by legal authorities in making decisions; and (2) That the main function of Brazilian psychiatry, at least since its inception in 1930, was the confinement of the population that was considered mad, highlighting that Brazil has a very strong heritage of slavery, besides the presence of strong modernizing discourses in the country.

For the present work, it is important to point out that both Madariaga's (2018) and Engel's (2001) works do not intend to completely break with Foucauldian narratives and concepts. Both authors instead propose establishing a dialogue between Foucauldian narratives and the local aspects of the context that is being analyzed, however always emphasizing that the latter cannot be reduced to the former, especially taking in account the phases or the sequence of the events. It is important to point out that decolonizing narratives do not necessarily imply a complete denial of narratives, authors, concepts, etc. taken from studies undertaken in other places. According to our understanding, what characterizes decolonizing narratives is not only the refusal to reduce local narratives to narratives

established in other places, but mainly the active proposal of narratives that take into consideration the specificities of the analyzed places, where this narrative can either break completely or dialogue with established narratives (by focusing on particular aspects or creating a counterpoint, etc.).

Another Brazilian study that is possibly closer to the work we present here is one conducted by Fonseca et al. (2016), where the authors problematize the attempt developed by certain Brazilian narratives to elevate the Polish psychologist Waclaw Radecki—who is considered one of the pioneers of psychology in Brazil—to the same position that Wilhelm Wundt held in German psychology, i.e., the position of a founding father. Thus they problematize the narratives based on great names and great actions, seeking a different, more specific one that is not limited to a repetition of foreign narratives in a national context.

More recently, two doctoral theses (Rosa, 2020; Fonseca, 2020) also problematize the limits established in the field of the history of psychology in Brazil. Rosa (2020) avoided a division between science and common sense/religion by addressing different national authors, who named their objects of study "psychology", in a symmetrical and equally way, an approach that allows for the inclusion of truly different actors in the narrative: spiritists, intellectuals, politicians, writers, etc. With this approach the author questions the script of the history of psychology that was established in Brazil, which is restricted to the repetition of the same narrative, with characters who always seem to play the same roles.

Fonseca (2020), in turn, developed a local history on the Institute of Psychology (IP) of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), pointing out the fact that this history is much more misleading than it may seem if we followed the established narrative of the history of psychology in Brazil, which is divided into phases (pre-institutional, institutional, autonomous, consolidated, professional) and characterized by the idea of progress. Fonseca, in contrast, shows that the history of the IP of UFRJ has many twists and turns due to very specific historical contingencies, such that it cannot fit into a division into phases or into an idea of linear progress.

We intend to follow this line of studies in this work by focusing on a problem that permeates all of the works under discussion – the problem of uncritically adopting foreign narratives to analyze phenomena that took place elsewhere. In this way we seek to show how not taking the development of local knowledge and practices into consideration can harm historiography, since it allows for the perpetuation of unfounded narratives. With this purpose we will refer to a recently published study (Ferreira et al., 2019) where we investigate different management styles—the different ways in which psychologists suggested to intervene in the worker, the work that is carried out or employment relations to maximize productivity—in work psychology texts of Rio de Janeiro published in the journal *Arquivos Brasileiros de Psicologia* (ABP). The initial result of this study indicates the impossibility of reducing the management styles used in Rio de Janeiro to the narrative developed by Rose in his book *Governing The Soul* (1999). Based on this finding, in the third section of this work we propose a discussion of the importance of decolonial narratives in the field of history of psychology.

The production of knowledge in work psychology: Central and peripheral contexts

Work psychology in English and North American contexts

In the book *Governing the Soul*, Nikolas Rose (1999) analyzed the complexification and empowerment of psychological expertise in the field of organizational or work psychology in the English and North American context, suggesting that this movement is articulated with the advancement of a liberal programme regarding management styles, which results in the gradual dismantling of coercive administrative practices in favor of technologies that give a greater degree of freedom to the managed subjects. This process is expressed in the psychological vocabulary, which, even though is initially linked to disciplinary practices, forms the base of the ergonomic subdiscipline and later the phenomenon of entrepreneurship. Without stipulating reciprocally incompatible phases, in our work (Ferreira et al., 2019) we registered—according to the narrative developed by Rose (1999), mainly in the second part of the book—three main management styles in the classification of organizational and work psychology.

