Knowledge affects in epistemology: choice and subjectivity in Communication research[1]

A afetividade do conhecimento na epistemologia: a subjetividade das escolhas na pesquisa em Comunicação

LUIS MAURO SÁ MARTINO[a]
Faculdade Cásper Líbero, Postgraduate Program in Communication. São Paulo – SP, Brazil

ÂNGELA CRISTINA SALGUEIRO MARQUES[b]
Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Postgraduate Program in Communication, Belo Horizonte – MG, Brazil

ABSTRACT
This essay outlines some aspects of subjectivity and otherness in Communication research. It argues that, in Communication Research, subjectivity is the prime research condition, and the relationship with the otherness preceds any epistemological action. Historically, from a Positivist point of view, subjectivity is an obstacle for scientific research, as it would be the place for affects and emotions that disturbs the rational evaluation of anything. However, distinguished epistemologists such as Bachelard and Morin have argued that subjectivity is a condition of scientific knowledge, as there is no 'objective' knowledge outside the conditions of knowing.
Keywords: Epistemology, otherness, subjectivity

RESUMO
Este ensaio propõe uma reflexão sobre a alteridade e as relações intersubjetivas nos estudos de comunicação, partindo das experiências de orientação de pesquisa em diversos níveis, da iniciação científica ao pós-doutorado. De um ponto de vista positivista, a subjetividade é compreendida como um obstáculo para a pesquisa, na medida em que, local de cruzamento de emoções e afetos, opõe-se à análise racional. Contrariamente, alguns epistemólogos como Bachelard e Morin argumentam que não há conhecimento fora de condições subjetivas específicas. Argumentamos que na pesquisa em comunicação não apenas a subjetividade é uma condição fundamental, como a relação com a alteridade precede qualquer ação epistemológica.
Palavras-chave: Epistemologia, alteridade, subjetividade

INTRODUCTION: THE ORIENTATION CLINIC

WHEN OUR POSTGRADUATE students need to talk about their difficulties in developing research approaches, especially those who carry out empirical research whose objects are both practices and subjects whose complexity in lifestyle defy any theory or methodological scope, an ethnographic book by Loïc Wacquant presents elements for valuable discussion: *Body & soul: notebooks of an apprentice boxer* (*Corpo e alma: notas etnográficas de um aprendiz de boxe*, 2002). In one of his first footnotes, the author expresses a fascination for the world of boxing and fighters. He also mentions glimpses of conversations with Pierre Bourdieu, his thesis supervisor at that time: "Pierre Bourdieu told me the other day that he was afraid that I could be seduced by my object... Little does he know that I am already far beyond seduction" (Ibid: 7)[2].

The recurrence of the political, ethical, affective-epistemological and practical dilemmas presented by our students, associated with our own difficulty in constructing with them reflections and analyses enabling the ability of representing what was communicated via *empiria*, was directed towards the need to embrace the affections and nuances of otherness in writing (Marques, Martino, 2015).

The notion *orientation clinic* refers to the context and reciprocal implications of the protagonists in this scenario: supervisor and supervised engaging in the task of jointly producing a moving text as a result of affective and intellectual investment, as well as welcome and reception activities. As pointed out by Macedo (2012: 54), "[…] in the clinical scope, in its situation of uniqueness, subjects are invited to work themselves. In the clinic, listening to the other also means listening to the other inside me. I also listen to myself, I listen to my implications". For the author, the reciprocal implication of supervisor and supervised reveals that a clinical position is, above all, an ethical stance. "Thus, the clinic has to be considered, above all, epistemology, a listening position of the other, of myself, as intelligence of complexity, temporality and opacity" (Ibid. 55).

Under these aspects, the reflections proposed in this paper emerge from epistemological practices in the Communication field. If epistemological discussions usually occur in specific places, epistemological practices are scattered in each moment of research, where it is possible to observe resonances of thoughts and problems in the field.

The object studied here is not systematic, but constant: they are the questions and problematizations brought by researchers during supervision meetings. It would function similarly to a *clinical activity*, almost a *clinic* of epistemological

practice in which challenging cases aiming for reflection on the supervision practice are discussed.

This also clearly refers to a reflection process: according to Martin (2013), Bianchetti and Machado (2012), Schnetzler and Oliveira (2010), and Gondim and Lima (2007), the supervision relation is always an ambivalent exchange. We bring this discussion to the agenda as participants provoked by situations into thinking dialogically about its transformation.

By eliminating the myths surrounding supervision activities – justified somehow by certain practices that, although extrapolating the activity of *research supervision,* end up being a task of supervisors nevertheless – it is possible to understand the moment of supervision as unique for exchanging ideas and establishing discussions, not only of individual or group research, but also regarding the way research is developed. Thus, epistemological practice can be understood as the set of reflections about "wanting-to-do" research, in contrast to the fabrics of knowledge woven in discussions of the field (Corazza, 1996).

