

The background features a stylized cityscape with various buildings represented by blue and white grid patterns. A prominent building on the left is a tall, curved structure with a dense grid. Other buildings are scattered around it, some with different grid patterns. The background is light blue with a network of thin lines and circular nodes, suggesting a digital or social network theme.

Ciências Sociais Aplicadas: Entendendo as Necessidades da Sociedade 2

**Luciana Pavowski Franco Silvestre
(Organizadora)**

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(Organizadora)

Ciências Sociais Aplicadas: Entendendo as Necessidades da Sociedade 2

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APRESENTAÇÃO

No e-book “Ciências Sociais Aplicadas: Entendo as Necessidades da Sociedade”, apresentam-se artigos e pesquisas que mantêm relação com demandas da sociedade contemporânea, a partir de estudos realizados nas diferentes regiões do Brasil, representando a diversidade territorial, bem como, as singularidades e elementos que as conectam.

Apresentam-se ainda, três artigos em espanhol, sendo estes de cursos de graduação e pós graduação do Uruguai, México e Espanha e um em inglês do programa de Pós-Graduação da Universidade de Brasília. Tais artigos mostram-se pertinentes e contribuem para as discussões e análises que são apresentadas aos leitores a partir do campo das Ciências Sociais Aplicadas.

São ao todo cinquenta artigos divididos em dois volumes. Os artigos foram organizados em seis seções, conforme segue: **Tecnologia e Comunicação**, sendo esta a primeira seção, em que são abordadas as relações existentes entre a tecnologia e a comunicação com os processos de trabalho, políticas públicas, inovação nos processos de gestão e de conhecimento; O **Comportamento Organizacional**, título que nomeia a segunda seção, apresenta-se de maneira expressiva nos artigos que também tematizam os processos decisórios e de gestão de conhecimento no setor empresarial, com valorização do capital humano e da função social das empresas; **Cidadania e Políticas Públicas**, aborda pesquisas realizadas entorno das políticas de saúde, de atendimento às crianças e adolescentes, da educação, da questão agrária, da segurança pública e das políticas tributárias na lógica de cidadania e garantia de direitos; **Estado e Sociedade**, aborda as relações estabelecidas entre estes, apontando para a importância e impacto dos movimentos sociais para a definição de pautas que contemplem os diferentes interesses existentes na sociedade de classes; *Os artigos que compõem a seção Trabalho e Relações Sociais* debatem o grau de satisfação de acesso ao trabalho em um contexto de terceirização e precarização das relações estabelecidas através deste e por fim, em **Estudos Epistemológicos** apresentam-se dois artigos que analisam perspectivas diferentes do processo de construção do conhecimento.

Os artigos apresentam pesquisas de envergadura teórica, as seções mantêm articulação entre si e contribuem para a divulgação e visibilidade de estudos e pesquisas voltadas para as necessidades e desafios postos para vida em sociedade no atual contexto social, econômico e político.

Luciana Pavowski Franco Silvestre

SUMÁRIO

CAPÍTULO 1	1
A INTERNAÇÃO E O ACOLHIMENTO INSTITUCIONAL COMO DESAFIOS NO ATENDIMENTO EM SAÚDE MENTAL À POPULAÇÃO EM SITUAÇÃO DE RUA	
Rayoni Ralfh Silva Pereira Salgado Marta Fuentes-Rojas	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.2451925061	
CAPÍTULO 2	14
INFORMAÇÃO AOS USUÁRIOS E ACOMPANHANTES SOBRE OS SEUS DIREITOS E DEVERES E OS SERVIÇOS OFERECIDOS DENTRO DA UNIDADE DE PRONTO ATENDIMENTO	
Lavinha Soares Santos	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.2451925062	
CAPÍTULO 3	18
CONSIDERAÇÕES SOBRE A QUESTÃO AGRÁRIA NO BRASIL: UMA MANIFESTAÇÃO DA “QUESTÃO SOCIAL”	
Monica Pereira	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.2451925063	
CAPÍTULO 4	29
ESTUDO DE CASO SOBRE A COMUNICAÇÃO GOVERNAMENTAL RELATIVA À CRIAÇÃO DO MINISTÉRIO DA FELICIDADE DO DUBAI E DOS EMIRADOS ÁRABES UNIDOS	
Diamantino Ribeiro Jorge Remondes António Pedro Costa	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.2451925064	
CAPÍTULO 5	45
A RELAÇÃO ENTRE A COMUNICAÇÃO NÃO VIOLENTA E A MEDIAÇÃO DE CONFLITOS	
Carolina Portella Pellegrini Simone Régio dos Santos Zaionara Goreti Rodrigues de Lima	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.2451925065	
CAPÍTULO 6	58
O DIREITO PENAL DO INIMIGO À LUZ DO GARANTISMO PENAL	
Mariana Hazt Lencina Cândida Joelma Leopoldino	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.2451925066	
CAPÍTULO 7	74
DO CÓDIGO DE NUREMBERG AO CÓDIGO DE ÉTICA MÉDICA BRASILEIRO: O PRINCÍPIO DO CONSENTIMENTO INFORMADO E A CONDUTA ÉTICA MÉDICA PELOS ESTUDANTES DA UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO RIO GRANDE - FURG	
Gilberto Leonello Carolina Corrêa Soares Natália Ongaratto da Rosa Stéfani Wontroba Bandeira	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.2451925067	

