


Mental health and human rights: An analysis of rights violations and resistance processes

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ABSTRACT

This proposal raises some questions about human rights violations by state actors. To this end, we seek fragments in the history of institutionalized violence in Brazil, to demonstrate how the state, through the public security apparatus, even after the period of re-democratization of the country, continues in the name of fighting crime by invading homes, using repressive methods that depend on the violation of the most elementary human rights. This under the applause of a middle class that is increasingly thirsty for security.

Keywords: Human rights, Violations, Security.

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INTRODUCTION

This proposal raises some questions about human rights violations by state actors. To this end, we seek fragments in the history of institutionalized violence in Brazil, to demonstrate how the state, through the public security apparatus, even after the period of re-democratization of the country, continues in the name of fighting crime by invading homes, using repressive methods that depend on the violation of the most elementary human rights. This under the applause of a middle class that is increasingly thirsty for security.

Within this context, the work of the Clinico-Group team of the Torture Never Again/RJ Group and the Extension Project of the Federal University of Espírito Santo "FORDAN: confronting violence", which has a social headquarters in the São Pedro neighborhood, Vitória/ES, problematizes the inseparability of the practice of the mental health professional and politics. It is up to the professional to decide what type of policy he wants to strengthen with his practice.

Thus, like these authors, we seek to build a process of action in mental health, education and other professions that are committed to Human Rights. This concept is not used here in the sense of a compendium of universal values of humanity, as has been naturalized in neoliberal countries, but as a struggle that makes us engage for the creation and preservation of the different manifestations of human life.

HISTORY OF INSTITUTIONAL VIOLENCE IN BRAZIL

Several Human Rights Groups offer free assistance to the population affected by torture, ill-treatment and other forms of violence practiced by public agents, civil and military police. When dealing with these types of services offered by professionals in the fields of psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis, the following question arises: What historical contexts do these human rights groups emerge? What are your productions, struggles and connections with other social movements? Why have they taken it upon themselves to offer this service? To discuss these issues, a little of the history of institutionalized violence in Brazil is highlighted.

In the Brazilian colonial period, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, episodes of torture and ill-treatment against indigenous people, enslaved people and dangers of all kinds, such as those persecuted by the Inquisition and those who committed crimes of *lèse-majesté*, were recorded. With the emergence of industrial capitalism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, according to Foucault (1988), tortures leave the field of almost everyday perception and enter the field of "abstract consciousness". It is the age of punitive sobriety, when it is no longer to the body that punishment is directed, but to the soul.

Thus, the fundamental principle of modern times is that punishment hurts the soul more than the body. That is, no longer the acts practiced, but those that can be carried out, depending on the soul of the subject: whether they are former slaves, blacks, mulattoes, immigrants, poor.



The era of dangerousness is inaugurated, where a certain segment by its soul, its essence, its nature, must be constantly watched, disciplined and standardized. We enter, according to Foucault, into disciplinary societies where institutions produce docile bodies, training not only the physical, but fundamentally the spirits. (COIMBRA, 2002, p.8)

Coimbra (2002) points out that in addition to the device of dangerousness, another device continues to be used with impunity throughout the republican period: that of torture. No longer for the enslaved, but for the "criminals", "marginals", for the poor in general. According to the author, one of the evidences of this statement lies in the fact that only the last Republican Constitution, that of 1988, therefore at the end of the twentieth century, provides for the criminalization of this practice. It was in the period at the advent of AI-5 (12/13/68) that this practice became official policy in the state.

During this period, also called the "years of lead", the Department of Political and Social Order (DOPS) functioned throughout the country. The Civil and Military Police and the Armed Forces invaded homes, tortured and killed political soldiers, as well as others who violated the current social "order". It should be noted, however, that with the "political opening" (1985) and the transition to democracy, government support for the use of police violence did not disappear as expected.

