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Critical (Feminist) Psychology in Portugal. Will it be possible?

Portugal: Historical-political and sociological characterization

Portugal lived under a dictatorial, fascist regime, from May 28th 1926 up until April 25th 1974. Since the Republic, in 1910, Portugal went through a period of political, economical and social disturbances, with the successive falls of governments and a perilous financial situation, which was aggravated with the participation in World War I. In 1928, António de Oliveira Salazar enters the political stage as Minister of Finances. Introducing politics of austerity, Salazar manages to balance the country's financial-economical situation and builds an image of a powerful statesman. This image and his influence led to the approval of the new Constitution, which would set up the regime of the "New State". 1933 Constitution reinforces an authoritarian regime that prohibits political parties and strikes, establishes censorship and raises the political police office (PIDE International and State Defense Police). These measures embodied a repressive state, whose main tools of domination were fear and ignorance. Bad living conditions of a great part of the population and very high levels of illiteracy contributed to this situation.

In 1961, the colonial war began with military operations in Angola, followed, straight after, by the ones in Mozambique and Guinea which ended up dominating the political life since then. An increasing number of soldiers are sent to the African continent. According to António Barreto "in the 60's, beginning of the 70's, military service and war in Africa were one of the mightiest factors of socialization of Portuguese youth and of reorganization of family and commercial nets" (1996, p. 24). Portuguese colonial war was severely criticised, inside and outside the country. It was a cause of discontent for the population, who saw their children dying in an never ending war. Living conditions worsened due to the financial effort needed in order to support the conflict.

In 1968, Marcelo Caetano substituted Salazar, who was seriously ill². Though what was known as "Marcelist Spring" seemed to reflect a certain amount of liberalization, Salazar's structures remained intact. Censorship still prevailed along with PIDE and the colonial war. In spite of some economical development, which began to arise in the sixties, and besides a light liberalization that was owed to Marcelo Caetano, the colonial War and the whole dictatorial regime, did not allow the country to evolve (Barreto, 1996).

The Colonial war contributed highly to the decadence of the regime on April 25th 1974 and of the so-called Carnations Revolution³. Popular dissatisfaction caused by the war in the colonies spread to soldiers who were fighting in Angola, Guinea and Mozambique. Therefore

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² Even after Salazar's death in 1970, the regime still survived during four more years.

³ In the dawn of April 25th, a lady who was carrying carnations to decorate the restaurant where she worked started offering them to the soldiers that were passing by; these put them in their rifles. As soon as the rest of the population woke up and was aware of what was going on outside, they gathered in the streets carrying carnations as well. This image of a soldier with a carnation in his rifle standing on an armoured vehicle became the symbol of our revolution.

the revolution itself was a result of the dissatisfaction of some sectors of the Armed Force. It was these sectors, which subsequently was named Armed Force Movement (MFA). It rebelled against the regime and caused the revolution of April 25th.

According to António Barreto (1996) the democratic regime was gradually installed, (though faster than expected from such a closed and immobilist country).

Many were the new situations for Portugal. Only after 1974, and for the first time, Portugal had universal suffrage and free elections; freedom of speech was restored; the most ancient colonial empire of the world ended. In only a year's time, more than 600.000 Portuguese citizens returned from Africa. They were designated as "the returned". There were no serious adjustment problems (ditto, 1996). However, the political crisis was constant. There was much instability and conflict and a new social and political balance became necessary. That is why Barreto believes that Portugal only reached political stability in 1985.

During the 20 years following the Revolution, the population grew old like few others in Europe. The greatest illiteracy level in Europe practically disappeared, and the service sector flourished. The Welfare State that was quite weak up until then, or even non-existing, was universalised. Society was diversified, Religious freedom became a reality and political parties and unions became organized. In what concerns women (questions that interest us the most!), they started to be recognized as citizens: they started to have access to all professions, to be able to vote, to have their own bank accounts, to have a passport and to be able to go abroad without their husbands' permission⁴.

These changes occurred in a very laid back manner and were only possible due to a great deal of negotiation. Probably due to this fact, they were not completely fulfilled seeing that some aspects still persisted: the state being too centralized, excessive bureaucracy, weak civil society and a strong social inequality. Nowadays, among all the European countries, Portugal presents the biggest gap between the profits of the rich and of the poor.