Here, we focus on the epistemology present in the daily routine of research. According to Bachelard (1976: 14), we are concerned not with the "vigorous rationalism of the morning", with the objective luminosity of the vigor of certainty, but rather with the "afternoon empiricism": exactly when the subjectivity of a researcher comes in, who has to deal with questions and inquiries that are more important to delineate research as they are left behind and hidden under a cloak of scientificity/scientism, which insists on being perpetuated in the universe of Human Sciences.

There is a considerable and welcome discussion on epistemological issues *per se*, but there seem to exist few papers that effectively try thinking the conditions of epistemology in the development of Communication research, in large part focusing on the theoretical discussion about the methodological approach, episodic in this field of knowledge. If the numbers serve as a clue, there are at least thirty-five books in circulation approaching theory and epistemology, against seven books and just a few essays on methodologies and research practices (Lopes, 1999; Santaella, 2001; Baptista, 2003; Maldonado et al., 2006; Maldonado; Bonin; Rosário, 2008; Maldonado et al., 2012; Bonin; Rosário, 2013; Braga, 2005; 2010; Ferrara, 2014; Martino, 2016).

Epistemology does not exist outside its possible conditions, while at the same time, by its very existence, it is also a form of questioning that transforms these conditions. According to Ferreira (2003), it is not possible to understand the epistemological scope outside the political instance. To these two dimensions it is possible to add a third one, intersectional: the subjectivity of researchers in epistemological practices.

A

In the research daily routine, when choosing *practices*, the epistemological vigor and the contradictions of policies relate to the intentions of the researcher, creating in this triple intersection a dynamic movement through which research develops.

Hyland (2012: 194), in an extensive paper on the relations between identity, subjectivity and institutional conditions of research, presents a series of negotiation strategies between the subjectivity of the researchers and the *objective* practices one needs to embrace to participate in the *academic community*.

Epistemological uncertainties and impasses permeating Communication studies still manifest in the singular universe of each research, from scientific initiation to postdoctoral studies, when questions leave the space of epistemological discussion to become actual research activities.

With the urgent pace of academic activities and production, the discussion space of research does not always question its fundamentals, often walking on trails already traveled, thus resulting in the space for critical thinking becoming a space of repetition and re-elaboration.

It is necessary to return continually to the fundamental questions of the field in order to find other ways of thinking them. Against the illusion that some questions would already be *answered* as they have already been asked in the past, it is necessary to continually address these questions. Moreover, it is this action that makes them very important.

Every new research proposes fundamental reflections about the epistemology of Communication: *is this a Communication study? Is this object suitable for research in this field? Which methods and approaches allow for the construction of a communicative approach about the object? What are the relations between the object of knowledge and the empirical object?* Even if the Communication field has been formulating these issues for decades, and therefore these questions may seem outdated in some aspects, it is worth remembering that they impose themselves as a challenge to each researcher, thus being under continuous renewal.

In addition, this research set as a whole constitutes what we know as *Communication field*. More than any technical definition theoretically or epistemologically sustained *a priori*, we understand it as the set of research in a field that allows us to observe its limits, potentials and derivations – hence the need to think in each research what is valid in terms of its relevance to communication.

This text runs parallel to the reflections previously developed by the authors in several spaces of interlocution (Martino; Marques, 2014; Martino, 2016). Therefore, the discussions presented here aim to synthesize, expand and develop the debates proposed in the works mentioned.

SUBJECTIVITY IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF RESEARCH

One of the entryways for observing the "morning rationalism" mentioned by Bacherlard (1976) would be the affective relation established between the researcher and his/ her research. The subjectivity aspect of research practices is often a talking point in research methodology books and handbooks in the form of a question that could be read as an insoluble paradox of gnosiology: if the observer cannot leave the point of view of his/her subjective singularity, what is the validity of his/her knowledge and which are the possibilities of sharing it with others? In some way, this question replaces the problematic of objectivity as opposed to subjectivity. In addition, that is not the approach proposed here.

The starting point is a question on how research is inscribed in the researcher's life (Lopes, 2003, 2004, 2010): the act of accomplishing research not only mobilizes the researcher's intellectual and cognitive energies, but it also has a substantial affective investment in order to have time, dedication, and effort to spend, perhaps for years, on a single subject or range of related concepts.

The research activity derives from the subjectivity of the researcher: something that disturbs him/her, bothers him/her or embarrasses his/her curiosity can be topics and research problems to be developed. An uncomfortable feeling concerning some issue makes the researcher question his/her certainties in order to point to something he/she does not know and, precisely for this reason, this becomes a subject of research. Even the *intellectual* interest mentioned is not without a particularly affective face (Thomas, 2010). As Barbosa and Hess (2010) synthesize, every research in Human Sciences deals with the researcher himself/herself.

Teaching in higher education can be one of the motivators, especially in the case of a specific type of student who, since graduation courses, presents signs of interest in this field, participating in scientific initiation activities or writing elaborate course completion monographs. In other words, it is a choice made towards academic research (Inácio Filho, 2005).

