

THE NURSE AS A POLITICAL-SOCIAL BEING: PERSPECTIVES OF A PROFESSIONAL IN TRANSFORMATION

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ABSTRACT

The national context is going through a period of intense political and social transformation, in which the Nurse seeks answers to the political questions that permeate his work process. To identify the perceptions of students and post-graduation teachers about the role of the nurse as a political/social being. Qualitative research, articulated with Paulo Freire's Itinerary of Research, which consists of: 1) Research of Generating Themes; 2) Encoding and Decoding; and, 3) Critical Unveiling. Data were collected in June 2017, during a subject of the Nursing Postgraduate Program in the *stricto sensu* modality of a public university in the south of Brazil. Five students and two teachers participated. The reflection resulted in three categories: I - Formative reformulation of the "Being a Nurse"; II - Emancipation due to knowledge; and, III- Political involvement. The analysis points out the importance of the formation and historical-social transformations for the inclusion of Nursing in the political action. Nursing's role as a social-political being in the face of the current public health scenario reflects the awareness of a changing profession, which requires class empowerment and more critical pedagogical curriculum that strengthen progression and solidify the category.

Keywords: Enfermagem. Papel do profissional de enfermagem. Educação em enfermagem. Cultura. Promoção da saúde.

INTRODUCTION

The current Brazilian political scenario is undergoing through multiple and profound transformations. As a result, it can be said that the subject of public morality in the country has never been so emphasized, even internationally, which should encourage intense discussions from the academic field to the most popular social strata. Within the current political context in which the country lives, it is important to recover what, since the establishment of the Brazilian Constitution in 1988, is the responsibility of public agents - the battle for changes in the management of the health system and the guarantee of transparency^(1,2).

Still immersed in this scenario and going through numerous transformations, there are the Unified Health System (SUS) and all the actors involved in its maintenance, among which, the Nurses stand out. In order to obtain adequate answers to the recent political

questions that permeate the work process, it is necessary to modify the way of conceiving Nursing care. Its conception, based only on the standards of biomedical rationality, no longer answers the multiple questions that involve the human being in its political and social dimension. This movement of transformation of the care and professional training scenario is expected and important for Nursing, as this process drives new knowledge, and these, consequently, lead to new practices in an endless cycle of renewal^(1,3).

However, the sociopolitical standard, called as the fifth nursing knowledge standard, is still considered a great challenge⁽⁴⁾. In order to perform it fully, the nurse needs recognition for the important contributions to the construction, decision and execution of health policy guidelines in the country. The position that many of them occupy in posts and charges in the health field, increasingly, in the assistance and in the delineation of health policies demands their continuous insertion in the decision-making and capacity of critical thinking^(4,5).

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The nurse practitioner experiences in his daily life a series of limits, for his socio-political role, since many operate under conditions of work overload, insufficient personal dimensioning, low salary and restriction of autonomy. This challenging context demands the development of strategic skills and tools that enable it to target a critical stance. Thus, a new paradigm is sought in the discursive practice that instigates the transformation of these professionals in relation to the current health context in the country, since their performance is characterized by care that runs through a range of situations, encompassing social, cultural, economic and social issues, policies⁽⁶⁾.

From Paulo Freire's point of view, the nurse needs to walk in this world that constantly challenges him/her, recognizing himself/herself as an unfinished being, dependent on reality and relationships, to substantiate the situation in which he/she finds himself/herself. Only after this reflection he/she will be able to move, finding alternatives to overcome the situations he/she experiences. In this way, the obstacles of daily life need to be observed as possible to overcome for freedom⁽⁷⁾.

These concepts of Freire permeate the scope of Health Promotion by its strict relation when it corroborates with the new health paradigm, which seeks the participation of people and collectivities to act in their own environment through a process of qualification of the same, thus enabling better quality of life and breaking with the curative actions^(8,9).

Within the framework of Health Promotion, the strategy of empowerment that enables this awareness of individuals and groups is highlighted⁽¹⁰⁾. In the context of the health system, the nurse practitioner plays an important role in providing opportunities for this exchange, when, in a horizontal relationship, people are heard and involved in political and social decision-making processes, considering the experiences of individuals and participating in this process movement that will stimulate awareness⁽¹¹⁾.

