Violence at work in the series The Office from the perspective of epistemicide

Violência no trabalho no seriado The Office na perspectiva do epistemicídio

Violencia en el trabajo en la serie The Office desde la perspectiva del epistemicidio

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ABSTRACT

Contextualization: When analyzing workplace violence and subjectivation processes, epistemic violence is highlighted as a structural mechanism that delegitimizes and marginalizes the knowledge and perspectives of specific groups, consolidating dynamics of exclusion and social isolation. The TV series "The Office" presents an emblematic representation of this phenomenon through the disconnection between the main character's behavior, Michael, and employees' perceptions. This attitude manifests in practices that generate recurring feelings of disrespect and devaluation, highlighting the complex power and hierarchy relations that perpetuate symbolic violence in the workplace.

Objective: To understand workplace violence and subjectivation processes from the epistemicide perspective, using the TV series "The Office" as a reference.

Method: A qualitative, observational study was grounded in the "structured microanalysis". This method, anchored in thematic axes and subthemes, enabled the constructing of a network of meanings, allowing a systematic analysis of the investigated dynamics.

Results: The study revealed the reproduction of inequalities and injustices in the workplace, with the characters demonstrating forms of resistance to these dynamics by seeking to assert their identities and validate their experiences against the dominance of hegemonic knowledge. This struggle for recognition and appreciation underscores the urgency of constructing inclusive work environments that respect and embrace diverse perspectives, promoting equity and justice in organizational relations.

Conclusions: The findings emphasize the social and theoretical implications of epistemic violence in the workplace, highlighting how it devalues knowledge and perpetuates inequalities. The study contributes to understanding the dynamics of exclusion and resistance, offering a critical perspective on the impact of power relations on individual subjectivation. It also highlights the role of organizations in establishing practices that value the diversity of voices and knowledge.

Keywords: violence at work; epistemicide; organizational relations; processes of subjectivation; observational study.

RESUMO

Contextualização: Ao analisar a violência no ambiente de trabalho e os processos de subjetivação, ressalta-se que a violência epistêmica opera como um mecanismo estrutural que deslegitima e marginaliza os saberes e perspectivas de determinados grupos, consolidando dinâmicas de exclusão e isolamento social. A partir do seriado *The Office*, identifica-se uma representação emblemática desse fenômeno por meio da desconexão entre o comportamento do personagem principal, Michael, e as percepções dos funcionários. Essa desconexão se traduz em práticas que geram sentimentos recorrentes de desrespeito e desvalorização, evidenciando as complexas relações de poder e hierarquia que perpetuam a violência simbólica no ambiente laboral.

Objetivo: Compreender a violência no local de trabalho e os processos de subjetivação a partir da perspectiva do epistemicídio, utilizando a série '*The Office*' como referência.

Método: Realizou-se uma pesquisa qualitativa de caráter observacional, fundamentada no método de 'microanálises estruturadas'. Esse método, ancorado em eixos temáticos e subtemas, possibilitou a construção de uma rede de significados, permitindo uma análise sistemática das dinâmicas investigadas.

Resultados: Evidenciou-se a reprodução de desigualdades e injustiças no ambiente laboral, tendo os personagens demonstrado formas de resistência a essas dinâmicas ao buscar afirmar suas identidades e validar suas experiências diante da hegemonia do conhecimento dominante. Essa luta pelo reconhecimento e valorização ressalta a urgência de construir ambientes de trabalho inclusivos, que respeitem e acolham a diversidade de perspectivas, promovendo a equidade e a justiça nas relações organizacionais.

Conclusões: Os resultados ressaltam as implicações sociais e teóricas da violência epistêmica no ambiente de trabalho, destacando como ela desvaloriza conhecimentos e perpetua desigualdades. O estudo contribui para a compreensão das dinâmicas de exclusão

e resistência, oferecendo uma perspectiva crítica sobre o impacto das relações de poder na subjetivação dos indivíduos. Evidencia-se também o papel das organizações na construção de práticas que valorizem a diversidade de vozes e saberes.

Palavras-chave: violência no trabalho; epistemicídio; relações organizacionais;processos de subjetivação; estudo observacional.

RESUMEN

Contextualización: Al analizar la violencia en el entorno laboral y los procesos de subjetivación, se destaca que la violencia epistémica actúa como un mecanismo estructural que deslegitima y margina los saberes y las perspectivas de ciertos grupos, consolidando dinámicas de exclusión y aislamiento social. La serie The Office presenta una representación emblemática de este fenómeno a través de la desconexión entre el comportamiento del personaje principal, Michael, y las percepciones de los empleados. Esta desconexión se traduce en prácticas que generan sentimientos recurrentes de falta de respeto y desvalorización, evidenciando las complejas relaciones de poder y jerarquía que perpetúan la violencia simbólica en el entorno laboral.

Objetivo: Comprender la violencia en el lugar de trabajo y los procesos de subjetivación desde la perspectiva del epistemicidio, utilizando la serie The Office como referencia.

Método: Se realizó un estudio cualitativo de carácter observacional, fundamentado en el método de "microanálisis estructurado". Este método, basado en ejes temáticos y subtemas, permitió la construcción de una red de significados, posibilitando un análisis sistemático de las dinámicas investigadas.

