



The Conjuncture Of Nursing Work In The Civil Society Of Alagoas State In The 1980s Under The Aegis Of Antonio Gramsci's Thought

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ABSTRACT

The study analyzed the circumstances of the work of nursing attendants, assistants and technicians in the civil society of Alagoas in the 1980s. This is a qualitative, social-historical and analytical research. Written and oral sources were used, produced in interviews conducted with recourse to thematic oral history, with those who witnessed the historical phenomenon. The information was analyzed under the grammaticalist aegis. The hegemony of the State during the military regime was observed, as well as its influence on the nursing work in the civil society of Alagoas, denoting the precariousness of the work environment, work overload, moral harassment and in some cases the exposure to work risks.

Keywords: Nursing History, Working Conditions, Nursing Assistants, Civil Society.

1 INTRODUCTION

The object of this study was the work circumstances of nursing attendants (ATE), nursing assistants (AE) and nursing technicians (TE) in the civil society of Alagoas in the 1980s.

When analyzing the trajectory of a profession, the intention is to understand how it has been formed and configured over time, in order to recognize the trends through which it has been moving within society, since the professional practice at a given juncture contributes to the debate on better strategies for strengthening the profession and for understanding the social and historical context of the work environments in which it is inserted (Teixeira et al., 2021).

Work from a Marxist perspective is conceptualized as an ineliminable human activity, in which productive force is employed as a way to obtain subsistence within capitalist society. It is a form of production of means for sustenance and that human beings are constituted as social beings through their work activities (Marx, 2010).

Considering that work is the way of being and being in the world, being the means of man's action in the core of society regarding his process of generating his living conditions, in the analysis of human

action in the social world, work assumes an axial position, because its various forms of use have been engendering throughout history structural conjunctures that have their own internal dynamics that preserve and modify them according to the transformations that have occurred and the types of contradictions generated by changes in their components (Marx, 2010; Leite, 2017).

Nursing work ranges from primary care to the highest technological density, with varied activities of multiple degrees and complexity within the capitalist system (Bardaquim et al., 2019). Throughout its trajectory as a caring profession it meets social needs and stands out as of paramount importance to humanity for the quality of services offered within capitalist society (Padilha, 2020).

The exploitation of the worker is evident throughout the trajectory of capitalism, and nursing would be no different, because throughout its history it has suffered from a coercive system, where its workers are forced to submit and accept the forms of labor precariousness (Santos et al., 2018).

This social inequality to which nursing workers are exposed leads them to want to organize and fight for their rights, either individually or collectively (Gramsci, 1986). The conflicts and struggles between classes in society highlight the devaluation of the proletariat class and the high concentration of income by a minority, at the expense of the exploitation of the majority by the sweat of their labor (Gramsci, 2011).

The struggle for worker valorization in the Brazilian scenario in the 1980s, from the high number of strikes, had been attributed not only to the context of opening and easing of state repression, but to the country's economic context and the leverage of trade union organizations (Moura; Rocha; Santos, 2017).

Taking into consideration that nursing was inserted in the labor field and present in the struggles of the 1980s, understanding the subjective and objective conditions of this work in a socio-political and economic conjuncture contributes to the consolidation of the profession's memory, strengthens the professional identity, and allows grounding of the history of health services (Lorenzetti et al., 2012; Padilha, 2020; Teixeira et al., 2021).

According to a study by Taffner et al (2019) produced with the theses and dissertations catalog of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Level Personnel in the line of Brazilian nursing history, demonstrated the invisibility about the union politicization and work circumstances of mid-level nursing professionals, in the face of such a gap, we aimed to analyze the work circumstances of ATE, AE and TE in the civil society of Alagoas in the 1980s.

2 METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative study of a historical-social and analytical nature (Barros, 2015), linked to the Dona Isabel Macintyre Study Group (Gedim) of the Federal University of Alagoas (UFAL), within the research line of the history of Brazilian nursing. This article was extracted from the scientific initiation work entitled "As Circunstâncias de Criação do Sindicato dos Auxiliares e Técnico de Enfermagem de

Alagoas (SATEAL)" with funding from the scientific initiation scholarship program of Seune College (Maceió - AL).

The geographic cutout considered for this research was the state of Alagoas, the institutional cutout was SATEAL and the socio-temporal cutout selected was the 1980s, the year SATEAL was created. Written and oral documents built from the testimonies of people who witnessed the phenomenon in question were constituted as sources (Barros, 2015).

The written documents used were surveyed in the archive of the SATEAL headquarters between the months of January and March 2017, others donated by the study participants and some provided by the Laboratory of Documentation and Research in History of Nursing (LADOPHE)/UFAL. These documents were analyzed through Barros' (2019)-critique of testimony.

