SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF COLLEGE HAZING: A NECESSARY ETHICAL REFLECTION

Neusa Maria Kuester Vegini[1]
Flávia Regina Souza Ramos[2]
Mirelle Finkler[1]

[1]Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Saúde Coletiva. Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, Brasil.
[2]Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Enfermagem. Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, Brasil.

ABSTRACT

Objective: to understand the social representations of college hazing in the health field.

Method: the Social Representations theory of Serge Moscovici was the theoretical-methodological framework used in this qualitative study. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with health workers, freshmen, senior students, and professors of a university located in southern Brazil, in August 2015. The interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed.

Results: four thematic categories emerged: Social representations of hazing, Experiences, Ethical problems, and Influence on professional training. The results of the first two categories are presented. Hazing is represented from two different perspectives: a cooperative one – jokes and happiness, fraternization and friendship, integration and participation, greeting and reception; and a coercive perspective – violence, aggression, submission, initiation and rite of passage.

Conclusion: ambiguity between the social representations of hazing reveals different potencies in the students' moral development: on one hand, there is the exchange of values with positive contributions and, on the other hand, there is the experience of devaluations that undermine the process. An ethical analysis of college hazing performed by the academic community and the involvement and commitment of professors are essential for changes in paradigms concerning professional training to take place.

DESCRIPTORS: Professional training. Health. Ethics. Social Representation. Hazing.

REPRESENTAÇÕES SOCIAIS DO TROTE UNIVERSITÁRIO: UMA REFLEXÃO ÉTICA NECESSÁRIA

RESUMO

Objetivo: compreender as representações sociais dos trotes na área da saúde.
Método: optou-se pela teoria das Representações Sociais de Serge Moscovici como um referencial teórico-metodológico para uma pesquisa qualitativa. A coleta de dados foi feita através de entrevistas semiestruturadas com profissionais de saúde, calouros, veteranos, professores de uma universidade no Sul do Brasil, em agosto de 2015. As entrevistas foram gravadas e transcritas.
Resultados: da analise emergiram, quatro categorias temáticas: Representações sociais dos trotes, Vivências, Problemas éticos e Influências na formação profissional. Neste artigo apresentam-se, de forma articulada, os resultados das duas primeiras categorias. Os trotes são representados sob duas perspectivas distintas: uma cooperativa – como brincadeiras e felicidade, confraternização e amizade, integração e participação, acolhimento e recepção – e outra coercitiva – como violência, agressão, submissão, iniciação e rito de passagem.
Conclusão: a ambiguidade das representações sociais do trote retrata suas diferentes potências no desenvolvimento moral dos estudantes: de compartilhamento de valores que realizam contribuições positivas por um lado, e de outro, de vivências de desvalores que prejudicam tal processo. A análise ética das práticas relacionadas ao trote pela comunidade acadêmica e o envolvimento e comprometimento docente são fundamentais para que possam ocorrer mudanças nos paradigmas da formação profissional.

DESCRITORES: Formação profissional. Saúde. Ética. Representações sociais. Trote.

REPRESENTACIONES SOCIALES DE LA NOVATADA UNIVERSITARIA: UNA REFLEXIÓN ÉTICA NECESARIA

RESUMEN

Objetivo: comprender las representaciones sociales de la novatada universitaria en el área de la salud.
Método: se optó por la teoría de las Representaciones Sociales de Serge Moscovici como un referencial teórico-metodológico para una investigación cualitativa. La recolección de datos fue realizada a través de entrevistas semiestructuradas con profesionales de la salud, calouros, veteranos, profesores de una universidad en el sur de Brazil, en agosto de 2015. Las entrevistas fueron grabadas y transcritas.
Resultados: del análisis emergieron, cuatro categorías temáticas: Representaciones sociales de las novatadas, Vivencias, Problemas éticos e Influencias en la formación profesional. En este artículo se presentan, de forma articulada, los resultados de las dos primeras categorías. Las novatadas se representan desde dos perspectivas distintas: una cooperativa - como juegos y felicidad, confraternización y amistad, integración y participación, acogida y recepción - y otra coercitiva - como violencia, agresión, sumisión, iniciación y rito de paso.
Conclusión: la ambigüedad de las representaciones sociales de las novatadas retrata diferentes potencias en el desarrollo moral de los estudiantes: por una parte, el intercambio de valores con contribuciones positivas y, por otra parte, la experiencia de las devaluaciones que socavan la proceso. El análisis ético de las prácticas relacionadas al novatadas por la comunidad académica y la participación y el compromiso docente son fundamentales para que puedan ocurrir cambios en los paradigmas de la formación profesional.

DESCRIPTORES: Formación profesional. Salud. Ética. Representaciones sociales. Novatadas.