Affective involvement is one of the elements responsible for instigating the will to know, the willingness to learn and, indeed, to review one's own internal dispositions regarding not only the object and the research practice, but also as a world view – hence the research experience has a transforming potential for the researcher, shifting it from established certainties to temporary doubts and the uncanny (Freud, 2010 [1919]).

However, at the same time, there also appears to be a number of risk elements observed in this context.

The attachment to certain topics or perspectives, the difficulty researchers have to formulate cuts, abandoning definitions or leaving topics aside, have

some of its roots in the affective gesture governing the elaboration of some research project.

When it is not opposed to the rationality of research practice, however questionable the perspective of reason might actually be, this affective element tends to present consequences for the epistemological practices that can be translated not only as a persistent attachment to certain assumptions and points of view, but also seeking, in some cases, to force the methodological and empirical developments in order to offer results already expected.

However, which are the possibilities of knowledge based on a necessary subjectivity?

In a text about the possibility of religious people to develop sociological studies about religion, Pierucci (1997) argues that interest in the subject is an *a priori* impediment to the study, since works developed under these conditions tend to be apologetic or even proselytizing. Echoing Bourdieu (1980), Pierucci questions the validity of knowledge before the interests: how to *speak badly* of the institution to which one is attached? However, we can understand this perspective of distance as a possibility of disconnection from the reality experienced and that perhaps in the context of research practices this means the artificial elaboration of a place *outside* society, a possible *view from nowhere.*

The experience would be a hindrance to research – the place of speech within the scientific field is characterized by a relative autonomy that cannot be constrained by links of another order. Distancing not only highlights the characteristics of the scientific field as an autonomous space, but it is also an epistemological premise in which conceptual, ethical and methodological decisions anchor.

However, at least since the 1990s, several authors such as Bhabha (2006), Butler (2006), and Spivak (2008) point the opposite way. Experience does not have to be taken into account, as it is one of the conditions that allow for the elaboration of research. By positioning themselves alongside the *subalterns* in each research, these authors choose to take an approach to the place of intellectuals.

Spivak (1996: 307), for example, in an interview with the editors of *The Spivak Reader*, comments on some of the dilemmas that crossed the way she constructed her implication in elaborating a narrative which, according to her, "will work in the benefit of the subaltern" [3]

According to Spivak, the most general answer about her essay *Can a subaltern speak?* was that she had not acknowledged that a subaltern can speak. According to her, some had even suggested that she was not allowing the expression of resistance. She comments about her desire, as an intellectual, not to speak for

[3] Excerpt from the original in English: "Working for the subaltern is precisely to bring them, not through cultural benevolence, but through extra-academic work, into the circuit of parliamentary democracy. Because the subaltern, any subaltern anywhere, is today, de jure, a citizen of some place or the other. So this is something that has to be kept in mind. Working for the contemporary subaltern really means putting one's time and skills on the line so that this can happen." All the translations were made by the authors.

subalterns specifically on behalf of subaltern women, but to allow in her writing the creation of a scene of expression and listening to these women.

Thus, the author defines her place of speech from the political gesture of being with them and presenting herself to them to produce a common knowledge able to give origin to a meeting of distinct ways of knowledge in which one does not gain prominence over the others. Instead, each one shares the same activity of elaborating and constructing interlocution scenes in which subalterns speak, are heard, and considered.

Spivak's speech tells us that, despite her constant dialog with Foucault and Deleuze, at the time of writing her essay points out that it was necessary to make the young Indian's voice stand out from the one produced by the two French philosophers who, in her opinion, despite detecting the lines of force that exercise the power of invisibility and invalidation of ways of knowledge, could not imagine which constraints and desires would be implied in the actions and ways of existence of the *others* in Europe.

Spivak (1996: 307) demonstrates that we all have a place of speech, a social, ethical, and political location from which we "try to learn from and keep alive"[4] committed rules and attitudes towards the criticism of inequality. The place of speech would be for her, at the same time, the reflexive construction of a position and the ethical responsibility aroused by the way in which such positioning can constrain and affect other groups, presenting obstacles to the design of the conditions that allow them to reach citizenship and emancipation.

Thus, rather than an individual experience of legitimation within an already constituted group, the place of speech implies identifying how collective subjects are positioned in hierarchical power relations, questioning authoritative and totalitarian discourses and narratives.

In this regard, Spivak and her research on subaltern insurgencies point out how they emerge not as a completely positive identity, with a sovereign self-consciousness, but as political subjects connected to a network of differentiated and potentially contradictory threads. She transforms the gesture of "working for the subalterns" in a method of research and a place of speech from which emerge conducting concerns of scientific inquiries: subjectivity and life trajectories gain importance as it is from there that emerge the questions that are transformed, afterwards, into research questions.

The study of the group or social space to which one links is no longer seen as impossible but rather necessary: the proximity of the research subject to the theme researched is the condition that enables research itself (Klinger, 2016; Rago, 2013).