Resultados: Se evidenció la reproducción de desigualdades e injusticias en el entorno laboral, observándose que los personajes mostraron formas de resistencia a estas dinámicas al buscar afirmar sus identidades y validar sus experiencias frente a la hegemonía del conocimiento dominante. Esta lucha por el reconocimiento y la valorización resalta la urgencia de construir ambientes de trabajo inclusivos que respeten y acojan la diversidad de perspectivas, promoviendo la equidad y la justicia en las relaciones organizacionales.

Conclusiones: Los resultados destacan las implicaciones sociales y teóricas de la violencia epistémica en el entorno laboral, subrayando cómo esta desvaloriza los saberes y perpetúa las desigualdades. El estudio contribuye a la comprensión de las dinámicas de exclusión y resistencia, ofreciendo una perspectiva crítica sobre el impacto de las relaciones de poder en la subjetivación de los individuos. Asimismo, evidencia el papel de las organizaciones en la construcción de prácticas que valoren la diversidad de voces y saberes.

Palabras clave: violencia laboral; epistemicidio; relaciones organizacionales; procesos de subjetivación; estudio observacional.

1 INTRODUCTION

There are several definitions of workplace violence and different perspectives on what constitutes workplace violence. Threats, verbal abuse, physical assault, and homicide are all possible forms of violence. Some definitions only consider physical assault, while others encompass any act meant to harm workers or their organization (Asamani, 2016). On the other hand, Roderick (2010) addresses workplace violence, highlighting its significant impact on those directly involved, witnesses, and those affected by consequences. According to him, the causes of this violence are diverse, with social, cultural, individual, and workplace factors all contributing to a situation that encourages aggressive behavior.

Thus, different organizations and institutions such as the European Commission, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) provide broad definitions of workplace violence, covering incidents in which people are abused, threatened or assaulted in work-related circumstances (Asamani, 2016). The ILO, for example, categorizes workplace violence into internal (between workers) and external (between workers and any other person present in the workplace), recognizing both physical (e.g., attacks, beatings) and psychological (e.g., intimidation, harassment) forms of violence (Asamani, 2016).

For Barreto and Heloani (2015), intolerance in labor relations is related to psychological violence in the workplace, where attitudes such as discrimination and harassment prevail. They emphasize that the reorganization of work due to globalization and competitive pressures leads to issues such as higher productivity demands, longer working hours, job insecurity and a reduction in workers' rights, which contributes to an increase in violence and moral harassment in the workplace.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2022), one in five workers, approximately 23%, have experienced violence and harassment at work. Specifically, 17.9% reported psychological violence, 8.5% faced physical violence, and 6.3% were victims of sexual violence. Women, young workers, and migrants are the groups most vulnerable to harassment and violence. The ILO report also highlighted that most victims face multiple incidents over time, with more than 60% of workers experiencing these problems repeatedly (ILO, 2022). Violence and harassment at work are not isolated incidents but recurring problems that require long-term intervention.

Silva, Bernardo, and Souza (2016) demonstrate, using interviews with union members, that it is challenging to establish a causal link between illness and work, as well as the perception that the majority of diseases are still perceived to be caused by individual and genetic traits, rather than being attributed to the way work is organized and experienced, which suggests additional challenges in understanding epistemic violence. The phenomenon of 'presenteeism', in which workers show up for work even though their mental health is impaired due to a culture of fear in companies, which can lead to moral conflicts and illness, for the authors, represents a public health problem that needs to be further debated. In other words, "pressures that dissolve sociability by interfering with identity and subjectivation processes at work" (Barreto & Heloani, p. 544). Certainly, combating this violence involves engaging in open dialogues, recognizing preconceptions, adopting diverse perspectives, and promoting an inclusive and eclectic approach to knowledge production (Teo & Wendt, 2020). In this way, the authors defend epistemic pluralism, which recognizes multiple valid forms of knowledge to mitigate epistemic violence and promote equitable and respectful discourse.

Thus, understanding that there are, in the organizational context, aspects that can contribute to the expression of violence, Baird and Calvard (2019) discuss the existence of epistemic 'vices' in organizations, giving examples such as malevolence, ignorance, arrogance and injustice, understanding that recognizing these 'vices' can create a toxic work environment, where physical and psychological violence can occur due to poor management of knowledge and ethics.

That said, for Baird and Calvard (2019), epistemic violence can lead to the suppression of dissenting voices and the prioritization of power over truth. It involves intentional opposition to knowledge and truth and can result in the dissemination of misinformation. Thus, organizations that practice epistemic malevolence risk facing adverse reactions from the public, loss of trust, and legal implications. Therefore, organizational epistemic violence can erode trust, promote a culture of manipulation, and perpetuate unethical behavior that harms individuals and society.

Considering the various definitions and manifestations of violence in the workplace, including everything from physical aggression to forms of epistemic and psychological violence, the problem of inadequate management of these issues in organizations arises. The lack of clear policies and strategies to prevent and deal with violence in the workplace can result in consequences for the mental health of workers, besides favoring an organizational environment that is variable to "different forms and manifestations of violence, which results in a precarious process of subjectivation for both unskilled and highly qualified workers, who compete for available jobs every day" (Barreto & Heloani, 2015, p. 556).