INTRODUCTION

The right to health is achieved through public, social and economic policies and the role of health workers is to ensure such rights in their practice. Excellence in health care implies rethinking the ethical dimension of professional training, which represents a challenge in academic institutions.[1] A new profile should mainly be based on the development of political, social, and essentially, ethical competence.[2]

Ethical training, which includes at its core the process of moral development, takes place in the sphere of professional socialization, from the first contact of undergraduate students through the most varied academic experiences. Through such experiences, students exercise values and disvalues and learn behavioral rules. Thus, these experiences constitute an occult curriculum that takes place in parallel with formal curriculum, serving as a reference for new students and enabling the construction of knowledge and skills, but above all, that of attitudes.[3]

One of these academic experiences is taken as the object of this study: a phenomenon that is part of the academic life in many countries, known as *trote universitário* in Brazil, *praxe* in Portugal, *bizutage* in France, *novatada* in Spain, and hazing[*] in the United States.[4] This refers to an initiation ceremony used by a given social group, characterized by a "power-submission" dynamics between seniors members and potential members of the new group.[5]

The term "hazing" is widely disseminated in the scientific literature. It is a form of interpersonal violence applied as a challenge in which an individual performs a dangerous, illegal or inappropriate deed. It is something that is expected of or imposed upon those willing to join a group and often includes humiliation, degradation, abuse or risks. Such practices may be contrary to the objectives of providing education and threaten the health and safety of an academic community. For this reason, hazing is considered group bullying, even if it is restricted from a conceptual point of view because it does not clearly express the intention and duration of activities as they apply to bullying.[6]

Hazing in Brazilian universities is considered a tradition, a rite of passage, and at the same time, an opportunity for students to integrate with the academic community. Even though in most cases hazing includes games and parties,[7] it may express an important lack of care toward students,[3] because freshmen are frequently treated by seniors as inferior beings, identified by the nickname *bixos*[**] and treated as animals who should be tamed through the use of humiliating or violent practices.[8]

Hazing is considered a problem from the perspective of the development of autonomous individuals and the struggle against all forms of oppression. Hence, its interface with ethics should be an object of reflection as a way to break from the naturalization of violence in higher education institutions.[9] Irreverence and excess may result in tragic consequences, as physical harm and even death is usually reported at the beginning of terms.[4,10] For these reasons, hazing has been prohibited in some universities of many Brazilian states. It still exists, however, in many programs in the health field, revealing the ineffectiveness of prohibitive measures.[3]

Identifying why and how this tradition remains is important to devising strategies intended to improve the ethical dimension of professional education. In this sense, this study's objective was to understand the social representations of hazing in the health field, hoping to understand how they are established and become naturalized.

---

* Even though in the USA, practical jokes, simply referred to as "pranks" has a more neutral connotation, and the term "hazing" – what would be a subcategory of "college pranks" – has a negative connotation, in this study, both terms are used together to convey the meaning of the term *trote* in the context of this study setting, a Brazilian college. The reason is that in Brazil, the term *trote* has both connotations, as shown by this study's results.

** T.N.: *Bixos* is a pun with the word *bichos*, which means animals in Portuguese.

METHOD

The Social Representations (SR) theory is the theoretical-methodological framework adopted in this study. SR are psychological and social elaborations based on the triangulation of subject-other-object, which reads systems of social reality, which in turn express and contribute to the development of existing social values.[11] This theory views individuals "not as isolated individuals but active social actors, affected by different aspects of daily life that are developed in a social context of interaction and engagement".[12:696] Engagement includes two types of processes: participation in a network of interactions with other people through social communication and social belonging defined at various levels: "that of place in the social structure and position in social relations, being inserted in social and cultural groups that define identity, the context of life where social interactions take place, social and public spheres".[12:696]

The study of SR demands attentive examination, observation of "linguistic traits, archives, and above all, discourse packets",[13:217] because SR are based on understanding how a social group impacts individual psychological processes and reflectively, how this psychological process impacts the social group through anchoring and objectification processes. Anchoring is a process of transforming what is unfamiliar within our system of knowledge, whether it is a framework, a classification, etc., and often results in a positive or negative judgment. It is about using a denomination or a word to represent what is new, unknown. Objectification is a form of treatment between words and things, so that it "unites an unfamiliar idea with reality, becoming the true essence of reality".[13:71]

This descriptive study with a qualitative approach was conducted in the health department of a federal university located in southern Brazil, where hazing persists in some programs[7], especially those in the health field, even though it has been prohibited for nearly 20 years. Even though hazing practices vary among the programs (more violent practices are reported in the most competitive programs), we decided to present results together in order to ensure confidentially and include programs where hazing persists under other names.

After approved of the research by Etichal Research Committee, the primary author entered the field in August 2015 to monitor the reception of incoming students. A field diary was adopted during the period of data collection to record observations of the environment and information such as dates and times of events, orientation classes, and the location of student academic centers.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and digitally recorded. Previously developed scripts containing open-ended questions for free association that were specific to each group of participants (students, professors, and professionals) were used. The scripts were improved with the aid of researchers experienced in qualitative methodology.

Overall, 25 people (14 women and 11 men) from the following programs were interviewed: Nursing, Speech Therapy, Medicine and Dentistry. Each interview lasted an average of 30 minutes and individuals were interviewed only once. All the participants were personally invited to take part in this study and provided their free and informed consent. The programs were selected according to field characterization; that is, the coordinator of the Health Sciences Center reported the history of hazing of the programs of this specific center.