In 1976, while the country was rebuilding itself under a democratic regime, graduate courses in Psychology were created in the three public Portuguese universities. Forty-eight years of fascism, together with its alliance with religion and the consequent colonial war, which we previously referred to, shaped Portuguese society in a deep and conservative way, preventing it from accompanying the evolution of the other countries in Europe and in the world. This fact is obvious in two aspects of the history of Psychology in Portugal, namely with its great involvement in the recruitment of soldiers for the colonial war and the creation of the first university degree in Psychology (in 1968) in a private institute (Institute of Applied Psychology), supported by the Catholic Church.

While Critical Psychology, or the theories that influenced its appearance, and, specifically the whole movement of crisis within Social Psychology (Gergen, 1973) developed in other parts of Europe and in the United States, in Portugal there was still no Psychology degree in the public universities.

The whole framework that has been previously presented, concerning the revolution and the revolutionary period that followed it, might lead to the belief that psychology would mirror the country in political terms with a clear leftwing and anticlerical ideological involvement. History, though, does not portrait such scenario.

Many prior conditions were factors of constraints and the existing psychology, though pre-academic (Gonçalves & Almeida, 1995a)⁵, was fundamental for its development.

⁴ The way a country deals with women's rights is a good barometer of its development.

⁵ Oscar Gonçalves and Leandro Almeida in their article *Country profile: Portugal*, refer to the existence of three periods in psychology in Portugal: pre-academic, since the beginning of the twentieth century up until the first degrees at Portuguese public universities in 1975; academic, straight after that period and professional period, the current one. In our article we only refer to the pre-academic and academic periods.

Many people think and say that dictatorial government, that subjugated the country during forty-eight years, delayed the development of psychology. Nevertheless, we agree with Jesuino (1994) who believes that the causes of the delay were more related to the country's economical conditions, at the time, and the structural inertia of the system, than from that of the military dictatorship. As mainstream science, Psychology does not seem to be especially disrupted by totalitarian regimes.

The History of Psychology in Portugal

The pre-academic period until 1975

We will start by mentioning the periods until 1950 (presented by Abreu in 2005) and another period which lasted until 1974. A brief reference will be made concerning the history of the institutions where psychology was practiced (the Institute of Career Guidance, created in 1925, and the Army's Centre of Polytechnic Studies, created in 1960). We will also talk about the creation of the first private graduate course in psychology (in an institute linked to the Catholic Church – Superior Institute of Applied Psychology, created in 1968).

Psychology in Portugal was born in the beginning of the century, as in all of Europe. In 1912, in the College of Letters of the University of Coimbra, the first laboratory of psychology was created where the first studies of experimental psychology and psychopedagogy were carried out. These studies had not come, however, to have continuity. Psychology was studied predominantly in the courses of philosophy and in the psychiatric medical school (Jesuino, 1994).

This first pre-academic phase can be broken down into three periods (Abreu, 2005, based on Sílvia Lima⁶, 1950). The first period was from mid 19th century to the beginning of WW1. The second period was from 1914 to 1941 and the third from 1941 to 1950. We will basically focus on the last two since it was these that we believe to be relevant for the understanding of the current situation of psychology in Portugal.

No período de 1914 a 1940, de uma forma geral a psicologia orientava-se por padrões eminentemente experimentais, laboratoriais e métricos e era essencialmente aplicada no campo médico, pedagógico e da orientação escolar e profissional.

During the period of 1914 to 1940, psychology was generally guided by experiential, laboratorial and metric measures that were mainly applied to medical, pedagogical and school and career guidance counselling fields.

We must highlight the creation of the Institute of Career Guidance (*Instituto de Orientação Profissional* – I.O.P.) in 1925, which was the result of Faria de Vasconcelos' Work (Pinho, 1986). The I.O.P. practiced the following activities: guidance counselling to students of primary schools; organized services of career guidance in the country; trained professionals (doctors and teachers); elaborated studies and scientific research. Despite being a pioneer in this country, the I.O.P.'s organization and goals led to the idea that a medical orientation prevailed in psychology, as well as trait and factor theories through the use of psychological exams. As Jesuino (1994) put it, the "Instituto de Orientação Profissional was, in this matter, pioneer in the use of testes in Portugal" (p. 228).

University professors, teachers, neurologists and psychiatrists (Silvio Lima, 1950, in Abreu, 2005) were mainly influenced by positivist paradigm and by associationist empiricism. The importance of diagnosis in career guidance and selection was dominant in this period.