The oral documents emerged from eight statements made by people directly connected to the historical object. The participants of the study were oriented about the possibility of keeping their identity confidential. However, all the interviewees waived their right to confidentiality. The identification of those involved in the historical phenomenon in question contributes to reveal the social, political, and professional place of the participants, making it relevant for the recognition of the actors involved in the writing of this history.

Thus, the following participated in this research: a) Nurse (RN): Lenira Maria Wanderley Santos de Almeida, b) Nursing Technicians: Maria Benedita dos Santos, Elizete dos Santos, and Mario Jorge dos Santos Filho; c) Nursing Assistant: Maria Solange Rodrigues; and d) Nursing Attendant: Pedro Anselmo and José George dos Santos.

After consent and signing of the free and informed consent form (ICF), the interviews were conducted with the support of a semi-structured script and recorded on Sony MP3 devices at the locations of choice of the interviewees. The recordings of the testimonies were transcribed and transformed into documents, with the editing of language vices that could hinder the understanding of the text, and later validated by those involved with the statement validation term. The oral documents were organized based on the methodological referential of Thematic Oral History.

The results were discussed under the aegis of Antonio Gramsci's theoretical reference in his concepts: class, culture, hegemony, political society, and civil society.

Immediately after the discussion in light of the theoretical framework, the essay was organized into two topics for better understanding, namely: I) The hegemony of the State during the Brazilian military regime and II) The work of nursing in the civil society of Alagoas in the 1980s.

The ethical principles were respected, as recommended by resolutions 466/2012 and 510/2016 of the National Health Council (CNS), which regulate research with human beings. The project was approved under opinion number: 1.568.566 and CAAE: 55605316.4.0000.5013, via Plataforma Brasil.

I) State Hegemony During The Brazilian Military Regime

The need to construct this Topic I arose by understanding, from a Gramscist perspective, the hegemony of the state in a dictatorial period and its actors, because to the extent that the relations of forces of production are exercising hegemony under a social group, in some cases the search for better conditions within society is awakened (Heidemann; Gomes; Sánchez, 2008).

Addressing the thought of the theorist adopted in the study under interpretation of Wanderley (2012) the "State is the same as the political society itself, is constituted by the organs of the superstructures in charge of implementing the function of coercion and domination". Still with this same author, "civil society is conformed by the set of bodies, within the state, usually considered "private", which enable the intellectual and moral direction of society, through the formation of consensus and the adhesion of the masses" (Wanderley, 2012).

The period of military dictatorship in the country was marked by a strong repression of rights and to ideas contrary to the regime, sometimes by the direct use of military force, sometimes by repression ideological, constraints that deepened social injustices taking the less favored layers of the population increasingly poorer while the bourgeois caste accumulated capital, for this, despite not assuming power, the nation granted it to the military to stifle popular participation and maintain the material bases of its hegemony (Santos; Santos, 2018). Thus, the ruling class has the ability to unify around its political project a broad and non-homogeneous bloc marked by class contradictions (Gramsci, 1978).

The Civil-Military Dictatorship instituted in Brazil from 1964 by a coup resulted from the increasing political radicalization of the last months of the Goulart government. Hailed as a "Democratic Revolution," since its conception the movement had as its main characteristic the fact that it maintained a high degree of institutionalization (Resende, 2013).

Thus, the military coup was instituted by the Supreme Command of the Revolution, composed of Army Commander-in-Chief Artur da Costa e Silva, Brigadier Francisco de Assis Correia de Melo and Vice Admiral Augusto Rademaker. These dictators, with the help of the author of "Polaca" (1937), Francisco Campos, launched the first Institutional Act (AI-1), being granted the right to annul legislative mandates and indirectly summon a president for the country (Resende, 2013; Fausto 2019).

The governments of the dictatorial period were divided thus: Castelo Branco Government and the Institutionalization of the Authoritarian Regime (1964-1967), Costa e Silva Government and AI-5 (1967-1969), Médici Government and the Years of Lead (1969-74), Geisel Government and the Slow, Gradual and Safe Opening (1974-79), and Figueiredo Government and the sunset of the Brazilian Military Regime (1979-85) (Almeida, 2013; Fausto, 2015).

Despite the promise of the economic miracle, the wage squeeze was evident, as well as unemployment and deep social inequalities, in addition to repeated accusations of corruption and white-collar crimes (Fausto, 2019), thus characterizing the hegemonic power of the state in the 1980s. In the

Alagoas scenario, the sociopolitical conjuncture of the state in the 1980s was a direct reflection of the Brazilian crisis, gestated since the coup of 1964 until mid-1985 (Carvalho, 2015).

Therefore, the democratic forces in Alagoas faced strong pressures, both from political representation and from social movements. Here there was an opposition bloc to the dictatorial regime, but it was weakened by the loss of Muniz Falcão, considered "the greatest popular leader of Alagoas" and by the closing of the *Diário de Alagoas* newspaper linked to him, leaving a political actor without strength or influence in this abusive conjuncture (Carvalho, 2015).