The intentional sample was composed of 13 students – seven freshmen (identified here as F followed by a number, in order to maintain confidentiality of their identities) and six seniors (S), all were younger than 25 years old. The freshmen were identified in the programs' directories according to the class schedule of each program and were interviewed in public areas within the campus, though without the presence of other people. Senior students were identified in the student academic centers and were interviewed in these places, also without the presence of others. Only the freshmen had never taken part in hazing activities. Eight professors – one coordinator from each program, that is,

four coordinators (C) and four professors (P), were also interviewed. The coordinators nominated professors who had previously worked in their respective programs with hazing-related issues. The four professors from health field programs asked that the interviews be scheduled for a later time, so the interviews were held in their offices on the campus. Individuals with active participation in their respective professional councils were randomly selected through websites and were interviewed in their offices, both in public and private health services.

After a pre-established number of interviews were completed, we certified that the data collected and transcribed were sufficient to answer the study's questions. The last interviews revealed no new information, so data collection ceased. The transcribed interviews were imported into *Atlas.ti* for data analysis, which resulted in 71 codes, from which four thematic categories emerged: SR of hazing, Experiences, Ethical problems, and Influences on professional training.

The results of the first category, SR of hazing, are analyzed together with the second category, Experiences, and presented here from a cross-sectional perspective. Hazing was analyzed according to text elements in the light of the SR' objectivation and anchoring processes.

RESULTS

The social representations of hazing can be seen through the terms most frequently used to describe the phenomenon as shown in Figure 1, where the size of the letters are related to the frequency in which terms appear in the data collected.
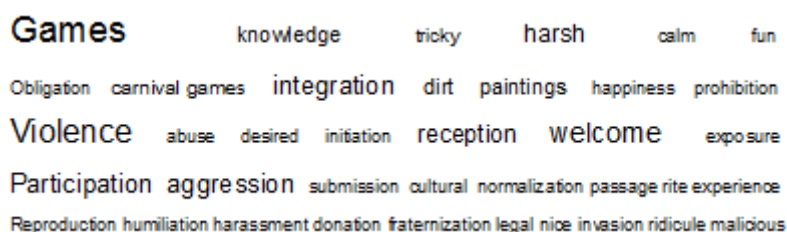

Figure 1 - Social representation of hazing with a proportional relation between the size of letters and how many times they are repeated in the interviewees' speeches. Florianópolis, SC, Brazil, 2016**.**

Hazing presents various facets and can be grouped under two opposable perspectives: a cooperative and a violent facet: [...] *hazing has a side that is cooperative, integrative, but there is also a side that leads to disintegration, which distorts, oppresses and also has violence* (D1). To better approach this phenomenon and achieve this study's objectives, the SRs are presented from the two perspectives, though this division is not always perceptible because both coexist in the same practice under the same name in Brazil (*trote*).

Phenomenon's cooperative perspective

Games and happiness

Hazing are represented by most interviewees as a form of welcome in which activities are described as jokes, fun, recreational games, painting, tricks, and dirt on bodies, associated with happiness: [...] *happy people, everyone is dirty but playing* (C3). Thus, hazing are represented as a playful experience: [...] *there was a game of getting messy with flour, eggs. There were some games to getting to know the campus* […] *we had to take pictures of some places around the campus* […] *some questions related to the program* (V3).

Fraternization and friendship, integration and participation

This study's participants defined hazing as an opportunity to socialize, make friends, something that encourages integration and participation – inter-related concepts, representations that translate harmonious coexistence based on affection, at least for those who consider its participation to be voluntary: [...] *if you don't want to participate and didn't sign the form, you do not participate. This is well-established in the program; we monitor it* (G2). The idea of fraternization is manifested in its peculiar meaning of becoming familiar with the unfamiliar because family and friendship provide contexts for affection and mutual aid: [...] *by getting two classes together, I met many of my friends, people I get along with very well even now* (V2). Other adjectives such as 'nice', 'interesting' and 'cool' appeared very frequently in the speeches.

Welcome and reception

Some interviewees denied the existence of hazing because the university has prohibited them, so they could be punished, but also because the word ("trote") acquired a negative connotation: [...] *the word 'trote' is sort of harsh. We don't have the habit of using it in our program* (V3). For this reason, the phenomenon started to be called "student reception and welcome": [...] *the name here changed to "freshmen welcome week" because hazing is associated with something harsher, violent stunts, exposure, that's what I associate it with* (V2); [...] *a prank-hazing is a joke; reception, welcoming, to provide information that is important for students* (G4); […] *welcome takes place before hazing per se, so when it's time for hazing, it is not that thing of not knowing each other but suddenly you do* (G4). Therefore, reception and welcome – terms related to care and protection – were words used to objectify hazing, resignifying them: taking their negative connotation and transforming them into hospitality and welcome.