Abreu (2005) referred Silvio Lima as the one that most characterised the period of 1941 to 1950 by the new approaches in psychology. These approaches were mainly descriptive,

⁶ Professor in the College of Letters of the University of Coimbra. He published a History of Psychology in Portugal.

hermeneutic, comprehensive and humanistic leading to an idealistic-methodological turn with a Dilthey and Brentano influence. The array of protagonists in this period narrowed when compared to the previous one. This period was mostly represented by university professors, neurologists and psychiatrists mainly within medical schools (idem, 2005).

After the 60's, applied psychology in Portugal started to be noticed due to the arrival of professionals that had obtained their degrees in France and other European countries, and also professionals who were trained in Philosophy departments. The appearance of all these professionals made it possible for psychiatric hospitals to offer services of psychological diagnosis and for the Ministry of Labour to provide career selection and guidance.

Meanwhile, psychology in the army started to evolve. As had been previously mentioned, one of the fundamental elements for the history of psychology in the pre-academic period was the (official) creation of the army's Centre of Polytechnic Studies in September of 1960 (Gonçalves & Almeida, 1995). In the 40's, the army was already involved in many studies in the sensorial and psychomotor field and were the first to use pen and paper tests.

The colonial war, which lasted from 1961 to 1974, contributed to the evolvement of this line of assessing mental abilities. At that time, the existence of a psychotechnical service in the army was believed to be more profitable when it came to military training, but it would also contribute to improve the contingent of troops. The initial goal defined by the Centre of Polytechnic Studies to prepare centres of selection was delayed due to the beginning of the colonial war in Angola. The Centre of Studies was soon overloaded with tasks of selecting personnel; therefore, the exams of psychological assessment took place in Training Centres. During the 60's, with the purpose of selecting individuals with graduate courses, some techniques were developed, namely, studying and implementing assessment through group dynamics. In 1968, the publication of the first Military Psychology Bulletin took place, focusing on studies about sensations and perceptions, emotions, personality and leadership psychology (Army's Centre of Applied Psychology,). By the end of the 60's, just a decade away from the creation of the first university degrees, it can be noted that psychology was mainly positivist and empiricist and that the humanistic and hermeneutic perspectives referred by Silvio Lima (Abreu, 2005) did not have the impact that the author idealized. In fact, as Gonçalves and Almeida (1995) and Jesuíno (1994) had mentioned, during this period, assessment prevailed and applying tests was just about the sole and exclusive activity practiced by psychologists⁷.

We had highlighted the importance of the Institute of Career Guidance (I.O.P.) and of the Centre of Polytechnic Studies of the Army. We will now focus on the creation of a graduate course in psychology in a private school which occurred in 1968.

Graduate courses in Public Universities only emerged in 1976 but since 1948 there had been many efforts into making this a reality. In 1962, it was granted the creation of a course entitled Psychopedagogical Sciences in the College of Mary's Heart, a religious college that soon merged with the Superior Institute of Applied Psychology. This course began with both the approval of the Ministry of National Education (a governmental body) and Lisbon's Patriarch Cardinal (the Church's supreme representative in the country). The institute's internal regulations referred that this course's goals should be research and education "respecting the pure principles of the global view of the christen world". Although it was a course that presented a great variety of subjects, it must be emphasized that it also included subjects of Theology and Religious Psychology (Borges, 1986).

The academic period, after the creation of the first courses in 1976

⁷ In spite of assessment instruments were not standardized to the Portuguese population.

The creation of official higher education in psychology only took place in 1976, after the April Revolution, with the opening of three faculties of psychology and education sciences, respectively in the University of Lisbon, Porto and Coimbra. Subsequently, fifteen years later, in 1991, a course was created in the University of Minho.

Marques (2000) noted that the graduate courses in Psychology became a reality due to the collaboration of doctors and psychoanalysts. Isolina Borges (1986) further explained these influences making reference to three organizations that had a considerable impact on the creation of Psychology degrees in the Public Universities: the Superior Institute of Applied Psychology, which we have already mentioned, the Portuguese Society of Psychoanalysis, created in 1966, though only recognized in 1981, and the Portuguese Society of Psychology that appeared in 1960 and which included almost everyone who was practising psychology without being doctors or psychoanalysts: with degrees in history, philosophy and dissertations in psychology or with degrees in education from foreign countries. Professors from the first graduate courses of psychology were important for the development of certain areas and epistemological positions within psychology.

