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Editorial

Epistemological Reflections and Doing Science in Contemporary Administration

Reflexões Epistemológicas e Sobre o Fazer Científico na Administração Contemporânea

Carolina Andion*[1,2,3]

ABSTRACT

RAC has prioritized studies that advance the scientific debate in the field of contemporary administration, favoring original and interdisciplinary studies with epistemological approaches expanding conceptual boundaries and innovatively connecting theory and practice. RAC values responsible knowledge production that contributes in and out of academia. Given this, it is vital to reinforce a research agenda for administration, broadening the horizons of epistemological and metatheoretical discussions on the content of the knowledge produced and on how this knowledge is produced. Such a research agenda must focus on the field's scientific practices, the scope and limits, and the consequences of these practices in academia and beyond. This editorial presents some reflections and contributions to thinking about new epistemological paths and supporting the use of new praxeological avenues in the field. The intention is to help consolidate a research agenda on epistemology and practices in the scientific work of administration oriented toward the most prominent societal challenges.

Keywords: epistemology; knowledge production systems; sociology of science; administration.

RESUMO

A RAC tem priorizado trabalhos que avancem o debate científico no campo da administração contemporânea, privilegiando estudos originais, interdisciplinares e com abordagens epistemológicas que expandam fronteiras conceituais e articulem teoria e prática, de forma inovadora, valorizando uma produção de conhecimento responsável e que traga contribuições para dentro e para fora da academia. Diante disso, coloca-se a importância de reforçar uma agenda de pesquisa em administração que amplie os horizontes das discussões epistemológicas e metateóricas sobre o conteúdo do conhecimento produzido, mas também sobre como esse conhecimento é produzido, concentrando-se nas práticas científicas do campo, seus alcances e limites e as consequências dessas práticas no universo acadêmico e para além dele. Esse editorial apresenta algumas reflexões e contribuições para pensar novas vias epistemológicas e para experimentar novas avenidas praxeológicas no campo, buscando contribuir para adensar uma agenda de pesquisa sobre epistemologia e as práticas no fazer científico da administração orientado para os grandes desafios societais.

Palavras-chave: epistemologia; sistemas de produção de conhecimento; sociologia da ciência; administração.

* Corresponding Author.
1. Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina, Centro de Ciências da Administração e Socioeconômicas, Departamento de Administração Pública, Florianópolis, SC, Brazil.
2. Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina, Centro de Ciências da Administração e Socioeconômicas, Programa Acadêmico de Pós-Graduação em Administração, Florianópolis, SC, Brazil.
3. Associate Editor of Revista de Administração Contemporânea - RAC (Journal of Contemporary Administration).

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INTRODUCTION

RAC has explained in its editorial policy and discussed in its previous editorials its decision to publish only articles that clearly bring theoretical, practical, methodological, or didactic contributions to the field (Bispo, 2023). Also, the journal understands that theory and practice are interdependent (Bispo, 2022a) and offers space for articles portraying applied research and focusing on solutions to concrete problems (Motta, 2022). Thus, as Bispo (2022b) proposes, taking inspiration from Agamben (2009), 'contemporary' in RAC's point of view refers to the ability to apprehend and learn, approximating and distancing from the present time and its challenges.

It is, therefore, a question of favoring a critical, reflective, and quality scientific production based on consistent epistemological approaches that expand the theoretical and practical scope of administration, expanding its social impact to respond to contemporary challenges. But what does this mean in practice for our scientific field? In this text, I present a reflection on the direction of contemporary administration science, not only in epistemological terms but also in the field's scientific work, to inspire authors and readers in their studies and contribute to deepening the research agenda on this topic in RAC.

The epistemological debate and reflections on administration science have greatly advanced since the publication of seminal studies on the subject internationally (Astley & Van de Ven, 1983; Audet & Malouin, 1986; Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Currently, the treatment of themes related to the epistemology, history, or sociology of administration science has gained increasing space in publications, academic debate, and the curriculum of graduate programs in several countries, including Brazil (Serva, 2017). This process also reflects the very scientific development of the fields of administration and organizational studies.