The violence in Alagoas was a fixed tattoo of this dictatorial system, under articulation of the state that had under its power the judiciary, the police apparatus and an illegal structure of justiceiros (capangas and gunmen) who performed the famous private and obscure "justice". The repercussion of this muddy system caused so much fear that in some small towns that political family tradition was hegemonic, hence so many crimes of politicians adversaries to their regime (Carvalho, 2015).

In 1982, the last election under the military regime was held for federal and municipal positions, and soon afterwards the direct elections were held, but the state machine felt undermined by the people's vote. In the face of these votes Divaldo Suruagy was elected, but behind such a result there was the texture of the military regime (Carvalho, 2015).

The balance sheet of Alagoas' dictatorial management pointed to an unbridled investment in the agro-industry, roads, and hotel sectors, yet in this same period Alagoas reflected the worst social, labor, and health indicators (Carvalho, 2015).

When the crisis in the national scenario cooled down, Solange highlights the effervescence and the organization of the struggles by social movements:

The silence imposed for 21 years, when the amnesty came, when the process of democratization of the country came... of redemocratization, all the workers' category movements and the grassroots social movements, residents' associations, rural workers... look, it was something that was effervescing with something that I think was not the moment; it was not a good moment; but, I also remember the suffering, before that... after the military coup... first day of terror... But, when we managed - nurses, assistants, rural workers, every segment of organized civil society wanting a citizen constitution to be built (Rodrigues 19 Feb. 2017).

Health social movements in the 1980s from various sectors of civil society experienced persecution by an authoritarian regime, but sought to break with this situation through a process of resistance and denial of the authoritarian order and recognition of citizenship rights, achieving important achievements as the crowning achievement of this process, namely the 1988 Constitution and the creation of the Unified Health System (SUS) (Santos; Santos, 2018).

Corroborating the words of Solange Rodrigues, Lenira Wanderley cites the conflicts and struggles concerning women in the social context of the time:

...it was a fight within the fight, as I usually say, it is a fight within the fight, it is more a fight within so many fights, because the fact of being a woman in Brazilian society, in the world, is already a challenge, and in Brazilian society and in Alagoas' society, I mean, in the Northeast of Brazil, I am a country girl. I was born in the backlands of Alagoas, Pão de Açúcar, but my family is from Olho

D'água das flores, so I was born there in Pão de Açúcar, so there are many challenges and so, and the history of nursing brings in a biography of challenges and women's struggles within the capitalist society, that is, essentially manual care (Almeida, 25 Jan, 2017).

According to the thought of Gramsci (2011), the incorporation of civil society to the state sphere occurs by various ways and mechanisms, the primary form would be in the formation of public opinions for the strengthening of a counter hegemony, but this construction is slow and often are reported as negative, because the state is monopolistic. Here we can see in the statements cited above a class consciousness and the planning of a counter hegemony.

Still, in the light of Gramscian thought, it is from the criticism of the hegemonic conception that the subaltern classes can assume a leading function, since they would engender new conceptions of the world, a new culture that no longer contemplates the interests of the bourgeoisie (Gramsci, 1986). However the common interests of the workers should be to promote an intellectual and moral reform throughout the generations, also requiring the takeover of the apparatuses of state domination, especially the apparatuses of ideological direction in order to spread this new culture (Gramsci, 1978).

The deponent Elizete dos Santos claims that she would like to go to law school, but her socioeconomic roots were poor, her family was very large, and she had to work early to cooperate financially with the support of her family. At the same time she talks about a woman who took care of her and showed that with struggle one could change that reality.

Then my mother was very poor, I dreamed of going to law school, I dreamed all my life about this class, to fight for the rights of those who were forgotten, but I knew I would never do it, because I was the oldest of 11 siblings, my mother was a washerwoman and my father a simple surveyor for a newspaper, I could never be a lawyer at that time, even because going to law school for poor people is still a lot of difficulties... When I met Noraci Pedrosa I was adopted by her and she helped me to see that our situation in the 1980s was due to lack of struggle, that with this we would be able to improve our position (Santos 05 mar. 2017).

To clarify the concept of struggle mentioned directly by the interviewees Lenira and Elizete, and indirectly by Solange, it is understood that the struggle is a class struggle that takes place in the civil society, in the search for counter hegemony built by the proletarian class, in order to destroy or absorb the bourgeoisie, eliminating it as the dominant class (Gramsci, 2011).

Again, making reference to Solange Rodrigues' statement, it is evident her concern with the so-called excluded by civil society and with the high rate of violence against women. Similarly to Elizete, she mentions nurse Noraci Pedrosa as a landmark in her life.

