

# Chapter 6

## Psychology and LGBTI+: Science, Power, and Politics on Queer Perspectives in Brazil



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### 6.1 Introduction

The history of Brazilian psychology can be seen as a piece of political change in Brazilian society. Even though the epistemological and methodological changes have been more internal than external, it is very real that the historic division is not able to grasp the movements and ruptures in psychological science in Brazil. We are aiming in this chapter to offer a vision of chances, ruptures, and challenges in a queer perspective on psychological studies from a dissident's subject position (Tonelli et al., 2013).

In the present text, we intend to highlight the tensions and changes in the field of psychology when it comes to observing the path of the constitution of a queer positionality in the scientific making of this science. Therefore, to understand the changes in Brazilian psychology is to consider a political process of positioning and decolonization of scientific thought in the context of the so-called crisis of social psychology in Brazil (Jacó-Vilela, 2007; Mancebo et al., 2003; Sandoval, 2000; Spink & Spink, 2007). Also, it is significant to concern that the approaches to LGBTI+ issues have also been the interpellation of subject's conception and the epistemological and methodological mainstreaming bases (Tonelli et al., 2013).

At different times, the notion of the subject of dissidence and positionalities seems to indicate, in recent history, several changes that go through the conceptions of sexuality and gender, specifically of LGBTI+ themes and identities in the psychological field. One of these crucial transformations is the so-called "objects"

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turning into “subjects.” This change did not happen without a set of theoretical, political, and methodological changes within the production of knowledge itself.

The migration from the category of research object to the protagonists of psychology’s production to the subjects of sexual and gender dissidence meant a gradual transformation of science that, attentive to issues of gender and sexualities in pathologizing and objectifying orders, went through countless revisions considering the diversity of LGBTI+ subjects’ experiences. This migration expresses an efferescence of knowledge production no longer in the condition of abstract research objects but as a thought of psychology’s episteme. Whether by considering the interpellations coming from society and social movements (or by the crisis in legitimating systems of conservative and retrograde social orders), slowly in the last two decades, psychology has had to provide answers that indicate to us a process of queerization of scientific practice.

Our argument in this chapter is that these internal spins in psychology happened as a function of local and transnational social as so as political changes (Freitas, 2000). However, it was the interpellation installed from the crisis of social psychology that fertilized the internal soil, which nourished the confrontation of epistemic and methodological questions, not without litigation, but through dialogical tensions between science, power, and politics.

This analysis, therefore, will pursue this movement locating three political and epistemological turns in Brazilian social psychology, which erupted in the scientific scenario with specificities and crossings among them, although we can underline some idiosyncratic characteristics of each time as analytical keys that allow us to understand the queerization process of psychology:

1. The Latin American Marxist turn or the entry of dissident subjects into the analyses of social psychology
2. The feminist turn and LGBTI+ identities or the encounter of the subjects of sex and gender dissidence as an object
3. The ethical-epistemological turn or queer and transfeminist positions as an epistemic turn for social psychology: the insurgency of the “objects”

The decolonizing meanings (Tonial, Maheirie, & Costa, 2020) present in distinct facets of these changes that are aligned in our arguments, with a possible analysis of a process of autonomization and critical questioning of the scientific thought of Brazilian psychology and the visibility of the heterogeneity of the subjects of dissidence at the epicenter of these reflections, research, and professional practices, stand out especially from the 1980s in Brazil (Sandoval, 2000).

In this sense, positionality is a key concept because it refers, on the one hand, to the fact that the notion of dissidence operates in relational terms, as an effect of hierarchical distinction of normative positions. On the other hand, it inscribes dissidence in dynamics of unstable arrangements that involve heterogeneous elements in articulatory practices. We deal here with the construction of the subjects of dissidence among sciences, power, and politics. Based on Sheila Jasanoff (2004), the idea of dissidence has pointed how, in such articulations, subjects are situated and coproduced.

## 6.2 The Latin American Marxist Turn: Subjects of Dissidence as Social Class Oppression

Since the mid-1970s, the crisis in the Brazilian and Latin American social psychology becomes evident (Silva, 2019), although this has been a more general movement of several areas of scientific knowledge in many parts of the world: the critique of decontextualized theoretical-epistemological models regarding local realities and the political crisis of legitimization systems of the social order seen as scientific neutral (F. A. Costa, 2014; Lane, 1984).

We can perceive as nodal point of this crisis the appearance of dissident subjects of history: working class, poor, women, etc. In a movement to give visibility to the history of the defeated, for so long objectified and invisibilized, Brazilian social psychology produced its deepest crisis in that historical period (Silva & Veras, 2013).

This movement installed in the bases of psychological thought in the final years of the last century signified the emergence of the epistemological crisis of Brazilian (Costa, 2014; Lane, 1984) and Latin American social psychology. The crisis developed from the field of social psychology, it was a critique of psychology itself, which included the denunciation of false scientific neutrality, the totalization of pretended universalizations of theoretical models distant from the local complex reality, and the discursive legitimacy with the forms of power of the social order. That criticism/crisis was central to the field and had immeasurable effects (Spink & Cordeiro, 2018).