With an origin anchored in practice, in the empiricism of Taylor and Fayol, and a managerial approach (Vizeu, 2010), the theoretical and metatheoretical construction in administration is more recent (Audet & Malouin, 1986). Such construction began in the middle of the twentieth century – one could say that it was a reaction to classic works[1] – with the contributions of human relations interactionists (Argyris, 1957; Mayo, 1945; Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939), of the decision-making school (Barnard, 1938; Simon, 1961), and sociologists interested in organizational studies such as Merton (2013a, 2013b) and Parsons (1967), to name just a few. Since then, the analysis of organizations and the field of administration has become fertile ground for applying functionalism (Chanlat & Séguin, 1987) and, therefore, for a positivist episteme that is still considered predominant in the field (Gonzales-Miranda et al., 2018).

Such a perspective, mainly guided by technical and instrumental approaches, tends to naturalize the notion of an organization as a synonym for 'company' and 'management' as a domain focused on solving problems. In this sense, the manager guarantees the activities through control and coordination, emphasizing performance. The belief in this paradigmatic predominance is revealed in the field's scientific production, research, and teaching practices. They tend to reproduce certain symbolic generalizations, explanatory models, examples, and common values (Kuhn, 2011), with consequences such as the predominance of normative and prescriptive approaches that don't stimulate criticism and reflexivity and give little space to rationales other than the instrumental one, as Guerreiro Ramos (1989) points out.

However, it is important to remember that this 'artificial unanimity' of functionalism has been questioned for various authors (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Chanlat & Séguin, 1987; Westwood & Clegg, 2013). This is especially true due to the development of metatheoretical studies showing the characteristics of still-young administration science. These studies show that the discursive field of administration has never been homogeneous. On the contrary, it is fragmented and diverse, and there have always been dissenting voices.

Therefore, it is important to embrace (and not disguise) this plurality of the field's theoretical, paradigmatic, methodological, and analytical perspectives and deepen understanding of its diversity, particularities, and potential. This is only possible if we invest more in expanding our reflection on the production of knowledge in administration science and scientific work in this field. This means conceiving meta-questions about the epistemic matrices adopted (Paula, 2015) and their implications. However, it also demands reflections on scientific work so that 'inventive' science can be produced and not just reproduce universalist models, often adopted without due sociological reduction (Ibarra-Colado, 2008; Guerreiro Ramos, 1996).

This is an extension of metatheoretical reflection in the field (Helin et al., 2014; Tsoukas, 2005; Tsoukas & Chia, 2011) and also on scientific practices (Callon & Latour, 1981; Latour, 1983; Pickering, 1992). Tsoukas and Chia (2011) show that this movement reveals the existence of a plurality of ontological, epistemological, theoretical, praxiological, and axiological perspectives that can be adopted in administration studies and research that influence the way researchers face organizational reality, build knowledge about it and approach the practices. As

we advance in discussing this plurality of perspectives, the existence of various forms of constructing scientific validity and discourses about organizations and their phenomena becomes more visible. Assuming the forms of scientific validity adopted gives way to more consistent, responsive, and transparent research. On the other hand, these forms of validity are immersed in and shaped by society and time. Therefore, they are historically constructed and anchored in particular conceptions of what and how we investigate (Demo, 2012; Westwood & Clegg, 2013).

I start this editorial based on the premise that the advancement of epistemological reflections on knowledge construction and scientific practices can contribute to designing a more robust administration science that can respond to the challenges of our time. Particularly, I show that some characteristics responsible for the questioning or branding of administration science as 'pseudoscience" can be seen today as elements that favor it, as a science of 'organizing,' 'coordinating,' a science of practices, devices, and processes that can produce important effects on the world and in response to contemporary challenges.

Its heteronomy and relations with common knowledge and politics, its anchorage in the real world, its applied character, the multiplicity of theoretical approaches, the dispute between them, and methodological anarchism can be seen not as 'defects' of administration science. However, they are qualities that provide possibilities to build 'knowledge production systems' (Hill, 1984) that are more consistent, coherent, and honest with their limitations. For this to occur, it is necessary that both what is produced by administration science and its own scientific work be problematized –administration science is taken as a phenomenon of investigation through theoretical and empirical studies.