Phenomenon´s coercive perspective

Violence, aggression, submission

Hazing were also associated with physical, moral and psychological violence, generating distrust and fear. According to the interviewees, some hazing are harsh and present undesirable situations, such as humiliation, ridicule, discrimination, invasion, harassment, malicious and submission: [...] *bullying, racial offenses, gender offenses, exposure, I don't exactly know a very good word for it, but I guess sexual exposure is very extreme, it goes against everything that is preached* (V2); [...] *exposure, humiliation, machismo, this kind of thing* (P1); [...] *when one talks about hazing, you already think about heavy stuff, something they'll end up taking advantage of us* (C6).

Disrespect toward the freshmen's dignity and self-esteem characterizes violence because it harms or threatens someone's physical or moral integrity. Such rights cannot be negotiated: [...] *there was what they call freshmen auction: they buy a student for nothing actually, just to give the person a nickname. They buy for cents, or a few Reais***, depending on who pays more. They embarrass you up there and someone pays whatever they think you deserve for having undergone such embarrassment. So he gives you a nickname that has to do with something you did or something that will mark you as being a freshman* (C2); [...] *it's humiliation that has no purpose, just demeans the person, disrespects the person; it's something unnecessary, and the way I see it, there's a fine line with criminals, you expose people* (P1); [...] *it's a practice that only belittles people* (V3); [...] *they carry a plaque with nicknames on their laps and it seems aggressive* (D3); [...] *I recall people who*

*** Brazilian currency

complained and I don't blame them (V1); [...] *some of my colleagues were laughing and acting like everything was just normal, but I didn't find it normal* (P2).

Booing and other collective methods to coerce or harass people are resources used by senior students who manage to subdue small groups or individuals. Thus, violence would be represented by the dynamics of the groups based on pressure that unbalances forces, because those who resist and do not participate in the pranks are often rejected or excluded: [...] *they force people to do something in front of others just because she is front of other people. I think it's very bad, because they know people will likely not refuse, for instance, to drink* (C4); [...] *this thing of booing when freshmen enter the classroom, they deserve being welcomed, because it is a battle for them too; I don't find it funny* (D3); [...] *especially because they do not respect individual issues; it's clear that many freshmen will do things for fun, but there are people who do not have the emotional structure to deal with these situations, with aggression and humiliation, and it may harm them in the long run and some people may even be harmed in the short term* (G1).

The violence all these experiences reveal, from moral, psychological and even physical violence, contradicts versions that freshmen willingly take part in hazing: [...] *I guess that this speech that 'those who don't want do not participate' is a discourse of those who are dominating the situation. So, the person is in the group and wants to be accepted, is experiencing a new moment. Sometimes, the person has no option, not even of thinking about it. Sometimes, people will think about it only later, after having done what they did, after having exposed themselves. We don't discuss it openly within universities, not even before entering a university, so people do not have a repertoire or argument or a rationale to actually make a decision* [...] *anyway, it is not a choice. I find it abominable, disgusting, mistreatment; this has nothing to do with education, respect, love or affection* (P1).

Initiation and rite of passage

In universities, hazing is also represented as an initiation ritual, thus, it is a very expected event from the moment one starts preparing for the entrance exam. It is an image that marks one's very approval in the exam: [...] *so every day we were prepared for it and if we didn't have it, we'd be sad"* (P4). Even though it is not a very frequently shared representation, the idea of rite reveals social acceptance and even a desire of some, who considered it to be an initial academic stage as necessary as other academic stages that will qualify students to practice a given profession: [...] *pranks are a cultural issue, as a rite of passage. Students pass a rite to solidify their status as now being students* (D1); [...] *I need to deconstruct this idea with students, the idea that now that they are in college they need to submit themselves to these rites. Practices that some senior students only reproduce, sometimes even violently, without critically reflecting upon what such a rite means* [...] *but it's my role, as a professor,* [...] *to demystify and deconstruct it* (D1).

DISCUSSION

The definition of moral harassment and bullying involves negative or aggressive actions that happen repeatedly, in addition to the presence of an intention to act and an imbalance of power between victim and bully.[6,14] Evidence, however, suggests that students define college hazing as being substantially different and related to less victimization. Even though they recognize it as a negative behavior, they do not acknowledge an imbalance of power, and even less, intention or repeated behavior.[14] Perhaps, the fact they consider there is less victimization expands the representation of hazing from a perspective that comprises behaviors, intentions or positive results, such as those indicated in the discourse showing the cooperative side of pranks, or perhaps less victimization enables

students to reconcile in their imagination what are otherwise irreconcilable things, such as submission to unpleasant actions, just to be up to the challenge and joy of having been able to enter university.

