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Dialogues between popular education and food and nutritional education: reflections from the trajectories of three university professors

Anelise Rizzolo (https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4683-8736) [1]
Ligia Amparo Santos (https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6925-6421) [2]
Pedro José Santos Carneiro Cruz (https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0610-3273) [3]

Abstract *This essay explores the convergences and singularities of popular education and Food and Nutrition Education based on biographical fragments of the undergraduate training program in Nutrition of three university professors who established their academic and professional trajectories at these crossroads of knowledge and actions mediated by popular education. Inspired by the autobiographical method, the narratives revealed that the initial indignations with social inequalities were mobilizing the routes in the formative path toward understanding hunger, suffering, and human care. To this end, seeking spaces and opportunities to learn about and experience social work in contexts of vulnerabilities was a decisive factor in their personal and professional constructions, revealing the contradictions of traditional training models and the starting point for the genesis of critical thinking. Thus, clues are offered to understand the interfaces of Popular Education (PE) and Food and Nutrition Education (FNE) in the converging actions around the fight against hunger and the right to food without, however, reducing one to the other when food and Nutrition are projected on the horizon of practices.*

Key words *Popular Education, Food and Nutrition Education, Autobiography*

[1] Departamento de Nutrição, Faculdade de Ciências da Saúde, Universidade de Brasília. Campos Univ. Darcy Ribeiro s/n, Asa Norte. 70910-900 Brasília DF Brasil. anelise.unb@gmail.com
[2] Escola de Nutrição, Universidade Federal da Bahia. Salvador BA Brasil.
[3] Departamento de Promoção da Saúde, Centro de Ciências Médicas, Universidade Federal da Paraíba. João Pessoa PB Brasil.

Introduction

Based on the biographical fragments of three public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) professors who graduated in Nutrition, this essay aims to analyze their academic-professional trajectories in the production of knowledge and actions mediated by the dialogue between Popular Education (PE) and Food and Nutrition Education (FNE) in the Human Right to Adequate and Healthy Food context. The three trajectories consider the different historical and political contexts experienced by the authors, two of whom reported from the mid-1980s and the other from the early 2000s, multidetermined by the field of Food, Nutrition, and Health, highlighting hunger and obesity, within a process of establishing public policies to guarantee the Human Right to Adequate and Healthy Food in interface with the Right to Health.

Opting for autobiography as a methodological approach was based on the understanding that, when shared, life historicization contributes to building subjectivity and promoting a sense of belonging to the world[1,2], besides recognizing the history of others in the relationship with historical time and intertwining it with life in society. Agreeing with Camargo[3] and Albertini[4], the life story is a valuable tool since it is placed precisely at the intersection of the relationships between what is external to the individual and what they carry within. It can be a privileged tool for analysis and interpretation insofar as it incorporates subjective experiences mixed with social contexts. Remembering is producing meaning. It always occurs vis-à-vis the world and the reality we live in. When we narrate, we assign meanings to events that can be powerful in engendering general changes[5] when critically systematized and shared. The approach of autobiographical fragments also comes from Hooks, who recognizes the importance of experience for understanding the world, its conflicts, and paradoxes, giving identity to theoretical and social processes[6].

Biographical fragments of professors' educational paths

Lígia Amparo's encounter with PE and FNE Crossroads

My primary motivation for deciding to study Nutrition was hunger. In 1984, Brazil was experiencing a political upheaval with the "end of the economic miracle" and imminent indirect elections, with Brazilian civil society sectors yearning for a Brazilian re-democratization. This transition would occur the following year when I entered the Nutrition course at the Federal University of Bahia.

I consider my generation to be the military dictatorship's daughters and sons. As a result, I had a very silent childhood and adolescence regarding what was happening in the country during this period. Albeit "blurred" and barely comprehensible, world images would come to me on Brazilian TV, especially the *Jornal Nacional*. There, I would see images of a bearded man speaking to crowds – who would later become President – images of the National Plateau, interspersed with images of hunger in the Northeast. The word "hunger" was beginning to be spoken effectively.