In this sense, this research aims to understand workplace violence and subjectivation processes from the epistemicide perspective. To this end, the TV series 'The Office' is chosen for the study due to its popularity and availability on streaming platforms, using humor to explore sensitive topics, including issues of violence and conflict in everyday situations at work. It also brings together various actions that can be interpreted as forms of violence in the workplace, from bullying and psychological harassment to epistemic manipulation and other more subtle forms of abuse.

By studying how the characters in the series deal with situations of violence at work (or fail to deal with them),

understandings of the phenomenon are broadened, which are favorable to reflecting on prevention and intervention strategies by organizations. This path involves a discussion on the hegemonic Eurocentric model and intellectual dependence, followed by the definition of a decolonial project from the perspective of understanding epistemicide and also a definition of epistemic violence at work to address the relationship of this violence with the subjectivation processes, resistance and work identity, considering contributions from psychology and organizations fields.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Eurocentric hegemonic model, from the Global North, expands to the Global South, establishing an academic and intellectual dependence (Cañas & Gallego, 2016; Dussel, 2016). This phenomenon, discussed by thinkers such as Edgard Lander and Aníbal Quijano (Beigel, 2016), manifests itself in the coloniality of being and ontological dependence, perpetuating colonial patterns of power and justifying itself through the modernity rhetoric (Alatas, 2003). Consequently, epistemological violence, or 'epistemicide', is discussed as a repercussion of this mode's centrality, which denies, excludes, and destroys local knowledge and cultures, imposing hegemonic knowledge reinforcing social exclusion (Santos, 2016).

Thus, Teo and Wendt (2020) state that epistemic violence is expressed when a group or individual imposes its knowledge as indisputable, disregarding and delegitimizing other valid forms of knowledge, that is, the imposition of a singular point of view, restricting the knowledge plurality. This form of violence perpetuates power imbalances by silencing marginalized voices and discrediting their knowledge, reinforcing oppressive ideologies.

Along the same lines, Schultz (2020) problematizes epistemic violence regarding the implications of academic-scientific work, suggesting the perpetuation of stereotypes, prejudices, and inequalities, besides the marginalization and exclusion of communities in the production and application of psychological knowledge, resulting in additional psychological, social, and emotional damage. In this context, Bunch (2015) mentions that epistemic discrimination is a violent process that creates a hostile environment for marginalized groups, triggering stress, anxiety and feelings of isolation.

In the meantime, Kwok (2020), incorporating Miranda Fricker's ideas, examines the moral implications of this violence at work and proposes a review of hierarchical structures. The author investigates epistemic injustices in the workplace, understanding the testimonial and hermeneutic injustices that undermine workers' credibility and interpretation of information. In contrast, in this reading, the traditional hierarchy reinforces inequalities in listening rights and causes moral damage to workers. In this context, Bunch (2015) mentions that epistemic discrimination is a violent process that creates a hostile environment for marginalized groups, triggering stress, anxiety and feelings of isolation.

Kwok (2020) also criticizes 'epistemic egalitarianism', understanding that the unequal attribution of credibility perpetuates unfair practices, especially in hierarchical environments, considering that certain management practices in hierarchical workplaces reinforce these injustices, creating a vicious cycle of unfair treatment. Indeed, moving forward in this debate suggests analyzing the hierarchical reference that Kwok (2020) cites, problematizing the psychosocial labor identity processes and accounting for epistemic violence.

Before that, we reflect on the contributions of Fontes (2022), who, based on Michel Misse and Gabriel de Santis Feltran, by associating violence, work and the periphery, discusses the process of identity construction of peripheral workers in terms of moral conflicts facing practical-symbolic disputes among different normative regimes around what is morally 'right' in Brazil urban peripheries.

In this discussion, the 'worker' is highlighted as one who, faced with the dynamics of interaction between distinct 'worlds': the 'world of crime' and the 'workers' in urban peripheries, advances in hierarchical experiences in the organizations' context. Therefore, subjectivation processes toward work identity can gather trajectories that challenge the compression of epistemic violence in organizations, given the moral conflicts in the social, cultural and political dynamics that speak of ideological aspects. For Barreto and Heloani (2015, p. 550), "when intolerance becomes a categorical imperative, violence takes the place of language, leading to humiliation, discrimination, disqualification, indifference and denial of the other as a BEING with rights".

Hence, workers, work, and the organizing processes speak about psychosocial processes understanding, as Spink (1996) highlights, that organizations are not only physical entities but also products of discourses and social interactions in which daily actions, discourses and rhetoric in organizations situate the concrete reality of the organization, including understandings about the contradictions and conflicts of everyday life.

In this sense, recognizing the subjectivation processes facing work identity in the context of power dynamics in an analysis of the phenomenon of epistemic violence, therefore, converges with the reading of a "psychology of work as a procedural action based on the social psychology of the organizational phenomenon [...] as the basis for a dialogue that supports the agency of the other in altering practices and ways of acting" (Spink, 1996, p. 189). Thus, subjective production corresponds to an explanation of lived experiences, intertwined with the objective conditions of life's causality, recognizing the inevitable distortion that subjective interpretations can bring to lived events (Furtado, 2011).

Along these lines, "the concept of subjective meaning underpins a historical-social conception of subjectivity". So, subjectivation is a complex process that involves the production of meanings, affects and modes of being, situated at the

interface between the social and the individual, "[...] social spaces [that] generate forms of subjectivation that are concretized in the different activities shared by the subjects, and that becomes, with distinct subjective meanings, part of the individual subjectivity of those who share these spaces" (Gonzalez Rey, 2005, p. 24-25).