[4] Excerpt from the original in English: "Even as we try to learn from and keep alive the rules and fragments of a compromised responsibility-based cluster of attitudes with which the general problems that we confront in postindustrial societies can be critiqued, and perhaps in some remote, impossible future, even solved; even as we try to keep them alive, we cannot forget that working for the subaltern means the subaltern's insertion into citizenship, whatever that might mean, and thus the undoing of subaltern space."

In the *orientation clinic*, this type of question focuses on questions related to the researchers' place of speech.

On the one hand, for example, the concern of studying the situation experienced: *Can I study the company where I work?* or *Can I analyze the movement in which I am a militant?* based on the present biography becoming, through clearly defining one's interest, an impediment in the constitution of a place of scientific speech (a religious person cannot be a sociologist of religion and a soccer fan cannot develop research on communication and soccer etc.).

On the other hand, there is a research proposal based on a biographical narrative: the trajectory of the research subject is a pole of ignition and a claim of irrefutable validity of the research demand or its catalysts (e.g., only people who have suffered bullying could study it; only victims of racism would be allowed to research this subject, and so on). The affective relation with the object, seen as an obstacle from the first perspective, becomes a condition for the second – with biography legitimizing the place of scientific speech. In addition to this, there is the dilemma of constructing a space *outside* the experience analyzed, covering it with the ethical principles considered adequate for the data to be properly collected and represented in the text (experimentation, affects and sensations become objects of attachments, profuse footnotes and humorous comments in defense boards).

According to Fassin (2008), it is possible to do research guided by the affects at the same time as being rigorous, ethical, and coherent. Rigor is not confused with objectivity but derives from an internal coherence of research: coherence between the problem that guides us, the concepts mobilized, and the methodology created from these elements. Rigor also requires detailed analyses in which the researcher's political-epistemological implications and historical, social, and institutional influences that cross the practice of research and its discursive construction are explicitly manifested. In other words, rigor is not only a description of facts and methodological procedures designed to observe them, but should be included in dialectic actions (ethical negotiation with the perspective of the respondents). It is not a matter of innocently attempting to solve ethical problems as presented in our research trajectory, but rather of striving to formulate them pertinently in order to capture their theoretical, cultural, human, and political dilemmas. "We do not solve an *aporia*, [...] we explore it through the work of explaining ethical issues, clarifying their tensions and negotiating localized and provisional responses" (Ibid. 132-133)[5].

The starting point of this biographical interest and investment, affirming or denying the bond of knowledge of the other, manifests itself in a second space: in the bond to otherness, which, formed in an intersubjective web of openings and closures, also drives the perspective of epistemological analysis of research.

[5] According to the original text: "On ne dépasse pas une aporie: on l'explore [...] dans le travail d'explicitation des questions éthiques, d'exploration de leurs enjeux et de négociation de réponses locales et provisoires."

FROM OTHERNESS TO THE OTHER AS AN *OBJECT*

Research obliges us to face otherness. In Social Sciences research, this subject is always related to the other that challenges us to think the relation between the researcher's ego and the *other*: the research work, thinking from Lévinas (2007), happens in the space of *we*, which, as the French author recalls, is not the sum of more than one ego, but forms another meeting place.

Regardless of the epistemological position chosen for its development, we can understand research work as an exercise of approximation to the other.

This *other*, in a broad sense, implies an object relation to find a researcher: the *object of research*, the *object of knowledge*, the *empirical object* and similar denominations indicate the point of view of placing the question as external to the researcher. In this broad conception, the otherness that research imposes the researcher can be understood as the set of elements that will become present when conducting research – documents, texts, concepts and methods become, in the eyes of the subject, an otherness that he/she will need to manage (Martinelli, 1999: 26).

However, in daily research, the institutional constraints of deadlines and obligations do not always allow one to see the other in this way. The encounter with subjectivity in research apparently cannot be taken in equivalence with any other encounter, as it occurs in the methodologically controlled situation of the research.

Two different perspectives on *science* guide these questions. However, the opposition that we developed here is not resolved by the choice of one or the other: on the contrary, our argument is that the current model of research is formed by a little elaborate adaptation of the two – our scientific studies, originated from subjective problems, are complemented by objective methods in the encounter with otherness. The epistemological problematic is derived towards methodological choice and, at that moment, it increases the perception of the objective *distance* between the researcher and his/her object.

Affect towards research constitutes one of the guidelines of practice, and it is not surprising that other instances of subjectivity populate the research space. Next to a psychoanalytic approach, we can observe certain situations in supervision relations: for example, when researchers who, in previous instances, demonstrated a high research capacity and yet leave aside the impulse to research, academic opportunities and even, in certain cases, present difficulties to write. This dynamic assumes that subjective factors often excluded from the *serious* or *practical* scope of the research need to be taken into account at the time of research activities.