The center of the crisis was social psychology as a science (but its effects could be perceived in many other areas), since the epistemic criticism produced in the displacement of the naturalistic proposition about subjectivity dislocated the bases of psychological science, shaking even the most resistant areas in questioning their own practices. The nub of the crisis occurred from the articulation of the critique about the bases of psychological thought and the relation of science with functionalist and positivist perspectives of scientific and social thought that dealt, not without naivety, with conceptions of subjects with nothing to say about the contextual, local, and situated conditions. Thus, crisis and critique were responsible for new subjects, scientific problems, and methodologies.

Beyond the theoretical and methodological crisis instigated by the criticism to the colonialism of psychological thought and the ideology of scientific neutrality (Freitas, 2000; Sandoval, 2000), the crisis of psychology in Brazil also meant the emergence of the experiences of dissidence within psychological thought. From this perspective, it is possible to consider that political issues were fundamental to the twisting of psychology towards the inclusion of the working class as subject of its concerns. Social class issues become central to the development of critical social psychology in Latin America by putting the coloniality on the agenda and the idea of a latinoamericanization as a reference of thought (Mignolo, 2005).

Concerning this, it is important to underline that the crisis of Brazilian psychology meant more than an epistemic and methodological critique but a political turn in the basis of psychological scientific knowledge (Costa & Prado, 2016).

In this sense, the crisis was a critique of science, but also it dared to be an ideological and political critique against the legitimacy of the colonization process in scientific thought and the naturalizations of psychosociological processes. Although the consequence of the crisis was quite plural (Sandoval, 2000), a highlight about the field of interest of this chapter was the shift in the subject-object relationship in the very basis of psi knowledge (Parpinelli & Fernandes, 2011). At that moment, the possibility of considering dissident experiences was given from the notion of social class, which became one of the central markers to understand psychosociological processes and modes of subjectivation of the workers' movement (Sandoval, 1994).

The critique emerged from the crisis of social psychology, and spilling over many boundaries between areas in psychology was mainly psychology as a science. Although the notion of the subject is a contention of different conceptions (Prado & Toneli, 2013), the critique is based on a nonhistorical and dislocated conception of subjectivity from the set of its social, political, and economic relations (Lane, 1984).

The appearance and visibility of the experiences of dissident subjects at the center of psychology was the effect of a complex turn, since this change had epistemic and methodological consequences of various densities, meaning the bet on the development of sociohistorical theories, of participatory and qualitative methodologies, as well as of an intense debate on the epistemic bases and the subject-object relationship within the production of knowledge (Costa & Prado, 2016).

Issues such as power relations, social movements, the processes of political awareness, political engagement, and the effects of social class oppression become keys to a new view of psychological science on dissident experiences (Hur & Lacerda, 2016). The appearance of these themes and the complexity of thinking about the subjects in their concreteness in social reality put in focus critical questions to theoretical and methodological positions before the crisis (Silva & Veras, 2013).

The visibility of these subjects in psychological theories was crucial to review their epistemic and political positions, as well as to understand social class as a complementary analysis of the polymorphic positionalities of the dissident subjects.

The recognition of the working class as subjects of rights and subjects of change did not encompass the immediate recognition of other forms of oppression and subordination within Brazilian society, delegating to the centrality of scientific and discursive production a representation of the working class as masculine, binary, white, and heterosexual. This movement signified the entry of several fundamental themes on dissent but not always in a position more complexified by social and intersectional markers or even as a dialogical intervening field of differences.

Thematizing power relation forms of subordination and the effects on the construction of subjects indicate to us that the turn in psychology was relevant to politicize science. The denser link between science and politics became visible and essential to answer the question: for who is scientific knowledge intended?

This period of psychology was marked by the importance of Marxism's thoughts to the production of a sociohistorical perspective of psychology. This perspective undoubtedly brought power relations into the field of psychology as a field to be thematized and, at the same time, implied an epistemic and methodological revision

in several areas of research and intervention in psychology, particularly in social psychology. We consider that in this critical turn becomes a vast terrain of disputes, dissident positions, and themes that put at stake the articulation between scientific knowledge, the forms of legitimated social order, and interpellation dissent to power.

Although this revision was important for the politicization of psychology, this perspective simultaneously reduced the notion of the historical subject to a social class determination. That is, its protagonism from dissidence would be linked to the experience of economic oppression from the condition of social class.

This alignment was responsible for considering historical and economic conditions for the construction of subjectivities, as well as it condensed from the unified notion of social class as a social-economic category, all the dissident experiences, not counting other markers such as gender, sexuality, and race, as intersecting in the experiences of dissidence. The idea of unity of dissidence around the social class category was determinant in the delimitation of the idea of the subject in this context of Brazilian psychology.