...my sister-in-law, a doctor, and then she already worked, she assisted women... the prostitutes, and I already had a sensibility to see that those women, besides the violence they suffered, there was also, at that time, the lack of health assistance and the economic crisis in Brazil. So, I am talking about a time before the Unified Health System (SUS). At night I would go to deliver the medicine and talk; and I would question why I was so, so, beaten. Imagine? Her sister-in-law is now working with prostitutes, in a landfill, in Santana do Ipanema?! And then all the accessibility with social organizations started until one day I met Noraci Pedrosa (Rodrigues, February 19, 2017).

From the testimony of Solange Rodrigues, the documentary sources consulted and the studies of Menicucci (2014) and Botaro (2015), in the 1980s the Brazilian scenario was going through an economic

slowdown and the beginning of the decay of the dictatorial system, for offering subsidies for the birth of popular health movements (MPS) and social organizations of leftist character.

During the consolidation of the Sanitary Reform (SR), these movements were protagonized by different social actors (Church, Unions, associations, and Community Health Movements), contributing to the breaking of the meritocratic character of health care in Brazil and later, consequently, to the end of the dictatorial period (Menicucci, 2014; Botaro, 2015).

There was a hollowing out of the opposition claim through the execution and approval of the Amnesty Law by the Congress in August 1979 (Fausto, 2015). There were also reactions in the early 1980s for the opening of the military regime, when newsstands that sold leftist newspapers, the City Council of Rio de Janeiro, and the Brazilian Bar Association were bombed (Brasil, 2002).

In the strike of the ABC metalworkers, a conflict was observed that resulted in the confrontation between the State and the civil society. For Gramsci, the State represses because it is a *political society*, situated in the sphere above *civil society*, but an actor of civil society, being composed of various types of civil organizations, namely: trade unions, associations, church, school, media and parties (Simionatto, 2011). So much so that the Catholic Church supported the unionists again and these, after weakened, return in the dictatorial decline (Villa, 2014).

Furthermore, the intellectual and moral supremacy of the dominant class, subtended as the State, was observed within the time frame of 20 years of dictatorship, which analyzed under the Gramscian lens is contained in the concept of hegemony exercised in civil society (Coutinho, 2002).

The hegemony of the State in the military regime can be perceived in the moment that a group of military men exercised influence within politics, which for Gramsci (1986) refers that hegemony is the "condition or capacity of influence and of political and cultural direction that, through voluntary social organisms (private apparatuses of hegemony), a social group exercises over civil society, in which the State is the Political Society".

Another point worth mentioning in the Gramscian view is the cultural battle, which is considered a basic construction in the attempt of a counter-hegemony, manifested in the subordinate class, which enables the execution of mechanisms to favor a new worldview, within a hegemonic block. In this context, the interviewee Mário Jorge shows his concern with the leisure of nursing professionals, workers in a hospital in the interior of the state of Alagoas at the time.

At the time I was also part of the nursing assistants and technicians association that I innocently created in the Palmeira dos Índios Hospital. So I created this association with only a recreational, recreational spirit. So, the class from Alagoas, from Maceió, made contact with me, knowing about the existence of the association, right? (Santos Filho 19 mar. 2017).

For Solange Rodrigues and Mario Jorge the access to social organizations began from the concern with leisure and social welfare of workers of their class. For Gramsci (2011, p.22), "the educational ideology is considered a real situation in a certain type of society, the guiding principle, based on the ideals

of its conception. In contrast ideas are not born from other ideas, philosophies are not born from other philosophies, but these are renewed expressions of the actual historical development (Gramsci, 1986).

The beginning of Elizete's confrontation as a subordinate class, being a mid-level nursing professional, generates an awareness that one needed to go to fight for not accepting the prevailing imposition of common sense, inspired by her friend Noraci Pedrosa. Based on Gramsci's concepts (1978) it can be said that nursing represents a social force, built by struggles and clashes between the political power (dominant) and other social groups.

When applying such concepts to nursing, taking into account the professionals that made up the class, there was a drive for emancipation from the manipulation of the ruling class, organized by means of culture through their class associations and unions to promote a new social imaginary (Heidemann; Gomes; Sanchez, 2008).

From the testimonies of Elizete dos Santos and Solange Rodrigues, both were inspired by Noraci Pedrosa Moreira; an emblematic person in fighting the cause of nursing workers, therefore, an inspirational figure (Moura; Rocha; Santos, 2017).

To praise the female figure and her performance in popular social revolutions in general and especially in unions, is to contemplate the diversity in the formation of the working class, because the classical historiography is sexist and silences the female struggle (Goettert, 2015). According to Gramsci's concepts (2011), Noraci Pedrosa Moreira is considered an intellectual capable of organizing class entities to form alliances in order to promote the construction of new values and establish the professional identity.

Nora, as she was affectionately known, was described as a woman who fought for the rights of the forgotten, with a notorious life trajectory within the context of the history of nursing in Alagoas. The statement below externalizes someone who fought for all nursing professionals, organizing the proletariat class to seek better working conditions.