CAPÍTULO 8	84
DISPOSICIONES Y POLITICIDAD EN LA CO-CONSTRUCCIÓN DE NARRATIVAS BIOGRÁFICAS: EL TRABAJO DE LA REFLEXIVIDAD	
Mabela Ruiz Barbot	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.2451925068	
CAPÍTULO 9	96
GERENCIALISMO: A RESPOSTA NEOLIBERAL PARA A GESTÃO DAS POLÍTICAS SOCIAIS	
Evandro Alves Barbosa Filho	
Maria Izabel Rêgo Cabral	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.2451925069	
CAPÍTULO 10	110
ESTUDO ESTATÍSTICO DA QUANTIDADE DE CONTRIBUINTES QUE DECLARARAM O IMPOSTO DE RENDA NO PERÍODO DE 2012 A 2015	
Cristian Carlos da Silva Coelho	
Gabriel Ribeiro de Abreu	
Arlane Lopes Chaves	
Luana Sousa Almeida	
Lilane de Araújo Mendes Brandão	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.24519250610	
CAPÍTULO 11	124
OS BENEFÍCIOS DA GESTÃO TRIBUTÁRIA NA GERAÇÃO DE INFORMAÇÕES FISCAIS	
Thaynara Keila Oliveira	
Jerson Krack	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.24519250611	
CAPÍTULO 12	140
ESTADO E SOCIEDADE CIVIL NO BRASIL NA SEGUNDA METADE DO SÉCULO XX	
Marclin Felix Moreira	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.24519250612	
CAPÍTULO 13	151
REDES SOCIAIS E MOBILIZAÇÕES PÚBLICAS. O MOVIMENTO DE “15 DE SETEMBRO” EM PORTUGAL	
Isabel Babo	
Célia Taborda Silva	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.24519250613	
CAPÍTULO 14	166
REPENSANDO A PERCEPÇÃO DA VELHICE ALIADA À DISCUSSÃO DE CLASSE E HEGEMONIA	
Juliana de A. F Doronin	
Giovanna de Aquino Fonseca Araújo	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.24519250614	