This first turn (more characterized as the crisis of social psychology) was extremely important for the visibility of the relationship between science and politics, because of the addition of the working class as a social and political agent; however, the issues of gender and sexuality were not thematized, and a certain erasure of this corporeal and gendered subject was given from the unification of the notion of social class, identity, and social category. The debt that remains from the politicization of psychology is with the urgent answers that should be given to the interpellations by the feminist and LGBTI+ movements that, in the context of the late twentieth century, had the scientific field as a fundamental field of disputes. It is only in what we characterize here as the safe turn of Brazilian psychology towards a feminist agenda that we will perceive the multiplicity of dissidents being discussed in the field of psycho-science.

### **6.3 The Feminisms Turn and LGBTI+ Issues or the Encounter of the Subjects of Sex/Gendered Dissidence as an Object**

As pointed out, the opening for dissident experiences from a politically situated engagement raised important effects for the psychological sciences. It not only produced displacements in the boundaries between subject and object, but it also required a complexification of the notion of dissidence, as well as an expansion of what this field encompassed. If the centrality of social class to understand the constitution of subjects was unquestionable, the debates around identities, social movements, the relations between difference and inequality, and especially the criticism of the unitary subject of dissidence require new revisions in what was constituted as social psychology in Brazil (Costa & Prado, 2016).

The interpellation of heterosexist logic and gender binarisms, markedly influenced by feminists and by the LGBTI+ fights, is inscribed in this interpellations to the psychological sciences, linking what we identify as the second political and epistemological turn in Brazilian social psychology: the encounter of the subjects of sex/gender dissidence as an object.

This turn comprises two main movements: on the one hand, the critical turn in social psychology opened the way for approaches sensitive to essentializations and naturalizations in the field of gender and sexuality and committed to the debates around the various forms of oppression and prejudice in which heteronorm dissident subjects were submitted. On the other hand, despite the important political turn, the politically positioned and critical approach towards sex-gender dissidents did not necessarily represent epistemological twists in social psychology beyond those that had been foundational to the previous crisis.

Thus, the entry of the subjects of sex-gender dissidence into the debates also corresponded to a specific arrangement between science, power, and politics: the entry of LGBTI+ issues and subjects as objects to be known, subjected to intervention, and assimilated by psychological science.

It is important to emphasize that the novelty, in what we called as turn two, concerns the understanding of gender and sexuality from a sociohistorical perspective founded mainly through power relations. Although sex and gender have been categories present in psychological knowledge, here these categories will be invested with a more polemical alignment, thought from specific historical contexts, with constructionist perspectives, and always involved in power relations. This kind of theoretical consideration about analytical categories had effects on later theorizations that were extremely fruitful about the notion of subjects of dissidence. However, the themes of gender and sexuality become objects of analysis in psychology, this is not immediately and not linearly accompanied by the rupture of the logic of classifications in the psychological field and to the strengthening of gender and sexuality hierarchies, which are as long as the history of this discipline.

Therefore, the regulatory distinction that was established between heterosexuals and homosexuals is inscribed in this classificatory and normative ideal. It was erected placing heterosexuality as the order of nature and, in this sense, as the only experience capable of expressing human sexual desire in a healthy and balanced way. Scientific institutions reveal themselves as spaces of production, reproduction, and updating of a whole set of dispositions, through which heterosexuality is instituted and experienced as the only legitimate possibility of sexual and gender expression (Warner, 1993).

This set is called heteronormativity, and at its basis is the belief in the natural existence of two sexes that would be automatically and correspondingly translated into two complementary genders and modes of desire equally adjusted to “compulsory heterosexuality,” constituting a normative sequence sex-gender sexuality (Butler, 1990).

The scientific bias of this new conception transposed homosexuality, non-heterosexually oriented behaviors, and even less traditional sexual behaviors from the category of crime or sin to the category of diseases and perversions (J. F. Costa,

1995). The scientists of this period, mainly in medicine, physiology, and psychology, were crucial in the construction of this new discourse, playing a central role in the construction of conceptions and normalizations that affected the classificatory hierarchies of sexualities and genders.

From the second half of the twentieth century, feminism and LGBTI+ movement emerged as two political movements that challenged normatization processes denouncing their violent and rights-violating nature, with international and national repercussions. Both influenced a series of changes in science, culture, and society (and, although they are not analogous movements they have similarities, constituted by numerous phases, ruptures, continuities, and unique history), with a strong impact on the psychological field, one of the most normative scientific fields regarding the expressions of sexualities and genders in the social sciences, humanities, and health.

In the field of sciences in general, but especially in psychology and psychoanalysis, the sexual difference has been a key to understanding how science has been established as a new technology of production of gender binarism. It has historically established itself as its technology to become a system of legitimating social norms, particularly gender norms to regulate gender positions and expressions, the functions and places of bodies, and the expectations we have of the other. In this respect, Márcia Arán (2009), analyzing the field of psychoanalysis in the debates around gender norms and sexuality, demonstrates how psychoanalysis acts reiterating “device of sexual difference,” reintroducing, according to the author, what Thomas Laqueur (1992) described as the “model of the two sexes,” essentially binary, incommensurable, and qualitatively distinct, which starts to constitute itself as a norm from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Arán, 2009).