Entering university may be a shock in the life of students because they enter unknown territory, occupied by various social groups at a time when they receive a great deal of institutional information, a series of rules to be followed and a long program of courses to attend. It is a time of getting to know faculty members and getting closer to older students is the context of pranks, and a context in which socialization activities are not highly valued,[7] favoring crossing into a new world that is desirable, but also frightening. Away from parents' supervision and seriousness, the feeling of being freed from family rules is followed by strangeness with which students cope via a familiarization process in which SR of this new world are formed. The natural sociability of young people who yearn to belong makes hazing look like games, for, in fact, anchoring the figure of pranks in jokes and relating them to childhood memories is a strategy that allows one to familiarize oneself with these activities and ward off fear, while learning new social roles.[15]

Games are activities that imply cooperation and aid in the process of connecting an individual with oneself and with groups. Pranks that take place in the programs in the health field propose some games that include the bodies of students. Such games may be somewhat related to professional routines, considering that health professions have their focus of attention on the human body. At the same time, images presented by the media and billboard advertisingsof exam prep courses promote the idea of pranks as the symbolic representation of success and happiness, which contributes to the naturalization of such practices, as they represent the achievement of passing an entrance exam.[10] Thus, after all the emotions and fears that precede one's entrance into college, students may actually desire to take part in pranks to manifest their joy over their accomplishment.

The idea of friendship is a SR, as previously mentioned in the results, which often is confused with fellowship, which includes relationships of collaboration and mutual respect (the expression 'fellow student' may later be replaced by 'colleague', that is, a fellow professional, a relationship that is essential to developing corporate and institutional relationships). Friendships, however, are even more significant references in all phases of life. Beginning in childhood, friendships give one the opportunity to exercise respect and reciprocity and establish lasting bonds of affection, as well as the valorization of important humanistic attributes, such as loyalty and solidarity.

The ways connections are established often serve a common goal – sports, work, college, for instance.[16] Groups of friends often carry out activities such as get-togethers, parties, studying together or establishing other types of partnerships. Nonetheless, groups experience belonging issues, as well as exclusion. Membership is strengthened with compliance to rules, the sharing of values, and adherence to collective ideals, while exclusion or voluntary withdrawal occurs when there is divergence in regard to the forces that motivate a group.[16]

Hazing are intended to create a feeling of belonging through collective experience.[4] From childhood, individuals are part of a family or groups, live in society and fear being excluded. Participation is anchored in the meaning of being part, of having a social role and having a space within the college; and "being part" is anchored in the idea of accepting a group and being accepted by a group, because individuals want to participate in society.[15]

The meaning of welcoming is also presented from a cooperative perspective of pranks, that of supporting and taking care of those who enter new territory, according to the interviewees who frequently used the expressions 'to territorialize the freshmen,' where 'the territorialized' referred to the returning students who already know the campus. The choice to work in a health profession is related to providing care.[17] Consistently, care is present in the act of receiving and welcoming new students, which is possibly anchored in the function of health workers, and some professors also consider it is

to be a role of professors. Activities of welcome and reception, however, have not replaced pranks,[7] which still take place in parallel outside the campus.

We need to critically reflect on the effects of abusive practices, such as publicly exposing freshmen by making invasive or sexist questions, or even questions out of context; by promoting "auction" practices that resemble those of slavery; embarrassing students by demanding them to ask for money on the campus public streets; making them wear plaques with derogatory nicknames. Nicknames are often based on personal characteristics with the potential to reduce a person to a physical or psychological aspect, labeling people. What are the consequences for the education of a student who is identified by nicknames? hazing is related to becoming familiar with difficulties of the profession, such as paint and dirt that may even smell bad, as if they represented roles of health professions that involve blood and other bodily fluids. Does one feel disrespected or embarrassed for being exposed at traffic lights wearing torn clothing, barefoot, painted/dirty, sometimes even having their hair cut, asking for money to finance parties for the senior students? It is undeniable that hazing has the potential to generate ethical conflicts due to the embarrassment it cause among students, specially the most vulnerable ones, in the academic interpersonal relationship.[9]

From a coercive perspective, the SR of hazing as violence refer to abuse and excess, which frequently occur when the behavior of senior students characterizes acts of domination over new students. One example of hazing that drew the most attention during data collection is the so-called territoriality, which is strongly implicated in symbolic violence. The senior students ordered the new students to walk in an "elephant position", that is, the students lined up and lowered their hands between their legs, holding the hand of a student in front of them and of a student behind them, while repeating obscene and sexist verses the senior students dictated, reinforcing the dominance of machista and a heteronormative social culture. Hence, by treating students as animals,[18] senior students try to prove their allegedly superiority, which would accrue from greater knowledge, both related to their future profession, as well as of the teaching institution in which they have been already 'territorialized' - a feeling of having possession over the institution - that would justify their allegedly authority. In practice, a power relationship is apparent in the activities previously prepared by the seniors or institutional "welcome committees", which legitimates a social hierarchy based on our society's knowledge-power and on the feeling of having possession of the territory.