Based on this premise and advances in reflections on epistemology and scientific practices in the field, I present in this editorial proposals to reinforce a research agenda for administration, broadening the horizons of epistemological and metatheoretical discussions on knowledge content and on how this knowledge is produced. I focus on the field's scientific practices, their scope and limits, and the consequences of these practices in academia and other areas.

THE PROGRESS IN THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL DEBATE AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS IN ADMINISTRATION STUDIES

At the very beginning, epistemological discussions were reserved for philosophers, starting with Bacon and Descartes. This was maintained in the first three-quarters of the twentieth century when the production of legitimate discourses on sciences – institutionalized by the disciplines of philosophy of science and epistemology – was a monopoly of philosophy. During this period, professional scientists were rarely observed expressing any concern about the problem of knowledge in their respective disciplines, much less taking science and scientific knowledge as objects of empirical analysis. Thus, the epistemological discussion in the social sciences revolves around ways of building knowledge, focusing on the different ontological and epistemological aspects that may lead to multiple ways of producing knowledge based on internal validity criteria. Through the opposition and dialogue between the positivist and idealist philosophical traditions, several strands of knowledge construction are conceived over time within the scope of philosophy that will clearly impact social sciences.

It was no different in the administration field, resulting in a predominance of a positivist episteme, which anchors the structural-functionalism widely applied in the social sciences and organizational studies (Chanlat & Séguin, 1987). The critique of functionalism was later accompanied by the expansion of critical studies (Gantman, 2017). With the advance of theoretical production in organizational studies – and as a reflection of a movement observed in the social sciences as a whole – some authors denounced a polarization between positivist and constructivist perspectives in the field illustrated by the opposition between functionalist and critical studies (Caldas et al., 2011; Gonzales-Miranda et al., 2018).

More recently, studies have advanced toward showing that the scientific field of administration is much more diverse in epistemological terms, going far beyond this polarization. Chanlat and Séguin (1987), in their seminal work, discussed the need to expand the paradigmatic choices to investigate several phenomena that the field of organizational analysis was not addressing. Inspired by Westwood and Clegg (2013), one could say that administration is a discursive field consisting of a matrix of texts, theories, concepts, practices, and institutional forms/arrangements. It is composed of diverse communities of language and discourses in dispute. It has never been homogeneous but fragmented and diverse, permeated by dissenting voices, even when certain perspectives are predominant.

Paula (2015) advances this discussion by arguing that the field of administration studies is permeated by several epistemic matrices inspired by philosophies, the logics of thoughts, and particular cognitive interests. Each matrice has its own internal coherence, language, and specific validity criteria. Demo (2012) calls this contingent validity, indicating that researchers must observe this phenomenon.

Thus, Paula (2015) states that the incommensurability or the total separation of the epistemic matrices is impossible since they communicate and correspond with symmetry. The theories and methodologies chosen by researchers move between the different epistemic matrices to overcome cognitive incompleteness and can generate 'epistemic reconstructions' (Paula, 2015).

Thus, in research practice, it is much more common to find hybrid epistemic approaches defined according to the research questions, objectives, and phenomena investigated. More than seeking an absolute epistemological coherence, often unattainable, it is about building 'knowledge production systems' (Hill, 1984) that clearly identify their constituent elements, which must be connected. It is also important to identify and publicize the inconsistencies and limitations of knowledge production systems – studies rarely do that – and propose possible solutions for such limitations.

Tsoukas and Chia (2011) help advance these constitutive elements of every knowledge production system. Such elements have repercussions on the research direction and also have implications in terms of attitudes for the researcher, including (a) ontology (how the investigated reality is perceived); (b) epistemology (how knowledge is constructed and which paths and validity criteria are adopted); and (c) methodology and/or praxeology (how phenomena are investigated and how we interact with them). In addition to these elements, we can also add axiology. As Hill (1984) argues, every knowledge production system is related to the values and ideological perspectives of the researcher. Such values, even if implicit, influence the conduction of the research or the analysis of its results.