In this sense, this study aimed to identify the perceptions of students and teachers of a postgraduate subject in relation to the nurse's role as a social-political being in relation to the current Brazilian public health scenario.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative research, articulated with the methodological reference of Paulo Freire, entitled as Research Itinerary. Many countries use this methodological option, however at the national level,

this framework solidifies in the context of education and advances in other areas, highlighting in health research, promoting a horizontal and dialogic relationship of the participants with the researcher^(7,12).

The Culture Circle is characterized by a moment in which people who experience the same situations are willing to debate on a certain theme. The researcher initially seeks to understand the vocabulary of these individuals (thematic research) so that later can promote the discussion on these generative themes, understanding the common sense of the participants and realizing how they understand the situation described (codification). Subsequently, the reflection of situations critically allows individuals to come across a new look at what they have already experienced, but they had not noticed, and scientific knowledge for this perception (decoding) can now be offered. Finally, from the previous moment these people seek strategies, solutions to the challenging situations, called "limit situations". This last moment is characterized as critical unveiling^(12,13).

These stages of the Paulo Freire method are not dependent and the researchers are also participants in the Circle. In this way, dialogue is the key to the development of the method, since there is a relationship that allows both to grow together, educate themselves and be educated⁽¹³⁾.

This research was carried out in a classroom, located at the Health Sciences Center of the Federal University of Santa Catarina (Florianópolis). Five students and two teachers, related to the subject "Theoretical and philosophical foundations of the thought of Paulo Freire: Itinerary of Research and Practice" of the Program of Post-Graduation in Nursing (PEN), in the mode *scripto sensu*, participated. The inclusion criteria for the participation of the study were: to be a teacher or student of mentioned discipline. As an exclusion criterion, the non-active participation in the Culture Circle was adopted.

The students who participated in the study are professional Nurses graduated in Nursing, with teaching practice, health care and administrative practice, enrolled in master's or doctoral courses. The professors, Doctors in Nursing, have experience in approaching the subject investigated in research, extension and teaching activities with undergraduate and graduate students, as well as acting in research groups.

The activity took place in a single day, during the bimonthly meeting of the subject in June 2017, lasting two hours, structured in three stages: 1) Research of the

Generating Themes; 2) Encoding and Decoding; and finally, 3) Critical Unveiling.

This subject was developed with seminars that addressed different themes within the thinking of Paulo Freire, among them: theoretical and philosophical conceptions of the thinker and its predominant concepts, such as autonomy, empowerment, education and culture. All of these meetings provided opportunities for the discussion of the students and teachers, which often culminated in reflections of the group related to the obstacles of the Nursing work in the current national scenario, such as the adversities faced by SUS, the predominance of the biomedical model, among other situations that restrict their performance as an agent for social and political change. Such concerns have emerged during the meetings, guiding the choice for the theme to be developed and discussed in this paper. At first, there was a triggering activity, through the reading of an article that sought the critical reflection of the work of the nurse practitioner in the search for a socio-political space that values the nurse⁽¹⁴⁾.

Based on this reading and introduction to the activity, the researchers raised the following triggering question: What are the perceptions of the students of a postgraduate nursing subject about the nurse's role as a social-political being in relation to the current Brazilian public health scenario?

Consequently, the circle began with discussions based on the reading of the article and more strongly on the professional experiences of the participants, reflecting on the obstacles to the work of the Nurse as a political being. One of the researchers used cardboard and pen to describe the generating themes by the participants. In about 30 minutes of discussion the themes were raised and some of them already coded and decoded.

Six themes were generated during the research in the initial stage of the Culture Circle, which, from the discussion, were codified and decoded in a central theme to be unveiled by the participants. This process involved all the students and teachers present, according to the method used⁽⁷⁾.

The steps of the method, the speeches of the participants recorded in audio with formal authorization, were later transcribed in full.

For the analysis and discussion of the data, it was used the health promotion referential, more specifically the empowerment strategy, the standard of political knowledge and the concepts of Paulo Freire^(7,8,10,11,14).