In the supervision relation, Schnetzler and Oliveira (2010) emphasize that the intensity of the bond established throughout research activity not

only mobilizes cognitive resources but also emotional and affective ones in order to verify research developments – or in frustration to the contrary. This relation seems to become more evident when, due to the conditions of research production, supervisors extend the limits of their activities by adding technical, bureaucratic and administrative tasks to an introductory space of investigation.

Otherness, at this moment, runs the risk of not being understood as such, and instead as an *object* of research, from which *data* or *discourses* are extracted in order to be analyzed with a *theoretical framework* that, in advance, already qualifies the other within categories: he/she is part of a *social class*, an *age group*, a *gender* or *ethnicity* to remain in the repertoire of Social Sciences, space in which Communication is located.

Of course, the classification procedure is one of the presuppositions of the scientific activity and the construction of hermeneutic characteristics is one of the elements that presides the heuristic operationalization of research itself. However, to which classificatory procedure are we referring? The exercise of *classifying* otherness potentially becomes the exercise of reducing the other to the theoretical-methodological models that guide research. The *object* nomenclature, in this case, seems to withstand the evaluations of ethics committees in research in a sense perhaps more gnosiological than epistemological: the idea of *studying* and *understanding* the other by extracting *results* from specific methods.

Broadly criticized from an epistemological perspective, as Morin (2001) or Santos (1998, 2010) highlight, it is interesting to note its persistence as a method: research methodology handbooks rarely dedicate any space to questions related to the intersubjectivity existing in research work in Human Sciences, focusing fundamentally on the demands of what to do in order to obtain certain information.

Researchers who differ in many respects seem to agree with the need to question this relationship.

Morin (1996, 1998, 2009) emphasizes an essay-like and comprehensive dimension of sociological research, insisting on the need to consider that, in Sociology, the relation between researcher and researched is, above all, a relation between subjects. It is necessary, in this regard, to always seek a "meta-point" of view that implies the questioning of the research accomplished, recalling that in the relation between subjects there is no "neutral point" for the observer. Only the "meta-point" of observation can offer a parameter to think the directions of the research.

In the antipodes of this thought, but approaching a similar question, Bourdieu (1980), at the same time claiming the status of Science for Sociology, does not neglect the constant reiteration of the need to examine the conditions

of force from which research emerges. His comment does not refer to the subjectivity of the researcher, according to Morin's understanding, but to the social conditions of research production – for example, the implications of the scientific field within which one works for the election of more or less "noble" or even "scientific" objects, subjectivized by the researcher in his/her scientific "habitus".

Although situated in quite different fields, both authors suggest the need to observe issues related to subjectivity in research as a determining factor in the possibilities of effectively knowing something about the society in which one lives.

This perspective is linked in some way to the study of the possibilities of making science – and the ethical point of view imposed here is not related to considerations of respect or to the specifically moral component of research, but to the very condition of knowing something in the space of relations with the other to be researched – *being researcher* already puts the perspective of an interval towards the researched. Understood in the relational aspect, ethics is one of the epistemological foundations of research, since it is based on it that the possibilities of knowledge construction are unveiled.

THE OBJECTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCHER

The Sociology of Knowledge has devoted considerable space to external issues of knowledge practices. Several works, now classic, refer fundamentally to the urgency of external conditioning factors of scientific research from a tradition inaugurated by Weber (2010) and followed by very different lines of thought.

However, we only recently began thinking the conditions of subjectivation of the objective, institutional and political factors existing within the epistemological practices of research construction. It seems that the topic of the subjectivity of who researches continues to be relegated to the background within a space of fixed certainties marked by a persistent "objectivity" present in the notion of "knowledge" in circulation in the Communication field – and, for the rest, in all qualitative research (Nygaard, 2015: 45).

Research projects are born from the meeting between objective conditions – which means, the power device to which epistemological practices relate – and its possibility of subjectivation by the individual interested in *conducting research*, from scientific initiation to postdoctoral studies. Within these conditions, there is a long learning not only of academic practices in the formation of a *habitus* as mentioned by Bourdieu (1992), but a process that seems to go considerably deeper into the constitution of being a researcher.

Engagement with research also occurs on a highly personal and subjective level, customarily neglected in the context of academic social practices, being manifested only in times of tension and rupture – when the magic between the researcher and his/her research shrinks from the epistemological, institutional and technical constraints stemming from the academy's own practices.

This does not imply invectives against bureaucracy or technical procedures, which are essential to the dynamics of any field. However, this is not what is at issue here.

It is possible to note the outbreak of the issue when the *ways of conducting* among institutional practices gain prominence in the face of epistemological elaboration activities. Institutional constraints at several levels sometimes seem to be staggering in a set of formal-bureaucratic obligations (models, norms and rules to be followed at the time of writing, and their representational *mise en forme*) that put activities in the background of research.