Therefore, the expansion and diversification of ontological, epistemological, methodological, and axiological perspectives and greater interdisciplinarity in the field can be important elements for developing administration science. This is because investigations and the ability to theorize and produce answers only benefit from exploring the various possibilities opened up by the different epistemic matrices built over time and their application in research.

However, reflections on science have not only advanced from an epistemological point of view, focusing on the internal validity criteria of knowledge production but also brought important insights into scientific practice. Next, I address the discussion in science studies and its possible contributions to the administration field.

SCIENCE STUDIES, THEIR PRACTICES, AND THEIR DEVELOPMENTS IN ADMINISTRATION

As Bourdieu (2001) observes, the emergence of science studies can be interpreted as a reaction of sociologists toward the philosophers who dominated the debate on knowledge. Merton (2013a; 2013b) is the first to research science from an eminently sociological point of view, demonstrating the relationship between the institutional environment (values, behaviors, cultural frameworks, etc.) and the development of science. Therefore, Merton can be considered a pioneer in making the sociology of scientific culture, i.e., its ethos. However, although the author demonstrates that the institutional environment influences the flourishing of science, Merton still affirms the autonomy of science and its essentiality, defending an ideal of modern science founded on the principles of neutrality and objectivity.

The space for a critique of the classical science project finds an open space only later in the debate, mainly in the philosophical sphere. The work by Thomas Kuhn is its main exponent. With Kuhn (2011), the possibility of considering external influences in the development of science comes into play. Thus, Kuhn's work served as a validation for a series of authors who, after the 1970s, began to study the sciences' social dimensions. This opens space for an evident break between what was done in the field of sociology of knowledge by Merton and what will emerge later with works in the sociology of science (Dubois, 2005).

The studies of the history of science by Khun and other authors in the 1970s[2] paved the way for sociologists to explore new frontiers of science studies, invading territories until then occupied only by philosophers Martin (2006) points this out when indicating the new spaces unveiled: from the domains of scientific content to ultimate issues such as truth, objectivity, and scientific argumentation. A movement toward the 'denaturalization' of science is then observed, giving rise to new questions and a new research agenda interested in discussing both scientific epistemologies and scientific practice. In this wake, a strong program was developed, with David Bloor (2009) as the main representative, and later the works of Bourdieu that founded the critical sociology of science as a field of disputes and domination (Bourdieu, 2013).

For Bloor (2009), strong sociology of scientific knowledge must necessarily adhere to four principles: (a) it must be causal sociology and seek the various conditions (beyond the sociological ones) that produce the states of knowledge; (b) it must be impartial, not judging knowledge in terms of truth or falsity, rational or irrational, since judgments of this type are relative; (c) it must present symmetry, which applies to the mode of explanation; the same types of cause explain true and false beliefs and, therefore, one should not only point out what

led to the successes, but also what led to the scientific errors; and (d) must be reflective; its explanatory model must be applied to sociology itself and, specifically, to the sociology of knowledge itself. If this science seeks general sociological laws, it must be subject to social laws just like the hard sciences, Bloor's main object of attention.

In addition to a strong program, another fundamental pillar in the institutionalization of the sociology of science was Pierre Bourdieu's work. Bourdieu produced extensive research covering various empirical universes and formulated his sociology of science based on a notion of the social field. Three studies emerged from this effort and were published in Portuguese for the Brazilian audience: *O campo científico* (2013) (*Le champ scientifique* or "the scientific field"), *Os usos sociais da ciência* (2004) (*Usages sociaux de la science* or "the social uses of science"), and *Para uma sociologia da ciência* (2001) (*Science de la science et reflexivité* or "science of science and reflexivity"). For Bourdieu (2004), the scientific field is an arena of competition, a place for disputes over the monopoly of scientific authority. Even if, in some cases, scientists are averse to the accumulation of money and political power, they direct their practices to the accumulation of scientific capital. Merton saw the values and imperatives of science as really disinterested, whereas Bourdieu (2013) directly contradicts him and says that this is a veiled interest, an interest in being disinterested. In fact, scientists struggle to have the (legitimate) power to define science according to their particular interests, ensuring the perpetuation of their dominant positions in the field.