Psychology, in a sophisticated way, has historically been complicit in the heterosexism of sexual differences and gender inequality. With a scientific garb the social norm of gender/sexual binarism (named as gender norm) has been present in prescriptive and scientific explanations, often in an unquestionable way. In this way, perhaps one of the greatest impacts of the feminist movement in psychological science has been the discussion about sexual differences, evidencing the macho and heterosexist character of scientific thought (Nogueira, 2001), as well as the denaturalization of conceptions that were built with high scientific collaboration, such as the myth of maternity, care, and intelligence differences. The reaction to criticism was not necessarily unison, but it opened cracks so that feminist thought found in the bastion of sexual difference in the psychological field, one of its main adversaries to be deposed (Nogueira, 2001).

From a feminist perspective, several authors denounce the logic of sexual differences in the passage of Western ideology about the masculine and feminine, producing what has been called the “new” science in the twentieth century (Nogueira, 2001). With this, they call attention to the fact that the scientific discourses on sexual differences and gender binarism (supported on the logic of the genital complementarity of heterosexism) involved the production of institutional mechanisms of control, laws on sexual education of children, elements of maintenance of the



existing power and classifications, and normative ordinances of the inferiority of the feminine and non-heterosexually oriented sexual practices (Nogueira, 2001).

In turn, the LGBTI+ movement, besides contributing equally to the denaturalization of the so-called “normal” behaviors concerning gender positions and sexuality, introduced new levels of cultural and social values to think a less heteronormative science. In the political field, LGBTI+ movement put sexualities to the center of the public and political scene.

From the dispute for the legitimization of sexualities as a right, the denunciations of heterosexism as a social norm produced by gender binarism, and by the ideology of the complementarity of bodies, the LGBTI+ movement deconstructs the social norm as a necessity, producing legitimacies for us to understand its actions. In this scenario gender norms appeared as its most nodal expression “heteronorm,” which reveals itself as compulsory and mandatory, therefore, naturalized, instead of presenting itself as articulated by social practices and institutions.

As Maria Juracy Toneli-Siqueira (2008) points out, the first turn of social psychology had facilitated the incorporation of gender studies in its ethical, political, theoretical, and epistemological horizon. From studies centered on the harassment and male oppression through critical focus on the denaturalization of sexual difference (Toneli-Siqueira, 2008), it becomes evident how scientific knowledge – in psychology but not exclusively – about gender and sexuality issues, during the twentieth century, becomes a disputed field, a scenario of battles in which science, power, and politics were far from establishing well-defined boundaries. On the contrary, the subjects of dissidence, or the positionality of dissidence in the scientific universe, made multiple possible interfaces and blurring between science and society.

The dialogue of the feminist and LGBTI+ movements with psychology in Brazil in 1990s imposed the need for psychological knowledge to enter in the conflictive dispute in which the field of gender norms is inscribed. The outbreak of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the 1980s in Brazil also appears as an important element that demanded displacements in the way of thinking about sexuality, gender, and collective health (Paiva, 2008), in addition to driven large financial contributions from international agencies – in the field of research and intervention – as well as demand for prevention programs (Russo et al., 2011), in which the place of social psychology was paramount.

Especially since the 1960s, two distinct problematic fields corresponded to two approaches that were constituted in the field of sexuality: the sexological approach and the constructionist approach (Paiva, 2008). The first is an older enterprise (dating back to the late nineteenth century) and “asserted itself by responding to demographic or health (mental or sexual) ‘problems’, contributing to producing the discourses that Foucault called bio-power” (Paiva, 2008). As pointed out in the research by Russo et al. (2011), which aimed to characterize the professional field of sexology in five Latin American countries, psychology was very active in the birth and movements of sexology in Brazil.

In the two main journals of the area, the *Revista Brasileira de Sexualidade Humana* (*Brazilian Journal of Human Sexuality*), first edited in 1990, and the *Revista Terapia Sexual* (*Sexual Therapy Journal*), created in 1998, psychology



appears as the area of graduation/titling most common among the authors (Russo et al., 2011). Among the main themes of the *Brazilian Journal of Human Sexuality* were sex education, sex therapy, professional ethics, professional training, pharmacological treatments, teenage pregnancy, STD/AIDS, homosexuality, and female sexuality. Regarding the *Sexual Therapy Journal*, the themes most addressed by psychologists were sex education/orientation, STD/AIDS, sex therapy, and sexual dysfunctions (male and female), focused on the following groups and topics: couples and family, children and adolescents, disabled, elderly, homosexuals, and transsexuals. The editor-in-chief psychologist of the journal, who used to introduce himself only as a sex therapist, started to use the term “sex psychotherapist” from the late 1990s (Russo et al., 2011).

On the other hand, the constructionist approach “defined as a question to understand sexuality as a social phenomenon, the inequality between the sexes, the subordination of women, the sexual discrimination; in the last three decades it was strongly dedicated to understanding the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the violation of sexual rights” (Paiva, 2008). Such approach, aligned to socioconstructionist psychology, and responding to the critical theoretical, methodological, and political call that constituted the crisis of psychology in Brazil of the 1970s, not only received influences from feminist, gender (Borges, 2014), and gay, and lesbian studies but also constituted important alliances with feminist and LGBTI+ movements.