At this point, there is a certain contrast, or even an internal contradiction, between the discourses of questioning the *scientific status* of the Communication Field, with an insistent refusal and criticism – correct, in our view – of a positivist model of science, and the acritical adoption of this model. The search for systematized and well-represented knowledge – we could even use the term *apostilled* – seems to manifest itself equally in the epistemological instances during the moments of elaboration of the research.

If it is possible to play with labels, the research routine often takes place in the movement between postmodern theories and positivist methods. This may be reflected, in practice, and as indicated in other moments (Martino, 2016), as the distance between discussions of *theoretical chapters* and the methodological operationalization of concepts at the moment of definition and analysis of the *empirical object*. Otherness is reduced to the *object*, to the *information* or *discourse provider* from which it complements what theoretical research already indicated.

The fluidity of the concept of *science* present in the Communication field seems to contribute in some way to this state of affairs. At the same time, a science model is adopted and rejected. There are quantification criteria presiding over the issues of academic progression, production requirements, and various qualification stratifications based on criteria that seem to demand, in Communication research, the adoption of a scientific model, similar to what we see in the production of Anglo-Saxon countries – numbers, tables, graphs, and data.

Indeed, the problem would not be in the adoption or the criticism of this epistemological model itself. The point is that this pattern of scientific activity does not seem to be justified within Communication research: the impossibility

of producing quantifiable results, the methodological difficulties of quantitative measurement given the amount of qualitative research in the field, the existence of a range of different objects which prevent a re-approximation that does not occur through disciplinary juxtaposition – we are not talking about *interdisciplinarity* – challenge the *scientific* parameters of the field – by which, on the other hand, it is judged and evaluated.

These contradictions can escape the perception of who is involved in the moment of academic production. Above all, epistemological reflection, according to Signates (2013), does not necessarily accompany research practices.

Given this scenario, it is possible to understand why the search for formatting *models* leads to the search for theoretical-methodological *models* that can conduct research with guarantees not only that something is being *done right*, but also that it is in accordance with the approval of defense boards and the *ease* of accomplishment of the work from specified *models*: there is a guarantee inside the right and canonical formula, the "magic words" – often the concepts in vogue during a period – for the accomplishment of research. As if the use of theoretical references, usually of high complexity, were the result of a decision prior to the exploration of the object, thus taking *theory* as a set of postulates to be *proven* by the empirical moment of research.

In this respect, it is common to observe the conversion of the empirical object into *examples*, or the acritical and sometimes formal use of complex theoretical frameworks for object analysis. In this way, we meet the demands of an objective knowledge while leaving aside the perception of a specific subjectivation mode of what it would mean *to do research*. The point here is the *application* of models and formulas established within a certain academic framework acritically sustained because of its established symbolic value.

At this point, the *academic genealogies* responsible for more or less rigid affiliation to one or another mode of research related to the production dynamics of accepted theoretical-methodological truths, with more or less criticism and restrictions and within the university environment come into play. This kind of linkage of the researcher tends to guarantee his/her entry and recognition in academic spaces that would otherwise present difficult access.

At this moment emerges the researcher's subjectivity confronted with his/her decision of acquiring knowledge with the possibilities and political-epistemological arrangements regarding his/her position. In some cases, when the disagreement between expectations and possibilities reaches very high levels, we arrive at a point of rupture: a moment in which research, previously understood by the researcher as a space of discovery, becomes a bureaucratized activity among the obligations of affirmation and support of a *truth*.

The levels of psychological distress related to this type of demand are usually high and, in some way, they are also responsible for creating and reinforcing some common joke in the field about the difficulties of doing research, turning knowledge production practices into a burden from which the researcher wants to get rid of as soon as possible, at any cost (Beillrot, 2001; Carvalho, 2015).

In addition, the period of investigation is crossed by numerous, already existing temporalities or space-times and by those created especially because of the research situation itself. Such variety of created space-times decentralizes and de-territorializes research, faces institutionalized and consensual spaces-times, thus producing new assemblages and new and unpredictable (and uncontrollable) events.

FINAL REMARKS

In the problematic moments of any investigation, beyond institutional parameters, the researcher's subjectivity emerges, often visible in the anguish that surrounds the meanderings of academic production. Not by chance, the myths of university corridors are buoyed by subjective reports of the difficulties posed by each research or by the relation with colleagues and supervisors to the point of gaining prominence face of the elements of *scientific* investigation itself.

The presentation of Communication as a *scientific* academic field, sometimes understood as a setting of positivist inquiry, is in certain cases a factor that affects the subjectivity of researchers, not always driven by the desire to acquiring knowledge, but by the concern with adjusting its epistemological restlessness to the demands of scientific or academic *activities*. Hence, the highly subjective practices of the research proposal are presented as *objective* forms of *scientific* knowledge production in a field or even in a *large field* that does not seem to support this kind of procedure.

