Methodological Handicraft in Qualitative Research on Work Psychodynamics

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The rigor in the qualitative research imposes to relate i) objects of study, taken in their complexities historically constituted; ii) theoretical perspectives from which the objects are analyzed; and iii) methodological choices that operationalize the research. This text socializes a reflexive account about the methodological mix of three studies, whose objects were delimited from the same theoretical lens: The Psychodynamics of Work (POW). The POW is interested by the objective, subjective and intersubjective work experiences, being the "study of psycho-affective movements generated by the evolution of intersubjective and intra-subjective conflicts" there are in the work (Assis; Macedo, 2008, p.119). It is a theoretical current with epistemological alignment in the understanding studies, since it considers the work as action of the subject in the objective world, but loaded with subjective senses. The studies invest in methodological processes of discursive recovery of the objectivity-subjectivity, focused on the acts of speech and listening interested for the understanding of the senses. The structuring elements were: a) Theoretical lens of the studies: POW; b) Objects: Study I - conflicts in labor relations in the context of new public management; Study II - manager-subordinate relationship in the context of flexible companies; Study III - labor relations in social business. The types of interviews were: Studies I and III - narrative interviews using stimulus element; Study II - narrative interviews with guide topics. In each study, narratives were anchored in the professional life history of the subjects, considering the specificities of the contexts of the public agency, the company, and the social business. Stimulus elements were used in Study I (posters with names of the governors and periods of government) and in Study III (poster with the expression Social Business). This "methodological bet" proved to be correct. In Study I, the subjects elaborated narratives about perceptions and feelings concerning the work context in each change of ruler that implanted new techniques of management; and, in Study III, the stimulus element made possible the emergence of workers' representations about a recent organizational type, the social business, still lacking conceptual consensus in the literature. In Study II, the narratives were evoked following the guideline framework. In the three surveys, fundamental dimensions of POW were addressed: a) work experiences; b) thoughts about experiences; c) feelings about experiences. These discursive moments of double protagonism (stimuli of the researchers and elaborations of the researched ones) allowed the construction of narratives loaded with meanings, which were interpreted through the analysis of the nuclei of meaning, a re-reading of the thematic content analysis technique, in the territories of the POW, as proposed by Mendes (2007, p. 72): "the ASN consists of the dismemberment of the text into units, into nuclei of meaning formed from the investigation of the psychological themes of the discourse." It is concluded that the PDT studies have, in the qualitative approach, large methodological possibilities of operationalization, which require the researcher to posture as an intellectual artisan (Mills, 2009), but always observing the intersection between theory, object and method.

Keywords: Qualitative methods. Psychodynamics of work. Methodological mix. Intellectual craftsmanship.
References


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