After 1974, most of these professors (great majority being psychiatrists) had returned to Portugal from France and Belgium and other countries where they had been refugees, having run away from PIDE and the colonial War. Professors with degrees in Philosophy had remained and in their majority integrated educational and developmental psychology. Social psychology wasn't considered an area of great influence in these first courses of psychology. Only at a later time, the Superior Institute of Sciences of Labour, an institution of public education that wasn't part of the Classical University of Lisbon, gathered the first social psychologists⁸ supporting the courses of sociology, anthropology and management. Due to this, the degree in Social Psychology and Organizations was created in 1995. These professors were inclined to follow a social-cognitive orientation, despite the influences of a European social psychology (Tajfel social identity theory and Moscovici's social representation theory).

Gradually, psychiatrists and psychoanalysts started leaving the Faculties giving place to a new generation of ex-students, who started their university careers and that, through their PhD, started introducing North American orientations. This set forth the epistemological course of psychology in Portugal. The exceptions that resisted the American hegemony, essentially kept the French orientation.

However, and because this aspect seems crucial for us when concerning the short history of critical psychology, it is important to mention the establishment of the Psychology course at the University of Minho in 1991. This degree was conceived in the first place by the "dream" of an ex-student of the Faculty of Psychology and Sciences of Education of University of Porto, José Fernando Cruz that finished his degree in 1981 and became a teacher at University of Minho, teaching classes in psychology linked to teacher's training⁹. In association with two other ex-students of the same university (Leandro Almeida and Óscar Gonçalves), they began to think and organize the creation of that new course in the University of Minho, that in geographical terms, is barely 50 kilometres away from Oporto. It is important to mention that Óscar Gonçalves had carried out his PhD in the United States of America and was inclined to introduce an innovative element that he valued to the graduate course in Psychology. It was within this context that the graduate course in Psychology was created at the University of Minho, differing from the existing model at that time and introducing new themes that are still today unique when it comes to Psychology in Portugal. For instance, at the time of creating this graduate course the Community Psychology discipline was introduced by Óscar

⁸ The first came from France and were influenced by Moscovici's social representation.

⁹ In almost all the Portuguese universities, the creation of graduate courses in psychology was mainly due to the efforts of the professors of educational psychology who were linked to teacher training.

Gonçalves as being an area that he became familiar with during the post-graduation years he had spent in the United States of America. The first author of this paper became responsible for the Community Psychology course (indicated by Óscar Gonçalves himself) while she was completing her own PhD and at the time was already an assumed feminist and ideologically committed. This fact cannot be seen as a minor influence on the future development of the critical and feminist perspective in Social Psychology. Within this academic context of openness and innovation, she was able to defend her PhD (Nogueira, 1997) and was referred to by Lúcia Amâncio (2002) as being the first feminist in Psychology in Portugal.

Despite the fact that Psychology emerged late in this country we must highlight that it grew quite quickly and in certain places in a way that can be compared to European levels. In 2002, 23 degrees in institutions of private and public higher education were functioning and there was an entrance of about 2 thousand students every year (it is necessary to note that Portugal has 10 millions of inhabitants) (Pinto, 2002). This fact though can not be considered representative of the quality of those graduate courses (Gonçalves & Almeida, 1995). In its majority, these graduate courses had been guided by courses of epistemological positivist orientation with some incursions by post-positivist methodologies grounded-theory and narrative psychology, for example), but not necessarily critical. The graduate course in Psychology of University of Minho arose once again as more innovative when in 2002, the “Psychology and socio-cultural diversity” course was introduced, which appeared as a possibility for critical approaches in psychology to emerge, having introduced questions of theory of oppression and liberation.