One of the results of this process is the dissociation between the theoretical and methodological perspectives employed in the field. As observed by Martino (2016), the great theories employed in the Communication field do not constitute methodological operators able to offer parameters for research production. At that moment, the conceptual operators in the field, sometimes cognitively and affectively adopted by researchers, demonstrate an ontological insufficiency in terms of analysis of empirical objects – which perhaps cannot effectively be considered unexpected, as the object of knowledge in this case also does not present itself in a defined way.

Thus, we observe the emergence of a question: if Communication is a *science*, and as such, it is treated and defined within political-institutional instances, what is the resistance in defining basic points? At the same time,

given the apparent lack of consensus in these definitions, rendering much room for subjective elaboration, what is the reason for insisting on treating it as *science*? In terms of everyday practice, how to combine a subjective-theoretical and essayistic research predominant in the field with the requirements of an objective commitment linked to techniques of data collection and analysis that rarely dialog with theoretical developments? Some questions constantly proposed during supervision dialogs (for example, *Which author should I use?* or *How to conduct research so that it is not only a representation of experienced life, but also revives something experienced?*) suggest a tension between the use of some theoretical strand to *explain* the empirical data and the very elaboration, fabrication and creation of research via writing.

The dialog between theory and method may disappear at this point.

As a perspective and synthetic proposal of what was presented in this paper, perhaps it would be necessary to think that the relational operation put in march by Communication research has to welcome otherness, enabling us to think, see and speak about different worlds differently, allowing us to be part of the worlds which they (both operation and research) glimpse, providing us time to find a place in the midst of representative modeling and affective experimentation. ◼

REFERENCES

BACHELARD, G. *Epistemologia*. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1976.

BAPTISTA, M. L. C. Disciplinas teóricas: de entulho de currículo a campo do desejo e autopoiese. In: CONGRESSO BRASILEIRO DE CIÊNCIAS DA COMUNICAÇÃO, 26., 2003, Belo Horizonte. *Anais*… Belo Horizonte: Intercom, 2003.

BARBOSA, J.; HESS, R. *Diário de pesquisa*: o estudante universitário e seu processo formativo. Brasília: Liber Livros, 2010.

BEILLROT, J. A "pesquisa": esboço de uma análise. In: ANDRÉ, M. *O papel da pesquisa na formação e na prática de professores.* Campinas: Papirus, 2001. p. 51-64.

BHABHA, H. *The location of culture*. Londres: Routledge, 2006.

BIANCHETTI, L.; MACHADO, A. M. N. Apresentação. In: _____; _____ (Orgs.). *A bússola do escrever.* 3. ed. São Paulo: Cortez, 2012. p. 13-24.

BONIN, J.; ROSÁRIO, M. *Processualidades metodológicas.* Florianópolis: Insular, 2013.

BOURDIEU, P. *Questions de Sociologie*. Paris: Minuit, 1980.

_____. *Homo academicus*. Paris: Seuil, 1992.

A

BRAGA, J. L. Para começar um projeto de pesquisa. *Comunicação & Educação,* São Paulo, v. 10, n. 3, set./dez. 2005. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.11606/issn.2316-9125.v10i3p288-296

_____. A prática da pesquisa em comunicação: abordagem metodológica como tomada de decisões. *E-Compós,* Brasília, v. 14, n. 1, jan./abr. 2010. DOI: https://doi.org/10.30962/ec.v14i1.665

BUTLER, J. *Gender trouble*: feminism and the subversion of identity. Londres: Routledge, 2006.

CARVALHO, S. *Como não se faz um trabalho de conclusão de curso.* São Paulo: Saraiva, 2015.

CORAZZA, S. M. Labirintos da pesquisa, diante dos ferrolhos. In: COSTA, M. V. *Caminhos investigativos.* Porto Alegre: Mediação, 1996. p. 105-131.

FASSIN, D. L'éthique, au-delà de la règle: réflexions autour d'une enquête ethnographique sur les pratiques de soins en Afrique du Sud. *Sociétés Contemporaines*, v. 3, n. 71, p. 117-135, 2008. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.3917/soco.071.0117

FERRARA, L. D'A. A comunicação: da epistemologia ao empírico. In: ENCONTRO ANUAL DA COMPÓS, 23., 2014, Belém. *Anais…* Belém: Compós, 2014.

FERREIRA, J. Campo acadêmico e epistemologia da comunicação. In: LEMOS, A. et al. (Orgs.). *Mídia.br.* Porto Alegre: Sulina, 2003. p. 115-129.

FREUD, S. O inquietante. In: _____. *Obras completas de Sigmund Freud.* São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2010. v. 14. p. 329-376. Trabalho originalmente publicado em 1919.

GONDIM, L.; LIMA, J. *A pesquisa como artesanato intelectual*: considerações sobre método e bom senso. São Carlos: EdUFSCar, 2007.

HYLAND, K. *Disciplinary identities.* Cambridge: CUP, 2012.

INÁCIO FILHO, C. *A monografia na universidade.* Campinas: Papirus, 2005.