By approximation, the first style can be named "disciplinary", and it has existed since the beginning of the 20th century. At this time, interventions sought the worker's optimal adaptation to their work through the use of inscription techniques, such as aptitude tests and studies about fatigue. Interventions were restricted to the work environment, with the objective of maximizing productivity. In the words of Rose (1999):

> These early studies of industrial fatigue, by and large, construed the worker as a physiological apparatus whose attributes were to be analyzed, calculated and adjusted to the design of work - lighting, rest, pauses, bench layout and so forth - in order to minimize fatigue and maximize efficiency. (p. 65)

Rose (1999) observes that in this movement organizational psychology created its techniques in synergy with the emerging disciplinary devices: The norms of experimental psychological programmes, which are the condition for its supposed scientific status. At this moment we can find manifestations in approach such as Frederick W. Taylor's, which was based on monitoring work according to the rate of production.

In the second style, which we can call "ergonomic", we encounter the emergence of vectors which oppose the initial disciplinary objectives of the first trend. Even though they are still restricted to completing tasks, interventions indicate that these tasks should be adapted to the psychic and social nature of the working subject. A new visibility is given to what before appeared only as a set of strange variables in search of efficiency, and these were used to guide the interventions made by psychotechnicians. Here a great focus is given to ergonomics, which seek an improvement in efficiency by adapting work to the psychophysiological nature of the workers, which includes specific psychological configurations of intellectual and affective vectors. In the words of Rose (1999):

> It was a question, rather, of fitting the job to the man and the man to the job. The worker, that is to say, was to be individualized in terms of his or her particular psychological make-up and idiosyncrasies, the job analyzed in terms of its demands upon the worker, and human resources

were to be matched to occupational demands. Vocational guidance and selection would adjust recruitment to work through a psychological calculation of suitability, movement study and analysis of periods of rest and work, the design of tasks and materials and so on, would adjust work to the psycho-physiology and psychology of the worker. [...] The worker had a complex subjective life that needed to be understood if industry was to truly take account of the human factor. (p. 68)

This trend gained popularity in the interwar period, and its main proponents were the industrial psychologist Charles Samuel Myers in England and the industrial psychologist Elton Mayo in the United States.

Finally, the third style possesses a clearly entrepreneurial aspect, where the techniques act on the articulation between personal and professional spheres. Employees are supposed to obtain self-realization not despite, but through their work, which should align its conditions and objectives to the ethic of the entrepreneurial self. This ethic posits that human beings have a self which seeks autonomy and freedom, and which should seek meaning in life through acts of choice. Here we have a radicalization of what Rose calls the liberal conducting of others' conduct, since coercive interventions impede the natural movement of employees in search of excellence in the performance of their tasks. In this entrepreneurial style, which emerged in the beginning of the 1970s, efficiency is reached by intertwining psychological and professional spheres; the individual is conceived as a self in search of self-realization and work is seen as a place where this identity is affirmed and constructed.

Work psychology in Rio de Janeiro

Our bibliographical research consisted in the analysis of discourses regarding work in articles published by the journal *Arquivos Brasileiros de Psicologia* (ABP) between 1949 (when the journal was created) and 1965 (when the first psychology courses were created in the country after the implementation of a law that regulates and creates the profession), seeking thus to determine which types of discourse predominated, in what moment each of the discourses arose and which transformations occurred in this discursive field.

It is important to point out the relationship between different discourses and management styles, since we will frequently make use of these terms in our analysis. We consider management styles the diverse strategies used in work environments, which are envolved in certain arrangements of things in order to obtain a certain specific result; thus it is our understanding that management styles possess a certain strategic coherence regarding their function, in the sense that different strategies are chained in a process that seeks a certain result. The discourses regarding each of the management styles are instruments of actualization of these management styles, however they also expose the concepts that guide the functioning of the management styles to which they refer; discourses are what is actually said, that which we find in the analyzed sources (in this case, the journal articles), but which at the same time also point to the management styles to which they refer and which they develop.