So, in the health field, there is an interface between mental health and violence, which ranges from the understanding of biopsychosocial well-being to intervention and prevention practices. Violence, in this panorama, is configured as a phenomenon that generates mental illness and this interrelation, which, according to Lira et al. (2024), must be understood considering the social, historical and cultural determinants since these factors allow us to understand mental illness resulting from violence through the body-social relationship, associated with the context in which the individual is inserted.

Indeed, violence is part of these socio-historical determinants, crossed by the inequalities that permeate Brazilian social formation, sustained by power dynamics, exploitative structures and various forms of oppression. Moreover, inequalities are intensified through class, race and gender markers, reflecting disparities in access to health, resources, opportunities and rights (Lira et al., 2024).

The labor context is no different: the various forms of violence, emphasizing 'epistemic violence', are subtly situated and experienced by workers. Lima and Sousa (2021) point out that the workplace has symbolisms and subjectivities marked by power struggles, domination and resistance. Still on this path, Camargo, Almeida and Goulart (2018) corroborate that work relationships marked by situations of violence and hostility compromise the individual's experience at work and generate repercussions in the subjective and health fields, leaving them vulnerable and more susceptible to psychological suffering.

Therefore, the implications of forms of violence in the workplace significantly affect workers' mental health, mainly because it is veiled violence, and the process of psychological exhaustion occurs, sometimes gradually, exposing the individual to sadness, anxiety, depression and melancholy. Additionally, it compromises workers' psychosocial aspects, personality, identity and self-esteem, with repercussions on their family, social and professional relationships (Granja, Lopes & Ramos, 2024).

3 METHODOLOGY

There is an increasing amount of qualitative research that uses audiovisual recordings as an analytical resource to explore and explain daily activities, social organizations and practices, emphasizing the analysis of everyday life, stressing the importance of transcribing, observing and conceptualizing the content of the video to gain meaningful insights for research purposes (Heath, Hindmarsh & Luff, 2010).

Thus, in understanding workplace violence and the subjectivation processes from the perspective of epistemicide, we used the sitcom 'The Office' as an observational study, which was produced between 2000 and 2010, a period characterized by a significant increase in the popularity of the situation comedies, especially in the United States. It was an era marked by the growth of corporate office culture, exploring humor based on interpersonal relationships, work hierarchies and corporate culture.

As a follow-up to the analysis, the research is inspired by the Tela Crítica (Critical Screen) project presented by Alves (2010, p.71), who understands that "the objective treatment of critical analysis articulates theoretical-analytical insights with significant scenes from the film", and, in this way, recommends "using significant images of typical scenes and characters. It is important to expose details of the film that contribute to the overall critical analysis".

Thus, by reading Flick (2004) and Vanoye and Goliot-Lété (2002) on the "structured micro-analysis" approach, 3 (three) thematic axes have been identified in Seasons 1, 2 and 5, in line with the objectives of this article to allow a detailed and systematic critical analysis. Then, the film will become a space for reflection if the subject-recipient understands these thematic axes and the significant problematizations highlighted in the selected episodes. Thus, the critical experience can also be understood within the horizon of the researchers' subjectivation process, allowing the methodology to mobilize a subjective and formative experience (Alves, 2010).

4 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Initially, we present the characters and a description of their roles (Table 1) captured in the images-interactions of the scenes' continuous review, which allowed us to record the perceptions of the interpretations based on the reality presented in the series.

Table 1
Characters and their features in the TV series "The Office."

Characters	Description
Michael Scott (Steve Carell)	Michael Scott is the regional manager of Dunder Mifflin's Scranton branch. He is known for his lack of sensitivity and inappropriate behavior, always seeking to be appreciated and accepted by his employees.

Dwight Schrute (Rainn Wilson)	Dwight Schrute is the assistant regional manager and a dedicated salesman. Eccentric and competitive, he is obsessed with security and hierarchy. Besides work, Dwight owns a sugar beet farm and a rustic hotel.
Jim Halpert (John Krasinski)	Jim Halpert is a charismatic and witty salesman known for his pranks with Dwight. He shows no interest in his job at Dunder Mifflin but develops a romantic relationship with Pam Beesly throughout the series.
Pam Beesly (Jenna Fischer)	Pam Beesly is the receptionist at the Scranton branch, known for her kindness and attentiveness. She begins the series by engaging with Roy but eventually marries Jim Halpert. Pam seeks to fulfill her dreams and grow professionally throughout the series.
Ryan Howard (B.J. Novak)	Ryan Howard starts as a temporary intern but eventually becomes an ambitious executive. His career is marked by ups and downs, including being fired for fraud and rehired in a lower position.
Angela Martin (Angela Kinsey)	Angela Martin is the stern and strict head of the accounting department, known for her critical nature and religious devotion. She has a secret relationship with Dwight and, later, Senator Robert Lipton.
Kevin Malone (Brian Baumgartner)	Kevin Malone is a friendly but clumsy accountant considered 'slow-witted'. Known for his gaffes, he is loved by his colleagues due to his 'good nature'.
Oscar Martinez (Oscar Nunez)	Oscar Martinez is an intelligent accountant who defines himself as gay. With a sarcastic and superior attitude, he is a respected and important person in the office.
Stanley Hudson (Leslie David Baker)	Stanley Hudson is a veteran salesman known for his cynicism and apathy towards work. He often shows disinterest in office activities.
Phyllis Vance (Phyllis Smith)	Phyllis Vance is a kind and friendly saleswoman who her colleagues underestimate. She has a long-standing friendship with Stanley and is married to Bob Vance of Vance Refrigeration.
Creed Bratton (Creed Bratton)	Creed Bratton is the head of the quality control department, but he has a mysterious past and strange behavior, which makes him an enigmatic and hilarious figure.
Meredith Palmer (Kate Flannery)	Meredith Palmer works in the supply department and is known for her inappropriate behavior and alcohol problems, often involved into embarrassing situations.
Kelly Kapoor (Mindy Kaling)	Kelly Kapoor is a customer service representative who is very outgoing and interested in pop culture. She has a complicated relationship with Ryan, which is marked by constant fighting.
Toby Flenderson (Paul Lieberstein)	Toby Flenderson is the human resources representative and is often the target of Michael Scott's scorn. Quiet and reserved, Toby usually feels undervalued in the office.
Andy Bernard (Ed Helms)	Andy Bernard is a salesman transferred from the Stamford branch, known for his insecurity and need for validation. He eventually becomes the manager of the Scranton branch, although his leadership is questioned.