This study composes a research clipping entitled "Popular practices and health professionals: challenges for health education". The ethical aspects that guided this research obeyed Resolution No. 510/2016 of the National Health Council, which approves and regulates research with human beings⁽¹⁵⁾. The study was evaluated by the Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Santa Catarina and approved under Opinion n. 33209713.9.0000.0121 and the study participants signed the Free and Informed Consent Term (TCLE) in two forms. Participation in the research was voluntary and to guarantee the anonymity of the participants, they were identified as "DO" for teachers and "DI" for students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Investigation on Generative Themes

Words are characterized as the starting point for understanding the participants' vocabulary universe. They are generative, because they allow reflections from the themes raised initially, referring to the new discoveries of the reality emerged by the group. Thus, they provide the engagement of the members of the Culture Circle, stimulating them to the problematization that will occur later⁽⁷⁾. The meanings given to the situations they experienced were written in such a way that the whole group could visualize and thus "admire" their experiences.

The dialogue developed in the Circle took place in a horizontal way and gave the speech of all the participants, valuing the experience of each one of them⁽⁷⁾. The reflection of the teachers and students resulted in six generating themes. To present the discussion involving these results, it was chosen to list three categories encompassing them, according to the table below.

Table 1 – Generator Themes grouped into categories

Generator Themes	Categories
- Education/Curriculum;	I - Formative reformulation of "Being a Nurse";
-World's knowledge; -Profession's knowledge; - Empowerment;	II - Emancipation due to knowledge;
- Battle strategies; - Co-responsibility;	III- Political involvement;

Source: the authors.

2. Encoding and Decoding

I - Formative reformulation of "Being a Nurse"

In this theme the participants discussed widely the different characteristics of professional training in Nursing, as well as their pedagogical curriculum. They considered the social and political transformation that has been taking place in the profession and in the Nursing model of care, of curative, biomedical action for the promotion of health.

The participants also discussed the influence of the academy, so as to reflect on the professional in which the nurse will be, also on their professional autonomy and their appreciation as an essential member of the health team. Participants also indicated a discrepancy between the private and public training of Nursing courses.

It is necessary to see what pedagogical proposal of teaching the person was formed; the school, the curriculum of that school, was in which direction? (DO1)

Before I was in the private university scenario, with a much more market-oriented and non-politicized focus as in federal institutions. What I see in the federal today is a more politicized, more critical student, more involved with the national political scene, then leading battles, from struggles in this political landscape. So today what we realize is that the student gets much more involved...(DI1)

It should be added that the action of the Nursing teacher contemplates the process of building a new professional with an analytical and critical sense. His/her competence, both analytical, critical, reflexive and practical, will be directly linked to the process in the academic journey as a graduate student. In this way the pedagogical didactics used in Nursing training will be the main differential of their future behaviors⁽¹⁶⁾.

It is important to note that, in addition to academic training, other factors directly influence the construction of the "Being a Nurse", since democratic health spaces favor the social and political participation of nurses in their praxis. It is when the he/she is in inadequate working conditions, taking multiple journeys due to low salaries and unfavorable environments, where the increasing demand for assignments conflicts with the weaknesses of the market. Such critical knots come directly from political instability in the public health system.

II - Emancipation due to knowledge

This theme consists of speeches about the world's

knowledge, the profession's knowledge and empowerment. Participants considered that for the emancipation of the Nurse in their work in the health area and for the profession to transcend it is necessary knowledge, study and empowerment. The last one is seen as a process that seeks transformations by encouraging action and reflection on the reality of life, as well as promoting the critical unveiling of professionals through dialogue⁽¹²⁾. In addition, it is necessary to raise the awareness of the professional and its importance in the health system, minimizing the victimization evidenced by disparity of salary among the different classes of health area, as well as valuing union and strengthening of the profession.

First the Nurse has to recognize himself/herself as a political being, and he/she has to have a reading of the world. What role do I play in the world? Who am I anyway? If he/she has this position before the world, he does the reading of the world in which he/she is inserted, he/she is able to have a critical social action. If he/she is blindfolded, if he/she is in his/her site and can not go beyond, he can not do a critical social performance. [...] He/she has to have training, he/she has to have reading ... this creates a consciousness and it is this consciousness that will give him/her the empowerment to leave this circuit of submission/oppression. (DO1)

This process in search of consciousness is related as a way that people behave in the face of the challenges experienced in everyday life, transforming this environment into a human universe. In this way, to be conscious is also to be aware of the world, which favors men to overcome situations that suppress them and limit to a new horizon that liberates them and gives them the possibility of a new view, that is critical and reflective⁽⁷⁾.