As Borges (2014) points out, in an article where he (re)accounts the relations between feminisms, queer theory, and critical social psychology (especially regarding the debates around sexualities), these articulations were strengthened from the common criticism to essentialisms, naturalizations, and universalistic assumptions of the production of scientific knowledge. In this sense, although feminisms, queer theory, and critical social psychology each comprise a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives, they share the understanding that science, society, and politics are not separate fields and that they act, therefore, actively, in the construction of reality (Borges, 2014). Thus, if it is true that scientific practice is not detached from politics and the structure of privileges in society, an important contribution of social psychology supported by feminist and LGBTI+ critique in Brazil was its engagement in the critique of a science taken as neutral and in the visibility of sexist, heterosexist, and racist assumptions naturalized in the ways of doing science.

In the wake of this process of dislocations in social psychology, it is worth highlighting the emergence of four working groups (WG), in the history of the National Association for Research and Post-graduation in Psychology (ANPEPP), particularly focused on the axes of gender and sexuality in psychology as central, from the critical perspective already presented: (1) GT “Psychology and Gender Relations” (started in 1992 in the IV Symposium of Research and Scientific Exchange of ANPEPP, and closed in 2000); (2) GT “Women, femininity and female sexuality” (started in the Symposium of 1994 and gathered for the last time in 1998)<sup>1</sup>; (3) GT

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<sup>1</sup>For a history of these first two WGs and an analysis of the role of ANPEPP in the academic production on gender in Brazilian psychology, see Adriano Nuernberg (2005).

Psychology and Gender Studies (which started its work in 2006, at the XI ANPEPP National Symposium); and (4) Psychology, Politics and Sexualities (started in 2012, at the XIV ANPEPP National Symposium).

As stated on its institutional webpage,<sup>2</sup> ANPEPP was created in 1983, with the objective of “bringing together graduate programs linked to Brazilian higher education institutions to foster and stimulate the training of professionals for research and graduate studies in Psychology.” Since their inception, all the WGs have had participants from universities in several Brazilian regions. The ANPEPP Symposia take place every 2 years and are organized around thematic working groups.

Among the aforementioned groups, the WG “Psychology and Gender Studies” aims to “consolidate the space for dialogue among researchers from different higher education institutions in the country, which produce in the field of gender studies in Psychology and dialogues with other areas.” The WG “Psychology, Politics and Sexualities” has as its objective “the reflection about the different ways of thinking about sexualities, politics, and science, as well as to understand how the transformations related to practices, discourses, and moral codes configure them in distinct sociocultural and intersubjective contexts. These contexts produce identities, as well as a hierarchization of the sexualized bodies and the discourses and practices related to them. The work of the WG points to a research/training relationship marked by interdisciplinary practice and political positioning in defense of sexual rights.”<sup>3</sup>

Since the first works and collective scientific organizations around the themes of gender and sexuality assumed the existence of political implications of the knowledge produced by psychology in this field, it can be stated that there has been an expansion regarding the objects of research, as well as multiplication and ramification of theoretical and methodological perspectives and political positionalities incorporated. Despite the dislocations brought by feminist theory and politics, the logic of sex differences in the scientific field has remained as a common ground among many theoretical and methodological perspectives in psychology. In nonlinear ways, social psychology has engaged politically in this field of genders and sexualities, allying with social constructionist perspectives, some of which did not widely question sexual difference as a unique and persistent reality, and sometimes producing more forceful dislocations in such entrenched notions of nature and identity.

The set of social problems indicated in this chapter added to sensitive changes in the debate of power relations, forms of subordination, and the effects on the construction of subjects, the crisis turn and the subsequent turn in psychology were relevant to politicize science and disseminate notions of dissident subjects and their positionalities.

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<sup>2</sup> (<https://www.anpepp.org.br/>)

<sup>3</sup> Information taken from the Thereza Mettel WG Directory (<https://www.cadastro.anpepp.org.br/grupotrabalho/public>) may, 2021

However, many experiences of subordinate and dissident forms were treated much more as objects of investigation from already established and unquestionable theoretical assumptions or as an interventional field (which required instruments of therapies and intervention from psychology), without considering the recognition of these subjects as producers of their discourse, knowledge from their experiences with the body, their sexuality, and their subjective positions. These tensions between the criticism of gender binarism, heteronormativity, and science were a full dispute about the directions of the pressure of social movements, which were fundamental to the effervescence of works on LGBTI+ movements and gender and sexuality in psychology (Ferrão et al., 2019), configuring new forms of power relations, science, and politics.

#### **6.4 The Ethical-Epistemological Turn or Queer and Transfeminist Positions as an Epistemic Turn for Social Psychology: The Revolt of the “Objects”**

As we have already highlighted, turns 1 and 2 point to processes of politicization of psychological science, something that in Brazil was strongly embraced by social psychology. In turn 1, we highlight social class as an important articulating element for the appearance of subjects of dissidence, calling into question the notion of the abstract subject of certain previous formulations. This is a profound ethical-political dislocation that accompanies the crisis of psychology and corresponds to a critical turn in the field.