Source: Survey data.

It can be seen that, through the 'structured micro-analysis' of individual scenes and sequences from the chosen seasons (Table 2), the series' plot highlights experiences of silencing and devaluation of knowledge when, for example, Toby Flenderson, a representative of the Human Resources area, is frequently silenced and devalued by Michael Scott. Michael constantly ignores or ridicules Toby's attempts to implement human resources policies that protect and benefit employees (Toby is in HR, which technically means he works for corporate, so he's really not a part of our family. Also, he's divorced, so he's really not a part of his family. - Michael Scott.)

Invalidation of Experiences and Identities: When Oscar Martinez, one of the accountants, frequently has his experiences and identity invalidated or misinterpreted by Michael (Oscar is the gay accountant. I would never use this word, but I have no problem with the word... He would. - Michael Scott); still, Stereotypes and Generalizations, referenced in the way Michael refers to Kelly Kapoor, based on stereotypes and generalizations about her ethnicity (Kelly is our Indian employee who works in customer service. She's been with us for a few years now. And she's... exotic. - Michael Scott), or when Pam Beesly, the receptionist, often has her opinions and contributions disregarded or undervalued by her male colleagues. Michael frequently delegates tasks to Pam without recognizing her potential or considering her professional aspirations (Pam, just cover for me. Don't tell anyone where I am. Just say I'm out sick or on vacation or something - Michael Scott).

Table 2
Summary

Episode Excerpts	Observations
Diversity Day (Season 1; Episode 2)	
Diversity training: Mr. Brown: At Diversity Tomorrow, we believe it's very easy to be a hero. All you need are honesty, empathy, respect, and open-mindedness. Michael Scott: Uh, excuse me. I'm sorry, but that's not all it takes to be a hero.	Mr. Brown presents an idealistic and simplistic discourse on what it takes to be a hero in the context of diversity. He reduces the complexity of social and historical relations of oppression to individual qualities, disregarding the power dynamics that situate these relations. Michael Scott, in questioning this view, although he does not present a structured critique, points to the insufficiency of this approach.
Racial Index Cards: Michael Scott: Okay, on the flip side of this card, I'm gonna write a race of people. I want you to treat other people like the race that is on their forehead. Treat them like that race, no matter what. Michael Scott: (doing Indian accent) Kelly, how are you? Thank you, come again! Kelly Kapoor: (slaps Michael) That is not right!	Michael Scott proposes an activity that reinforces racial stereotypes and essentializes identities. By performing a stereotypical imitation of an Indian accent, he perpetuates epistemic violence by reducing Indian identity to a caricature. Kelly Kapoor's reaction is a form of resistance, rejecting this representation and asserting her subjectivity against the symbolic violence imposed by Michael.