CAPÍTULO 15	174
LAVA JATO E SEU IMPACTO NA RENTABILIDADE DAS ESTATAIS BRASILEIRAS	
Elisandra Bochi Turra	
Sandra Maria Coltre	
Gilmar Ribeiro de Mello	
Lirane Elize Defante Ferretto de Almeida	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.24519250615	
CAPÍTULO 16	190
MULTILATERALISM AND NATIONALISM IN THE 21 ST CENTURY: CONSEQUENCES TO GLOBALIZATION FROM THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE	
Hugo do Valle Mendes	
Juliano Vargas	
Joanilio Rodolpho Teixeira	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.24519250616	
CAPÍTULO 17	209
SATISFAÇÃO NO TRABALHO: UMA ANÁLISE TEÓRICA	
Joseane da Silva Rodrigues	
Darliane Ribeiro Caldas	
Rochele Kaline Reis de Medeiros	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.24519250617	
CAPÍTULO 18	220
A PESSOA COM DEFICIÊNCIA E O TRABALHO: ESTUDO DE CASO COM JOVENS DEFICIENTES INTELLECTUAIS E A PERSPECTIVA DE INSERÇÃO NO MERCADO DE TRABALHO	
Carmelinda Parizzi	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.24519250618	
CAPÍTULO 19	232
ANÁLISE DO CENÁRIO DO TRABALHO MANUAL NO CORTE DE CANA-DE-AÇÚCAR, A TERCEIRIZAÇÃO DA MÃO DE OBRA E A PRECARIZAÇÃO DAS RELAÇÕES DE TRABALHO	
Pedro Afonso Martini Dreyer	
Liliane Vieira Martins Leal	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.24519250619	
CAPÍTULO 20	245
AVALIAÇÃO DOS PARÂMETROS CORPORAIS DE ZELADORAS DE UMA UNIVERSIDADE ESTADUAL NO PARANÁ	
Marina Daros Massarollo	
Francieli do Rocio de Campos	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.24519250620	
CAPÍTULO 21	249
DINÂMICA DO EMPREGO FORMAL NO SETOR PRODUTOR DE SOJA NO ESTADO DE MATO GROSSO NO ANO DE 2017	
Erico Souza Costa	
João Gabriel Pagnan Zanette	
Mayara Pereira de Souza	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.24519250621	

CAPÍTULO 22	260
ECONOMIA SOLIDÁRIA E COOPERATIVISMO: FORMAS DE ORGANIZAÇÃO DO TRABALHO NA COOPERATIVA MISTA DOS PRODUTORES RURAIS DO PROJETO DE ASSENTAMENTO TARUMÃ MIRIM (MANAUS-AM)	
Michele Lins Aracaty e Silva Epaminondas da Silva Dourado	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.24519250622	
CAPÍTULO 23	276
FIART: UM ESTUDO DA FEIRA INTERNACIONAL DE ARTESANATO COMO ATRATIVO DE PROMOÇÃO DA CULTURA POTIGUAR	
Fernanda Louise de Brito Gonçalves Layanna Pinheiro da Silva Maria Rafaella Marques de Paiva Patrícia Daliany Araújo do Amaral	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.24519250623	
CAPÍTULO 24	284
COMO SE PLANIFICAM, TRATAM, ANALISAM E INTERPRETAM NARRATIVAS ? A ABORDAGEM COMPREENSIVA-QUALITATIVA “PROCESSOS DE REQUALIFICAÇÃO SÓCIO-IDENTITÁRIA”	
Maria de Fátima Costa Toscano	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.24519250624	
CAPÍTULO 25	298
QUALITATIVE EPISTEMOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF SUBJECTIVITY: ALTERNATIVE EPISTEMOLOGICAL PATHS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH	
Andressa Martins do Carmo de Oliveira Thamiris Caixeta	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.24519250625	
CAPÍTULO 26	308
MODERNIDADE BRASILEIRA, DESIGUALDADES E SOFRIMENTO ÉTICO-POLÍTICO	
Rui Maia Diamantino Raimundo Mentor de Melo Fortes Filho	
DOI 10.22533/at.ed.24519250626	
SOBRE A ORGANIZADORA	332

QUALITATIVE EPISTEMOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF SUBJECTIVITY: ALTERNATIVE EPISTEMOLOGICAL PATHS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT. In this study we present a critical reflection on the absence of the epistemological dimension in the qualitative researches in Psychology and the impact of what characterized the path of the scientific doing from the positivist philosophy until its arrival and permanence in the human sciences, taking into account its appropriation by the Psychology . After discussing some aspects of this trajectory, we present the Qualitative Epistemology proposed by González Rey, showing from the scene of his birth to its epistemological and methodological implications designed for the study of the subjectivity produced in the conditions of the cultural-historical context. Following are presented its three principles, with which it concomitantly discusses the advances of this proposal for the epistemological rescue in the qualitative research in Psychology. Finally, the heuristic value of this Epistemology for the production of the knowledge of complex phenomena in the scope of the research in

Psychology is shown.

KEYWORDS: Qualitative Epistemology; Subjectivity; Qualitative research; Psychology.