In 1984, I was taking a pre-university entry exam course. Coming from a technical school used to studying less for the world of work, paradoxically, it was my awakening to the different areas of knowledge, particularly humanities, which made me give up on Engineering. I was affected by the event of hunger, and this new knowledge mobilized me to try to understand it. Awakening to humanities subjects did not take away my enjoyment of studying the natural sciences and understanding their events. Faced with these uncertainties affecting thousands of young people when deciding on a higher education course, I turned to the university's support bodies to choose a career. Why so? When I analyzed its curricular structure, the course had subjects from different areas, and I was interested in hunger.

Like most Nutrition courses – as is still the case today – humanities was fairly incipient in the first few semesters of the course in the basic cycle. Biochemistry, anatomy, physiology, and chemistry made up this curricular path, which caused cracks in my purpose, and it seemed that interdisciplinarity and the theme of hunger were only part of my dream universe. I tried to give up. I went on to another course and ended up returning. When I returned, a few moves were important in deciding my future paths: firstly, the search for subjects on the curricular "fringes", such as Bahian Culture, Sociology, and the emblematic experience of Anthropology. This was an introductory course with an experienced teacher who was attentive to Nutrition and its interfaces with Anthropology. He always flagged up interesting topics; he did not always get to them but welcomed them. We had the opportunity to vis-

it – my first visit – an Indigenous community in Bahia. It was a wonderful experience. I wanted to do my final course work in this community, but that was impossible.

Secondly, the importance of the student movement. My political training was consolidated there, both as a citizen and as a professional, and training in the broader issues that concerned our objects of study and professional work, such as hunger and food and nutritional security. Thirdly, I was fortunate to have teachers at EN-UFBA who were sensitive to social and political causes, working in the outlying communities of Salvador, and here I would like to highlight the Cansanção Project. Cansanção is a municipality in the state of Bahia located in the Semi-Arid Region, which until then, I had been unaware of – the Northeastern Sertão and drought.

Born and raised in the capital, Salvador, my monthly trips to Cansanção, 346 km away over ten years, contrasted the images etched in my memory, emanating from TV screens at the time, with those found without technological mediation. This encounter with the field and students and professionals from different backgrounds was fundamental to my understanding of PE. It was a profound unveiling of the layers erected by the monodisciplinary and mono-epistemic Nutrition course.

First, countryside men and women. The images of bodies under a scorching sun, straw hats driving a cart with cassava, or the arid images of the land, desolate children with no name and identity gave way to the human, the "all too human". The rural people had a name, an identity, a voice, desires, interests, anger, intrigue, and everything that makes up a human being. Second, in the practice of Nutrition, the actions to be developed were not configured "ready" technologies to be applied in one aspect of the human – the relationship of Nutrition with the biomedical body. It was necessary to hear and listen to the community and peers and create work strategies with these ideas from dialogue and, fundamentally, collaboratively. I learned that the world of life is sovereign, and that disciplinary knowledge must respect it. I learned that such world is also complex, and that only complex (inter)disciplinary knowledge can account for this reality. Popular knowledge and scientific knowledge demanded another level of horizontal and fruitful relationship. I learned a lot.

I joined the Cansanção Project as a student and left as a professor with activities whose details of this learning, while deeply relevant, do not fit this brief account. As a teacher, I started my academic career with this "luggage", developing projects in Salvador's peripheral communities – extension projects, Social Nutrition internships, Teaching-Care-Community projects, and Education and Research projects. In my graduation, I found the Nutrition Education professor who was enchanting through the corridors, encouraging the organization of one of the greatest Brazilian Nutrition congresses held in Salvador in 1989, titled "Hunger: A political issue", at a political moment of fundamental transition for the country's history. This renowned professor in the country, developing a prominent work of Nutrition aimed at the vulnerable communities as we call them today, also integrated the Cansanção project. After my experience in anthropology, I organized my courage, which was suffocated by shyness, and sought the professor to talk about my yearnings in the course. I do not remember what and how I approached her; I remember where the conversation occurred.