KLINGER, D. *Escritas de si, escritas dos outros.* Rio de Janeiro: 7Letras, 2016.

LÉVINAS, E. *Ética e infinito*. Lisboa: Edições 70, 2007.

LOPES, M. I. V. *Pesquisa em comunicação*. São Paulo: Loyola, 1999.

_____. A pesquisa e o ensino nas escolas de comunicação. In: PERUZZO, C. M. K.; SILVA, R. B. *Retrato do ensino em comunicação no Brasil.* São Paulo: Intercom; Unitau, 2003. p. 283-294.

_____. Pesquisa em comunicação: questões epistemológicas, teóricas e metodológicas. *Intercom – Revista Brasileira de Ciências da Comunicação*, São Paulo, v. 26, n. 1, p. 13-39, jan./jun. 2004.

_____. Reflexividade e relacionalismo como questões epistemológicas na pesquisa empírica de comunicação. In: BRAGA, J. L.; LOPES, M. I. V.; MARTINO, L. C. (Orgs.). *Pesquisa empírica em comunicação*. São Paulo: Paulus, 2010. p. 27-49.

MACEDO, R. S. *A etnopesquisa implicada*: pertencimento, criação de saberes e afirmação. Brasília: Liber Livros, 2012.

MALDONADO, A. E.; BONIN, J. A.; ROSÁRIO, M. N. *Perspectivas metodológicas em Comunicação*. João Pessoa: UFPB, 2008.

MALDONADO, A. E. et al. *Epistemologia, investigação e formação científica em comunicação.* Natal: EDUFRN, 2012.

MALDONADO, A. E. et al. *Metodologias de pesquisa em comunicação*. Porto Alegre: Sulina, 2006.

MARQUES, A. C. S.; MARTINO, L. M. S. A comunicação, o comum e a alteridade: para uma epistemologia da experiência estética. *Logos*, Rio de Janeiro, v. 22, p. 31-44, 2015.

MARTIN, M. S. Que faire des conseils (ou de la absence de conseil) de son directeur de thèse? In: HUNSMANN, M.; KAPP, S. *Devenir chercheur*: écrire une thèse en sciences sociales. Paris: Ehess, 2013. p. 63-79.

MARTINELLI, M. L. O uso de abordagens qualitativas em serviço social. In: _____. *Pesquisa qualitativa*: um instigante desafio. São Paulo: Veras, 1999. p. 19-30.

MARTINO, L. M. S.; MARQUES, A. C. S. Aproximações e ambivalências epistemológicas da pesquisa que se constitui entre a comunicação e o comunicar. *Lumina*, Juiz de Fora, v. 18, n. 1, p. 1-19, 2014.

MARTINO, L. M. S. Da teoria à metodologia: um ensaio sobre a construção de projetos em comunicação. *Revista Comunicação Midiática*, v. 11, n. 2, p. 22-35, ago./dez. 2016.

MORIN, E. *Sociologia*: a sociologia do microssocial ao macroplanetário. Portugal: Europa-América, 1996.

_____. *Ciência com consciência*. Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 1998.

_____. *A cabeça bem-feita.* Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 2001.

_____. *O Método 03 – O conhecimento do conhecimento.* Porto Alegre: Sulina, 2009.

NYGAARD, L. *Writing for scholars*. 2. ed. Londres: Sage, 2015.

PIERUCCI, A. F. Interesses religiosos dos sociólogos da religião. In: ORO, A. P.; STEIL, A. C. (Orgs.). *Globalização e religião*. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1997. p. 249-262.

RAGO, M. *A aventura de contar-se.* Campinas: Unicamp, 2013.

SANTAELLA, L. *Comunicação e pesquisa*. São Paulo: Hacker, 2001.

SANTOS, B. S. *Um discurso sobre as ciências.* Lisboa: Afrontamento, 1998.

_____. *Introdução a uma ciência pós-moderna.* Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 2010.

SCHNETZLER, R. P.; OLIVEIRA, C. *Orientadores em foco.* Brasília: Liber Livros, 2010.

A

SIGNATES, L. O que é especificamente comunicacional nos estudos brasileiros de comunicação na atualidade. In: BRAGA, J. L.; GOMES, P. G.; FERREIRA, J.; FAUSTO NETO, A. (Orgs.). *10 perguntas para produção do conhecimento em comunicação*. São Leopoldo: Unisinos, 2013. p. 19-29.

SPIVAK, G. C. *In other worlds.* Londres: Routledge, 2008.

_____. Subaltern Talk, interview with the editors. In: LANDRY, D.; MACLEAN, G. (Eds.). *The Spivak reader*. Londres: Routledge, 1996. p. 287-308.

THOMAS, B. *A filosofia e a felicidade.* Lisboa: Instituto Piaget, 2010.

WACQUANT, L. *Corpo e alma*: notas etnográficas de um aprendiz de boxe. Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará, 2002.

WEBER, M. *Metodologia das ciências sociais.* São Paulo: Cortez, 2010.