Historical-Cultural Psychology in Research Groups in the CNPq Directory in Brazil

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ABSTRACT – This article presents an overview of research groups that use Historical-Cultural Psychology as a theoretical framework, registered in the Directory of Research Groups of the Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq). A "state of knowledge" study was held. 115 groups were found, and the following data stand out from the analysis of their descriptions: terms used to name the theory; knowledge areas; geographic distribution; nature of the group's institution; foundation year; and main research topics in the areas of psychology and education. As a result, it is pointed out: that semantic dispersion concerning the theory naming; increase in groups researching public policies; and insertion of contemporary themes such as racism and gender. It is concluded that the above panorama makes it possible to better understand the research interests carried out by Historical-Cultural Psychology and the challenges to be faced.
KEYWORDS: historical-cultural psychology, research groups, state of knowledge, CNPq

Psicologia Histórico-Cultural nos Grupos de Pesquisa no Diretório do CNPq no Brasil

RESUMO – Este artigo apresenta um panorama dos grupos de pesquisa que tomam a Psicologia Histórico-Cultural como referencial teórico, cadastrados no Diretório de Grupos de Pesquisa do Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico. Realizou-se um estudo do tipo "estado do conhecimento". Da análise das descrições dos 115 grupos identificados, destacam-se: denominação da teoria; área de conhecimento; distribuição geográfica; natureza da instituição; ano de formação e principais temáticas de pesquisa em psicologia e educação. Como resultados, destacam-se: dispersão semântica em relação à nomeação da teoria; aumento de grupos pesquisando políticas públicas; inserção de temáticas contemporâneas como racismo e gênero. Conclui-se que o panorama exposto possibilita melhor compreender os interesses em pesquisa realizados pela Psicologia Histórico-Cultural e os desafios a serem enfrentados.
PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Psicologia histórico-cultural, grupos de pesquisa, estado do conhecimento, CNPq

The importance and relevance of Historical-Cultural Psychology (HCP) are present in publications of a national and international significant set of works, which present an overview of the historical and theoretical constitution of this perspective, or analyze the biography of its authors, based on different interpretative approaches. Many works explain the main propositions of L. S. Vygotsky (1896-1934) and his followers. Among these syntheses, Beatón (2005) stands out; Daniels (1996); Freitas (2007); Longarezi and Puentes (2013); Ratner (1995); Rego (1995); Riviere (1994); Shuare (1990); Van der Veer and Valsiner (2001); Wertsch (1988), among others.

In Brazil, according to Mainardes and Pino (2000), Vygotsky's theory began to be known in the second half of the 1970s. However it was only in the 1980s, in institutions such as the State University of Campinas – Unicamp, where the Group Pesquisa Pensamento e Linguagem, in 1992, and Pontifícia Universidade Católica – PUC/SP, where

the "São Paulo school" was created (Carvalho and Souza, 2010), which formed the first research and study groups of this author's work and of its followers, who influenced the formation of new groups linked to several universities in other Brazilian states.

Mainardes and Pino (2000) also carried out one of the first surveys of Brazilian publications from a Vygotskian perspective. Subsequently, Freitas (2004) mapped the productions based on Vygotsky's thought found from the 21st to 26th Annual Meeting of the National Association of Postgraduate Studies and Research in Education (ANPEd), from 1998 to 2006, and brought reflections about the appropriation of Vygotsky's theory in the country. Silva and Davis (2004) investigated how Vygotsky's concepts were understood by authors linked to the area of Educational Psychology and concluded that his work did not advance sufficiently from a theoretical point of view, being restricted to development and learning processes, as well as to relation between thought and language. The productions presented at ANPEd were also a reference by Schlindwein, Souza, Silva, Asbahr, and Nadaleto (2006), who carried out an extensive survey of the research presented in the Educational Psychology Working Group and found "... a significant number of works from a historical-cultural perspective, demonstrating the expansion of this approach among researchers" (p.157), as well as the relevance of HCP studies for schooling.

Considering the importance and expansion of HCP in academic circles and knowledge production, the need to investigate its insertion in Brazil was assessed. To this end, we took as an empirical reference the research groups registered in the Directory of Research Groups of the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (DGP-CNPq) – and which inform in their title or their description the option for historical psychology-cultural as an adopted theoretical-methodological framework.

Thus, the first research on the topic took place in 2010, carried out by Synthes, Souza, and Barroco (2010). In the survey carried out on this occasion, 53 Research Groups were identified and registered with the DGP-CNPq, which declared to use HCP as a theoretical reference, especially in the education and psychology areas. This survey brought preliminary information about the profile of the research groups, presenting the distribution according to geographic and knowledge areas, the type of institution, the link with postgraduate programs (PPG), and exposing an overview of the themes studied.