Hazing also occurred outside the campus in the format of parties, in which new students are encouraged to drink alcohol, among other activities that take place in furtive parties promoted away from campus, outside the institution's control. In these situations, practices intended to dominate the new students and treat them as property are even more viable. There are shocking cases of deaths and other severe forms of physical violence, such as burns and rape, that happen during hazing and college parties sometimes reported by the Brazilian[19] and international[5] media, as well as situations related to college sports.[20]

Recently, students of a traditional medical school in São Paulo (Brazil) reported a number of rapes, but the perpetrators were not punished. The cases were shocking, not only because of the facts themselves, but also because of attempts to silence the victims. The students' reports highlighted the omissions of universities and revealed how frequently abuses took place, to the point of leading to the creation of a committee to support the victims.[19] This 'law of silence' does not only prevail in the Brazilian context; rather, it is a rule both among those who haze, as a defensive measure, and among those who submit themselves to it, basically from fear.[5]

This study' participants understand that even though there is consent, undesired participation characterizes violence. Thus, there is an unequal game of forces that results in submission, oppression and the colonization of another, and represents a real danger to freshmen. Complaining is discouraged through deprecatory labels and one may be excluded from the group, or the mere fear of being

excluded, accompanied by punishment and even greater humiliation, may lead students to accept a "lesser evil". Representations of hazing related to some type of violence imply the objectivation of these images of undesired practices to which students are subject, as if dealing with violent aspects were a small price to pay in exchange of college life.[4]

Among the varied forms by which new students signify the initiation rituals to which they submit themselves, which is another SR of hazing, they are frequently reported as difficult experiences.[9] How can a future health worker learn to respect the freedom and autonomy of those under his/ her care if the first lesson at college is one of disrespect and submission?[1] We should reflect upon environmental and social stimuli that lead young individuals to desire or actually take part in such activities from a tendency of mimicking and following their reference groups,[16] providing their consent without considering potential consequences. In fact, the maturity reflected by older age among college students is one of the factors leading some to refuse to participate in hazing when they enter college or when they become senior students themselves. Among those who did take part in hazing, being older was associated with a self-realization that they had exposed students to embarrassing situations.[9] Gender is also a variable that plays a role, as young men are more strongly in favor of hazing, while young women tend to disagree with such practices.[21]

The psychology theory of learning explains aggression and violence as the result of learning because rewarded behavior tends to repeat.[22] Therefore, senior students who were successful with their aggressive behaviors tend to repeat their actions in other spheres of their lives, as well. Another way to learn to act aggressively is through example, as freshmen who learn by observing their older peers' behavior. In fact, some violent actions are reproduced in hazing every semester, every year, by "perpetuating rituals [...] and their perverse consequences".[5:9]

Another aspect to consider in terms of aggressive and disrespectful behavior is that it may be a reflection of the excessive competition for slots in college and also in the job market in the health field. Intensive competition may activate individualistic behavior, lead to conflict and promote isolation because others are considered competitors.[23] Therefore, we need to consider violence and aggression that may be reproduced due to the repetition of a learned behavior or due to the competitive nature of the academic and professional environment of the health field or even due to the ambivalence of feelings such an environment may elicit.[4]

"The role of rites of passage is to operate a transformation in status and identity that, sociologically, works as a group integration mechanism".[4:51] Thus, there is the tacit promise that once challenges are overcome, individuals will become members of the group by right.[5] The rite, however, has to be incontestable, has to show to society a transformation and, for this reason, they are publicly staged in a place that is visible to all.[4] When hazing is interpreted this way – part of the culture to which students are supposed to subject themselves, accepting everything without questioning – it may be configured as a rite: "the image is no longer a sign and becomes a copy of reality".[24:109] Rites transmit the idea that it is mandatory. Considering a prank to be a rite may validate any type of behavior that is part of rites, and due, as well to rites being transitory. The fact that hazing takes place during an established period of time may be a factor that favors acceptance on the part of freshmen.[4]

The ritual of hazing is a contemporary technology of power.[25] Permeated by violence, it contradicts a future professional practice directed to healthcare delivery, denying the very essence of higher education in heath[9] and harming an individual's moral and ethical development.[1] These practices are founded on the logic of oppression on the part of senior students who hold more knowledge, a practice that is justified as being a tradition but which needs to be contested for reality to be transformed.[26] For that, universities need to devise coping strategies and be open to a dialogue.[27]

CONCLUSION

The first experiences that take place between freshmen and senior students at college are tied to different feelings. It is a time of transition and the festive atmosphere leads young individuals, most still adolescents, to abandon some old rules and beliefs, predisposing them to changes, new ideas, references and paradigms. This predisposition is important because college students need to be open to new forms of thinking, knowing and being, in order to transform reality. Thus, in this context, the academic community needs to understand the role of hazing and its repercussions in the ethical training of professionals.

From a cooperative perspective, hazing is represented as play and games, socialization and friendship, integration and participation. From a coercive perspective, hazing is represented as violence, aggression, submission, rites of passage and initiation. New students are called to play their roles. A youth may not take part in hazing; however, if a student rejects his/her role in it, s/he will be rejected by the new group. From a sociological perspective, individuals tend to accept the role society, or in this case, the role senior students, attributes to them because they want to belong. Even if they have many expectations and idealize this new group, the recently arrived students are required to fulfill their roles and assume the socially recognized identity that is attributed to them.