I joined the Nutrition course, and the continued discussions on Nutrition Education occurred in her classroom. Through the Nutritional Education field of knowledge and practices, now Food and Nutrition Education, I learned more about the determinants of hunger – the work of Flávio Valente on Food and Nutrition policies, the work of Francisco Vasconcelos, the extension courses on political economy, which led me to take on Food and Nutrition Education as one of the most relevant spaces in my academic-professional work in Food and Nutrition.

FNE, as it has been called in the last decade after the publication of the Framework for Food and Nutrition Education for Public Policies by the then Ministry of Social Development, seemed to be the space of fluidity between Nutrition and PE and between Nutrition sciences and social and human sciences. I saw FNE as the more "reduced" nutritional sciences and their devices for action – diagnosis and dietary prescription – finding their Gordian knot, which is the encounter with the other, human, in their entirety. The metrification of Nutrition – of the body and food – comes up against desires, culture, and the world of life. We are desiring bodies, bearing our identity marks, which are subversive even in the unconscious to the establishment of the normative. We are, exist, and desire much more than the empire of a diet. I did my doctorate in the social sciences, working with anthropology. However, FNE also continues to be this link between food and culture with Nutrition and the nutritionist. I continued to medi-

ate the FNE discipline and develop research and training projects, experimenting with "another" FNE in which PE is part of this perspective affiliated here.

Anelise Rizzolo's experiences, learning, and insurgencies at the PE and FNE intersections

Looking back at the past allows us to reconstruct trajectories. The narratives we choose connect with the place we currently hold. There is no single path to PE – different paths but no way back. Every time we look back, the road that brought us there is no longer behind us, which can be very inspiring.

I understand PE practice as a set of experiences, processes, relationships, and subjectivities, breaking with the traditional educational process. I will start this reflection by considering these moments/markers along my educational path. My discomfort with structures that concealed problems, ignored reality, and prevented a critical dimension were central to this story. However, let us start from the beginning: Nutrition came to me while trying to understand myself visa-à-vis life. I chose Nutrition on an impulse. Restless with the world's ills, inequalities, and social injustice, I embraced Nutrition for the possibility of something new, a promise that caused astonishment in the 1990s: Nutrition? What is that? Ah, the profession of the future! However, I discovered other things besides this: the problematic relationship with my body, the distorted image, conflicts, and self-esteem issues that led me to see the food universe as an alternative for dialogue, care, and the search for healing. A desire to pacify the silent anguish that I did not know with whom or how to address.

Unlike what I had imagined, the course started from the premise that the body is a "machine" that can be "programmed" to function optimally. The underlying subjects ignored the human dimension. I learned about biological forms and functions with the idea that the body operates automatically. No pain, sadness, emotions, or meanings. I tried to control my affections and believed this: it deteriorated my dietary disorder traits. I have become an expert in calories and nutritional composition, a complete version of the food composition table. It took many years of psychoanalysis and self-knowledge to transform this suffering into wisdom.

A native of Pelotas, I studied at the Federal University of Pelotas (UFPel). I participated in initiatives that brought me into reality early, including an extracurricular internship in childcare at a PHC Unit (UBS) on the city's outskirts. I was in my fourth semester. I had just taken the mother-and-child course, and after participating as an interviewer in a field study at the Epidemiological Research Center/UFPel, I did a 30-day internship that completely changed my relationship with Nutrition.

The daily routine of working with the community challenged me with questions: How can we introduce food in the first year of life to children without decent housing? What guidance should I give to breastfeeding mothers who do not even have the income to buy "beans and rice"? How do we talk about avoiding "diaper rash" to mothers who cannot afford disposable diapers and used clothes? How could I tell them that breastfeeding should be done in a quiet and peaceful place when they lived in a two or three-room house with five children, their husband, and mother-in-law? There, I saw myself as pathetic and incapable of playing my role alone. Nutritional advice would only make sense in the social context and this environment. I recognized myself in a health team, a learning community with listening and empathy. Working in primary care, the inseparable relationship between teaching, research, and extension materialized vividly. The ethical dimension of relationships ran me over, and I discovered that we are subjects in the teaching-learning process.