As seen so far, the field of sociology of science has undergone major transformations in the last four decades. A movement of diversification of perspectives is perceived, with the common point being a process of denaturalization of science, which is now seen not only as 'knowledge' but as an institution with its scope and limits (Pestre, 2006). These transformations do not occur in the field of sociology of science alone, but in science in general and in the society of the 1970s, in the context of the crisis of Fordism and after the 1968 movement, which gives rise to several questions about the relationship between science and society, theory and practice, and, more specifically, about doing science.

In this scenario, the reconstitution of the history of the sociology of contemporary science goes beyond a generalizing and normative discourse that sets the tone, for example, for the classic studies of the philosophy of science and the sociology of knowledge. The current challenge seems to be to reconstitute a coherent narrative that allows an understanding of the particularities and differences between the multiple interpretative currents that have emerged in the field in recent decades. When we look at the different works that make a genealogy of the most recent history of science, and more specifically of the sociology of science (Bourdieu, 2001; Braustein, 2008; Dubois, 2001; Gingras, 2010, 2013; Martin, 2006; Pestre, 2006; Vinck, 2007), the interpretation is not unanimous. More than a coherent guideline, perhaps the controversies and the heterogeneity between the approaches, the multidisciplinarity and the multiplicity of study objects prevail.

Thus, a new research agenda on science emerges, which also generates repercussions on the social sciences and on administration more specifically. Dubois (2001) lists and characterizes the main research programs that reoriented the field of sociology of science from the 1970s onward when interdisciplinary approaches were valued, a series of scientific associations interested in the subject emerged and publications multiplied and expanded funding for research in the area. As points in common, the author raises four trends that emerged at that time, and that will become stronger in the field in later decades: (a) emphasizing empirically observable scientific actions and practices; (b) relativizing and 'de-essentializing' science by taking its activities from a situated, contextualized perspective that values its history; (c) accentuate the interdependence of the different factors that contribute to putting scientific activities into practice; and (d) increase interest in the social consequences of science, the social responsibility of scientists and the ideology inherent in every scientific community.

Although these trends can be identified as common points in contemporary approaches to the sociology of science, such trends are presented differently along the research lines. Based on the authors cited so far, I present, in Table 1, a synthesis of three main research lines that I consider to be the founders of the transition in the field of sociology of science that occurred after Merton's studies on the institutions of science: the theory of the scientific field, the strong program and, more recently, the socio-anthropology of science and technique (Latour, 1983; Latour & Woogar, 1997; Pickering & Guzic, 2008).

These research lines make room for going beyond the debate on the different epistemologies of science (focusing on the products of scientific fields and disciplinary aspects as conceptual constructions) as they become increasingly interested in scientific practices, seeking to understand how science is done. These approaches are not satisfied with global causal explanations and emphasize the reality of the actors, showing that in their daily practices, such actors also affect the construction of the rules of the scientific game. There is a demystification of science, which loses its character of essentiality and self-validation and becomes denaturalized.

Seen as a set of practices, "science loses its uniqueness, it hybridizes, dissolves as an evident entity" (Pestre, 2006, p. 6, our translation), and becomes closer to 'mundane things' such as common knowledge, politics, or ideology.

The scientific practice has changed a lot in recent decades: "from solitary it becomes collective, from artisanal it passes to an industrial and heavily instrumentalized state; from local it becomes international … The search for money and titles gives rise to many frauds and conflicts of interest" (Gingras, 2010, p. 6, our translation).

Based on the heritage of these research lines and their current developments in the field of sociology of science, we observe a shift toward scientific practices and doing science. Science was then perceived as a set of practices involving different beings (human and non-human) in interaction, including those from the non-academic world. Such an understanding refounds, as stated by Latour (1999; 2012), some pillars that dominated the fields of science studies, whether in philosophy, history of science, sociology of science, or social sciences. Social science and "social," per se, become 'study objects' and are not taken as a priori data.