Conversation between Jim and Pam: Jim Halpert: So, as it turns out, I may not have won at all. In fact, I may have lost more money than I made. And you know what? It's OK. I'm going to call customer service, and they will make everything better.	These excerpts reinforce the analysis of epistemic violence, where Michael perpetuates racial stereotypes and minimizes the complexity of cultural identities. Kelly's reaction is a reaffirmation of her subjectivity and an active rejection of symbolic violence. Jim expresses a belief in easy problem-solving through customer service, which can be seen as a metaphor for the effectiveness of superficial approaches to complex issues of diversity and inclusion. This excerpt suggests a lack of understanding of the problems and an over-reliance on simplified solutions.
Michael leads the diversity session Mr. Brown: This is an environment of welcoming, and you should just get the hell out of here. Michael Scott: (laughing) Okay, let's go! Come on! **Michael making racial jokes:** Michael Scott: (imitating an Indian stereotype) Kelly, how are you? Thank you, come again! Kelly Kapoor: (slaps Michael) That is not right!	The contradiction in Mr. Brown's statements reflects the superficiality of institutional approaches to diversity. While he verbalizes a welcoming message, his and Michael's attitudes reveal a lack of commitment to inclusion and respect.
Conflict Resolution (Season 2; Episode 21)	
Dwight discovers Jim's complaints: Dwight Schrute: (reading the complaint) Jim Halpert said that you should eat a frog. If you don't, he'll remove all your teeth. Jim Halpert: (laughing) You know, it's just office pranks. Nothing serious.	Jim Halpert is seen to downplay his actions as 'office pranks', disregarding the psychological repercussions that such pranks may have on Dwight. Dwight's reaction to filing a formal complaint indicates an effort to resist these microaggressions and assert his subjectivity. Jim's laughter reflects a lack of empathy and the perpetuation of a work culture where such actions are normalized.
Michael trying to resolve Angela and Oscar's dispute over the poster: Angela Martin: I find the poster offensive. Michael Scott: (trying to mediate) Oscar, why don't you take it down until Angela leaves, and then you can put it back up? Oscar Martinez: That's not a solution. That's just avoiding the issue.	Michael Scott's response attempts to mediate the conflict without addressing underlying issues, revealing, once again, a superficial approach to resolving conflicts. By challenging Michael's proposal, Oscar emphasizes the need for dialogue and a solution beyond simply avoiding the problem. By expressing her discomfort, Angela asserts her subjectivity and seeks a change in the work environment that respects her limits and values.
Michael reveals the complaints to all employees: Michael Scott: I'm going to resolve all of your conflicts. (reading a complaint). Angela says that Kevin smells like mung beans. Kevin Malone: What the hell is mung beans?	Michael Scott has attempted to resolve conflicts by publicly revealing complaints, which may exacerbate tensions rather than fix them. Kevin Malone's reaction reveals incomprehension and surprise, which may indicate employees' lack of empathetic communication. Michael's public exposure of complaints may be seen as a form of symbolic violence, devaluing employees' individual feelings and concerns.
Michael tries to resolve the last grievance between Dwight and Jim: Michael Scott: Dwight, Jim, I think we need to work on your communication. Dwight, you can't just file complaints against Jim. Dwight Schrute: But he's always pranking me! Michael Scott: Jim, you need to respect Dwight's space.	Michael's approach attempts to balance Dwight and Jim's concerns but again resorts to a superficial solution that fails to address the underlying power dynamics. Dwight is trying to set boundaries and ask for respect, while Jim, with his "pranks", disrespects these limits. Michael recognizes the need for respect but does not take concrete steps to ensure Jim's actions cease.
Lecture Circuit (Season 5; Episodes 16 and 17)	
Michael and Pam visit the Utica office: Karen Filippelli: What brings you to Utica? Michael Scott: We are here because we are on a lecture circuit. Pam Beesly: (trying to soften) We're just visiting some of the other branches and sharing our best practices.	Michael Scott tries to justify his presence in Utica in an inflated manner, while Pam Beesly tries to soften and make the visit more acceptable. The interaction reveals a power dynamic where Michael seeks to assert his importance while Pam tries to mediate and smooth over possible tensions.
Michael recalls past relationships: Michael Scott: I think we should discuss it. I think we should talk about what happened between us, and I think we should get it out in the open. Karen Filippelli: There's really nothing to talk about.	Michael attempts to reopen past personal issues with Karen, who prefers not to discuss the matter. Michael's attempt can be seen as trying to control the narrative and reassert his subjectivity, while Karen asserts her right not to relive the past by rejecting the discussion.
Diversity Training with Kelly: Kelly Kapoor: Welcome to the first meeting of the party planning committee's subcommittee for the planning of our anniversary party. Dwight Schrute: This is stupid. Kelly Kapoor: It's not stupid. This is important.	Kelly Kapoor attempts to validate the importance of the party planning committee, while Dwight Schrute devalues the initiative. Dwight's reaction represents a form of epistemic violence, minimizing the value and significance attributed to Kelly. Kelly's insistence on affirming the importance of the task is an attempt at resistance and affirmation of her subjectivity.
Jim and Dwight handle the party organization: Dwight Schrute: We need a theme for the party. Jim Halpert: How about 'No Theme'? Dwight Schrute: How about you take this seriously? Andy tries to deal with Angela's absence: Andy Bernard: I don't get why she doesn't want to talk to me. We were engaged!	Dwight Schrute seeks organization and seriousness in the task, while Jim Halpert adopts a more relaxed and uncommitted posture. This dynamic reflects different approaches and priorities, with Dwight seeking affirmation through an organized structure and Jim resisting this formality. Andy Bernard expresses his incomprehension and frustration with Angela's absence, revealing his difficulty accepting and processing the rejection. His insistence on discussing the past relationship indicates a process of subjectivation where he tries to understand and reconstruct his identity after the rejection.
Andy opens up to Michael: Andy Bernard: She's the love of my life, and she just	Michael Scott responds superficially and stereotypically to Andy's pain, devaluing his emotional experience. This response represents a form of

left me. Michael Scott: Women, am I right?	epistemic violence by reducing the complexity of Andy's emotions to a sexist cliché, disregarding the depth of Andy's suffering.
Michael is ridiculed during 'lecture circuit.' Michael Scott: Scranton is doing great because of our emphasis on fun. Other Branch Manager: (sarcastic) Fun, really?	Michael tries to promote the idea that fun is essential to Scranton's success but is ridiculed by another manager. This interaction reveals Michael's attempt to validate his management approach, while the other manager's sarcastic response reflects disbelief and devaluation of this approach, undermining Michael's authority and subjectivity.

