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Invited Editorial



The democratization of research and knowledge: the *Recherche avec* network

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ABSTRACT

From 17th to 20th April, 2016, the second symposium of the *Recherche avec* network was held at Fluminense Federal University. On April 21st, at the School of Nursing, the network's scientific committee met to review the event. The invitation to write this editorial is an opportunity on our part to return to this intellectual and human encounter on the theme of otherness. This theme was present in all the people and in all the images, the songs, the sensations and the new ideas that came from a multitude of meetings dealing with different areas of research and practice in health, education, social intervention and also with the people to whom we proposed creative experimentation in the street. On the other hand, in terms of the symposium, which was an occasion to create links, collaboration and solidarity, this editorial is a good opportunity to present our *Recherche avec* network, its foundations, its activities and its purposes.

Descriptors: Nursing; Mental health; Collective Health.

The second symposium of the *Recherche avec* network, held in 2016, at the *Universidade Federal Fluminense* (UFF - Fluminense Federal University), had alterity as its theme. We experimented with this through our meetings which involved a great diversity of people both from the university and from a range of surrounding countries. Despite being shaken by national political events, Brazil welcomed us and offered us the wealth of a pluralistic and contrasting country. We did not think of otherness. Rather we shared experiences with the Brazilian people at a difficult time.

Before discussing the work of the symposium and presenting our research network, we wish to thank Ana Lucia Abrahão, Director of the School of Nursing, whose investment in the preparation and realization of our scientific expression was decisive. She knew how to manage the burdens of material organization and yet she offered us her intellectual contribution to common reflection. Despite the difficulties, Ana Lúcia and her team allowed all the participants to carry out the planned activities.

The political context, on that is particularly problematic for Brazil, worried those of our Brazilian colleagues who work in the health, education and social sectors. We were able to reflect with them on the consequences this could have on the progress made in recent years in their different sectors of work and research. The opening lecture by Professor Emerson Merhy, as well as encouraging a discussion of otherness in research, allowed the foreign participants who were visiting Brazil to better understand the nuances of the current period.

The close monitoring of this current situation has exposed the complexity and the deep tensions within Brazilian society and allowed us to meet local actors from outside

the university (schools, health centers, social centers, mental health organizations, child protection association). One of the days of the symposium was earmarked for leaving the academic framework and going to meet Brazilians, where they are, where they work and live today.

Some of us chose to experience otherness by spontaneously proposing creative exchanges; for example, some have proposed a photo-language experiment in the streets of Niterói, and others have collected data on the UFF campus with students, university employees and teachers for an experiment on writing in a multilingual context. Likewise, on campus, another group performed a theatrical experience involving a mixture of Portuguese and French. Another workshop, aimed at pedagogical research, went to the university nursery school and to a nearby school.

Other groups went to other more distant parts of the region. Thus, work in the community of Macaquinho was conducted through an audiovisual techniques workshop with colleagues and students of the UFF. An experiment in the mental health sector took place at the Hotel and Spa of Madness, Museum of the Unconscious, at Pedro II Hospital with a team that establishes a unique relationship with patients, in particular by theatrical practice. This was a result of the work of the psychiatrist, Nise da Silveira (1911-2011), who played a decisive role in the process of the Psychiatric Reform legislation in Brazil, from the end of the 1970s.

Another group approached the *Fundação Evangélica de Assistência Social* (FENASE – Evangelical Foundation for Social Assistance), a religious-guided institution that works in the field of child protection. Participants were able to discover their own history and work, and participate in activities with children and

professionals. Finally, an experimentation workshop on the relationship between popular education and collective health took place at the Albert Sabin Family Clinic in Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro, in the morning and, due to the political climate, the team of professionals working in the community of Santa Luzia of the city of São Gonçalo, came to the University for a workshop on popular health knowledge.