Our methodological strategy in analyzing the texts initially consisted of dividing the contributions of psychological expertise to the field of work according to three management styles delimited according to Rose's (1999) considerations: "disciplinary", "ergonomic", and "entrepreneurial". We sought to differentiate them by considering their

problematizations, in the same way as in the transformations undergone in the exercise of authority. In analyzing the articles of the journal *Arquivos Brasileiros de Psicotécnica*, we also observed that the categories proposed by Rose (1999) to UK were not sufficient to handle the specificity of the research material. Importantly, our aim was not to test in a cross-cultural sense Rose's hypothesis about work psychology in UK or to accuse him of proposing an universal history of work psychology. Our work is about the circulation and appropriation of historical hypotheses that change local historical hypotheses in universal statements about psychology development.

During bibliographical research, we observed the existence of texts that used a very specific type of discourse, one which mixed components of the different discourses considered by Rose (1999), but which did not entirely fit into any of the management styles delimited by his narrative. These are texts which clearly focus on the singular characteristics of the workers, but which do not resemble the ergonomic or entrepreneurial discourse. They indicate the need to focus on the attributes of the worker, but not exactly on their psychophysiological aspects (as in the ergonomic style), but in the aspects of their personality. They speak of the worker's authenticity and motivation, but do not approach any theme regarding the engagement in a project to constitute oneself with regard to an entrepreneurial objective. These articles focus on what is designated the worker's personality, even though this term is not defined in a careful or conceptual way. Since there was no ultimate systematic unity, we classified these texts as discourses and practices of the worker as an expression of an authentic personality. Thus we included this as the third style of analysis and made the entrepreneurial discourse become the fourth style. In this way we ended up with four styles: I – Disciplinary; II – Ergonomic; III – Personalist and Human Relations; IV – Entrepreneurial.

A detailed account of each of these management styles in the field of work, as they can be found and analyzed in the journal *Arquivos Brasileiros de Psicologia* (ABP), can be found in our recently published work (Ferreira et al., 2019). In the present work, which seeks to discuss the importance of decolonial narratives, we will focus the discussion on the third management style (III – Personalist and Human Relations), precisely the one which we had to establish from what was shown in the documental sources. The type of discourse which permeates this management style was what surprised us the most in the occasion: Firstly, because it occupies an intermediate position between ergonomic discourse (by taking the perspective of the worker based on his personality and human relations) and entrepreneurial discourse (by considering the worker's authentic and active personality, but without discussing any themes regarding entrepreneurship); and also due to the fact that the articles which mainly engaged in this type of discourse were more numerous than those of the second style (II – Ergonomic).

Thus, the articles with a personalist and human relations style are characterized by two main ideas: (1) The idea that human beings have personalities, which are characterized by needs, aptitudes and skills, where some of these variables are—according to some authors who follow this style—common to all human beings, to all workers, or to the context of work; (2) The idea that such human needs can and should be satisfied in the context of work by improving the human relationships that occur in this context. With this basis, the main propositions of the authors of this style regarding the work environment are: (1) To take into consideration the needs, aptitudes and skills of each worker, in order to allocate them to the work that matches their personality traits; and (2) To develop human relations in the

workplace, so that workers are able to fulfill their needs (physical, psychological, intellectual, affective, etc.), in order to increase their productivity.

Besides the singular aspects which characterize this management style and differentiate it from others, we are mainly interested in the instances where we found elements of other management styles in its discourse. Among the articles which we investigated that proposed the personalist and human relations style of management, we point out those by Bonfim (1953), Unknown (1956), Carvalhaes (1960), Freitas (1960) and Cordeiro & Frost (1960).

In Bonfim's (1953) text, among discussions about the necessity of respecting the subjective needs and the personality of the worker, mainly by improving human relations, we find the following statement: "The main factor in obtaining high productivity is the will of the workers to produce more, in order to earn more" (p. 87). It is similar to the entrepreneurial management style pointed out by Rose (1999), whose discourse affirms that there should be no tension between the desire for personal self-realization of the worker and their work in itself, that is, that the worker's self-realization should be obtained through their own work. We cannot state that this marginal comment in Bonfim's (1953) work makes him a precursor or antecedent of the entrepreneurial style, or that what he says is exactly what was subsequently postulated by the entrepreneurial discourse. In a different direction we wish to maintain that Bonfim's (1953) work has a specificity that activates different aspects of a strictly personalist and human relations discourse; in other words, what he said in 1953 has elements which are later taken up in a different configuration, with different purposes and a different reasoning.