This opens countless possibilities for studies of administration to look more closely at its structure as a scientific field and mainly at the "doing science" dimension, i.e., the practices and everyday experiences of scientists and their effects on society, broadening the research agenda and observing characteristics, particularities, advances, and limits of this still young science.

Table 1. Main lines of research that renewed the sociology of science after the 1970s.

Lines of research	Understanding science and doing science	Premises	Key notions
Theory of scientific fields Pierre Bourdieu	It comprises scientific work as a social practice that takes place in a specific field, product, and producer of this practice. The theory of scientific fields highlights the relationships of domination and denounces the implicit codes, habits, and routines that govern the scientific world (Dortier, 2008).	It focuses on the structures that guide scientific practices, different from merely interactionist or rationalist approaches. It emphasizes the notion of the scientific field as a space of dispute in which agents confront each other to maintain or modify the current power relations. "The agents defined by the volume and structure of capital they have, determine the structure of the field that, in turn, determines these same agents" (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 69, our translation). On the other hand, agents are a product of their environment, prisoners of action routines. They are prisoners of *habitus* that, above all, emerge from a learning process that often becomes unconscious and translates into an apparently natural attitude reproduced in their environment (Dortier, 2008).	Scientific capital; symbolic capital; *habitus*; autonomy and heteronomy of scientific fields; domination.
Strong program David Bloor	Conceptions of the natural order of things exist as long as there are different social interests. The opposition between two scientific theories is expressed not only in the researchers' divergent points of view on a given phenomenon but also in the divergence of interests rooted in the diversity of internal cultural systems of a scientific community (Dubois, 2001).	1) Principle of causality – considering that no belief is true per se (justification is not intrinsic, self-explanatory). One must look for the (social) conditions that produce the states of knowledge. 2) Principle of impartiality, concerning truthfulness or falsity, of rationality or irrationality. Do not use a priori. 3) Principle of symmetry: follow the actors in real-time and reconstruct the historical complexity of the moment and the elements that contribute to the construction of convictions. 4) Principle of reflexivity: requires the sociology of knowledge to apply its principles.	Experimental culture; the importance of the know-how and practice in science; analysis of scientific controversies; non-separation of the logic of researchers and the reality where they are located; scientific knowledge in flux; scientists are in constant debate; multiple rationalities (Pestre, 2006).
Socioanthropology of science and technology Bruno Latour Michel Callon	Science is produced from scientific practices observed in a situation. There is no dissociation between science's technical, economic, social, and cognitive dimensions. Science as a device that produces multiple conceptual and social orders (rhizomatic development) and not as a device that reveals the "hidden order" of nature (Pestre, 2006, p. 48)	It proposes another way of demarcating social reality that is seen not as a special domain, an exclusive sphere, or a particular object but as the result of a particular movement of reassociation and reaggregation between beings and objects. Scientific facts are disputed and are the subject of controversy in both the natural and social sciences.	Actant or actor-network; agencies and flows, the principle of symmetry between humans and non-humans, cartography of controversies, black box, translation, and the relationship between micro and macro scales.

Note. Source: Elaborated by the author.

CONCLUSION: WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR A RESEARCH AGENDA FOR ADMINISTRATION?

In this editorial, I synthetically explored the most recent debates in the fields of epistemology and sociology of science to highlight the possibilities that emerged from these debates to open new frontiers and launch reflections on contemporary administration science.

Concerning the epistemological debate, I agree with Paula (2015) when she invites us to recognize and explore the potential of the various epistemic matrices that coexist in the field and their interconnections to conceive new and varied forms of investigation and scientific 'digging' that can help us to identify, describe, interpret, understand, and/or explain administration phenomena. Such a movement seems essential for exploring new ontological, epistemological, and praxeological paths and their contributions in formulating new questions, problematizations, analytical-methodological, and theoretical constructions in our scientific field. This can help to achieve high-quality and socially impactful scientific production and promote scientists who are more aware of metatheoretical options and values and more honest with the values that anchor their studies and/or the studies they evaluate.