All of these experimentation workshops were completed by exchange workshops on research practices within the UFF. Here we were able to experience otherness through reflections held in common in groups made up of researchers from different countries, and different disciplines. All these meetings were rich in terms of encounters and surprises. A few months after the symposium, participants from all the countries involved still tell us how grateful they are to the Brazilians for the great quality of their reception and the openness with which they witnessed the beginning of an unsettling period.

Our collaboration with UFF is not new. There were long established relationships between the researchers of our network and the researchers of the Department of Psychology (particularly of the Fractal Magazine), of the Faculty of Education, the School of Nursing and the Institute of Collective Health of UFF. Collective health is, in fact, an area that allows for easy links between all disciplines, as shown, for example, in the publication of *Institutional Analysis and Collective Health in Brazil* in 2013.

An international and multidisciplinary scientific network

The French-speaking international network *Recherche avec* was created on the occasion of our first international symposium,

organized in April 2014 at the University of Ottawa (Canada). Since then, it has seen the gathering of hundreds of researchers, students and professionals. Intconnections between disciplines (educational sciences, sociology, anthropology, psychology, nursing and medicine) and countries (Brazil, Canada, Chile, France, Mexico and Portugal) allow the reinterpretation of the scientific, ideological and technical traditions of some individuals from the place given to the subjects.

Members of the *Recherche avec* network recognize the importance of social actors and the relationship between researcher, practitioners, and social actors in the research process and in interventions. We have constructed opportunities for exchange in our research actions, based on the diversity of our subjective experiences of realities inserted in our social, economic, cultural, and political contexts. Depending on the composition of the network, each question addressed should be quickly contextualized in order to become an object of exchange. In fact, the sociocultural and institutional environments of care, education, or social intervention practices are very different from one country to another, and also from one institution to another (hospital, school, social assistance organizations and others). Moreover, the activities of the network also allow us to note that, in addition to these large differences, transnational logic in economics and politics are found in discourses that guide national and local organizations and practices.

Ethical, epistemological and methodological assumptions

The reflections developed by the network are ethical, epistemological and methodological in nature. The premises of social

transformation and knowledge production are brought together⁽¹⁾, which presupposes the establishment of singular relationships between the researchers and their field partners⁽²⁾.

The network supports the development of research that brings together the people involved. In addition to international and interdisciplinary meetings, it progressively develops a device that combines scientific production and pedagogical tools, face-to-face and distance meetings, and research collaborations, thanks to the support of a digital platform.

This device is not intended to produce a new theoretical or methodological framework that would define a new or better way of research, but to develop an analytical framework that is applicable to action research, intervention research, collaborative research, participatory research, socio-clinical research, ethnographic research and other methods associating the human subjects involved in achieving the objectives of such research⁽³⁾. By promoting research development and contributing to the dissemination and appreciation of scientific knowledge and methods, we conceive the network as a device whose first aim is to encourage its members to reflect on the ways in which they elaborate and conduct their research with the people involved in it.

This happens through scientific meetings, such as that of Niterói, which breaks with the ordinary model in that it is not a priority to present formalized results. Rather, the aim is to submit the choices, doubts and limits that make up the researchers' work to collective analysis. It is the quality of our scientific work that we seek to improve, both with regard to ethical-political plans and to the plans for

refining the results obtained.

Scientific productions and research projects

Finally, the network allows collaboration in terms of projects and research publications in an international and interdisciplinary dimension. Some of these studies deal very directly with the health domain. Thus, four members from three different countries (Canada-Brazil-France), Marguerite Soulière, anthropologist in social work, Cinira Fortuna, Brazilian researcher in nursing, Gilles Monceau and Séverine Colinet, two French researchers in education, are carrying out, in simultaneous collaboration in the three countries, a research project on the relationships between birth and parenting. International publications and other projects are under construction, and the *Recherche avec* platform⁽⁴⁾ ensures diffusion.

To conclude, we wish for the beautiful continuing development of the Online Brazilian Journal of Nursing, and we hope that it can participate in the diffusion of the works of the members of our network and thus become one of our partners.

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