As a student, I experienced the political process of defending the university in the context of re-democratization and achieving university autonomy. I understood that all social rights are won through struggle, and I learned that the SUS is a heritage of the Brazilian people from female teachers (Cora, Denise, Fátima, and Marilda). They called on me to take responsibility and participate in a collective project to defend rights and achieve citizenship. I became socially engaged through a university education pedagogical process in the 1990s. As an activist in the student movement and a National Executive Office of Nutrition Students (ENEN) member, I had many plans to change the world: I wanted to be a nutritionist! I fell into the world working in three areas: public Nutrition, Clinical Nutrition, and Public Health – leading to the teaching experience.

My first reencounter with the university came early as a substitute teacher at 26 at UnB (1996). My first subject was Nutritional Education (still without the food). Paulo Freire's study, especially

the book *Communication or Extension?*, put my proposal for social transformation on a collision course, trapped in the syllabus of the subject I needed to plan. My world turned upside down! From then on, I worked in different higher education institutions as adjunct professor, visiting professor, collaborating researcher, and tutor, including UFSC, where I walked a path of enormous learning with stumbles, doubts, sharing and understanding the experience of PE as a field supervisor for the Multiprofessional Residency in Family Health alongside Neila Machado and Marco Da Ros.

Today, I recognize in these experiences the first marks of pedagogical praxis due to the audacity and challenge imposed on the subjects who believed in it. Following my path, without forgetting motherhood, life was entangled in the husband/child relationship. Simultaneous and much-desired choices, which I succeeded in making through renunciation, study, divorce, good help, and breath. I became an educator by exercising the contradictions of being a white woman and a mother in an unequal and racist country that does not value science and has not yet democratized access to higher education. University teaching would be a sensitive space for the practice of Popular Education/Extension. However, institutions are still rooted in Cartesian models and their content-based dilemmas, even with the ever-more-abundant technological entanglements. Their hermetic curriculum structure has historically hindered this experience.

It is curious to realize how refractory the training processes in Nutrition are to the PE reflective movements. The mono-epistemic roots of nutrition courses have hindered the construction of interdisciplinary knowledge. There can be no education as a practice of freedom without courage, as there will always be difficulties. However, it must be understood as a stage in critical intellectual development[7], and only then can we consolidate an action-reflection-action (praxis) process. We should create bonds, deepen reflections, generate meaning, and produce ruptures in the face of the models that (de)form the view of totality throughout the academic trajectory.

Nutritionists are permanent educators in their professional practice, which is why promoting bonds between educators and students (professionals and patients/users) is not just about formal educational relationships but mainly interdisciplinary educational processes. Any educational process that prevents dialogue with the social needs of society fails to fulfill its primary task, which is to establish communication, an individual or collective language for healthcare. Communication is the first step in the educational process. There is no emancipation without listening. Educational processes that predefine the knowledge to be shared tend to generate frustration for both the educator and the student. Dialogue and loving kindness make us take responsibility for what may or may not work but with the assurance of shared choices and attempts. The point is to open up space to understand the fruitful permeability of Popular Education's emancipatory educational processes in dialogue with intercultural knowledge in food and Nutrition.

Nutrition and the craft of care in Pedro Cruz's experience

As a young student starting the Nutrition course at the Federal University of Paraíba, I was constantly concerned about the distance between the curricular components offered at the beginning of the course and the actual practice of the Nutrition professional. Although I was relatively familiar with some of the basic elements of the nutritionist's practice (not least because I had already been involved in nutritional care at the time), I longed to start seeing Nutrition expressed concretely in the care of people. I wanted to be involved in effective opportunities to care for people or, as I thought then, "give people a diet". To my disappointment, the first few semesters of the course were intensely and exhaustively dedicated to the human body's biological, physiological, and anatomical dimensions and focused on disease and its biochemical dynamics. I was doing much more of a bachelor's degree in biological sciences than a health course focused on care and Nutrition. I wanted to take care of people.