On the other hand, the new research lines of science studies open space for works that focus on scientific work in the field of administration beyond its production and structures. Focusing on scientific practices, as stated by Frega (2016), means investigating an intermediate level that relates two distinct and complementary pillars of the constitution of science (a) the existence of forms of regularity, routines, habits, procedures, acquired learning and its effects; and (b) a reflective potential for criticism and rupture that is immanent in social life and that also permeates science. The practices can reveal both the ways of reproducing science and the actions that allow its updating/transformation and constant recomposition. In this sense, understanding them is essential to increase understanding of scientific dynamics.

The recent discussions highlighted in this editorial also propose a reconciliation between 'scientific' and 'practical' knowledge, traditionally separated and organized hierarchically in the debate on science and the field of administration. The study of practices, which has always been essential in administration and often devalued and confused with 'common knowledge,' is now considered, as Frega (2016, p. 329, our translation) states, "an asset, an indispensable component in the functioning of every enterprise destined to last in time," including in science.

Above all, advances in the epistemological debate and scientific practice allow looking at and exercising administration science differently. In this sense, as discussed by Alperstedt and Andion (2017), characteristics of administration that were considered problematic from an orthodox view, such as its heteronomy, its applied nature, the multiplicity of theoretical and methodological approaches, and its unclear demarcation concerning practices and ideology, can be seen today as particularities that distinguish and value administration in comparison to other sciences.

It is about seeing administration perhaps as it has always been, a science of practices, interdisciplinary, "a science that is carried out in the various laboratories of life" and, therefore, "an essential science in the process of instituting and transforming realities" (Alperstedt & Andion, 2017, p. 628, our translation) and to respond to the challenges of our time. Such a conception of administration science, as Bispo (2022a) proposes, could be at the heart of what we understand about 'contemporary administration,' which has been valued in RAC's editorial policy and discussed in other of its editorials, as mentioned before (Bispo, 2022a, 2023; Motta, 2022). For Bispo (2022a), it is about the ability to understand and respond to the contemporary challenges, which is not just what is new, but what emerges "from a historical process that helps us to recognize the present" (Bispo, 2022a, p. 2, our translation), and allows us to pose relevant questions permeating our realities.

However, both the product of knowledge and the paths adopted for knowing and doing scientific work in administration must be problematized and taken as phenomena to be investigated critically and reflectively, considering their real effects in the face of contemporary challenges. Administration becomes a primordial science in a world of profound social inequalities that generate material and symbolic injustices, where the increasingly severe effects of a climate crisis are experienced globally and locally. However, which administration science do we want and practice? Is it capable of facing our dilemmas? Based on these questions, I propose advancing a research agenda linked to teaching and extension, to co-produce a science of administration that transforms our realities and responds to contemporary challenges instead of only reproducing the field itself, legitimizing injustices, and justifying the status quo.

NOTES

1. Chanlat and Séguin (1987) use the term 'reaction' and not 'opposition' to indicate that there is much more interest in completing the classical school than in opposing it.
2. Without going into the particularities of each author, which would go beyond the scope of this editorial, from the 1970s onward, Thomas Khun and other authors in the fields of philosophy and social sciences

challenged the ideal of classical science and its principles. Among these authors are Imre Lakatos, with his critical rationalism; Paul Feyerabend (1975), a friend of Lakatos, with his epistemological anarchism; and Edgard Morin (1982) and Le Moigne (1995), who opened space for constructivist epistemologies in social sciences.

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Authorship

Carolina Andion*

Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina, Centro de Ciências da Administração e Socioeconômicas, Departamento de Administração Pública;

Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina, Centro de Ciências da Administração e Socioeconômicas, Programa Acadêmico de Pós-Graduação em Administração

Av. Madre Benvenuta, n. 2037, Itacorubí, CEP 88035-001, Florianópolis, SC, Brazil.

E-mail: andion.esag@gmail.com

https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4723-3437

* Corresponding Author

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