An unknown author's (1956) case resembles Bonfim's (1953): among arguments for the need of seeking a certain degree of harmony in companies through the achievement a greater degree of human understanding and respect for the personality of employees in the working environment, we find considerations regarding the "desire of the employee" (p. 52) and the aspiration of the employee to "professionally improve every day" (p. 53), which the author considers to be important factors in increasing productivity. These latter aspects are also present in Rose's (1999) approach to the entrepreneurial style, since entrepreneurial discourse considers the ideal worker the one who in their profession seeks to proactively achieve a level of excellence, without needing to be supervised by bosses or inspectors.

In Carvalhaes' (1960) case, we emphasize the presence of components of two other discourses: the disciplinary and the entrepreneurial style. Among discussions of work as a human need to deal with the contingencies of life, and of the improvement of human relations as a way to improve the financial situation of an organization, we find: (1) Not only the concept of "psychology as a way of adapting people to their work" – an approach with resembles the discourse of the disciplinary style; but also (2) the distinction between having the capacity to do work and the desire to work to one's full capacity: "It is one thing to have the capacity to execute a task, and another to use it with the desire for maximum productivity" (p. 80)—a distinction which emphasizes the desire for maximum productivity as the constitutive element of a worthy worker, a characteristic feature of the entrepreneurial discourse.

Alternatively, in Freitas' (1960) case, the peculiar element that emerges refers to the ergonomic management style. Among considerations regarding impulses, temperaments, and aptitudes, all of which are considered as innate and as constituting a fundamental part of human personality, we encounter the prescription that human work "should be chosen according to the aptitudes and psychophysical potential of each individual" (p. 75). This

prescription resembles ergonomic discourse by valuing aptitudes and psychophysical potential in allocating individuals to their jobs.

Finally, in the article by Cordeiro and Frost (1960), among discussions on the motivation and the structure of the needs of the individual, and how to promote human relations that provide safety for the workers, it is possible to find arguments regarding the necessity to stimulate the workers' independence and self-realization, based on the premise that "the worker should grow in such a way as to be able to become an adult and independent industrial citizen" and in stimulating "this development of independence in the worker's process of self-realization" (p. 68). These terms—independence and self-realization—which we have already briefly discussed before, will later play a major role in the entrepreneurial discourse.

It is important to point out that all of the discourses mentioned here predominantly belong to the personalist and human relations style. The elements of the other three types of discourse are like brief flashes, since they only appear in the texts in an isolated and passing way, without any appropriate development. We make this caveat here—even though we have previously emphasized that these elements appear sporadically among vast discussions on human personality and interpersonal relations—to avoid that our emphasis on the elements of other management styles give the impression that they predominate in this type of discourse, which is not the case.

Discussion: The importance of decolonial narratives

Based on the bibliographical discussion and the presentation of the procedures undertaken in the empirical study mentioned above, the discussion we intend to propose regarding decolonial narratives is anchored mainly on the following point: What is the importance of decolonial narratives? In order to answer this question, however, we need to return to the bibliographical discussion of the first section and articulate it with the methodological and historiographical issues raised by our empirical study.

Firstly, we need to return to the idea which emerged from Brock's (2006) analysis that dominant narratives, like all narratives, are constituted by inclusion/exclusion criteria of their components, but that they specifically become dominant due to an institutional issue regarding the possibility of the transmission of this narrative between generations (through handbooks in the case analyzed by Brock) and a historical contingency, which makes this narrative susceptible to being uncritically adopted in other places (in the case analyzed by Brock, the lack of interest in and development of the field of history of psychology in countries which are not the USA). The result of the establishment of a dominant narrative through these processes is that the history produced in one place about a specific phenomenon is considered to be the history of the phenomenon itself. The colonization of narratives occurs precisely through the process of creating and generalizing dominant narratives.

More precisely, the process of the colonization of narratives is the process according to which narratives produced in a given place are applied to other places, without considering the differences between the former and the latter. This process can occur in many different ways, but we propose the description of two processes that work in concert to create and maintain colonization: the process of authoritarian imposition, where a locally created narrative is imposed on other places, ignoring the possible differences between those places; and the process of passive reproduction, where a given place uncritically accepts and

reproduces a given dominant narrative, using it strictly to analyze local phenomena without questioning the validity of this procedure.