Source: Survey data.

In the episode "Diversity Day" (Season 1; Episode 2), it is noted that Michael Scott, the manager, organizes diversity training in which he focuses on addressing stereotypes rather than combating prejudice, as evidenced by his jokes about different ethnicities and cultures. The training, led by Mr. Brown, a diversity consultant, is subverted by Michael, who seeks control of the session and disrespects the consultant by insisting that he, Michael, should be conducting the training.

Michael then instructed employees to place racial identity cards on their foreheads and to treat each other according to the associated stereotypes, thus reinforcing the stereotypes rather than promoting understanding and respect for diversity. Kelly Kapoor's occurrence is a form of resistance, rejecting this representation and asserting her subjectivity against the symbolic violence imposed by Michael. These events align with Santos' (2016) idea of epistemicide, where local knowledge and cultures are denied and destroyed.

Subjectivation refers to the process by which individuals have experiences that situate their identities through discursive and social practices. Epistemic violence, as discussed by scholars such as Spivak (1988), refers to the imposition of knowledge and meanings that marginalize and silence the voices and experiences of subaltern groups. In the excerpt, this is exemplified by the activities proposed by Michael, which essentialize and stereotype racial identities, and by the superficiality of institutional approaches he represents. According to Cañas and Gallego (2016) and Dussel (2016), this simplification reflects the Eurocentric hegemony that neglects power dynamics and historical structures of oppression.

The characters who resist these practices, such as Kelly Kapoor, demonstrate a form of subjectivation that rejects epistemic violence and seeks to assert their own authentic identity. Her attitude toward Michael's imitation is a counter-narrative challenging the imposition of reductionist and stereotypical meanings. Therefore, the analysis suggests that the processes of subjectivation and epistemic violence are related, with discursive practices in the workplace situating identity trajectories and perpetuating exclusions and stereotypes, corroborating Furtado (2011) when mentioning that individual behaviors can affect collective relations, increasing violence in the workplace.

Subjectivation in the workplace is a process that occurs in everyday practices through daily interactions and institutional responses to conflicts. In this context, the characters try to assert their identities and boundaries in an environment that often devalues these attempts. Dwight Schrute is in a constant state of resistance, using institutional mechanisms (such as the complaint register) to ensure a respectful work environment. Jim Halpert and Michael Scott's lack of adequate response often devalues and ridicules his attempts. This devaluation process exemplifies epistemic violence, where Dwight's experience is minimized and disregarded.

Angela Martin also asserts her subjectivity by expressing discomfort with Oscar's poster. By suggesting a temporary and superficial solution, Michael Scott's response ignores the need for a resolution that respects Angela's concerns. By offering Michael the solution, Oscar expresses a deeper understanding of the need for dialogue and mutual respect. Kevin Malone is taken aback by Angela's permission, highlighting the workplace's lack of communication and empathy. Michael Scott's public disclosure of complaints exposes inconvenient difficulties and problems, exacerbating symbolic violence and disrespecting the individuals' subjectivity.

This situation illustrates Teo and Wendt's (2020) critique of epistemic violence that disregards and delegitimizes other valid forms of knowledge. This dynamic reflects a form of microaggression and perpetuation of a work culture where such actions are normalized. According to Barreto and Heloani (2015), intolerance manifests itself in acts that, when repeated, perpetuate psychological violence.

Jim Halpert represents the figure of a colleague who perpetuates microaggressions under the guise of "joking around," disregarding the impact of his actions on others. His lack of empathy and understanding of Dwight's needs is a form of epistemic violence, where he denies the validity of Dwight's experiences.

In the episode "Conflict Resolution" (Season 2; Episode 21), we observe a variety of conflicts between employees, ranging from trivial issues, such as disputes over personal belongings, to more significant disagreements about workplace behaviors and attitudes. This diversity of conflicts reflects the complexity of human interactions in the workplace and the need for differentiated approaches to resolution.

Michael Scott seeks to resolve all accumulated conflicts simultaneously, demonstrating a lack of understanding and skill in conflict mediation. His search for quick solutions to conflicts results in superficial resolutions that are far removed from the underlying problems, which often exacerbates tensions, contributes to providing an unsafe space for dialogue, and makes conflict resolution an uncomfortable experience for employees.

In the episode "Lecture Circuit" (Season 5, Episodes 16 and 17), Michael Scott goes on a lecture circuit to motivate and inspire salespeople at different branches of Dunder Mifflin. The idea is to promote the company and emphasize

Michael's leadership skills and charisma, even using the lectures as a platform to promote his image. The presentations often center on his personal experiences, which reflects Michael's inability to understand the real purpose of the lectures.

As a result, employees' reactions range from apathy to embarrassment, highlighting the disconnection between Michael and his audience, which leads them to feel disrespected and undervalued, increasing frustration and discouragement among employees and undermining the initial purpose of the circuit. This ties in with Kwok's (2020) critique of epistemic injustices in the workplace, where higher hierarchical positions enjoy more significant interference. As such, the subjectivation processes in the work environment are shaped by the interactions among characters and by the institutional responses to conflicts and disagreements. In this context, the characters try to assert their identities and resist epistemic violence that devalues their experiences and perspectives.