This first survey focused on identifying and describing the profile of these research groups, presenting a general overview of the appropriation of HCP by Brazilian researchers, indicating their national presence in research groups, and

pointing to the need for a more detailed examination of productions and the thematic gaps identified. Another aspect indicated, to be deepened and analyzed in subsequent research, focused on the importance of understanding what this theoretical movement has been like in Brazil and what its contributions are to social practices and knowledge areas. Thus, this research began in 2018, aiming to update the 2010 data and analyze the questions then proposed by the initial research. It is noteworthy that the 2010 research, within the scope of scientific initiation, was not published and only provided descriptive data, but little analytical one. Thus, in a brief DGP survey, we noticed that the number of groups had doubled, and we considered it important to update and publish the survey research a decade after the initial survey, to better understand how historical-cultural psychology develops in Brazil.

In this way, to carry out this in-depth analysis, the following guiding questions were asked: What are the main research themes of the groups in question?; Which areas of knowledge are they associated with?; How do they call the adopted theoretical framework (historical-cultural theory, historical-cultural psychology, socio-historical psychology, activity theory, among other nomenclatures)?; What is the geographic distribution of these groups?; What are the main contributions of these groups to the production of knowledge in the area of linkage?

Thus, the research reported here had the following objectives: a) identify research groups, registered with the DGP-CNPq, that point to HCP as a theoretical reference; b) highlight the areas of knowledge to which the research groups are linked, as well as the most recurring themes; c) identify the main research themes to which these groups have been dedicated; d) point out the distribution of research groups in different research centers in the different geographic regions of Brazil; e) advance the understanding of what this theoretical movement represents in Brazil, making a critical analysis of its contributions to social practices and areas of knowledge, especially Psychology and Education.

This article, therefore, aims to bring more concrete and current data about research and production arising from a theoretical approach that is growing in Brazilian scientific literature and whose contribution stands out due to the relevance of the theoretical-methodological conceptions of this perspective to understand the schooling process complexity, as well as the aspects and movements that constitute the educational phenomenon, pedagogical practices, and educational policies. In this way, it has consolidated itself in the areas of education, psychology, linguistics, physics, and mathematics teaching, among other areas of knowledge.

METHOD

To achieve the research objectives, a "state of the art" or "state of knowledge" kind of study was carried out, which, according to Ferreira (2000), they are bibliographical research that maps and discusses a given academic production, seeking to answer what it is highlighted according to different times and places; how and under what conditions knowledge is produced and socialized in dissertations, theses, publications and scientific events. For Ferreira (2000), they have in common the use of "... a methodology of an inventory and descriptive nature of academic and scientific production on the topic that seeks to investigate, in the light of categories and facets that are characterized as such in each work and in all of them, under which the phenomenon starts to be analyzed" (p. 158).

The choice of DGP-CNPq as a research source is justified given that this tool "... constitutes an inventory of scientific and technological research groups active in the country" (CNPQ, 2017), allowing to describe the general profile of the scientific-technological activity in Brazil. The information from the groups brings data about human resources, lines of research, knowledge specialties, application sectors of this knowledge, scientific and technological production, and patterns of interaction with the productive sector.

The basis constituted by the Directory has as its main purposes the exchange, planning, and preservation of the memory of scientific-technological activity in Brazil. As an instrument of information exchange, it informs the community in general about the research area, university or research center, practices, and recent productions. It should also be noted that the data registered in the directory are used to carry out periodic censuses about Brazilian academic production, which can be accessed at <http://lattes.cnpq.br/web/dgp/censos> (CNPq, 2017).

In methodological terms, the research work was divided into three stages: 1) collecting data from the research groups; 2) organization, processing, and analysis of data; and 3) discussion and development of the survey carried out.

In the data collection stage, data collection was carried out based on the information contained on the CNPq website, referring to the research groups/directory. The initial online consultation was carried out at http://dgp.cnpq.br/dgp/faces/consulta/consulta_parametrizada.jsf in two moments: 1) between May and June 2018, in which 98 Groups were located. This first survey was carried out by Míriam Laís Setti de Almeida Marcelo Oliveira, a psychology student at Unesp, and a Fapesp Technical Training scholarship holder (TT-1), linked to this project.; 2) between November and December 2018, when the survey was checked, expanded, and new search descriptors were included, totaling a sample of 115 Groups. This second survey was carried out by Ingrid Bueno Alves and Renato Libarino Aguilar, IC scholarship holders from CNPq.