To help explain these two processes, we will make an analogy with the process of colonizing peoples, which started in the 16th century with the "age of sail". In the Brazilian case, we were a large territory populated by diverse native tribes with different customs, types of organization, and languages. With the arrival of the Portuguese, a series of customs, types of organization, languages, religions etc. developed on Portuguese soil were imposed in an authoritarian way on the natives which had contact with the Portuguese. These customs, types of organization, languages, religions etc. were perpetuated on Brazilian soil by the lasting presence and dominion of the Portuguese over the Brazilian territory. Subsequent generations generally started to passively reproduce this series of materialities instituted by Portugal, even after Brazil obtained its complete independence.3 This is a summary of the process of the colonization of peoples.

Let us now think of the process of colonizing narratives. In the Brazilian case, regarding the narratives of the field of history of psychology, can think of a first phase—corroborating Brock's (2006) view—where, due mainly to the lack of researchers in the field of the history of psychology in our country, American handbooks were translated into Portuguese, with the consequence that this narrative was adopted, and many generation of psychologists were educated through their study. In a second phase, new Brazilian researchers of the field of history of psychology adopted these narratives uncritically as the basis or starting point for conducting their own investigations; here we have a passive reproduction of this new narrative in other works. Thus a dominant narrative, a colonization of narratives, is established (cf. Santos & Ferreira, 2022).

Continuing with this analogy, what constitutes the process of decolonization? The decolonization of peoples is not a top-down process (cf. Castro-Gomez 2017; Restrepo. E., 2010), in the sense that it depends only on the absence of influence of the colonizing countries on the colonized ones; where there is a passive—that is, uncritical—reproduction of colonizing contents by the colonized peoples, it is not merely about expelling the colonizers. The decolonization of peoples mainly takes place through the estrangement of the colonized regarding the colonizing contents (which, once they are passively reproduced, are also naturalized), thus resulting in an active effort to modify them. In the case of Brazil, currently decolonization is mainly enacted by a part of the black and indigenous population, which—through the use of certain arrangements (collectives, associations, political demands, etc.)—start to consider strange certain contents that are part of our daily life (beauty standards, workplace relationships, discriminations, etc.), seeking to change this colonized reality. It is interesting to note that this criticism is given through a return to the roots, by taking up contents belonging to the original peoples (in Brazil these are the natives who already lived here and the large quantity of African black people brought here through the colonization process), thus remaking through an effort of reconstructing a cultural memory what it means to be or to affirm oneself as black or native.

We can consider the decolonization of narratives as an analogous process. It is not enough to simply have handbooks written in Portuguese by Brazilian authors, if the narrative contained therein is the same of American handbooks, which, as we saw in Brock (2006),

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3 This description can be found in the most school textbooks in Brazil. If the reader would like to access a classic discussion of the conditions of the Portuguese colonization, see Holanda (1995).

only tell the history of psychology related to the USA. Since the uncritical active reproduction of this colonizing content already took place, our own narratives are permeated by it. The estrangement and questioning of dominant narratives by the colonized is essential in the process of decolonizing narratives, making thus an active effort to create a counterpoint to these narratives. As in the case of the decolonization of peoples, the decolonization of narratives occurs through a return to the roots, through taking back what is specific to a given place, which cannot be reduced to the colonizing content; in the same way, this process also takes place through the reconstruction of a historical memory, through the formulation of local narratives, which are contrasted with the dominant narratives.

Once we envisage that this process of decolonization should be undertaken from the bottom up, starting with an estrangement by the colonized peoples, and that this is only possible when there is a focus on what is absent in the colonizing content, the next question is: How can we develop decolonizing narratives in practice?

By answering this question, we do not intend to dictate a model or take into account all possible answers. We conceive that decolonizing strategies are very diverse and that in most cases they have an unpredictable character, which is part of their efficacy. Thus, referring to our empirical study, we seek to discuss historiographical and methodological principles which we think are useful in the development of decolonizing narratives.

As we briefly mentioned in the first section, when we referred to Madariaga's (2018) and Engel's (2001) works, we affirmed that the process of decolonizing narratives could take place through a dialogue and use of foreign and even established narratives. The aspect that characterizes the work of decolonizing narratives is not so much the sources that are used, but rather the degree of attention given to local specificities, preventing them from being ignored, suppressed or reduced. Thus concerning our empirical work (Ferreira et al., 2019), even though it was devised based on Rose's (1999) narrative, what made it a decolonizing work was our estrangement when we compared the articles which we analyzed with Rose's narrative and made a consequent active effort to affirm the differences we encountered, instead of reducing them to the narrative we used as our basis. We use Rose's narrative as basis because it proposes a kind of critical text about the history of work psychology. But it can at the same time colonize local narratives. The alternative is not to reject Rose's approach, but to amplify his narrative with local ones and their specific problems.