1 | INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the twentieth century, homogeneous and experimental-empirical studies have characterized (and still characterize) many of the researches in Psychology. Through the appropriation of a positivist paradigm on the part of psychological science, for reasons, among others, of an ontological indefinition of the latter, the production of knowledge about human psychological phenomena has responded to the established stages as the safe and reliable path of traditional science, based on natural and exact phenomena.

In spite of the usefulness of this system with regard to the analysis of data of the society that fit in statistical analyzes, for example, there are, on the other hand, psychological phenomena that require the confrontation of the unknown, in which reflections are proposed beyond the concrete data - something that does not characterize traditional science.

In this way, one can think that few reflections permeated the scientific doing in Psychology, which has relied almost exclusively on positivist

philosophy since its emergence, as proposed by Comte (2013). This author departed from the premise of science as the only possibility of producing concrete knowledge about the world. In addition, he argued that social phenomena could be studied through a systematization that would in turn unify them into general laws. From this, would result a universal knowledge, that is, a knowledge that could be validated equally and that would have the same results, in any context (Comte, 2013).

One of the characteristics of positivism was the valorization of the experimental model, considered as the fundamental method for scientific investigation (Sanford, 1889). In this sense, considering its influence in the sciences that study human processes, it is understood that secondary attention was attributed to the production of knowledge related to the complex and dynamic processes of human life (González Rey, 2005).

It can be said, therefore, that the qualitative research in Psychology was subordinated to the dominant representations of positivism; which, in turn, has sometimes promoted the dichotomization of the simultaneous interaction between the social and the individual, the cultural and the universal, in the production of knowledge in that science.

In addition, on the basis of a one-dimensional approach to human processes, the individual's unique condition was neglected (González Rey, 2005). In other words, one can say that the methodological rigidity in the production of knowledge ignores the human condition (Japiassu, 1982).

Starting from these initial reflections, the trajectories that permeated the sciences, until their arrival and installation in the human sciences, are presented, succinctly, especially considering Psychology. Next, we present the Qualitative Epistemology, as proposed by González Rey, and his contributions to new advances in qualitative research in relation to the study of the psychological processes that occur at the level of culture.

2 | BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE AND ITS APPROPRIATION FOR THE STUDY OF MAN

In order to briefly expose the trajectory of the sciences, it is necessary to understand what characterized their epistemological bases, so that it becomes important to go back a little in time and to study some epistemological ruptures already made (Bachelard, 1996).

At first, there is the emergence of a movement to the time of Galileo, which was the precursor of this rupture, in the quest to overcome the religious mysticism that prevailed in the production of knowledge. Galileo proposed that the universe could be known precisely by using reason (Japiassu, 1982). This epistemological rupture between the ancient and the medieval in the history of Western thought culminated in

the (dis) encounter between the knowledge of common sense and its homogeneous and crystallized thought of the time and in the proposal to deprive of credibility any interpretation that was not permeated by the logical structure, rational and precise.

As an unfolding, more and more, the study of the phenomena of the natural and physical world were thus based on “precise” soil, credited by the systematization of information from rigid and logical methodological criteria. As a result, they achieved the criterious status of scientificity. In turn, this stability offered by scientific status became the target of the sciences that dealt with subjects that concern the human and the life in society.

In the first instance, therefore, this epistemological turn had an impact on the scientific doing in the natural sciences. Nevertheless, the mastery of the knowledge of these sciences required such care in the handling of the data for a production faithful to the verifiable logic of scientific analysis. In other words, the study of its object fit the scientific assumptions as proposed then.

However, the problem resided in the appropriation of this rigor, based on steps of rigid validation of data, to produce a knowledge focused on the phenomena that are human, not objective, but subjective. Thus, aiming to conquer a space in the ideological representation of truthfulness and scientific credibility, without a consistent ontological basis, the human sciences have identified themselves with the positivist spirit and appropriated it. This act took on such significant proportions that until now its influence persists in these sciences (Japiassu, 1982, González Rey, 2005).

A reflection pertinent to the present discussion resides in the questioning of what would have motivated such uncritical, superficial and inflexible appropriation by the human sciences. In this regard, as Japiassu (1982) pointed out, one of the central factors was the absence of philosophical foundations, together with the lack of critical and reflexive thinking and the lack of interest in knowledge and the study of the historical constitution of what permeated the course of science. All this contributed to the need to take to the scientific rigor borrowed, as support for the scientific production that relied on fragile bases from multiple sources.