Initially, the keywords were used: *Teoria Histórico-Cultural; Psicologia Histórico-Cultural; Psicologia Sócio-Histórica(o); Escola de Vygotsky; Escola de Vygotsky; Escola de Vygotsky; Teoria da Atividade; Psicologia Soviética; Teoria Sociocultural; Teoria Sócio-Histórica(o)*. This choice is justified by their use by Soviet authors or by their current use by researchers in Brazil, which demonstrates the lack of consensus regarding how to name the theory. As a criterion for inclusion of groups, we checked in their DGP mirrors whether authors such as Vygotsky, Luria, Leontiev, and other researchers from the historical-cultural school of Soviet psychology or contemporary authors of the developments of the theory in other countries were used as theoretical references (for example, the third generation of Engëstrong's activity theory, or González Rey's subjectivity theory). In future research, it would be interesting to investigate why groups use different names for the reference theory. Throughout the research the following descriptors were added: *Abordagem Histórico-Cultural; Perspectiva Histórico-Cultural; Psicologia e Marxismo; Teoria da Subjetividade; Enfoque Sócio-Histórico.* After surveying the DGP-CNPq, according to the previously selected keywords, and after reading the pages' description of the selected Groups contained in the current Directory database, as well as the lines of research described and the Lattes CV of their leaders, 115 Research Groups were considered for analysis. The group leader's Lattes résumé was consulted when, based on the group's description in the Directory, it was not certain whether historical-cultural theory (HCT) was the group's theoretical referent.

RESULTS

Firstly, quantitative data is presented based on the information found in the description of the 115 groups, available in the DGP-CNPq: terms used to name the HCP; areas of knowledge linking the Groups; geographic distribution of the Groups; nature of the institution to which the Group operates; year of formation of the Groups; link to PPG and reference to historical-dialectical materialism. These data allow a general quantitative overview of the groups that are the subject of investigation. In the second moment, a mapping of the Groups' main study and research themes is presented.

General Overview of Research Groups – CNPq

Terms Used to Survey Research Groups

To survey the Groups, several search terms were used, reproducing the research carried out in 2010 (Synthes et al., 2010), but also adding other terms based on dialogue with researchers in the area in a public presentation of preliminary data. Below is a table with the search terms used and the frequency with which they were found (Table 1).

Note the variety of terms, highlighting the greater presence of the expressions "Teoria Histórico-Cultural" – 51 groups, "Psicologia Histórico-Cultural" – 27 groups, and "Psicologia Sócio-Histórica" – 10 groups. The term "Teoria Histórico-Cultural" was the first used in the search, and in subsequent searches, the groups that were repeated in each term were not considered. This meant that the first term used concentrated more groups.

One hypothesis for the variety of terms refers to the area of knowledge, as groups linked to the Education area use the predominant denomination of "Teoria Histórico-Cultural" – thus the used term is different from the Psychology area. Another hypothesis refers to the training history of group leaders, for example, using the expression "Psicologia Sócio-Histórica" in groups in which the leaders had some connection during their training with PPGs in Social Psychology and Educational Psychology. The PUC of São Paulo has trained important masters and doctors in these areas.

Knowledge areas

In their description, the Groups appear linked to CNPq's major areas of knowledge. Regarding them, it was verified the large area and the specific area of concentration of the groups listed. The distribution of Groups predominates in the broad area of Human Sciences, in the specific areas of Education, concentrating 61.74%, covering 71 Groups, and in Psychology corresponding to 27.82%, with 32 Groups. With a small proportion, there are Health Sciences (Collective Health or Nursing), four groups (3.48%); Linguistics, Letters, and Arts (Linguistics or Letters), four groups (3.48%), and four areas with one group in each: Mathematics, Physics, Anthropology, and Administration, (0.87%).

Geographic Distribution of CNPq Research Groups

Concerning the geographic locations of the groups, in summary, there are HCP groups in all Brazilian regions, presenting the following distributions of the 115 Groups: North – 11 (9.56%), Central-West – 17 (14.78 %), Northeast – 19 (16.52%), South – 24 (20.87%), Southeast – 44 (38.26%). The majority are in the Southeast and South regions, confirming the regional inequality in research development in the country. It is noteworthy that this prevalence in the Southeast and South Regions reflects the asymmetries of Higher Education in Brazil, which were addressed in the National Postgraduate Plans – PNPD/CAPES (Hostins, 2006).