The codification of these themes reinforced the Freirean thoughts and sought to reflect on the performance of the Nurse as a being who has a range of attributions that require awareness in the environment in which he lives, passing through purely technical knowledge, as can be seen in the following speech :

I think for the Nurse to be a social critic, he/she needs to read more, to study more. Not only technical and reading and knowledge, but also reading policy in general (DO2)

When returning to the discussion, the participants, in some statements, expressed the multiple competencies of the nursing practice, reinforcing the idea that this one has been assuming new spots. However, this range of assignments must be translated into the possibility of performance in the practice of the whole category.

We are achieving more and more and what is in need is perhaps autonomy and empowerment, to know our role, to assume our role... (DI2)

If you are not putting yourself as a Nurse, putting yourself with awareness; and then we discussed several things, such as the issue of nursing, in the battle for rights. (DO1)

This process of empowerment goes beyond the power of decision and transcends autonomy, when it is remembered as a path to be traveled, which comes in degrees, requiring not only capacity and awareness but knowledge about what is around, involving life and world's circumstances to understand the availability of tools to be used^(10,17).

III - Political involvement

The participants pointed out a transformation of the Nurse's performance into political belonging. These changes, from their point of view, reflect in the historical transformation of the professional's education, of the maturing of the profession. They also highlighted the need for the political representation of Nursing.

If we look at most health units, most are Nurses coordinators, so they too, politically, are getting in, staning out, I think we have to look at these advances, can not be so negative to think there were no changes. (DO2)

The social insertion is still fragile [...] if we are to see in the national context, how many Nurses are deputies, ministers, ... Very few! So we do not have political insertion... (DI3)

Although they reflect on the importance of the representation and political involvement of nurses, the participants recognize that this itself is not enough for the growth of the category, given the influences of the country's party system.

When we study the pattern of political knowledge, one of the first questions that comes to me is: does the Nurse participate in the class association? Of any political group? Volunteer work? To identify if there is a greater social insertion. (DO1)

One of my colleagues was invited to work at the Health Department there in the municipality, so everyone was cheering for her, "now it's going to change! She's going to do a lot of things!"... and she got there and came back very frustrated, because it depends on a whole system. In addition to political involvement, involvement in partisan politics is necessary (DI4)

The training of the nurse and the recognition as a professional in society are changing, due to changes in

undergraduate courses. This professional does not only play a role in pain relief or healing. Nowadays, he/she plays his role in society as a political being, a transforming agent of realities, an educator and facilitator of communication between society and health service^(14, 18-20).

For such, emerging from the reflections during the Circle, it is necessary for the Nurse to incorporate their skills and abilities with a view to advancing the political representation and, in this way, to take care of the roominess that make possible the representation of the category, corroborating with the following assertion:

And from assuming our responsibilities as Nurses we will be able to drive laws, change many things, which today are not changed because some administrators are not aware of our function. (DI2)

Therefore, it is incumbent to the Nurse, to know, to speak, to participate, to decide, to intervene on the social and political guidelines in the delineation of actions, since the political dimension is established by the capacity to mobilize social groups according to the demands, necessities and interests of the team and the users. In this context, the political knowledge becomes fundamental to subsidize the action of Nursing in society, by admitting that politics is a dimension that is part of the life of the human being and permeates all its activities⁽⁴⁾.

3. Critical Unveiling

During the realization of the Culture Circle six themes were codified: Education/Curriculum; World's knowledge; Profession's knowledge; Empowerment; Battle strategies; and, Co-responsibility. During their decoding, the participants emerged in reflections on their perceptions about the Nurse as a political being, arriving at the critical unveiling that the main point to have a critical reflective consciousness is empowerment.

It is important to emphasize that the search for empowerment must emerge from the professional category itself, leading to accountability as a social representation of a category that is knowledgeable about a variety of health practices⁽¹⁰⁾. Despite this, there is still a long way to go in the search for prestige and professional insertion in political issues, especially since the disruption of the biomedical paradigm.

