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Promoting Health: An Instrument of Power and an Emancipatory Alternative

M Chapela

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Objectives: There are three central objectives in this work. The first is to offer a critical panorama of the promotion of health which serves as a reflection of who is interested in this field. The second is to present an emancipatory interpretation of health promotion. The third is to invite the construction of such emancipatory health promotion.

Methodology: Analytic and interpretative

Results: This study proposes a particular way to understand, investigate and act on health promotion.

This work is the product of reflection on design and implementation of an emancipatory form of health promotion, understood as a form that seeks to understand the causes of problems linked to the structures of power and domination. The author starts with displaying the origin and development of health promotion, which highlights the contradictory nature of their conception and practice. The author displays the components of health promotion proposed in various international events and suggests that, despite being an officially organized practice since the structures of hegemonic power, its political nature has potential for changing public health. Then, the author presents an alternative vision of health promotion that proposes new concepts of health, body-territory, disease, health promotion and healthy subjects. The text ends with examples of the application of such definitions and understanding of theoretical and practical problems of health.

Conclusions: Emancipatory health promotion, in its conception, study, and practice, is work that any cognoscente subject can conduct. In fact many people do and have done it throughout history as part of their human condition.

However, the article proposes specially two types of promoters. On the one hand, actors in social networks have been formed for this purpose and determined to be particularly committed to this work; and on the other hand, there are several professionals who could be convinced to join such a task: scholars, philosophers, scientists and artists who surely find in emancipatory health promotion a grain to meet their human interests.