Turn 2 sharpened this shift, demanding another one, which entailed the broadening of the notion of dissidence and the recognition of the insufficiencies in social class category to capture the complexity of the arrangements between the production of difference and inequality. Inscribed in this movement are (1) the emergence of gender and sexuality issues – more specifically, in a first moment, the experiences of cisgender women and cisgender gay men – as the object of study of a psychology not only attentive to the ways society produces social inequalities but also willing to critically and actively reflect about the power relations involved therein, as well as (2) the expansion of the gaze to other subjects of sex-gender dissidence, such as the LGBTI+ population in general.

In common, these two turns share a disagreement with the notion of scientific neutrality. Power, besides being a crucial element in addressing the issues and objects of research that social psychology addresses, will also be taken as an inherent factor in the very production of knowledge in the sciences, broadly, and therefore in the psychological sciences. Feminist debates around positionality in knowing and thus concerning the recognition of the partiality of knowledge (Collins, 1997; Haraway, 1988) will gain increasing strength in the debates.

If the feminist politics and theory of the 1970s and later on the LGBTI+ movement, as well as gay and lesbian studies, will drive the ethical-political critique

undertaken in turn 2, in turn 3 intersectional feminists, queer, transfeminist, and decolonial positions, as well as the debates on the depathologization of transsexualities, will provide support for the ethical-political displacements. This scenario will also drive an epistemic turn, marked by the displacement of those who are commonly figured as research objects to protagonists in psychological science. This meant not only that the subjects of sex-gender dissidence began to enroll and be recognized in the spaces of knowledge production but required more broadly transformations in the modes of research and advances in debates about situated knowledge (Haraway, 1988) as an element inscribed in a problematic of power and the economies of credibility (Fricker, 2007) of the sciences.

Numerous works within gay and lesbian studies in Brazilian social psychology (Bussinger, Menandro, & Padilha, 2017; Perucchi, Brandão, & Vieira, 2014), many of which were conducted by gay and lesbian researchers, figure in this turn, assuming the transition between turns, between studying LGBTI+ experiences and constituting a perspective of epistemic critique (Pacheco et al., 2017), as well as some productions of cisgender people that not only aligned themselves with depathologizing assumptions but also tensioned the hegemonies in the field of knowledge production, preponderantly biomedical, on transgender issues. In this perspective, there were recurrent works that impacted the psi field focused on issues linked to the logics of knowledge production from the depathologizing frameworks of gender and psychological practices in healthcare (Almeida & Murta, 2013; Bento & Pelúcio, 2012; Lionço, 2016; Prado, 2018; Teixeira, 2013).

It also highlights the growing protagonism of trans and transvestite<sup>4</sup> people in productions, as described by numerous authors, such as Almeida (2012), Favero (2020a), Jesus (2014), Sales (2018), and Vergueiro (2016), as well as the consolidation process of Brazilian transfeminist strands.<sup>5</sup> According to Jaqueline Gomes de Jesus and Hailey Alves (2010), transfeminism is a movement led by trans and transvestite women, which “emerges as a critique of cissexism or dimorphism,” and the naturalizations operated by essentialist-based feminisms regarding the sexual difference.

Thus, cisgenerity as a concept and the performance of the cishnorm gain an important place in the analyses (Bagagli, 2016, Bonassi, 2017), expanding the approaches on normativity related to gender and sexuality beyond the heteronorm. Concerns to interpellate psychology from the notion of cisnormativity (Bonassi, 2017) have important effects by questioning psychological listening and its procedures directed to the naturalization of cisgenerity as an element of its interventions (Favero, 2020b; Leal, 2016; Stona & Ferrari, 2020). This effect has produced an important epistemological critique of psychological science denouncing the naturalized relationship

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<sup>4</sup>There is also a production by cisgender and transgender authors on topics relevant to the field of depathologizations of the body and transsexualities (Tenório & Prado, 2016; Sales et al., 2016), trans childhoods and aging (Favero & Machado, 2019; Camargo & Machado, 2020).

<sup>5</sup>For a historicization and analysis about the production of knowledge about transgender and transvestite people in Brazil and the transformations and political-epistemological clashes provoked with their emergence as protagonists in the field, see Coacci (2018).

between body, gender, and sexuality that often structures the forms of psychological listening and care of the LGBTI+ population (Prado, 2018).

From a theoretical and political point of view, transfeminism aligns itself with black and intersectional feminisms and with the critique of the existence of a universal subject of feminism (Vergueiro, 2015). It also establishes positions that question the positions of power in the production of knowledge: blurring or inverting ironically consecrated places of subject and object (as do some productions led by trans people who will take cisgenerativity as an object of study, as observed in the work of Vergueiro (2015)). In this way, the transfeminist thought invades the academy but also puts into dispute the notion of legitimacy of knowledge production, denouncing the dynamics of the relationship between science, power, and politics identified therein.