Noraci was the first upper level person to kick the upper level union in the state of Alagoas. But there was another union, the union already existed and Nora was like this, an active woman, a woman that faced everything and everyone, she didn't practice her profession, she lived for the professionals and she fought for all professionals of the medium level, of the higher level. It was during a lecture that she gave that we met, and from that lecture on she adopted me as her daughter, I was so respected that Noraci slept in my house, she ate in my house, I lived in Nora's house, and this was my admiration, all my life. I saw Noraci Pedrosa as a true union leader, with a higher level who respected all classes (Santos 05 Mar. 2017).

For Gramsci (1986) it is necessary to educate people to have a realistic stance and consequently participate in the political struggle against the powers that be, to then unveil the hidden side of political society, the common sense knowledge imposed by the ruling class. After the proper elucidations, it would cease to be a utopia, to be like an idealistic illusion.

Lenira Wanderley quoted a famous phrase from Noraci Pedrosa, which was heard several times in the Nursing course of the Federal University of Alagoas: "You will never divide nursing". Thus, her thinking in the group without wanting to segregate it, makes her a mass intellectual, moreover, her

uninterrupted will along with her training and struggle in popular movements ratifies her intention in wanting to make the proletarian class as protagonists in civil society (Gramsci, 2011).

It is worth mentioning that the nursing labor market in the 1980s was composed of a small number of nurses and nursing technicians, since most nurses and nursing assistants were employed (Macêdo, 2013). In this period, the Law of Professional Practice (Law 7498/86) was approved, which, in summary, determined the recognition of the categories of nurse, nursing technician, nursing assistant and midwife, respecting their degrees of qualification. As for the nursing attendants, it defined that after this law they would continue to exercise their activities, but to exercise the profession afterwards they would have to have specific training regulated by law (Brazil, 1986).

Considering that the name of Noraci Pedrosa Moreira was repeatedly present in the analyzed testimonials as an inspiring figure of the nursing workers of the 1980s for the union politicization, we sought to describe this organic and warrior intellectual of this movement. In Figure 01, there is an iconographic document with the junction of some images of Noraci Pedrosa Moreira, acting as a nurse, educator and union leader.

Noraci Pedrosa Moreira was a nurse, educator, and union member (1954-1986). She founded the Associação de Profissionais de Enfermeiros de Alagoas (APENAL), member of the Central Geral dos Trabalhadores (CGT) (as seen on her shirt in Figure 1) and of the Sociedade Alagoana de Defesa dos Direitos Humanos (Silva; Bomfim, 2007). Through the gramscist lens, it is ratified that Nora's contribution to the union movement was primordial for the construction of the union politicization of mid-level nursing professionals. This movement was possible due to the clarifications that Noraci Pedrosa Moreira facilitated in planning meetings (Gramsci, 2011).

History is built both on the passivity of the masses and on the collective will that leads a group to action. The latter is the result of a summation of individual desires and behaviors guided by a certain interest. The foundation that is built in such an attempt to dam the ideology of the dominant class must possess a set of perceptions, practices, and collective experiences whose interrelation weaves a new identity for the excluded (Simionatto, 2011).

It is observed the construction of this process in the actions of intellectual Nora by providing subsidies for the proletarian class to build a new history by encouraging collectivity (Moura; Rocha; Santos, 2017). It is verified that "women have always played an important role in workers' struggles throughout history, even if, in this same history (written by men, to a large extent), they hardly appear" (Goettert, 2014, p.114).

The next topic deals with the work of nursing professionals in the health services of the time, seeking to understand the placement of elementary, elementary, and middle level nursing from the perspective of those who experienced it.

II) The Work Of Nursing In The Civil Society Of Alagoas In The 1980s

To construct this topic, the daily battles for the development of professional practice were considered, ranging from work overload to devaluation as a professional, as reported by the study participants, ranging from high risks of work accidents, professional devaluation, work overload, and moral harassment.

According to Vilella et al. (2011) and Macêdo (2013), the health care labor market underwent transitions in this period, as the Brazilian economy was driven towards industrialization, resulting in the expansion of hospitals; however, the care provided in these institutions was based on the biomedical model. In this context, the State, as a fundamental part of capitalism, influenced the work of Brazilian nursing, as perceived in the profession's adjustments to the economic, political, social, and ideological structure of the country (Pires, 1989; Macêdo, 2013).

According to Moura et al. (2018), between the 70s, 80s and mid-1993 nursing care in the civil society of Alagoas was provided by professionals with large-scale training from basic to fundamental educational level, following the national trend of requiring lower-cost and rapidly trained labor corroborating the national conjuncture addressed in the studies of Vilella et al. (2011) and Pires (1989).