The accelerated growth of the number of degrees caused an increase of professors and research, since this last one is mainly conducted in the university context (Jesuino, 1994).¹⁰ It is possible to verify this growth by analyzing the quantity of communications presented, in the successive symposia organized by the Portuguese Association of Psychology. These symposia have the tradition of involving almost all of the researchers that work in the Public Universities of Psychology (Jesuino, 1994, p. 231). In 1988, 100 communications were presented, in 1992 the total was of 168, in 1996 of 195 and in 2003 the total of presentations was of 268. Of these, the majority were from the following psychology fields: social¹⁰, clinical, health, cognitive and developmental. The areas that were least represented corresponded to the emergent areas in Portugal: environmental, forensic, and community psychology. An analysis of the keywords lead us to perceive that the most frequently referred were: psychopathological disturbances, psychological evaluation, self concept, illness, education, cognition, health and prevention, psychotherapeutic processes, interpersonal relationships, sport and methodological orientations (Castro, Garrido, Mouro, Novo & Pires, 2004). Concerning the kind of research, a recent analysis of three Portuguese magazines of Psychology revealed that quantitative research was the most frequent (Machado, Lourenço, Pinheiro & Silva, 2004). About 9 % of the published articles are qualitative (although their epistemological orientation is unknown), 50 % consisted of literature revision and conceptual analysis and roughly 40 % are quantitative studies. The quantitative researches are predominantly based on correlation or in statistical treatment of inquiries, questionnaires and interviews with the main goal of gathering numerical data.

In conclusion, we can verify that the Portuguese history of psychology was influenced by important socio-historical and political factors which predetermined the late establishment of graduate courses as well as professors in this field. This late development has been supposedly contradicted by the search for a strong, “scientific” and “new” direction found in the United States of America and in A.P.A. This guidance seems to transmit scientific stability, making up for lost time and the so-called “delay”. Going over everything that has

¹⁰ It is important to mention that most elements from the organizing committee of the event were professors of the graduate course of social and organizational psychology in ISCTE.

been mentioned so far, it is not difficult to see why Critical Psychology is so incipient in Portugal and will most likely have a hard time evolving. The attachment to this strong guidance needs to be shaken up a bit in order to make room for thoughts about all the epistemological assumptions that have contributed to making psychology a regulating and ideologically compromised institution.

Critical (feminist) psychology in Portugal

Firstly, it is important to clarify our position within critical psychology and feminism in psychology.

As it has already been mentioned, the first PhD thesis in Portugal where a feminist perspective is affirmed in psychology appeared in 1997, with the title “A new glance on gender social relations: a feminist critical perspective in the social psychology” whose author is Conceição Nogueira (1st author of this paper).

The feminist perspective is both influenced by gender social constructionist approaches in a critical way and by discourse analysis as theory/methodology of research. In the sequence of this opening mind in the academy, the first author of this paper had the possibility to guide the PhD thesis of the second author of the present article (Saavedra, 2001) which was entitled “Voices of success, (silenced) voices of failure: gender and social class in school”. Quite recently, the third author (Ana Sofia Neves, 2005) defended her thesis entitled “(Des)Construction of the gendered discourses about love, power and violence in intimate relationships: feminist methodologies is critical social psychology”. The three theses that have been mentioned throughout this paper assume a feminist critical perspective. Combining personal motivations and a pathway that had previously been opened, a small academic team emerges where feminist critical psychology becomes a starting point for critical psychology. The late arrival of feminist issues in Portugal meant that it had to skip the institutional period of Women Studies in universities which typically happened in the 70's. Since this never happened in Portugal, it is no wonder that debates on women Studies/Gender Studies or Feminist Studies, specifically in Psychology, just simply hadn't taken place in this country. This situation had a clear advantage, because it became possible to demand a critical feminist psychology project, precisely due to the lack of resistance from that group more represented in the mainstream, whether through Women Studies, whether through Gender Studies. Nevertheless, the acceptance of feminist psychology as well as critical psychology has been difficult. Most often we have to approach the issue by first referring to Gender Studies (a domain that is already relatively well accepted in the academy) so that we can gradually introduce feminist issues. Separating scientific domain, the political dimension and social change, which has been one of the pillars of positivism, is precisely one of the main poles of acceptance of critical psychology and feminist critical psychology. The difficulty that dominant psychology has in accepting this dimension makes it necessary for critical psychology to assert itself as a strategy aiming at politicising all the sub-areas in psychology (Parker, 1999). It is a concrete and temporal strategy that shall be mainly developed starting from the borders of the hegemonic discipline, working as a mechanism of disarticulation and discussion of the questions asked by science (López, 2002), and as a point of convergence of complementary knowledge, such as anthropology, sociology, philosophy, linguistics and others (Kitzinger, 1998). To appropriate this strategy means accepting that every social theory is unavoidably interpretative and evaluative (Richardson & Fowers, 1997)