This entry into the positive era is thus a possibility to definitively break with idealism, and thus to enter into knowledge based on ‘verification’ as a ‘proof’ of the real. Consequently, as one of the results of the rationalist proposal, experimentation has gained a central place in modern science. Empiricism then assumed the possibility of attaining truth, as if knowledge could not be contradicted, as if everything were eternal, or even static (Japiassu, 1982). Thus, in the scientific scenario that emerged in the human and psychological sciences in the nineteenth century, the concept of scientific knowledge comes to be represented by the idea of truth as a result of positive science.

A critical trend towards the positivist proposal of science emerged in the years of 1960 to 1990, especially with Koch (1981) as its precursor, followed by Feyerabend (1985). Nevertheless, these critiques were ignored through the predominant hegemony in Psychology, amid the “enormous institutional weight of the mainstream of empirical-

instrumentalist psychology” (Mitjans Martínéz & González Rey, 2017, page 15).

In this search for control of the truth, it is interesting what Miranda (2005) argues about the question of relativity, which necessarily permeates the process of knowledge construction within the human sciences. What is termed “truth” will always reveal its own partial perspective, given that human reality is constantly changing. That is, the transitory character of a truth is linked to the historical, social and cultural moment, and may not be a “truth” at other times, for example.

Moreover, the idea of propagating scientific research promoted the notion of an objectification of knowledge in which the relativity of phenomena became unquestionable. Thus, one of the main characteristics that must permeate all scientific production is left aside: “the maintenance of lucidity regarding the limitations of the knowledge brought to light, whatever the methodological procedures used” (Gatti, 2012, 61).

In the same sense, Gatti (2012), in a statement about the scope of research in relation to “truth”, points out:

In the production of knowledge, we always have a margin of uncertainty, even if in some cases it is indeed extremely small. For the researcher there are no dogmas, revealed truths and absolute, that is, there is no absolute and definitive knowledge. (Gatti, 2012, p.10).

The scientific model of the natural sciences, then, has had a significant impact on the human sciences. We could even say that this is a faithful reproduction of the forms of production of knowledge among these sciences. Thus the human sciences, in the absence of a sound philosophical basis for support, replicated, and even replicate, the precepts of the positivist paradigm. Finally, it is possible to reflect on man’s difficulty in dealing with the uncertainties that are part of the phenomena of his world (Morin, 2011), so that, for example, he began to use the same tools that he used to investigate the phenomena of the physical and natural world, as a possibility to know the processes that were related to human and social complexity. Thus, he did not admit, and to some extent still does not admit, the inapplicability of the predictions of laws that characterize the so-called scientific criteria to understand a given natural reality, to study himself. He insists and continues for some time to seek to create alternative trajectories, but still appropriating what is not appropriate for the production of this knowledge.

3 | THE EMERGENCE OF QUALITATIVE EPISTEMOLOGY: NEW ONTOLOGICAL DEFINITIONS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

In this scenario, permeated by uncertainties and contradictions in the qualitative research that permeated the scientific work of Psychology, González Rey found it difficult to find a methodology that could generate theoretical intelligibility of his proposal of the study of subjectivity, in a cultural-historical perspective.

Even before the emergence of the qualitative methodology as an alternative to the

then predominant quantitative between 1980 and 1990, the importance of the definition of the epistemological bases and the ontological meanings of the object of study was left aside, which would require new methodological proposals within the researches (Mitjás Martínez & González Rey, 2017).

In the words of the authors:

At the historical moment in which Qualitative Epistemology was proposed with the book *Qualitative Epistemology and Subjectivity*, Psychology and the social sciences in general sought actively to develop a type of research that differed from the rigid formal, instrumental and quantitative framework that presented itself as the 'scientific method' in these sciences, which limited the study of all problems that could not be studied from this rigid framework as metaphysical themes of philosophy, not science. This tendency was especially strong in Psychology, where it still currently surprises the prevalence of this ascetic, instrumental and empirical understanding of science. (Mitjás Martínez & González Rey, 2017, p.7).