Between the 70s, 80s until the mid-1990s, nursing care in the civil society of Alagoas was provided by professionals with mostly basic to fundamental education level training (Moura et al., 2018), corroborating the national trend whose demand was for lower-cost and rapidly trained labor (Vilella et al., 2011; Pires, 1989). About this context the deponent José George puts it that:

Maceió was very well served by hospitals, for example, the large hospitals that were the Santa Casa, the Sugar Millers, which were the two heavy hospitals here, then came the Sanatorium that only went to the sanatorium patients with tuberculosis, that is why it has this name of sanatorium... We still had here the Nossa Senhora de Fátima Hospital, in the 80's I think we had the Doctor Neves Pinto Health Clinic, which was in the center of town, where the C&A store is... Paulo Neto already existed in that place, Santo Antônio came later, but there was Santa Lúcia (Santos, 28 Feb. 2017).

At the moment in which the conjuncture of a certain macro place influences a micro place, that is, the national conjuncture influences the local conjuncture, there is the exercise of hegemonic power of a dominant group over another class (Simionatto, 2011). In this scope, the perception of exploitation of the other emerged, who was at the mercy of his personal work needs, even if the employer's offer was greater than the number of active professionals, the dominant class, exercised here by entrepreneurs, unveiled the testimony of José George:

Maceió was very well served by hospitals, for example, the big ones were the Santa Casa, the Sugar Millers, which were the two heavy hospitals here, then came the Sanatorium, which only went to the sanatorium patients with tuberculosis, that is why it has this name of sanatorium. We also had the Nossa Senhora de Fátima Hospital, in the 80's, I think we had the Doutor Neves Pinto Health Clinic, which was in the center of town, where the C&A store is today. Paulo Neto already existed in that place, Santo Antônio came later, but there was Santa Lúcia (Santos 28 Feb. 2017).

At the moment the national conjuncture influences the local conjuncture, there is the exercise of hegemonic power of a dominant group over another class (Simionatto, 2011). In this context, there arose

the perception of exploitation by the dominant class, here exercised by the entrepreneurs, of those who were vulnerable due to their personal labor needs, even with a job offer greater than the number of active professionals. As seen in the words of Elizete dos Santos:

One day, when I was leaving the night shift, me and my shift companion, Jesus, arrived at the Usineiros gate at the exit, the doorman said that Sister Helena was calling us. An energetic sister like she was, think of our situation?! I looked at Jesus and Jesus looked at me. What did we do? I don't know. What did we fail to do? I don't know. Then we went back in that agony and when we got there Sister Helena said: haven't you forgotten anything? Then she went to all the wards with me and Jesus, we went to the surgical center to look at the patients in the corridor. No! We thought we had forgotten some trichotomy, something serious. Are you sure? And that marked my life, when she called us, the glass on her table was broken, it was broken, they hadn't had time to buy another one, I don't know, and it was the adhesive tape that we didn't change (Santos 05 Mar. 2017).

According to Santos, Rodrigues, and Esteves (2017) in a study conducted about the nursing work in the 1970s and 1980s, whose institutional and geographic scope was the Santa Casa de Misericórdia de Presidente Prudente. They described that the nursing service was responsible for any activity related to care, either directly with the patient or indirectly, such as the production or cleaning of care-related materials.

Civil society is influenced by the dominant class, so that the latter, by constituting itself as a form of domination and organization of classes, balances between the task of educating (through common sense) and the search to suppress all inappropriate behavior that does not suit it (Gramsci, 1978). Therefore all coercion suffered by the deponent Elizete and the lack of knowledge about the biosafety measures cited by José George, remained being repeated, because their idea was totally different from the conformism of the time.

Again in Elizete's excerpts she portrayed her first job at the Hospital Universitário Professor Alberto Antunes, cites how her job as a nursing professional (AE at the time) was, some of her attributions, and how the hiring process was in other hospitals:

...I was one of the first employees at the University Hospital, which only had walls and where we used to make cotton balls, cut gauze, that was all we did, but then I met a doctor named Dr. Osvaldo Brandão Vilela (now deceased) and this man was like that and he fell in love with my work. Osvaldo Brandão Vilela (deceased today) and this man was like this, he fell in love with my work, he fell in love with the person and I went to work at the Sugar Mill, at the time of the sisters and from there I developed my life because I also had many sisters, Sister Helena at the time was a sister on the second floor of the Sugar Mill Hospital, she was too strict, now it was not humiliating she was strict, she was strict because until today she marked me in my life, a mark that she made that until today I am marked and after that day I became more rigid with myself, I can say what it was. (Santos 05 Mar. 2017).

Bringing up once again the study of Santos, Rodrigues, and Esteves (2017), ratified that the professional hires of nursing workers were by indications of the dominant class, the service chiefs. Within Gramscian concepts, the capitalist system of domination in the broadcasting, publishing, and communication medium appoints employees in favor of one or another technology of industry and services (Coutinho, 2002).