When we consider societies related to professions, we should have in mind that most of the lives of individuals entering a profession will be linked to their professional future – friends, colleagues and associations. A new student may have his/her behavior modeled to play a role that is necessary to maintain such a society, with its social status, pre-established rules and inherent policies, intended to maintain its hegemony. We should reflect upon the values and behaviors shared by the different professions that put individuals in a prominent social hierarchical position, but which may be in conflict with the values and behaviors demanded by health professions and should be in line with constitutional principles of the right to health.

The ambiguous nature of SR of hazing reflects their different potencies: that of sharing values that positively contribute to the students' moral development and that of experiences that harm their moral development. The submission of freshmen to pre-established roles through the practice of hazing makes it difficult for them to choose other roles. New roles need to be chosen by making an ethical analysis with the support of professors, which is essential to change paradigms in terms of professional education.

Even though hazing is widely condemned and some have a concern to transform and resignify the phenomenon, it still engenders many ethical problems allowing situations that involve a conflict of values. Such situations need to be analyzed and resolved, without however, depreciating changes intended to humanize the reception of new students and situations in which students were properly welcomed to a campus. Situations involving hazing, however, even if they take place outside the campus, cannot be ignored.

The purpose is to shed light on practices, even those under a new name, which include submission, aggression, violence and cause distress, be they subtle or explicit. We should bear in mind that simply renaming hazing does not contribute to the affective and effective welcome of students; rather insisting on these practices scorns university regulations that prohibit such acts. Note that new students are not aware of such prohibitions and senior students are not concerned with them. Even though we may allege a lack of control and accountability on the part of the legal system, we cannot fail to acknowledge that laws are the minimum moral structure necessary to society and when they are not respected, we face a great challenge, that of fostering a critical, collective and dialogued reflection committed to intervention – a truly ethical-political-pedagogical mission.

REFERENCES

1. Finkler M. Formação profissional e/ou educação universitária: de onde viemos, para onde vamos? Interface [Internet]. 2017 Apr-Jun [cited 2017 Sep 1]; 21(61):465-8. Available from: http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/1807-57622016.0753

2. Mascarenhas NB, Santa RDO. Bioética e formação do enfermeiro: uma interface necessária. Texto Context Enferm [Internet]. 2010 Apr-Jun [cited 2017 Sep 1]; 19(2):366-71. Available from: http://www.scielo.br/pdf/tce/v19n2/19.pdf

3. Finkler M, Caetano JC, Ramos, FRS. Ética e valores na formação profissional em saúde: um estudo de caso. Ciênc. saúde coletiva [Internet]. 2013 Oct [cited 2017 Sep 1]; 18(10):3033-42. Available from: https://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S1413-81232013001000028

4. Oliveira CS, Villas-Boas S, Las Heras S. Assédio no ritual da praxe académica numa universidade pública portuguesa. Sociologia, Problemas e Práticas [Internet]. 2016 Mar [cited 2017 Sep 1]; (80):49-67. Available from: https://spp.revues.org/2073

5. Marcitllach AA, Freire AGM. Novatadas: comprender para actuar [Internet]. Madrid (ES): Universidad Pontificia Comillas [Internet]. 2013 [cited 2017 Sep 1]. Available from: http://nomasnovatadas.org/noticias/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Novatadas-comprender-para-actuar.pdf

6. Allan EJ, Madden M. The nature and extent of college student hazing. Int J Adolesc Med Health [Internet]. 2012 Mar [cited 2017 Sep 1]; 24(1):83-90. Available from: https://dx.doi.org/10.1515/ijamh.2012.012

7. Albanaes P, Bardagi MP, Girelli S. Do trote à mentoria: levantamento das possibilidades de acolhimento ao estudante universitário. Rev Bras Orient Prof [Internet]. 2014 Sep [cited 2017 Sep 1]; 15(2):143-52. Available from: http://pepsic.bvsalud.org/pdf/rbop/v15n2/05.pdf

8. Zuin AAS. O trote na universidade: passagens de um rito de iniciação. São Paulo (SP): Cortez; 2002.

9. Costa SM, Dias OV, Dias ACA, S TR, Canela JR. Trote universitário: diversão ou constrangimento entre acadêmicos da saúde? Rev Bioética [Internet]. 2013 [cited 2017 Sep 1]; 21(2):350-8. Available from: http://www.scielo.br/pdf/bioet/v21n2/a19v21n2.pdf

10. Vegini NMK, Finkler M. Trotes Universitários pela mídia. In: Anais do XI Congresso Brasileiro de Bioética [Internet]. 2015 Sep 16-18 [cited 2017 Sep 1] p. 46; Curitiba, Brasil. Available from: http://www.sbbioetica.org.br/uploads/Publicacao/2016_02_11/Anais-BIOETICA-XI-Congresso-Brasileiro.pdf

11. Moreira JAC, Padilha MI, Silva DGV, Sapag J. Theoretical and methodological aspects of social representations. Texto Context Enferm [Internet]. 2015 Oct-Dec [cited 2017 Sep 1]; 24(4):1157-65. Available from: https://dx.doi.org/10.1590/0104-0707201500003440014

