

The author responds ... hope still exists

Reply

O autor responde
... a esperança ainda existe

El autor responde
... la esperanza todavía existe

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The discourses of those who debated the text assert a fundamental assumption for the comprehension and strengthening of PEH, that is, the conception that it is a field in construction adding knowledge, actions, and individuals that are moving in specific spaces and, as stated by Bourdieu¹, it is characterized as a field of power. From this perspective, it is worth remembering that in the institutionalization process of PEH as a technical area in the Ministry of Health (MS), various resources of power were brought to the scene, such as material support for the organization of groups and events, publication of texts in which the key concepts of Freirian Education were debated, and constituent processes of individuals



who stated “not only pedagogical, but also epistemological and ethical-political, supported by actions and practices in the historical fight against oppression and invisibility of various cultures and knowledge”² (p. 2), as Helena David remembers.

When reflecting on the institutionalization context of PEH in the MS from a perspective in which the State is conceived as a political arena disputing the hegemony of a particular world conception³, it is necessary to highlight that subtle disputes (as those usually occurring among several tactics in the left political spectrum) or evident disputes (as those occurring among rivals in opposing poles) existing in the MS, in the governmental structure, in the institutionalized political arenas, and in the collective spaces of social participation present reflexes in the current situation characterized by the fragmentation of the popular fights and the emergence of identity fights. Therefore, the following complex question is raised: How to produce dialogs in dispute scenarios? Alternatively, in other words, How to conduct a political action that enunciates transformations permeating moments of dispute and of dialog? What are their limits or possibilities when actions are adjusted to the existing conditions?

Regarding identity, I believe that it is of utmost importance that PEH, as a field in construction, give visibility to its fundamental principles, getting rid of the blurring evidenced by the different senses in which changing the preposition “of” to the connective “and” reveal crucial and important differences. Does the overcoming of the instrumentalist perspective of a “nice, fun” education translated by the expression “in Health” make sense to the individuals who identify themselves as popular educators?

An article written at the end of 2007 presents this question, but with a discussion focused on the organizational logic that tends to frame human thinking and acting fields in sectors, departments, and disciplines.

In this paper, Popular Education and Health is used when referring to the broader field that articulates two knowledge areas and is constituted in their interfaces. Popular Education in Health when related to sectors, disciplines, and projects of intervention, whose theoretical, conceptual, and methodological matrix is based on popular education⁴. (p. 306)

If such distinction is not clear, it is possible that we are developing educational processes, despite our good intentions, which assert the supremacy of the hegemonic knowledge in which popular knowledge emerges as an alternative in the face of the exclusion situations resulted from the organization of the Brazilian society. Helena David continues to question the apparent or real imbalance between “the knowledge accumulated in the PEH journey and our current capacity to create debates with an effective popular participation”² (p. 4).

Such imbalance has its roots in the permanent need to contextualize the world on which it is intended to produce critical considerations based on awareness regarding the position occupied in this world. There is an invasion of the capitalist values in all scopes of societies: individualism; social, economic, political, and cultural exclusion; fundamentalism; misogyny; racism; and daily and institutional violence. Liquid times when relationships are tenuous, mutant, in continuous change.



As Accioli⁵ asserts, “the PEH institutionalization built powerful processes, but that sometimes did not result in the critical reflection of the collective construction processes on the relationship between collectives/movements/academies/State”. Reflecting on the primacy of the activism led by the social movements to meet an exogenous agenda can cause discomfort as it leads to an inner look, to the inside of the groups involved, and to questioning the existence of subtle conflicts never resolved, concealed disputes, and individual interests overlapping the collective ones.

It is often possible to note, by observing the organization’s characteristics prevailing in some collectives, charismatic leaderships, hierarchies of power and authoritarian politics, reproducing traditional organizations in which the radically democratic experience passes off.

In a broader level, it would be possible to have as support the historical democratic inexperience in Brazil since colonial times, which Paulo Freire signals in a 1959 text as an element hindering the conditions for the emergence of a popular, permeable, and critical awareness, questioning when this possibility could exist...

In our type of colonization, base of the great domain? [...] In the almighty of lords ‘of lands and peoples’? [...] in the urban centers vertically created without the pronouncement of the people? In slavery? [...] In the nonexistence of democratic institutions? In the absence of circumstances for dialog in which we emerge and grow? [...] In the negligence of popular education to which we have always been relegated?⁶. (p. 8-24)

Within the context in which the PEH institutionalization occurs, would these conditions have changed? Would the formulation of policies, such as the PNEP-SUS, aimed at realizing the wish of being more, be a result or an inducer of democratic relations in the institutions? Would there be paths to build a future where the conditions of our democratic inexperience conditions were constructs to live freely?

And, from the perspective of overcoming, Carla Albuquerque⁷ brings to the debate the concept of intersectionality, a device that considers the possibility of overcoming our social and identity fragmentations in order to understand the distance between intention and gesture, turning our thoughts and actions into processes in which the subjectivity of being in the world may be constructed beyond the colonizing frameworks that marked our history with blood, sweat, and tears.

In the same direction, Osvaldo Bonetti⁸ indicates paths that turn to the instituting power⁹ that inherently exists within each human being, and which expands and can turn into strength through actions of the collectives and of the social movements.

From this perspective, it is necessary to recover the strategic sense present in processes of bureaucratic and formal institutionalization by the immanent forces that support PEH as a field of political fight, considering that not all always is this sense appropriated by the individuals in the field. And that, maybe, this is the *leit motiv* for the actions of popular educators, that is, strengthening the power and critical awareness bearing in mind that the institutionalized political power is effected in



governments operating by means of sectoral policies, plans, programs, and projects that ultimately seek to legitimize themselves in the face of society's needs and wishes, which, in turn, moves in the spaces of micropolitics to become visible and audible to the interests of their various components.

Finally, the debate based on critical reflections addressing from conceptual questions to organizational forms shows that the PNEP-SUS institutionalization in the MS brings outcomes and effects that need to be identified, mapped, and mobilized so they can be territorialized in the daily life of each citizen and established in the ways of being in the world.

In the current context, as Bonetti asserts, the PNEP-SUS is considered irrelevant and silenced; however, it is impossible to remove from history the process that gave birth to it and the principles that encouraged the journey from the construction of the collective will of the movements to be their representatives until their formalization. These principles appear as pillars of a path always in construction that gained prominence when the VI National Meeting and the I Latin American Meeting of Popular Education and Health, carried out in Paraíba-PI, presented as a theme the invitation to travel the trail of democracy, autonomy, and living well¹⁰. Hope still exists and remains alive.

Conflict of interest

The author have no conflict of interest to declare.

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