Still under the lens of Gramsci (2011), he highlights that such a hiring situation expressed by the deponent Elizete and for Santos, Rodrigues and Esteves (2017), says that a class when it is at a certain level of subordination adopts the world principles of the dominant class.

The testimonies of Maria Benedita, Pedro Anselmo, and Elizete dos Santos show an overworked nursing staff, with no unhealthy conditions, no decent rest, and totally at the mercy of that reality and without the action of a union entity:

...I gave a shift and our shifts were not shifts for us to rest, no, you didn't rest, you had your little break but while you were resting you were doing everything. You made cotton balls, you folded gauze, you made gauze, you made little packages of gauze, you washed all the syringe material, which was all glass syringes. All the dressing material was you, so the night was short, and you looked after the patients, medicate, when you left in the morning leave all the beds lined, all the bedridden patients bathed, all the bedpans washed and the kites and all the patients who were going to operate from 07 hours in the surgical center (Santos, 18 Feb. 2017).

...There were three wards for each patient, let me see if I can remember... two, four, six... There were 12 patients in each ward, then one went to rest, to rest, but if they rested there in the sector, we would start, when we arrived, nowadays we fight for a room, for a bed, we would go looking for a serum box, the serum cardboard boxes, our fight was for the serum cardboard box that was to extend, that was to put on the floor to rest on the floor in the sector, we did not have to leave the sector and we lived and survived, without anyone for us (Anselmo, Jan. 29, 2017). 2017).

Nursing was treated, you know? as a slave service, it didn't have a defined work day, it didn't have a salary floor, no guaranteed rights, and another thing, there were several salaries. The union at the time was not active. Each hospital paid what it wanted; there was no health risk; and there were few that paid health risk; there were few that recognized people's rights in the collective agreement. The SESI Hospital, because we had two situations: we had to dispose because it was only one union, we had public hospitals and we had the private network. Santa Casa, Hospital do Açúcar, Hospital do SESI, Sanatorio, is the.... that is the... how is the name? near CESMAC, I remembered Clinica Santa Juliana (Santos 05 mar. 2017).

Under the aegis of Gramsci (1986) such reality could be changed if the proletariat class organized and articulated the struggle, in order to emancipate itself and claim its rights through a representative entity directed by the subaltern class itself. The union is an association of workers representing the interests of the collectivity, through the five basic functions negotiation, assistance, collection, collaboration and representation, seeking to improve the working conditions of a specific group of people, through struggles on behalf of the proletariat class (Goettert, 2015).

For Santos et al. (2006) "The union movement has the responsibility of confronting the employers in the search for better living and working conditions, and for this it mobilizes the workers and the conquests extend to everyone, regardless of affiliation". This confrontation seeks the transformation of social reality, which occurs when social actors criticize and debate their conceptions of the world in order to engender a new culture with a view to collective action updated to the historical moment that is contemporary to it (Gramsci, 1986).

José George and Pedro Anselmo mentioned that they worked at the Santa Casa de Misericórdia de Maceió and that there was only one nurse, who was a nun. According to Moreira and Ramos (2004) related to the historical process of the work of nursing in Cuiabá-MT, they point out that religious women remained front in hospital institutions for a long time (1920-1990), similarly Santos, Rodrigues and Esteves (2017),

already cited above, confirm the extent to which these exercised multiple functions with autonomy and credibility with doctors and in civil society.

Peter and Joseph George also mentioned how the intake of patients for their care was at the time, and that he even worked with necropsy:

I started as an attendant, right, and I've done everything, I've participated in everything, and since the patients at the Santa Casa, that we and the sisters, we worked with a lot of love. No, there was no division of patients, everything was from the ATE to the entire floor. Because the sisters were together with us, we assisted, took these patients, it is what is called indigent on the street, picked up and took them to the santa casa for us to take care for example: make dressings, bath, lunch and so on, and then went back to the street because there was no shelter for these people (Anselmo 29 Jan. 2017).

The most complicated ones I, we worked, I was in the first pavilion, with Doctor Rodrigo Ramalho, who was a professor of urology at UFAL, very good he taught us a lot, and also you get the whole hospital, everything you learned, everything you participated, and even I helped Doctor Antenor a lot to do necropsy (Santos 28 Feb. 2017).

With regard to patient admission, nursing in the study of Moreira and Ramos (2004) was also performed in a Santa Casa de Misericórdia, however, in another geographical cutout, it ratifies this form of addition of patients and the nursing service directly linked to the character of charity and religion, as the deponent Pedro Anselmo had mentioned. As for the way nursing attendants were professionalized, Santos, Rodrigues, and Esteves (2017) point out in their results that it was the same way as said by the deponent José George.