Table 1
Search terms

Groups Distribution Table according to the terms search on the CNPq platform		
Inserted term	**End number of groups**	**Percentage**
Historical-cultural focus	0	0.00%
Vygotsky's school	0	0.00%
Vygotsky's school	0	0.00%
Soviet Psychology	0	0.00%
Socio-Cultural Theory	0	0.00%
Socio-Historical Theory	0	0.00%
Socio-historical focus	1	0.87%
Vygotsky's school	1	0.87%
Vygotsky's school	1	0.87%
Psychology and Marxism	1	0.87%
Subjectivity Theory	1	0.87%
Historical-Cultural Approach	6	5.22%
Historical-Cultural Perspective	7	5.22%
Activity Theory	9	6.96%
Socio-Historical Psychology	10	8.70%
Historical-Cultural Psychology	27	23.48%
Historical-Cultural Theory	51	44.35%
Total	115	100.00%

This leads us to consider that to understand the prevalence of the use of a given theoretical perspective, at a given historical moment and in given geographic spaces, the multiple determinations involved must be considered. In other words, its presence is implicated in the very possibility of carrying out research, first and foremost. The North Region, where fewer groups indicate Theory or Historical-Cultural Psychology as a reference, received greater attention in the last National Postgraduate Plans so that it can effectively participate in Brazilian Postgraduate Studies.

Another hypothesis put forward for the inequality of groups found in each region refers to how the theory arrived in Brazil, which will require, in the future, historical studies on the theory in our country. We know that the theory arrived in Brazil at São Paulo Universities, both in Social Psychology research groups with a Marxist bias, such as the PUC-SP groups (Carvalho e Souza, 2010) and in Educational Psychology groups, such as is the case of the group led by Ana Smolka at Unicamp. In the case of the South region, in Toassa, Asbahr, and Souza (2020), it is discussed how in Santa Catarina and Paraná the theory arrived in the field of educational policies in the 1990s.

The states with the largest number of Research Groups from a historical-cultural perspective are São Paulo (33 Groups – 28.70%) and Paraná (13 Groups – 11.30%). It is interesting to consider that this prevalence in São Paulo refers to the large number of PPGs in the State, mainly in São Paulo state universities and confessional universities, pioneers in the discussion of HCP. The importance of the State and Federal Universities of Paraná is also highlighted, which stands out for the inclusion of the HCP, because of the training received by their leaders in the São Paulo PPG in many cases. It appears that no Groups were in Alagoas (Northeast), Acre, and Amapá (North), which are States with a smaller number of PPGs and, consequently, Research Groups.

In the other states, the following were identified: Sergipe, Amazonas, Pará, and the Federal District, one group per state; Espírito Santo, Mato Grosso, Bahia, Ceará, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Norte, Tocantins and Rondônia, two groups in each; Maranhão and Rio de Janeiro, with three groups; Santa Catarina, with four; Piauí and Roraima, with five groups per state; Minas Gerais, with six groups; Rio Grande do Sul, Mato Grosso do Sul, and Goiás, with seven groups in each state.

Nature of the Research Group's Affiliation Institution

The nature of the institution to which the Research Groups are linked was identified: public, which may be municipal, state, and federal Higher Education institutions (HEIs), or private, including private confessional institutions, as categorized according to the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law (Brazil, 1996). The analysis of the distribution of Research Groups according to the type of HEI shows the highest concentration in Federal HEIs (58 Groups – 50.43%), followed by State HEIs (44 Groups – 38.26%), pointing to public HEIs as central research sites in our country, 102 Groups – 88.8%. The groups linked to private HEIs total five Groups – 4.35%, and confessional HEIs, 8 Groups – 6.96%. No groups were found in municipal HEIs.

The role of Public Universities as a place to produce research, knowledge, and training of researchers is evident as they concentrate most postgraduate programs. This notorious prevalence could be compared with the number of places offered for Higher Education in Public and Private HEIs, calling for reflection on the investment in research by the former, which is implicated in knowledge production. In the case of the HCP perspective, knowledge must contribute to revealing the real, in its countless facets – which constitute objects of investigation, beyond their appearance.

The HCP is present in 115 groups; therefore, there is an important insertion of the theoretical and methodological perspective in the different types of training HEIs. It is also important to highlight that the presence of Research Groups within the scope of PPGs has an important impact on undergraduate training. This discussion began when analyzing the performance of undergraduate Psychology students in the 2006 ENADE exams. The Psychology students who had better results in the exam questions come from HEIs where there are PPGs, encouraging research through Scientific Initiation and theoretical-methodological discussion in Laboratories and Research Groups (Souza, Bastos & Barbosa, 2011)

Year of Creation of Research Groups and Pioneering Groups

Considering the timeline of the constitution of the Research Groups, the first group created was in 1992, entitled "Thought and Language Research Group", followed by the creation of two more Groups only in 1997 and four more Groups in 1999. From 1999, new Groups were created each year, as shown in Table 2. The year 2012 stands out, with the creation of 16 Groups.