12. Jodelet D. O movimento de retorno ao sujeito e a abordagem das representações sociais. Sociedade e Estado [Internet]. 2009 Sep-Dec [cited 2017 Sep 1]; 24(3):679-712. Available from: http://www.scielo.br/pdf/se/v24n3/04.pdf

13. Moscovici S. Representações sociais: investigações em psicologia social. 11th ed. Petrópolis (RJ): Vozes; 2015.

14. Espelage DL, De La Rue L. School bullying: its nature and ecology. Int J Adolesc Med Health [Internet]. 2011 Nov [cited 2017 Sep 1]; 24(1):3-10. Available from: https://dx.doi.org/10.1515/ijamh.2012.002

15. Berger PL. Perspectivas sociológicas: uma visão humanística. 32th ed. Petrópolis (RJ): Vozes; 2011.

16. Zamboni C. Juventude: uma questão de fronteira para a Psicologia Social. In: Guareschi PA, Veronese V, organizadores. Psicologia do cotidiano: representações sociais em ação. Petrópolis (RJ): Vozes; 2007.

17. Souza VCT, Pessini L, Hossne WS. Bioética, religião, espiritualidade e a arte do cuidar na relação médico-paciente. Rev Centro Universitário São Camilo [Internet]. 2012 Apr-Jun [cited 2017 Sep 1]; 6(2):181-90. Available from: http://www.saocamilo-sp.br/pdf/bioethikos/94/a7.pdf

18. Zuin AAS. O trote universitário como violência espetacular. Educ Realidade [Internet]. 2011 May-Aug [cited 2017 Sep 1]; 36(2):587-604. Available from: http://seer.ufrgs.br/index.php/educacaoerealidade/article/view/13132/12929

19. Mendonça R. Estupros na USP expõem omissão de universidades. BBC Brasil, São Paulo, 2014 Nov 24 [cited 2017 Sep 1]. Available from: http://www.bbc.com/portuguese/noticias/2014/11/141120_usp_abusos_universidades_rm

20. Diamond AB, Callahan ST, Chain KF, Solomon GS. Qualitative review of hazing in collegiate and school sports: consequences from a lack of culture, knowledge and responsiveness. Br J Sports Med [Internet]. 2016 Feb [cited 2017 Sep 1]; 50(3):149-53. Available from: https://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2015-095603

21. Caldeira S, Silva O, Mendes M, Susana B, Martis MJ. University Student's perceptions of hazing: a gender approach. Int J Dev Res [Internet]. 2016 Sep [cited 2017 Sep 1]; 6(9):9444-9. Available from: http://hdl.handle.net/10400.3/3949

22. Bandura A, Ross D, Ross SA. Transmission of aggression through imitation of aggressive models. J Abnorm Soc Psychol. 1961;63(3):575-82.

23. Beaudoin MN, Taylor M. Bullying e desrespeito: como acabar com essa cultura na escola. Porto Alegre (RS): Artmed; 2006.

24. Oliveira FO, Werba GC. Representações Sociais. In: Jacques MGC, Strey MN, Bernardes MG, organizadores. Psicologia Social Contemporânea. 21th ed. Petrópolis (RJ): Vozes; 2012.

25. Siqueira VHF, Fonseca MCG, Sá MB, Lima ACM. Construções identitária de estudantes de farmácia no trote universitário: questões de gênero e sexualidade. Pró-Posições [Internet]. 2012 May-Aug [cited 2017 Sep 1]; 23(2):145-59. Available from: http://www.scielo.br/pdf/pp/v23n2/a10v23n2.pdf

26. Fonseca AA. A estratégia da dominação: trote universitário favorece lógica de opressão social. Revelação [Internet]. 2002 Mar [cited 2017 Sep 1]. Available from: http://www.revelacaoonline.uniube.br/portfolio/domicacao1.html

27. Villaça FM, Palacios M. Concepções sobre assédio moral: bullying e trote em uma escola médica. RBEM [Internet]. 2010 Oct-Dec [cited 2017 Sep 1]; 24(4):506-14. Available from: http://www.scielo.br/pdf/rbem/v34n4/v34n4a05.pdf

NOTES

ORIGIN OF THE ARTICLE

Article extracted from the thesis – The ethical dimension of the training of health professional: a study from the social representations of college "trote", presented to the *Programa de Pós-Graduação em Saúde Coletiva da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina*, in 2016.

CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHORITY

Study design: Vegini NMK, Finkler M.
Data collect: Vegini NMK.
Data analysis and interpretation: Vegini NMK, Finkler M.
Writing and / or critical review of content: Vegini NMK, Finkler M, Ramos FRS.
Review and final approval of the final version: Vegini NMK, Finkler M, Ramos FRS.

ETHICS COMMITTEE IN RESEARCH

Approved by the Ethics Committee in Research with Human Beings of the *Univeridade Federal de Santa Catarina*, Opinion N. 1.160.242, and Certificate of Presentation for Ethical Appreciation: 47198015.5.0000.0121

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest.

CORRESPONDENCE AUTHOR

Mirelle Finkler
mirellefinkler@yahoo.com.br