Thus we can postulate a methodological principle that is necessary for the development of decolonizing narratives: Always prioritize archives and primary historical sources in detriment of general narratives. This implies that the researcher always needs to be very careful and responsible when using great or established narratives, since there is always the possibility and danger of imposing extrinsic contents onto the sources. It is both an epistemological responsibility—since it regards the validity or the lack thereof of the application of the narrative—as well as a political responsibility—since the undue use of dominant narratives contributes to their perpetuation and diffusion, reactualizing the colonizing process from the bottom up.

In our empirical study, the way we found to use this methodological principle in order to avoid risking imposing an extraneous narrative on the sources was to extract the analytical categories from the sources. In our study, first we analyzed the narrative which was developed by Rose (1999) and taking it as a basis we formulated three classes of management styles. The next step was to analyze the sources in the Arquivos Brasileiros de Psicologia (ABP), not to simply apply the management style classes we formulated to what

we found in the sources, but instead to compare/contrast both cases. Methodologically, the analysis of Rose's (1999) narrative was made before the analysis of the ABP articles simply so that we could compare the latter to Rose's previously analyzed narrative with more detail. Only by following this two-phase process were we able to confirm the existence of discourses regarding the disciplinary and ergonomic management styles, besides also observing the existence of a very specific type of discourse—one which refers to what we called the personalist and human relations style of management—which mixed elements of the other management styles. Probably this management style is an effect of the multicolonized status of the psychology in Brazil, incorporating not only US and UK production but others as Western European continental countries. This position of a multicolonized country with respect to knowledge production creates an interesting position of a place where it is possible to assimilate, blend and combine different contributions of the central countries. This personalist and human relations style of management is a strong candidate for a national creation produced by multicolonial processes.

This is what we consider a critical use of narratives—which draws attention to what is specific and does not fit the narrative—compared to an uncritical use of narratives—which, by giving priority to the narrative, fits empirical data to the narrative, even with the cost of suppressing differences. In our study, we could simply have acted in an uncritical way, suppressing the differences we found in the articles and fitting every case to one of the management styles formulated based on Rose's (1999) narrative. Thus we can ask ourselves: What would we lose if we acted this way? What could we gain if we proceeded in a critical way?

At this point we arrive at the crux of the matter of the importance of decolonizing narratives—even though we consider that the answer to this question permeates all of what we have discussed until now. Now we need to pay attention to the fact that the relationship between the decolonization of peoples and the decolonization of narratives is more than an analogy. The decolonization of peoples is also affected through the decolonization of narratives, the latter being an instrument of political action for the former. In this sense, the decolonization of narratives possesses a very direct political implication, which pertains to the possibility of the coexistence of differences.

The great narratives, once established and stabilized, lead to the reduction of differences to a sameness, which is the dominating narrative itself. By drawing attention to differences, decolonizing narratives have as their ultimate goal the implosion of this unitary sameness, recognizing and giving space to the existence of all the small differences. Ultimately, the decolonization of narratives involves defending that our universe is varied, or rather that we do not inhabit a universe, but a multiverse (Latour, 2004). Thus, the importance of decolonial narratives is to allow the construction of this multiverse through the multiplication of versions (Despret, 2018).

In the case of the history of psychology, this implies exposing the different modes through which the configurations of knowledge, peoples, institutions, etc. have been established, by taking into consideration the history of each place under analysis. Even though we can establish a wide division between colonizers and the colonized, the history of each colonization process is quite specific, as well as the history of each place before and after the colonization process; the arrangements used both for colonizing as well as decolonizing also vary.

The responsibility of decolonial narratives of the history of psychology lies in exposing the specificities involved in the production of local knowledge and practices, thus affirming the existence of many diverse forms of psychology, drawing attention to the differences and fighting against a unification into great narratives. In this sense, the importance of decolonial narratives is coextensive with the political implication of affirming diversity and constituting a multiverse.

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