In this research, it is considered essential to understand the historical constitution of HCP in Brazil using the IES and the official insertion of Research Groups in the DGP-CNPq as indicators. It can be observed that the effective introduction of HCP as a theoretical and methodological perspective for Human Development studies emerged in the early 1990s, with the first Research Group officialization registered in the CNPq for this purpose. The first group created, in 1992, was the "Thought and Language Research Group" – GPPL – Faculty of Education of the University of Campinas (Unicamp), existing since 1987. The Group was initially composed of Ana Luiza Bustamante Smolka, Angel Pino Sirgado, Luci Banks-Leite, Maria Cecília Rafael de Góes, and Afira Vianna Ripper. They articulated "... around themes of common interest, carrying out studies

Table 2

Distribution of Historical-Cultural Psychology research groups by starting year.

Year of creation	Number of groups	Percentage
1992	1	0.94%
1997	2	1.89%
1999	4	3.77%
2000	2	1.89%
2001	2	1.89%
2002	7	6.60%
2003	1	0.94%
2004	3	2.83%
2005	1	0.94%
2006	5	4.72%
2007	2	1.89%
2008	5	4.72%
2009	7	6.60%
2010	5	4.72%
2011	3	2.83%
2012	16	15.09%
2013	9	8.49%
2014	8	7.55%
2015	6	5.66%
2016	8	7.55%
2017	7	6.60%
2018	2	1.89%
Total	106	100.00%

Note: As the CNPq Group Directory was offline from November 2018 to March 2019, it was not possible to find the C of nine groups.

and discussions on problems related to the main trends in psychology and their repercussions on education" (Thought and Language Research Group). The second Research Group, "Pedagogical Implications of Historical-Cultural Theory", created in 1997 by professors Sueli Guadelupe de Lima Mendonça and Suely Amaral Mello, from the Universidade Estadual Paulista (Unesp), Marília campus, linked to the Postgraduate Program in Education.

From then on, in 1999, four new Groups stood out: a) "Education Theories and Pedagogical Processes", coordinated by Professor José Carlos Libâneo at the Pontifical Catholic University of Goiás (PUC-GO). The group is linked to the Department of Education and the University's Postgraduate Program in Education. Professor Raquel Aparecida Marra da Madeira Freitas is deputy leader of the group; b) "Childhood, family and society", also based at PUC-GO, and coordinated by Professor Sonia Margarida Gomes Sousa, with Divino de Jesus da Silva Rodrigues as deputy leader. Institutionally, it is integrated into the School of Social and Health Sciences, in particular, the Postgraduate Programs in Psychology and Postgraduate Programs in Education; c) "NEPPEM- Center for Studies and Research in Social Psychology, Education and Health: contributions from Marxism", based at the Faculty

of Sciences of the State University Paulista (Unesp), Bauru campus. Its leaders are professors Sueli Terezinha Ferrero Martin and Angelo Antonio Abrantes; d) "GEPPE – Study and research group in Psychology and Education", coordinated by professors Sonia da Cunha Urt and Célia Beatriz Piatti. It is based at the Faculty of Education of the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul. The leaders and vice-leaders of most of the Groups are active in research and guidance of students in PPG and/or undergraduate studies. Historical research about the constitution of the PHC in Brazil could contribute by interviewing these researchers.

Research Groups that Reference the Historical-Dialectical Materialist Method

The explanation of the theoretical-methodological framework adopted is also essential information, considering that the Research Groups mention their affiliation with Historical-Cultural Psychology, namely, historical-dialectical materialism (HDM).

Like Duarte (2001, p. 78), it is understood that "... to understand Vygotsky's thought and his school, it is essential

to study the Marxist philosophical foundations of this psychological school". It is also argued that:

> ... the dialectical historical materialist method is the distinguishing feature of historical-cultural theory because it allows explaining reality and the concretely existing possibilities for its transformation, as long as the purpose is to overcome those particular conditions or circumstances of objectification/alienated appropriation in the sense of humanization, that is, in the sense of establishing the emancipation of individuals. (Tanamachi, Asbahr & Bernardes, 2018, p.91-92)

In the analysis of the description of the Research Groups, those that make explicit reference to the HDM method and dialectical logic stand out, in smaller numbers, according to the following data: groups that make direct reference to the HDM (20 groups); groups that refer to dialectics (four); groups that do not refer the MHD (91).

It is considered that the simple mention of the method or dialectics is not a sufficient condition to say whether the Research Group is guided by this methodological perspective, but this mention was one of the indicators that were considered, in this research, as important to be explained. It was identified that there are groups that have historically dedicated themselves to understanding and applying the HDM but do not make this explicit in their presentation texts. On the other hand, it is also known that there are groups whose theoretical perspective is the study of Soviet authors detached from their epistemological perspective, bringing Vygotsky closer to a constructivist or new-school vision of education (Duarte, 2001). This survey is intended to verify how this information appears in the description of HCP Research Groups. It was found that a small portion of Groups (20.9%) mention HDM or dialectics in their description. This could be an interesting aspect to be discussed with the Research Groups in subsequent investigations – to better understand the use of the method, in future analyses, it will be necessary to have access to the Groups' production.