The training process of ATEs according to Decree No. 8.778, dated January 22, 1946, was fast, requiring only training and an evaluation, facilitating the training of these professionals (Brazil, 1946). Mario Jorge mentions in his testimony that when he started his life as a nursing professional, he followed the educational path of that time:

At the time, I was already old enough, in need of a job, so I talked to the director of the Palmeiras dos Índios hospital where he offered me the opportunity of an internship and then... Six months later I had my license signed, working as an ATE. The ATE entered the labor market as I did, right so if the hospital management had sympathy with the applicant then they would put you to do an internship and this internship you ended up joining (Santos Filho March 19, 2017).

One can observe in the excerpts of Pedro, José George and Mario Jorge a type of adaptation to the situation, which for Gramsci (1986) when one agrees with something of this kind, one develops a conception of the world in an uncritical, incoherent, occasional and disintegrated way, thus belonging to a crowd as mass-men.

One can also mention that at that time the way the ATE had been instructed (doctors and nuns), or more precisely, its formative process. Still in the light of Gramsci, such professional training could be a façade, a subsidy from the dominant class to keep them away from the necessary educational system of training protagonists, to try to make a counter hegemony (Simionatto, 2011).

The long-dreamed-of liberation from this situation requires a strictly organized critique of the hegemonic world conception; if this is done, there will be a break from the condition of mass-men to the

condition of collective men, from modest to intellectuals, if we give up the imposed common sense to reach a critical sense in the light of our historicity and understand the current context (Gramsci, 1986).

Rescuing Mario Jorge's testimonials, one thing was observed: health was commanded by doctors, because they were the owners of the health establishments at the time, and nursing had started, according to him, to reach new directions that would value the profession:

Look, nursing was seen at that time, so I talk to... With... The restricted knowledge of Palmeira dos Índios of submission, of non-existence, right. That's where it was... It was... It was commanded by the medical category, so I only started to see nursing is... Trying to occupy its spaces, right... after 90 (Santos Filho, March 19, 2017).

Complementing the statements above, Maria Benedita mentioned that she worked at the Hospital dos Usineiros and in the former Emergency Room, portraying that the work was very tiring, that most of the times she couldn't even rest at night, unable to do her physiological needs and the high risk of work accidents were constant:

I stayed there at the Sugar Mill and in the Emergency Room, when it was that time that we were more or less organized, it was like this... We had the right schedules, we had the right hours to work, it was very hard, we worked, we worked one morning, one afternoon and one night, and we only had one rest and one day off. It was very hard, very tiring, at that time the Emergency Room was very very very very crowded, we couldn't even rest, there were times that we spent the night, doubled the night without even having time to do the necessities (Santos, 18 Feb. 2017).

It was observed in the statements the national validity of the law of nursing practice, Decree Law No. 8.778, which accepted the nursing practice by ATEs in the care function, but in 1986, Law No. 7.498 of June 25 was passed, which required standard educational training for all nursing professionals and distributed their attributions according to their training process.

We can see in the statements of this topic, some problems for the workers working in the clippings elected in this study, such as: excessive workload, high risks for work accidents, devaluation and moral harassment, omissions in the civil society, as seen in the statement of Maria Benedita.

According to these testimonies, it is emphasized the molding of that situation in finding normal that reality, which for the deponent Mario Jorge subtly began to visualize that at times nursing was submissive to the medical class. For Gramsci (1986), this vision of Mario Jorge states that it is from the criticism to the hegemonic conception that the subordinate classes can assume a leading function, because they would engender new conceptions of the world, a new culture, which no longer contemplates the interests of the bourgeoisie.

3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study analyzed the circumstances of the work of ATE, AE and TE in the civil society of Alagoas in the 1980s. From the historical sources of the study, the hegemony of the State during the military regime and its influences on the work in nursing in the civil society of Alagoas were verified.

Such hegemony is marked by the coercion of a dictatorial State and, in paradox, by the attempt of resistance on the part of social actors in favor of the Brazilian re-democratization process and better working conditions and salaries. The civil society of Alagoas reflected the national situation, being affected by the Brazilian crisis stemming from the dictatorial process.

Besides the nursing workers facing the hegemony of the State in the dictatorial period, as if this was not enough, this category lived with the hospitalocentricity in the civil society of Alagoas, because the advance of the hospital institutions in the time period, in paradox with the automobile industrialization in the national scenario, required a quick-trained labor force that most of the time had as trainers the owners of the health establishments themselves, the dominant class.

The precariousness of the nursing workers' work was massive on the part of those who composed the employer class and some of those who led the nursing team, some religious, because besides facing work overload and the poor dimensioning of the team in the hospital services, these professionals were exposed to moral harassment, as it was shown that they were called to repair the religious woman's desk, a form of hegemony used as the balance between domination and coercion.

This study presents as a limitation the difficulty in finding participants who have witnessed the historical phenomenon listed, because some were already deceased and others had some dementia. The need for further studies that can subsidize the unveiling of this phenomenon is pointed out, especially regarding the union politicization of these workers, since the 1980s were marked by great movements of struggle and resistance.

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