In defining subjectivity, González Rey proposes the inseparable articulation between symbolic and emotional processes, so that the symbolic-emotional unity is representative of subjectivity. It is considered, therefore, that the cultural reality is symbolically produced and makes sense for who is at all times acting in it. The study of subjectivity is no longer associated with human nature, similar to the animal. With the proposal of a complex subjective system, it is possible to reflect on advances in relation to intrapsychic and individualistic notions of the representation of processes that take shape in subjectivity.

In these terms, the author then discovered the impossibility of producing ontological knowledge on the subject in a scenario in which instrumentalism, systematic control and methodological rigidity predominated in the production of knowledge (González Rey, 1997; Mitjás Martínez & González Rey, 2017). Even in the face of a qualitative orientation, as posited, once absent epistemological questions in scientific doing, the tendency is to appropriate the way of conceiving and treating the methodological process as conceived in positivism, in its resemblance to objective realism.

González Rey published in Spanish in the mid-1980s the first edition of the work *Qualitative Epistemology and Subjectivity*, pointing to the construction of a new trajectory to study human subjectivity, generated in culture. It proposes an alternative perspective of scientific thinking: the Qualitative Epistemology (González Rey, 2000; 2005b; 2007), which is based on the constructive-interpretative method, in its articulation with Subjectivity Theory (2002), implying a new epistemological psychological sciences. González Rey and Mitjás Martínez, through *Qualitative Epistemology*, propose the study of the subject "as an epistemological category in the process of knowledge production" (2017, page 28), making it possible to understand the singularity of the processes that are organized subjectively in distinct trajectories of life marked by a personal history in the scientific doing. As a second principle, it emphasizes "the constructive-interpretative character of knowledge about subjectivity" (2017, 29). This

way of conceiving reality makes it possible to advance in relation to the linear causality often accorded to human processes, in which the imaginary and complex condition in scientific doing is ignored.

Finally, the third principle deals with the importance of dialogue in the course of the research, and its contribution to overcome the notion of neutral research. In this, the researcher or researcher, besides the participant, is also given a leading role.

These principles are explored in the next topic, along with other concepts used to produce knowledge about subjectivity.

4 | THE THREE EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS THAT UNDERPIN QUALITATIVE EPISTEMOLOGY

Here we present the three guiding principles of Qualitative Epistemology: the constructive character of knowledge, the singular as production of knowledge and dialogue as the core of research. These pillars make possible the better articulation of the researcher or researcher in their immersion in the field, since they emphasize the research as a production of knowledge coming mainly from the valorization of the singular and from the dialogue developed in the relation.

Although qualitative research has advanced in terms of method, González Rey (2002) affirms the existence of the predominance of the positivist imaginary in scientific research:

It is of great interest that, even when there is a long history of approach to qualitative forms of knowledge construction in Psychology, these have not led to an explicit elaboration of the theme in the epistemological and methodological fields, which shows the hegemony of beliefs and positivist worldviews in psychological research. (González Rey, 2002, p.23).

Without the epistemological view in the field of qualitative research, one runs the risk of continuing to legitimize only data obtained through different instruments, not being implicated in the deep theoretical development of the research.

We emphasize here that, in Qualitative Epistemology, the researcher or researcher plays a fundamental role in the construction of knowledge. In this sense González Rey (2005) states that:

The development of a reflexive position, which allows us to base and interrogate methodological principles, identifying its limits and possibilities, places us in fact in the face of the need to open an epistemological discussion that allows us to move, with theoretical awareness, within the limits and contradictions of scientific research. This leads us to break with the quiet and passive consciousness with which many researchers (sic.) Are guided in the field of research, based on the principle that to search is to apply a sequence of instruments whose information is organized, in turn, in a series of statistical procedures without having to produce a single idea. (González Rey, 2005, p.3).

The capacity for continuous reflection, then, becomes fundamental for the development of the role of researcher / a, since the research is also perpassada by its

subjective processes. This is the construction of knowledge based on human production that is generated within the relational and dialogical process of research. Thus, the empirical moment feeds the theory and allows the researcher or the researcher the theoretical personalization in front of the studied phenomenon.

On this, Gonzalez Rey (2013) points out:

To construct this configuration theoretically is a complex process that will imply the capacity of the researcher (sic) to generate meanings capable of integrating diverse empirical manifestations that only become intelligible before the meaning organized by the researcher in the course of the research. (González Rey, 2013, page 30).