Topics Studied by CNPq Research Groups

In a second moment of data analysis, we sought to extract from the Groups' descriptions which themes were being investigated. The information contained in "Repercussions of the Group" and in "Lines of Research" was taken as a reference. The focus was on Groups that fall within the areas of knowledge "Psychology" and "Education", as they are the areas with the greatest predominance of Groups (Psychology with 32.17% of Groups and Education with 58.26%).

After reading the descriptions, a list of the topics that each Research Group studies was first organized. Secondly, these themes were grouped into categories, which contain major research themes. It is noteworthy that, according to the descriptions, more than one research topic or more than one line of research was considered, since the same Group can be in two categories.

Topics Studied by Psychology Groups

The main topics studied by Psychology groups are:

a. **Human development**, with 16 groups, covering studies about development in general and periods of development, based on historical-cultural periodization.

b. **Psychological phenomena and processes**, with 13 groups, and the subtopics studied in this category are developments of higher psychic functions; psychosocial and/or mental development; formation of consciousness (contents of consciousness, meaning, meaning, activity, emotion, etc.); personality development; consciousness/unconsciousness relationship.

c. **The Psyche Formation in its relationship with schooling processes**, cited by 12 groups, which work on themes such as medicalization of education; educational processes and their relation with human development; indiscipline; learning difficulty; social interactions and interpersonal relationships at school; school-family relationship and family educational processes.

d. **Education**, highlighting education themes studied by groups linked to Psychology as an area of knowledge, cited by 12 groups, with research on Basic Education; training in Higher Education (or Higher Education); training of professionals (health and education, initial and in-service training); informal education, covering other institutions and non-school educational contexts; school administration; curriculum; pedagogical activity; teachers' performance; teaching and assessment methodologies; specific areas of knowledge, for example, Mathematics.

e. **Work processes**, cited by 11 groups, producing research on life projects; social movements; unemployment; worker training; critical work psychology; ontology, formation of man, and subjectivity in its relationship with work.

f. **Public Policy Analysis**, with 10 Groups, including themes such as exclusion-inclusion dialectics in public policies; public health and mental health policies; educational public policies; educational measures; control, and social participation in health.

g. **School and educational psychology**, highlighted by seven Groups, covering topics such as psychologist's professional performance and school context; educational psychology and context; psychological assessment.

h. **Health-Disease Processes**, indicating seven Groups, working with different dimensions of health: worker health; collective health; mental health; use of drugs; women's health and condition.

i. **Epistemological, methodological, and historical studies of historical-cultural psychology**, highlighted by seven Groups, based on the following subtopics: epistemology; Method and Dialectical Historical Materialism; History of Psychology; research methodologies; and discussions about research.

j. **Studies about violence**, with seven groups that indicate it, including topics such as prejudice; gender-based violence and violence against women; violence against children, adolescents, and young people; and racism.

k. **Inclusion and people with disabilities**: indicated by five Groups, and they have investigated issues that encompass the Target Audience of Special Education, discussing practices and policies of inclusive education and special education. Some cite Vygotsky's defectology studies.

l. **Studies about sexuality**, indicating four Groups, including studies on identity and sexuality; sexual gender; and prejudices related to sexuality issues.

m. **Human rights**: highlighted by three groups, this topic appears in some lines of research simply as "Human Rights" and some groups use the term in their name.

n. **Social Psychology**: this theme is indicated by two groups, one that uses the term in its name and the other that uses it as a line of research. It drew attention to the fact that this important field of Psychology has little repercussion among the Groups linked to HCP, and how the link between the theoretical approach and education has been predominant. There was the idea that Social Psychology would find in Historical-cultural Psychology subsidies for the development of research in this field.

o. **Aesthetic dimension and historical-cultural theory**: two groups were also located, studying Vygotsky's "Psychology of Art" and; the role of art in the formation of the psyche; among other topics.

p. **Other themes**: racial identity (one group), clinical activity (two groups), and neuropsychology (one group).

It appears that themes linked to Human Development and Higher Psychological Functions are predominant in Psychology groups linked to HCP. It is important to highlight the interface clearly established by the Groups concerning the schooling process, public policies, teaching work processes, worker and student mental health, school psychology, the HDM method, and the inclusion of people with disabilities. Issues of sexuality and gender, violence, and human rights researched from HCP in Brazil were also identified as emerging themes. One of the aspects to be observed is the absence of themes such as racism in Psychology groups, being mentioned only in one of the Research Groups.