As a child, I remember having two main games in which I fantasized about being a professional in action: one was a doctor, and the other a teacher. At the time, medicine enchanted me not because of the profession itself but because it represented care for young Pedro – the possibility of listening to people and their problems, being receptive, and guiding treatments to help overcome distress, anguish, and pain. Human suffering has always bothered and mobilized me. So, I saw medicine as an opportunity to exercise solidarity and contribute to addressing people's suffering. However, moments before deciding on my choice for the entrance exam, I opted for Nutrition because I thought I could not pass the Medicine course. I went into Nutrition because, a few years earlier, I

had started a fruitful process of taking care of my overweight. I saw a nutritionist, followed a strict diet, and exercised enthusiastically in a gym. For someone who had struggled with bullying since childhood, finally overcoming obesity and seeing myself as "thin" was exciting. However, in the first few semesters of the course, I saw nothing about Nutrition or Healthcare.

Unsettled by this situation, I began to eagerly look for opportunities for projects at the university that could keep me engaged in something that would give me a taste of what Nutrition would be like. This was not easy then, as most extension and research projects did not accept students from the course's early stages. I was as if condemned for my professional "ignorance" – taking only the subjects of the basic biophysiopathological and biochemical cycle. I could not do anything in biology (because I was a Nutrition student) or anything in Health because more experienced students were only accepted in more advanced periods of the professional cycle. Then, an opportunity emerged and took me to the Maria de Nazaré Community, in the Funcionário II neighborhood of João Pessoa, Paraíba, and the "Popular Education and Family Healthcare" Extension Project (PEPASF) of the Health Promotion Department at UFPB. I was fortunate to bring forward a subject originally in the sixth period of Nutrition called "Community Development and Communication". The lecturer addressed Nutrition intensively from the perspective of care, especially care linked to tackling the social inequalities that generated health issues, especially hunger and poverty. He took us to see PEPASF's work as one of the activities. One of the students had been working on the project for a long time, and she guided the class on this visit.

The visit occurred on a Saturday morning, and I met the student from the project at a bus stop so that she could accompany us to the community and the visiting group would not get lost. As the bus went from the city center to the community, we chatted eagerly with this veteran student. The central question on the minds of the less experienced students was: "How do we work with nutrition and diets with economically poor people? How do you make a proper diet for someone who is starving? What did the nutritionist have to do in a setting like that?" Along the way, the student wove threads of her work in the community that enchanted me, answering these questions with propriety, firmness, and great conviction, making it clear that YES, we nutritionists can and should work in this context and with these people. The issue, therefore, was not IF we should or could act but HOW to act. At the time, my view of the nutritionist's approach was quite restricted to my only nutritional care experience. Nutrition was the professional's determination of what people should eat to lose weight. It was not a recommendation but a determination. It was not about having access to food or combating malnutrition; it was about losing weight. That was not a problem for me in that context because I saw the nutritionist's imposing and authoritarian figure as relevant in helping me not to "go off the diet", strictly following it. I intensely believed that I would only be able to achieve my goal of losing weight by following what the nutritionist told me to do. My tastes did not matter so much as the goal. Even though I like to eat and have foods with much emotional significance in my life, I understood that the nutritionist had to "prescribe" the diet, like medicine, for those who needed to lose weight and "get in shape". With this view, I was surprised by the account of the nutrition student who had been working at PEPASF for some time when she told me how she worked with people and families in the community on food issues.