Always within the oppressed has the oppressor and vice versa. Nurses live a lot in this oppressive duality we are

talking about here. So, in order for us to empower ourselves, to emancipate ourselves, to liberate ourselves, we have to take a little of that oppression that is within us. And how will we take this oppression? Sure, having knowledge, reading, but also facing things. So we still have difficulty because of this hegemonic, medical model that prevails over our profession. (DO2)

The process of criticism will develop a new perception of reality, led to overcoming the obstacles of the category. However, the perception of what's real will only be possible from the unveiling, when people go beyond the naive look and face a concrete reality. This exercise coexists with the experience of praxis, which instigates critical thinking and reflection for socio-political action. This path enables empowerment and awareness for the Nurse's autonomy⁽⁷⁾.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The nurse's role as a social-political being in the face of the current Brazilian public health scenario

reflects the awareness of a changing profession, whose actors bear the historical roots of the profession, as well as characteristics of their education, professional and social experiences.

Emphasis is placed on the relevance of the vocational training model for the empowerment of these subjects, based on more critical pedagogical curriculum that strengthen the progression and valorization of the profession. It reinforces the need to seek strategies of struggle and resistance, from inclusion in the community and knowledge of public policies.

The limitation of the study may be in the number of participants and in the scenario, because they are Nurses of a single group, integrated in the context of the university. It reiterates the importance of new studies that broaden the investigation of the sociopolitical participation of nurses who are inserted in the different scenarios of professional performance, transcending the academic environment.

O ENFERMEIRO ENQUANTO SER POLÍTICO-SOCIAL: PERSPECTIVAS DE UM PROFISSIONAL EM TRANSFORMAÇÃO

RESUMO

O contexto nacional vivencia um período de intensa transformação política e social, no qual o Enfermeiro busca respostas às interrogações políticas que permeiam seu processo de trabalho. Identificar quais as percepções dos discentes e docentes de pós-graduação sobre a atuação do Enfermeiro como ser político-social. Pesquisa qualitativa, articulada com o Itinerário de Pesquisa de Paulo Freire, o qual se constitui de: 1) Investigação dos Temas Geradores; 2) Codificação e Descodificação; e, 3) Desvelamento Crítico. A coleta de dados foi realizada em junho de 2017, durante uma disciplina do Programa de Pós-graduação em Enfermagem na modalidade stricto sensu de uma universidade pública do sul do Brasil. Participam cinco discentes e duas docentes. A reflexão resultou em três categorias: I – Reformulação formativa do “Ser Enfermeiro”; II – Emancipação a partir do conhecimento; e, III- Envolvimento político. A análise remete a importância da formação e transformações histórico-sociais para a inclusão da Enfermagem na atuação política. A atuação do Enfermeiro como ser político-social frente ao atual cenário de saúde pública reflete a conscientização de uma profissão em transformação, na qual se fazem necessários o empoderamento da classe e currículos pedagógicos mais críticos, que fortaleçam a progressão e solidifiquem a categoria.

Palavras-chave: Enfermagem. Papel do profissional de enfermagem. Educação em enfermagem. Cultura. Promoção da saúde.

EL ENFERMERO EN CUANTO SER POLÍTICO/SOCIAL: PERSPECTIVAS DE UN PROFESIONAL EN TRANSFORMACIÓN

RESUMEN

El contexto nacional vive un período de intensa transformación política y social, en el cual el Enfermero busca respuestas a las interrogaciones políticas que subyacen su proceso de trabajo. Identificar cuales las percepciones de los discentes y docentes de posgrado sobre la actuación del Enfermero como ser político/social. Investigación cualitativa, llevada a cabo con el Itinerario de Investigación de Paulo Freire, el cual se constituye de: 1) Investigación de los Temas Generadores; 2) Codificación y Descodificación; y, 3) Desvelamiento Crítico. La recolección de datos fue realizada en junio de 2017, durante una asignatura del Programa de Posgrado en Enfermería en la modalidad stricto sensu de una universidad pública del sur de Brasil. Participan cinco discentes y dos docentes. La reflexión resultó en tres categorías: I – Reformulación formativa del “Ser Enfermero”; II – Emancipación a partir del conocimiento; y, III- Envolvimiento político. El análisis remite la importancia de la formación y las transformaciones histórico-sociales para la inclusión de la Enfermería en la actuación política. La actuación del Enfermero como ser político-social frente al actual escenario de salud pública refleja la concienciación de una profesión en transformación, en la cual se hacen necesarios el empoderamiento de la clase y currículos pedagógicos más críticos, que fortalezcan la progresión y solidifiquen la categoría.

Palabras clave: Enfermería. Papel del profesional de enfermería. Educación en enfermería. Cultura. Promoción de la salud.

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