It is considered that PHC, as a theoretical-methodological reference in Psychology, has proven to be fundamental in understanding the complexity of the schooling process, in the constitution of the learning and development processes of children, adolescents, and adults, in the possibility of constructing instruments methodologies that enable greater participation of school actors in research.

The theoretical and methodological assumptions of Historical-Cultural Psychology, based on the HDM, have responded to the questions that School and Educational Psychology carried out in the 1980s-1990s regarding its object of study, professional performance, interpretative references about school, and the psychologists' training. It has been presented as a fundamental theoretical and methodological basis that allows understanding of the spheres of particularity, singularity, and totality of the educational phenomenon in its relationship with the knowledge of Psychology.

Topics Studied by Education Area Groups

The groups linked to the Education area, due to their specificity, were classified according to the level and stages of education investigated (from Early Childhood Education to Higher Education) and according to the research themes to which they are dedicated.

Research Groups by Investigated Education Level

Most of the Research Groups in the Historical-Cultural approach are dedicated to topics related to Higher Education, comprising 32 Groups. All groups that work with teacher training or professional training at a higher level are categorized here. Early Childhood Education is the second level of education with the largest number of Research Groups in the approach, consisting of 13 Groups. Basic Education, in turn, is presented in eight Research Groups, without specifying which stage of Basic Education the Groups refer to. Six groups dedicated to Elementary Education are also identified; two Groups for Technical/Vocational Education; two groups for Youth and Adult Education, a Group on Secondary Education, and one on Distance Education (EaD).

Research Topics

Among the themes identified in the Research Groups that adopt HCP as a theoretical methodological approach in Education, Teacher Training linked to teaching activity/work and educational work corresponded to 31 Research Groups. Next is the topic of Teaching and Learning Processes; educational processes; cognition; and appropriation of knowledge with 29 Groups.

Within the scope of Teaching activities, there is the following distribution of Research Groups: a) Didactics

and teaching methodology, including terms such as School Practices, Pedagogical Practices, Pedagogical Activities, and Pedagogical Workshops: 24 Groups and b) Teaching specific curricular areas, such as Mathematics, Cartographic Geography, Physics, Science, Physical Education, Foreign Language, Botany: with 19 Groups, with the largest concentration in mathematics teaching. The theme of human and mental development, including themes such as mental actions, creativity, cognition, and conduct, is also well represented with 17 Research Groups, followed by the theme of Public Policies in Education (planning, development, evaluation) and; Public Education Network with 14 Groups. It is important to highlight that there is a considerable group of groups dedicated to Ideology themes; Language and Discursive Practices: 11 Groups.

The questions most focused on aspects of culture, cultural diversity, and family are constituted in 10 Research Groups. A slightly smaller number include themes related to inclusive education, special education, and disability issues, with nine Groups; Curriculum/teaching organization with six Groups; Literacy, including groups that brought literacy and literacy

in mathematics explicitly: five Groups; Art and aesthetics: four groups; Studies on sexuality and gender: two groups; School failure, school complaints and the medicalization of education: two groups. With one group each, the themes are identified: Peasant Education; Indigenous Education; Community Schools; Ethnography in the classroom; Prejudice; Health; Museums, and Zoos.

This is the first thematic-only categorization that could be improved in the future. In any case, it allows you to have a general overview of the main topics studied by HCT in Education, with emphasis on the topics "Teacher training", "Didactics and teaching methodology" and "Teaching and learning processes", all with more than twenty groups. It is important to highlight that at the National Association of Postgraduate Studies and Research in Education (Anped), these themes are addressed by the largest Working Groups – GTs.

Contemporary themes, whose discussion has proven urgent in school education (such as sexuality and gender, prejudice, racism and violence at school, Rural Education, and Indigenous Education), still appear in an incipient form.

DISCUSSION AND SOME FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The objective of this article was to present a general overview of the insertion of Historical-Cultural Psychology within the scope of scientific research in Brazil, in research groups that formally indicate it as a guide for their work, having as reference the groups registered with the DGP-CNPq. It is understood that the panorama presented is quantitative, as numerical data was presented on the number of groups, how they are geographically distributed, and the main research themes, among other information. In other words, a broad overview was produced that needs to be deepened beyond the data provided by the DGP-CNPq.

The future challenge is to investigate in more detail the possible developments or trends in the adoption of this theoretical framework, that is, what has been researched by the groups. In this sense, there are gaps to be investigated: what are the main concepts of the theory that underlie the groups' research? What are the main reference works used by research groups? What are the main methodological strategies used? How have the groups dealt with contemporary themes, not yet present as research themes at the historical moment in which the HCP was produced in the Soviet context?