In Brazil, transfeminism emerges in the early 2000s and gradually gains strength and consolidation in blogs, social networks, and spaces of political activism (Coacci, 2018; Jesus, 2014; Mattos & Cidade, 2016). We highlight, here, the analyses and texts published on the social network Facebook (in a group and page named “Transfeminism”) and on the blog <http://transfeminismo.com/>, which emerged in 2011 under the responsibility of Hailey Kaas. As Coacci (2018) points out, in what he calls the third wave of the Trans Movement in Brazil started in 2011, there is also an explosion of pre-vestibular courses aimed at transgender and transvestite people and the increase in their inclusion in higher education (undergraduate and graduate), as well as the demand for quotas in universities at different levels of education. It is also worth highlighting the emergence, in the national territory, of works on intersexuality in the field of human and social sciences, from a critical perspective to the pathologization of intersex bodies, as well as to unnecessary, non-consented, and mutilating early interventions, as highlighted by Machado (2008, 2014). Productions on intersexuality have been growing in Brazil, as well as the protagonism of intersex people or their family members in the production of knowledge (A. G. Costa, 2018; Santos, 2020), and, since its emergence, the field has produced important provocations not only to psychological science but also, in general, to gender studies, sexuality, the sexed body and social studies of science and technology. In this regard, two collections stand out, containing articles authored by intersex and endosex people, the first in the context of Latin America (Cabral, 2009) and the other from Brazil (Barreto, 2018).

All this movement happened not only within psychology but in frontier areas that produced strong political and theoretical interpellations to psychology, which was called to face a series of tension points and ambiguities, as well as to question positions and hierarchization of knowledge within its fields of action, marked by theoretical, political, and methodological assumptions already consolidated.

In psychology, we can also think of this process as a “queerization” of social psychology in Brazil. As highlighted by Oliveira, Costa, and Carneiro (2014):

In recent decades, queer theory has helped to establish a distinct agenda for the social sciences, the humanities and the investigation of sexualities, showing itself able to investigate and denounce how identities are discursively produced and unstable but also how social and gender orders are established on heteronormative terrain (Gramson & Moon, 2004).

Hegemonic heterosexuality (Butler, 1993) constitutes coherence between gender, sex, and desire and legitimizes and approves heterosexuality in repudiation of homosexuality. The latter remains forbidden but necessary to the cultural barriers for that one to maintain its stability. Other hegemonic norms of “race” and ethnicity, of social class, of functional diversity, or postcolonialism have also been in the sights of queer theory, constituting an immense body of work based on the critique of the normative. In a Foucauldian sense, this critique precisely allows for the de-subjugation of the subject within the confines of the politics of truth (Oliveira et al., 2014, p. 70).

For Oliveira et al. (2014), therefore, critical psychology establishes interlocution with other critical and political perspectives, such as feminism, Marxism, and queer criticism, to produce shifts not only in psi science but in the modes of production and legitimation of knowledge in general. From this understanding, we can affirm that queerizing psychology presupposes revisiting the schemes of truth production, the hierarchies of privilege and power on which such enunciation is based, and those that it (re)produces.

As we pointed out at the beginning of our analyses of the third turn, intersectional feminists, queer, transfeminist, and decolonial positions, from international and national references, were fundamental to the theoretical, methodological, epistemological, and political shifts and twists have undertaken.

As with the other twists, the approach to a series of complexities, nuances, and crossings between them has limitations, largely due to the effort to offer an expanded perspective of the field. What we highlight, however, as the mark of what moves in turn 3, are the responses that psychology in Brazil has been provoked to offer in face of the “revolt” of those populations and themes historically placed in the position of objects, in the sense of hierarchization between subject and object, of the debates about what will be considered legitimate knowledge, how it is produced and who may enunciate it, and of the ethical-political effects of the positionality of those productions. Revolt, here, can be translated as a political and epistemic movement, which will require a series of fundamental revisions in the approach to genders, sexualities, and the subjects of dissidence in this field of knowledge and practices.

## **6.5 Science, Power, and Politics: Queer Perspectives on Psychology**

The argument in this chapter points to a movement of the relationship between science, power, and politics from the three twists of psychology. It is important to emphasize that these turns do not mark watertight changes and reforms in certain periods but are characterized by singularities that coexist intersectionalized often in the same context and temporalities. Although they corroborate certain particularities of the moment, the twists reveal themselves to be much more interconnected and diffuse in dynamic transformation movements of science itself. They do not mark a gradual sense of development, nor an escalation to an evident protagonism. On the contrary, they spin, they move the field of production of gender and sexuality in psychology, changing theories, object-subject, methodologies, and politics.



To express more clearly the singularities and the movement of psychology with LGBTI+ identities and the themes of gender and sexuality is that the gyrations become important because they allow us to glimpse the movements of change, tensions, and conflicts that draw distinct relations between sciences, power, and politics. It is in this sense that we understand that LGBTI+ themes are no longer like a field object to be applied an interventionist theoretical model, but, quite the contrary, they are, in some cases, a field of production and analysis of dissidents that imply above all in an interposition to the social dimensions of sciences, power, and politics: emerging issues for the democratization of societies and contemporary knowledge.