As Oliveira, Santos and Silva (2001) observe, in the name of fighting crime, agents of the Public Security System, Civil and Military Police, continue to invade homes, using repressive methods that depend on the violation of the most elementary Human Rights. These methods range from a simple abuse of authority, such as: humiliation, threats, illegal imprisonment, beatings, torture and kidnapping, to summary executions that target the inhabitants of popular neighborhoods, homeless people and poor bandits. In short, the thousands of miserable people who roam our countryside and cities (COIMBRA, 2002, p.840).

In addition, there are a number of allegations of involvement of these public agents in the murders carried out by the Death Squads (still in vogue today), against the impoverished strata of the Death Squads. In fact, according to Bicudo (1997), this criminal institution emerged in the very functional framework of the Civil and Military Police of São Paulo, at the end of the 60s, and began to spread to several cities in Brazil, even in Espírito Santo, in some cases, supported by sectors of the urban middle class, which are busy with the "cleansing" of the cities.

In his work, Wacquant (2001) has questioned these practices to combat poverty and crime that most countries have been adopting in recent years, inspired by the "zero tolerance" policy implemented in the United States. This policy affirms an increasingly repressive and violent police force to contain high rates of violence, widely publicized by the media, its actions are aimed mainly at the most miserable population, which ends up reinforcing the marginalization of such segments, ignoring any analysis that relates the increase in crime to the increase in social inequality.



Here, the following question arises : were these five hundred years of torture and other forms of institutionalized violence passively watched by Brazilian society? In a Foucauldian perspective, where there is power, is there resistance? Historical records have focused on various revolts, rebellions, insurrections produced by various groups in this period. However, the movements for the defense of human rights, organizations of contestation and political resistance, only appear, according to Coimbra, in the military period, in full derogation of civil and individual rights. Among these movements, the author mentions: Brazilian committees for Amnesty, Women's Movement for Amnesty, Justice and Peace Commission and others. In Rio de Janeiro, in 1985, former political prisoners and relatives of those who disappeared during the military period founded the Torture Never Again Group (GTNM/RJ), with the objective of denouncing to society what the "horrors of torture and any other form of violence" were and continue to be. 1993).

Through its Clinical-Group Team, it has offered, since its foundation, medical and psychological support services aimed at tortured militants and relatives of the dead who disappeared during the military period. Two issues are presented to justify the creation of this clinical support: the unfavorable situation of the public health network and the performance of the majority of the clinic's professionals, dissociated from the political, social and ethical components. Currently, services have been extended to people affected by police violence.

According to Rauter (2002, p.69), experiences such as the Clinical-Group Team of the Torture Never Again/RJ Group and others throughout Brazil, where several health professionals are confronted with urban violence in all its nuances - the police and their incursions into poor neighborhoods, drug trafficking, stray bullets - have caused "a destabilization" of traditional clinics and their parameters. probably leading these professionals to invent new forms of intervention in the clinical field. What Rauter designates as "traditional clinic" are individual and/or group psychological, psychiatric or psychoanalytic care, which are guided by privatizing, intimate and orthopedic models, inspired by the private clinical medical model.

There are, however, other ways of thinking about health care through experimentation, the expansion of frontiers, the invention of other senses of being and being in the world, thus questioning the models of life always present in capitalistic societies, that is, a clinic that is not ready, finished, that can be taught as a model, but that is constituted at every moment in political crossings, institutional, cultural, historical, desiring and social (BARROS AND DOMINGUES, 2004).

In 2002, the State of Espírito Santo was pointed out by the media as a territory "dominated" by criminal organizations, infiltrated in its various institutions, deserving from the Federal Government the creation of a special mission to combat organized crime. In an interview, the then Deputy Attorney General of the Republic, José Roberto Santoro, stressed that 90% of the people investigated so far were members, sympathizers or had some connection with Scuderia Le Cocq, a



Criminal Organization that has the proven participation of several agents of the civil and military police, seeking to reverse this situation, in the elections of the following year won politicians marked by speeches of fighting corruption and in fact, Several officials have been blamed and in some cases arrested.