First of all, it bothered me that she never talked about "diet", but spoke a lot about "dynamics", "conversation", "workshop", and "construction". These words seemed very strange for a health professional to use, even more so for a nutritionist, who was supposed to (in my opinion at the time) "tell people what to eat, how to eat, when to eat, and how much to eat". However, while all this unsettled me, it also delighted me. I was inquisitive, probably because the teacher seemed to be awakening inside me the other professional side I used to play with as a child. The student's statement seemed to tell me that Nutrition would be something not dictated by the nutritionist but taught, not just to people but with people. Her account gave me the feeling of a crafted action, a care craft. In her narrative, she said, for example, how she tried to approach people, primarily, by building real relationships and connections with them. She learned their realities, contexts, life dynamics, afflictions, and difficulties. She visited them weekly to see how the threads of the lives of each person and each family in the community were unraveling. She told us that, in this way, she came to understand that there was no point in telling families and individuals what they should eat or how they should eat, but that she needed to build ways of eating with the families, considering the local social obstacles and the conditions of each family. Moreover, she told us how she re-

alized there was little point in dictating what to eat when people often did not comply, not just because of financial possibilities but also because of their tastes and desires. She went on to say how much she discovered that our work as nutritionists was enhanced when the diet also became something pleasurable for people, connected to the community's customs, desires, and culture.

At the end of the bus ride, I arrived in the community with my "spun" and even a little dizzy head. At the same time, I was eager to see it all in practice and restless with the many possibilities I discovered in that conversation. Caring could be not only helping by imposing standards of behavior and treatment on people. It could also be educating in the sense of talking, teaching, and learning. Caring could be crafting people's health together with people. This excited me in a way I cannot describe. Possibly because, albeit unconsciously, the two Pedros who played as children – the doctor (caregiver) and the teacher – finally saw the possibility of being one. From that day on, I could not stop going to the community. I took up the craft of care as a profession and never gave up.

Many paths have been traveled, including a four-year stint at the Maria de Nazaré Community and PEPASF, where I did "my university" on how to care for people in a constructed, shared, supportive, affectionate, and engaged way. More than that, I discovered that this craft had a name and a theoretical and methodological foundation: Popular Education (PE). Since then, I have been dedicating my life to thinking about ways, alternatives, and approaches to PE that trigger Nutrition as a science and a profession, to leaving the place of the normative and the prescribed and moving to the place of companion of people in their life struggles and journeys for the right to food and for the right to eat with fulfillment, happiness, and satisfaction. May eating be part of a larger project of living well.

Malaise as a turning point

The narratives show that the first element that proved to be fundamental to the subjects' search for food and nutrition education from a critical and emancipatory perspective was indignation at social vulnerabilities, hunger, misery, and social and human inequalities. Our three leading figures entered the Nutrition course through different routes with concerns, annoyances, and perplexities about these situations. Each subject follows a path accessed from their experiences and subjectivities mobilized by memories and recollections, migration processes, family experiences, work, beliefs, religiosity, language, and science. These configure them as experiences that also result from social structures and processes[8]. These discomforts with broader social issues did not seem disconnected from personal annoyances with their bodily experiences in the face of a contemporary ethic that imposes a single corporality for an allegedly healthy life[9].

Feelings and processes permeated by indignation, discomfort, perplexity, and questioning mobilized in these people the desire to tread other paths and look for routes toward change. These shifts converge with the concepts of "threshold situation" and "feasible unprecedentedness", categories found in Paulo Freire's writings. For the author, the threshold situations experienced by the subjects' daily lives were seen as a "perceived detachment" and are broken by "extreme acts", in this case, the search for other educational routes in the course curricula, seeking the "feasible unprecedentness"[10].

It seems clear that traditional curricular structures are insufficient for dialoguing with social reality. Universities have long questioned the importance of engaging educators and students in constructing critical know-how to produce new questions to old paradigms. In this sense, we should underscore the movement that has swept through several higher education institutions in recent years around extension curricularization. This movement indicates progress towards greater recognition of the need for a curricular insertion of extension due to the value of student experience in its incorporation into reality and student communication with the subjects of the territories, their problems, and the concrete life dynamics. However, it also inspires caution, as curricularization should not only correspond to accreditation but to the inclusion of an in-depth extensionist practice in the courses, which needs to be preserved, improved, and strengthened throughout the curricular process, including not losing sight of the dialogical approach with people and the inseparability with teaching and research for inclusive and equitable social transformation. Furthermore, it requires attention to the effects of disciplinarization and the risks of "incarcerating" extension in traditional and Cartesian curricula and fostering the dimension of student protagonism as a critical and (trans)formative experience[11].