We have dedicated ourselves to the analysis of some of the categorized research themes, focusing on the production of groups by examining the publications of their leaders and vice-leaders, to initiate discussions about possible developments or trends in adopting this theoretical framework in the knowledge areas in which Historical-Cultural Psychology is more frequent. To date, the following thematic sections have been made: Continuing teacher training (Santos,

2020); Health-disease processes (Oliveira, 2018); Production of school complaints (Guaragna, 2020); Public policies in education (Silva, 2021); Special Education (Clemente, 2020).

In analytical terms, examining the data collected raises some questions to think about the scenario in which HCP finds itself in Brazil today. The first highlight refers to the number of terms with which the theory is named: Historical-Cultural Theory; Historical-Cultural Psychology; Socio-Historical Psychology; Vygotsky's School; Vygotsky School; Activity Theory; Soviet Psychology; Socio-Cultural Theory; Socio-Historical Theory; among other terms. In other words, a great semantic dispersion is identified (Nuñez & Ramalho, 1999) about the naming of the theory.

This dispersion also occurs with the use of concepts, which can be seen in the analysis of the thematic sections, mentioned above, through the examination of articles by the leaders and vice-leaders of the groups: articles that mention authors of the theory, but do not mention support this theoretical perspective by presenting the analysis of their objects of study; articles that present little conceptual precision, that is, they mention some theoretical concept, but do not explain it; articles that, at the beginning of the text, mention HCP, but this does not appear later as an analytical bias.

Semantic dispersion is combined, in many cases, with eclecticism and several theoretical perspectives circulate in the same group, which appears in its description in the DGP-CNPq, or articles, as we see in the thematic analyses presented previously. It is interesting to see how Vygotsky

himself, in his classic text "The Historical Meaning of the Crisis in Psychology" (1999), had already denounced the theoretical eclecticism present in Psychology.

On the other hand, we can see the constant growth of groups identified with Vygotskian theory, especially in Education, and the increase in research within the scope of public policies (in education, health, and social assistance), bringing fundamental contributions of this theory to the implementation of government programs and projects.

It is also noteworthy that classic research themes such as learning, development, teacher training, and teaching methodologies continue to be investigated, but other themes appear in the scenario, such as discussions about gender and sexuality, human rights, immigration, the role of technologies, among others, requiring us to historically update the theory as part of the historical-dialectic materialist method that underpins our psychology.

Perhaps due to the educational challenges we experience in our country, the themes that are most studied are in the educational field, based on research and studies on development, learning, teacher training, language and thought, didactics and teaching methodology, psychology of education, and related matters. The predominant study of these classic themes is understandable and is part of our movement to appropriate the theory in focus.

However, to bring a provocation, wouldn't this be an opportune moment to start using the conceptual tools of HCP to also explain and investigate poignant contemporary themes of current reality? What contributions do we have to think about the rise of fascism and totalitarianism today? How can HCP explain our racist formation and the structural racism of our society? What theoretical-methodological tools do we have to explain the constitution of genders, roles, and sexual identities? Such questions can guide not only future research, but also foster educational and psychological intervention strategies from the perspective of the inseparability between theory and social practice, so dear to Marxism.

It is noteworthy that the research began in 2018 and was completed in a drastically different context. To think about its contributions and impacts, it is worth highlighting that in recent years Brazil has been split between what has come to be commonly called "left" and "right" – a split that occurred without it being possible to establish and disseminate analysis and articulations about reality. To this situation was added a campaign of disbelief in science in general, and in the human and social sciences, specifically. It is also necessary to consider the advances in neoliberal perspectives on society in the country and in the world. This has led Brazilian researchers and social leaders to resist in the fight for rights that have already been conquered and recognized and that are threatened daily, for human values that are disappearing in the face of the harsh situations in which the people are forced to experience/protagonize; by science and knowledge so that they can be produced, taught and appropriated.

What is certain is that daily work has been carried out in the face of these conditions, worsened by the deepening of the global economic and health crisis, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which began in March 2020. This all leads to highlighting the need to have a theoretical-methodological framework that helps in reading the constitution of society marked by profound contradictions. Through HCP it becomes possible to understand issues that directly affect the field of Education and build interpretive and action tools to combat inequality, social injustice, violence, prejudice, etc.

From a critical theoretical contribution, new questions arise: How will researchers find the conditions to continue their studies with drastic cuts in funding? How will they continue to train new researchers and higher education teachers with cuts in scholarships and without the prospect of opening competitions to replace retired or dismissed professionals?

Under these conditions, it is possible that new Groups will not be created or linked with the same frequency in the DPQ-CNPq. In any case, in addition to the themes highlighted, the current and new Groups will face emergency remote teaching, teleworking, teacher and student illnesses, and the defense of achievements included in public policies – in an exercise of resistance, among other themes that are being presented. They need to be identified.

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