In these processes of restoration of Espirito Santo society, the activities carried out by the Human Rights Support Center, a non-profit entity that currently coordinates several programs, among them: the Violence Database, the Support and Protection Program for Victims and Families of Violence, the Disque-Tortura and the Center for Assistance to Victims of Violence. The objective of the work, according to its coordinators, is to offer conditions for users to recognize themselves as social subjects and become active in the fight against violence, denouncing the aggression suffered and demanding from the justice and security system the punishment of the aggressor.

Perhaps, for some professionals, there was never any doubt about the need to articulate the practices of the various professionals who work in the field of human rights violations with their articulation with the various social movements that fight to guarantee access to impoverished populations, to housing, to quality public health, to work, etc. The thought, for example, that professionals who work with psychological, psychiatric or psychoanalyst care, who work in state facilities, forming groups, can get involved in politics, and these same professionals when they work in hospitals and private clinics, in individual care, should abstain from participating politically.

What is intended to be stated in this text is something much broader: All health professionals, whether psychologists, psychiatrists, doctors, nurses, are irremediably committed to some type of policy, regardless of the places they work, whether in hospitals, health centers, community centers or public squares. To deepen this issue, three fundamental concepts are needed: Clinical, Subjectivity and Politics.

CLINIC, SUBJECTIVITY AND POLITICS

Traditionally, the Clinic has been produced and naturalized as the domain of the private, of our intimate secrets, of the inner experiences of a subject, who is different and separate from politics, understood as the domain of the public, where we find the game of power. To problematize these oppositions between the clinic and politics, between subject and world, we use the concept of tool: subjectivity forged mainly by Gilles Deleuze, Félix: Guattari and Michel Foucault.

The novelty brought by this concept is the possibility of contrasting it with the notion of subject, understood as human nature. The idea of subjectivity is thought of as industrial, machinic in nature. Subjectivity, based on this reasoning, is not something internal, personal, profound, a private interiority of an "I", but refers to modes of existence, to provisional existential territories produced by various social equipments.



For Guattari, capitalist society has invested and continues to invest massively in the production of subjectivity. The capitalist mode of production functions not only in a market economy, but also in a subjective economy. Capitalism manufactures not only consumer goods, but also subjectivity.

Capitalist society, by appropriating the production of subjectivity, seeks to establish processes of modeling/serialization, subjecting individuals and groups to a relationship of alienation and oppression, to a model. However, this does not mean that the processes of singularization do not happen, on the contrary, the possibilities of deviation and reappropriation are always posed. There are always movements that seek to break with the process of serialization of subjectivity.

From the conception of subjectivity as the result of a process of production of oneself and the world always of the collective order, we seek to undo the supposed separations between the individual and the collective, between the public and the private, between the clinical and the political.

In the same vein, Passos and Barros (2002) discuss pseudo-neutrality in the field of mental health. Many go so far as to state that clinical work cannot be associated with any political ideology, which the approach presented in this text disagrees with. When dealing with modes of production of subjectivity, which always correspond inextricably to modes of experimentation and construction of reality, all mental health professionals, in one way or another, are politically compromised.

Having deconstructed the notion of neutrality of the health professional, it is now worth asking: what types of policies do they want to strengthen with their knowledge and actions? In fact, this question was already discussed by Paulo Freire since the 1960s, as the author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* asked: "What am I strengthening with my practice? What am I producing? New spaces, new encounters and/or sameness, what is already there, what is hegemonic?" (FREIRE, 1981).

CONCLUSION

It is concluded from the work developed by the Torture Never Again Group/RJ, Extension Project of the Federal University of Espírito Santo (FORDAN: confronting violence) and the various authors presented in this article, that there is no other possibility of contextualized action of mental health professionals, other than that articulated with the various movements for the defense of human rights. This concept is not used here in the sense in which it was naturalized by neoliberal countries, as a compendium of universal values of humanity, but rather as a struggle to guarantee and affirm the different modes of sensibilities, the different ways of living and existing, of thinking, understanding, that is, the affirmation of the different manifestations of human life.



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