Regarding the narratives' temporality, the contexts they experienced must be demarcat-

ed, given the historical struggle to guarantee the right to food and access to public policies to protect this right and promote actions to affirm it among socially vulnerable populations. At the time of our protagonists' graduation, especially Anelise and Lígia, in the 1980s, the period of Brazilian re-democratization, this reality was challenged by the scarce fabric of public policies to tackle the hunger issue. In Pedro's case, his entry into the undergraduate program came during the first years of formulating more consistent FNS policies, the 2000s, which also brought other challenges, such as dealing with hunger, alongside the emergence of obesity. However, despite the different periods, the curricula changed little, leading us to explore the routes of the few optional and almost rarely compulsory subjects, together with the student movement, in order to shape other knowledge and actions that would allow us to continuously expand our knowledge of actions and policies to promote FNS.

Indeed, the persistence of the three protagonists in Collective Health was due, to a large extent, to the fact that they found possibilities in other spaces, whether in extension, the student movement, social research, or even in encounters with people who had marked their trajectory, such as some professors, from which their concerns were accepted, debated, and unfolded, allowing them to understand that they could go on to form themselves and take ownership of other methodologies and knowledge. The incipience of the diet and other hegemonic devices in the education of nutritionists and the curricular organization of the higher education Nutrition course were revealed in this encounter with the other in their locus of production of the existence of the subjects to address hunger and human distress.

The narratives highlighted the extension students' recurring questions: How do you "teach someone to eat" in a situation of hunger or undignified living situations such as housing, education, and other violated rights? In an encounter with concrete reality, the boundaries of the mono-epistemic and Eurocentric science of Nutrition unveil its contradictions. In this context, other founding encounters between Nutrition students that emerged, such as the HPE, provided the basis for the construction of knowledge and actions that somehow also converge towards an emancipatory food and nutrition education. Here, hunger broadens the meanings of a place linked to malnutrition in its biological dimensions to a socio-political dimension and an existential and subjective dimension underlying the human experience. Hunger is a human event and a violation of rights. The Right to Adequate and Healthy Food can only be achieved by guaranteeing other human rights. Thus, the action is broader, interdependent, multidimensional, and interdisciplinary.

Therefore, two protagonists identify as popular educators, and one in Food and Nutrition Education. However, the trajectories meet in the convergence of producing meanings and perceiving the other as the subject of pedagogical action, committed to the processes, the confrontation of social inequalities, and the multiple inequalities revealed in the future (and current) teaching practice of the protagonists of this narrative.

Final considerations

The narratives underscore the relevance of trajectories in constructing professional identities and how questioning the structures of traditional educational models was the starting point for the genesis of critical thinking. Pedagogical praxis could include disobedience and conflict as part of its dialogical action. Gadotti points out in the preface to Paulo Freire's *Education and Change*[12] that PE is receptive to contradictions and antagonisms as pedagogical elements. Recognizing conflict promotes understanding and comprehension of problems. However, the discomfort, strangeness, and desire to care among peers led them to seek other paths, readings, dialogues, and knowledge to construct citizen science engaged with reality for social transformation.

Finally, albeit in an initiatory way, inspired by autobiography, this essay set out to give visibility to the unique experiences of the interlocutors through self-writing to apprehend and understand one's own personal and professional courses and the establishment of the PE and FNE fields in an intertwined and convergent way in the fight against hunger and for the Right to Food. With their different trajectories that draw near or intersect at different moments in their histories, FNE and PE can merge without reducing one to the other when food and Nutrition are projected onto the horizon of practices. We expect our work will inspire other works from these perspectives, in which a broader event can be read and understood through the subjects' biographies.

Collaborations

A Rizzolo, LA Santos and PJSC Cruz participated in the article's conception, review, methodological organization, analysis, discussion, and final writing.

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