Within this perspective, the constructive-interpretative method allows to characterize the production of knowledge as something that never exhausts the type of problems that it studies. A new field of reality is formed that generates new aspects that are susceptible of gaining meanings in the course of the research, enabling the elaboration of a new theoretical dimension.

It should be emphasized that the notion of method to which we refer is closely related to the theoretical definitions that support it, that is, it is the methodological elaboration that supports the expansion and theoretical development in the empirical field. This theoretical model also develops from the hypotheses or questions that are constructed throughout the research (González Rey, 2012).

It is in this context that the process of theoretical construction is inserted in the constant reorganization of the researcher's or researcher's thinking, that the indicators appear. According to González Rey (2005, 2005b), these are hypothetical elements that generate meaning within the process of information construction and lead to the intelligibility of the process studied in the course of the research.

Within this characteristic dynamism of the research, we highlight the legitimacy of the singular within a context that starts with the relationship built with and the participant of the research that generates an authentic expression in the dialogical moments and that allows the researcher or researcher to construct a new theoretical model based also in its subjective production.

This subjective production that is configured in the relational space between researcher and participant of the research may contain in itself a reflexive character that starts from the dialogue and brings the possibility of emergence of the subject. Thus we know that a person emerges subject when it generates options of subjectivation that conflict, intentionally or not, with the hegemonic normative systems of the social space in which it lives, generating alternatives of subjective sense that acquire a subversive character in relation to the hegemonic order.

In order to break the boundaries imposed by the social context, the emergence of the subject condition is necessary, because within the social fabric where this subject acts, new limits and life options will be generated (Gonzalez Rey, 2005). Being a subject is "a condition that is achieved permanently in the process of action and relations that

accompany a process of subjectivation” (González Rey, 2007, 184).

Emerging subject, in several contexts, brings to light the human capacity to think critically, in addition to the hegemonic discourses. In this sense, new questions and actions are always elaborated, and the person becomes responsible for himself and for his own life. Thus, the subject is the one capable of creating moments of tension between the rationality of positivist science and the dominant normative logic, starting from their life experiences that can lead to the subversion of part of this system.

We perceive here the dialogue as the core of the research, because it is from it that the different social or individual issues that permeate the life of the participant and that shape subjectively depart from it (González Rey, 2005).

In the words of González Rey (2005, pg 14):

Communication is the privileged space in which the subject is inspired by his different forms of symbolic expression, all of which will be ways to study his subjectivity and the way in which the universe of his objective social conditions appears constituted at that level.

In this way, we emphasize that it is from this element of communication that it is possible to understand the subjective senses and configurations, the way in which they are organized and how the participant’s life processes are subjectivated.

In short, these three guiding principles of research point to the significant importance of maintaining a reflective look at Qualitative Epistemology as an alternative in the way of thinking about the quality of qualitative research in Psychology, in order to perceive that the act of research is beyond simple data collection and involves in depth the dialogue and reflective capacity of the researcher.

5 | CONCLUSIONS

By the way of conclusion, one can understand that the scientific doing in Psychology was uncritically impacted by the appropriation of positivism used in the study of philosophy and other sciences. This was mainly due to the absence of epistemology and ontology in research on psychological phenomena. That is, psychologists adhered to the qualitative approach devoid of theoretical, and epistemological awareness, using qualitative research as an instrumental resource.

In that scenario, in the face of the need for a differentiated methodological input, which favored the deep knowledge of the object under study, in order to understand it in its specificities and complexity, and which, therefore, made it possible to study subjectivity as a system, by assigning categories proposed by the theory of subjectivity, González Rey proposes the Qualitative Epistemology, introduced as an alternative to existing proposals that limited a concrete approach and established a standard against the rigor of what was being investigated. The author thus provides the basis for an epistemological reflection, which would understand the historical, cultural and subjective dimension of human phenomena.

By proposing a new epistemological and methodological basis, it became possible to generate theoretical visibility of the subjective processes that take shape in the person's experiences, in front of the different spheres of his life.

From the above, it was emphasized the differentiated character of the Qualitative Epistemology and the heuristic contributions to the development of the studies of the psychological phenomena, making it possible to think of a distinct epistemological framework, in which naturalistic conceptions are overcome by a differentiated approach of the object, considering its complexity.

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