It is through the production of subjects from the constitution of regimes of truths and scientific problematizations, by the forms of regulation and hierarchical legitimacy, and by the conflicts and disagreements that the dissidents are constituted as possible subjective positions in different positionalities.

These are possible arrangements in different economic, political, and social contexts that allow articulations between science, power, and politics in very heterogeneous orders of dissidence. In this sense, it could be understood that the twists of psychology do not configure a chronological sense but are polemical arrangements between the scientific framework and its problematized truths, the forms, and structures of regulation and legitimacy of social orders, and the conflicts and tensions given by the emergence of the change of visibility criteria of certain subjective experiences that were not counted as subjects in the visible of the scientific grammar (Rancière, 2015).

These (dis)articulations summarized here as twists of psychology allow us to engage in an externalist and internalist debate of social psychology itself (Cruz & Stralen, 2012), thus opening spaces to insert scientific knowledge in a field of dispute between the legitimacies of the social order and the disagreements about this same form of organization of powers.

In this context of problematizations, the entry of political subjects of dissent in the recent history of Brazilian psychology helps us to think about the conflict and the disputes on the production of knowledge itself. The effects of this entry are many and transform the relationship of psychology with the queer perspective in gender and sexuality studies.

Not only by the internalist turns itself but above all by the externalist elements of the political, social, and economic context, there are historical moments that the boundaries between science, power, and politics seem to move in accidents and processes of mutual influences, revealing tensions between the spheres that strain the positionalities of dissident subjects in the articulation of scientific production.

Psychology has been a very intense field of dispute, in this sense, and has nodded to a movement of queerization of its production despite movements that seek to restore a traditionalist position of putting the subjects of dissidence back as an object.

The perspective of a queer positionality allows us to underline elements that in contemporary times make explicit this movement of psychology science in Brazil: (a) theoretical and methodological; (b) ethical and institutional; and (e) political and ideological.



- (a) Theoretical and methodological: the critique of the psychological field produced in the context of the historical turns was undoubtedly important for the revision of theories and methodologies. The influence of queer/LGBTI+ perspectives in the field of research in psychology allowed new themes to enter the research agenda with the development of innovative theoretical-methodological perspectives with more participatory elements, as is the case of auto-narrative, studies of sexual practices, bodies, and identities. Thematic studies such as the construction of clinical listening from the perspectives of gender and sexuality, queer political participation, embodiment, and sexual practices, prejudice, and homophobia, the contestation of cisheteronormativity as a naturalized regulatory ideal, and others enter the agenda of psychology. The most important thing to emphasize here is that the production of psychology from the positionalities of gender and sexuality dissent has undoubtedly produced displacement in the history of psychology itself.
- (b) Ethical and institutional: it is relevant to highlight that psychology as a profession has also undergone changes following the historical turns. Two resolutions institutionalize good practices in the relationship between psychology and LGBTI+ people. These resolutions are, namely, the first a punitive restraint on any practice of therapy to reverse or cure homosexualities and the second a guiding punitive measure for practices that pathologize transgender. The Federal Council of Psychology in producing these regulatory actions<sup>6</sup> also took an important step towards the recognition and legitimacy of LGBTI+ rights for the practices of psychology.
- (c) Political and ideological: psychology and its practices, although with tensions and confrontations, have played a role in emancipator policies of the LGBTI+ community. It has participated on several fronts with emancipatory political positions that have installed within its scientific and professional institutions a perspective of recognition of the agendas and rights of LGBTI+ people. Here we also highlight political and ideological positions that are antagonistic to emancipator processes and present themselves in collaborationist positions for the regulation of power and often to attack dissident positions, especially on the production of the field of gender and queer sexualities. A depuration of the field of gender and sexuality that has implied collaboration with forms of governing power marked by attacks on minorities and the stripping of LGBTI+ rights. It can be found new studies<sup>7</sup> on anti-gender and anti-queer offensives by psychology, seeking to understand the forms of mobilization and moral panic that these attacks generate and their effects on LGBTI+ inclusion policies.

The relationship between science, power, and politics in this context has been a very intense dynamic of arrangements and disarray, revealing the nodal points of tensions, disputes, and confrontations both inside and outside psychology. But these

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<sup>6</sup>Resolution 01/99 e 01/18 by the Federal Council of Psychology

<sup>7</sup>See *Political Psychology Brazilian Journal* [http://pepsic.bvsalud.org/scielo.php?script=sci\\_issuetoc&pid=1519-549X20180003&lng=pt&nrm=iso](http://pepsic.bvsalud.org/scielo.php?script=sci_issuetoc&pid=1519-549X20180003&lng=pt&nrm=iso)

movements have only been possible considering a fundamental exercise: the possibility of understanding the articulations between scientific knowledge, forms of governance, and dissent in a field of gender and sexuality long entangled in all psychological knowledge.

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