Specifically concerning feminist psychology, we highlight the epistemological and methodological pluralism as what best contributed to the critical project. But the tradition to condemn the dominant psychology goes back to the beginning of the discipline where many female researchers criticized the biological view as a way of restricting women to the

household and of attributing a situation of intellectual and social inferiority (Hollingworth, 1914; Wooley, 1903). This intimate relation between critical psychology and feminist psychology, namely the influence that feminism had in critical psychology, has already been well documented (Austin & Prillestenky, 2001; Fox, 2000; Parker, 1999; Wilkinson, 1997). However, the same can not be said about feminist psychology, since it may be merely empiricist standpoint, or even post-modern (Harding, 1986) and not having critical preoccupations, that is, not having an emancipatory project for social change in its principles. Taking into account this ambiguity in the concepts it's important to clarify the meaning we give to feminist psychology. According to Amâncio & Oliveira (2006) "Since its inception, feminism has taken up the task of deconstructing the past, and present, contradictions of modernity, including science and its unfulfilled promises of equality, emancipation and progress for all human beings. Mainstream psychology, on the other hand, (...) has isolated individuals from their political and historical context. But since psychology is not in people's heads, but is acted out in the world and rooted in historical contexts, doing feminist psychology in our country, as in others, means contributing to politicizing apparently neutral processes. In our view, one of the main tasks of feminist psychology is to pursue the study of the past as a source of meanings for the present" (p.44). Our point of view is that critical feminist psychology is in its principles and in the strategies that proclaim an inclusive and integrative framework, exploring the multiple variables of the minority condition of women (not only gender, but also social class, ethnic group, sexual orientation), seeing women and men as heterogeneous groups, which according to this heterogeneity have different access to power.

Implicitly we questioned an essentialist point of view where women are seen as a unitary group, sharing a set of qualities, traits and skills; innate or acquired that presumably regulate their behaviour, which has been predominantly assumed by psychology of women. In fact, several female psychologists research and write about women and other issues that have to do with women, without identifying themselves as feminists. Without a feminist orientation and an activist posture, the psychology of women is not very different from traditional psychology, only adding the topic of women as a theme to study. In an academic point of view this positioning is, obviously, not very critical and compromising.

Therefore, along with Burman (1998), Llombart (1998) and Wilkinson (1997) and others we consider that the designation of feminist psychology must be reserved to the perspectives in which the concept of feminism and its link to the area of political and social change is evident both in theory and psychological practice. Assuming this political slope and the emancipation towards a fairer society, as well as a psychology that does not contribute to the oppression of individuals and minority groups, implies questioning certain relativist assumptions and it becomes clear that to relativize events and theorizations does not mean that all conceptions are morally identical, equally valid and equally useful. In an extreme relativist posture became difficult to defend a critical project both in psychology or feminism (Gill, 1995). The fact that many authors assume a radical relativism, synonym of "all equal" "all the same", immediately implies that any positioning, political involvement or action (Willig, 1998) can become constrained and, consequently, also all the potential emancipatory critical psychology (Parker, 1998). In view of this dilemma some authors defend accepting a critical realism (Bashkar, 1986, cit in Parker, 1992), while others prefer to talk about critical relativism (Parker, 1998), that is, criticising realism but not assuming a radical relativism, which allows for the creation of emancipatory alternatives.

Whether we are talking about critical relativism or a critical reflexivity, what is evident is the need of ethic, directed to justice and emancipation and completely assumed by the researcher.

In this sense, we defend the resource to methods of research that show the oppressive messages hidden in the social, scientific and political speeches and that allow to the researcher to have a reflexive attitude toward the political and ethical consequences of the theoretically defended presuppositions as well as of the psychological fulfilled practice. So, participatory action research becomes a privileged way of reaching these goals and qualitative methodologies the main modes of gathering data and conducting analysis. With this we do not mean that a new scientific course should be created but instead a constant interchange between theory-investigation-action.

In sum, as feminist critical psychologists we aspire to promote a course open to change, that values and promotes equality and social justice between groups and individuals and that is active in the search of the well-being, both of men and women from all social groups. Being aware of the challenge entailed in the reconceptualisation of classical academic perspectives over social phenomena and over the methodological ways that support their observation and later theorisation, we understand that the path leading to change has already started to open. The acquaintanceship between traditional and critical can only have the result of promoting reflection around professional practices and scientific knowledge.

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