Michael Scott constantly tries to assert his importance and explain his actions but is met with confrontation and mockery from his colleagues and other authority figures. His attempts to reopen past elaborations and promote his management approach reflect a search for validation and recognition of his subjectivity. Pam Beesly is a mediator trying to soften and make interactions more harmonious. Her approach attempts to create a more inclusive and respectful working environment. Kelly Kapoor tries to assert the importance of her initiatives and resist the devaluation of her contributions by colleagues like Dwight Schrute. Her insistence on trusting the importance of the party planning committee is a form of resistance to the epistemic violence that minimizes her role and initiatives.

Jim Halpert and Dwight Schrute present contrasting approaches to organization and seriousness in the workplace. While Dwight seeks structure and seriousness, Jim adopts a more relaxed stance, reflecting different forms of subjectivation and resistance. Andy Bernard struggles to understand and process Angela's exclusion, seeking validation and emotional support. Michael Scott's superficial response reflects a form of epistemic violence that deeply devalues her. In consequence, it can be seen that epistemic violence manifests itself when knowledge is used to discriminate and dehumanize, addressing certain groups as inferior and excluding them from moral considerations. This violence is intrinsically linked to othering, where differences in beliefs and customs define a group as 'Other', leading to marginalization and conflict (Bunch, 2015).

Hence, the subjectivation processes in this context are marked by proof of identity affirmation and resistance to epistemic violence that devalues individual experiences. Institutional and interpersonal responses to conflicts and tension have repercussions on forming these subjectivities and on the perpetuation or contestation of power structures. There is undoubtedly evidence of injustices of testimony and hermeneutics that impede epistemic agency, as the capacity and ability of workers at lower hierarchical levels to exercise control over their knowledge, to express their perspectives and opinions validly, and to actively contribute to decision-making and knowledge production processes in the work environment (Kwok, 2020).

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Epistemic violence in the workplace, as portrayed in "The Office", has a significant impact on multiple dimensions of employees' lives, resulting in the exclusion and isolation of individuals whose voices and knowledge are systematically disregarded. Characters such as Toby, Oscar, and Kelly often feel marginalized and devalued. For example, as an HR representative, Toby is constantly ridiculed and ignored by Michael Scott, which exemplifies epistemic exclusion. Oscar, as one of the few openly gay characters, also faces disregard for his opinions and experiences, resulting in social and professional isolation. Kelly, whose cultural background and communication style are often devalued, exemplifies how epistemic violence can create an environment where specific knowledge and perspectives are overlooked.

The systematic devaluation of certain voices perpetuates inequities and injustices in the workplace. The lack of recognition and respect for the knowledge and experiences of marginalized individuals leads to unfair decisions and the maintenance of oppressive power structures. In the series, this is evident in how the ideas of minority characters are often ignored or appropriated by their more privileged coworkers. The hierarchical structure at Dunder Mifflin, where decisions are usually made without considering the perspectives of less valued employees, reinforces the perpetuation of injustices and inequities.

They feel demotivated and less engaged when their voices and experiences are invalidated. This situation is evident in "The Office" through the discouragement of characters who are often unheard. Toby, for example, displays an apparent lack of motivation and engagement due to the constant disdain he faces. A competent and knowledgeable employee, Oscar also shows frustration and discouragement when his contributions are undervalued or ignored.

Subjectivation processes in this context are marked by attempts at resistance and identity affirmation that are often undermined by inadequate institutional responses and the perpetuation of a work culture that normalizes symbolic and epistemic violence. This dynamic suggests a critique of the common practice in many organizations, where management prefers quick fixes rather than investing time and resources to resolve conflicts in a substantive and lasting way.

One of the significant challenges in addressing epistemic violence in the work environment lies in identifying subtle forms of symbolic oppression, such as the marginalization of ideas, the silencing of minorities, and the systematic disregard

of certain voices. Many of these practices are normalized in organizations, becoming invisible or, even worse, treated as part of the organizational culture, which makes them difficult to report and address. There is significant institutional resistance to change in environments where hierarchy and privilege are deeply rooted.

Thus, the culture of harassment, often masked by humor or power dynamics, contributes to perpetuating toxic and dehumanizing behaviors, as seen in "The Office", where disrespect towards marginalized employees is treated as a triviality. This resistance to change is accompanied by a lack of practical tools and methodologies to assess the profound impacts of these symbolic acts of violence on workers' well-being and productivity.

The study contributes to understanding the dynamics of exclusion and resistance, offering a critical perspective on the impact of power relations on individuals' subjectivation. It also highlights the role of organizations in constructing practices that value the diversity of voices and knowledge.

It is limited to the analysis based on TV series such as "The Office". Although it provides clear examples of organizational behaviors, it reflects a fictional scenario that may not capture the complexity and depth of fundamental dynamics in different work contexts. Thus, investigating the long-term psychological impacts of epistemic violence, including impaired mental health, demotivation and professional burnout, is a promising field, still little explored.

Furthermore, studies need to develop inclusive practices capable of restructuring organizational cultures to value and genuinely integrate the diversity of perspectives. Another relevant path would be to deepen the relationship between moral harassment and epistemicide, analyzing how the power and control dynamics contribute to delegitimizing knowledge and silencing voices, especially in contexts where the experiences of particular groups are systematically undervalued.

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