

DESTRUCTIVE MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOR AND ORGANIZATIONAL PATHOLOGY. REFLECTIONS FOR AN ARTICULATED INTERVENTION BETWEEN ACADEMIC GROUPS, SERVICES AND TRADE UNION MOVEMENTS

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Abstract

Work management is increasingly being marked by competitive business strategies to improve profits, productivity and capture of worker's subjectivity "soul". More and more aggressive, they flood local pathologic working environments with epidemic mental diseases (depression, burnout, suicide attempts and panic syndrome among others). These diseases assume increasing importance, interacting with such conventional diseases as musculoskeletal or other typical occupational, contamination, etc. The present paper describes aspects causing this organizational pathology, based in discussions during a course of diffusion and a national workshop with trade union leaders in 2014. Based in Piracicaba worker's health movement experience, we will debate importance of research and intervention articulated actions involving actors of three poles: academic groups, workers organized representatives and Worker's Health public agents. These joint actions seem to be essential to enlighten challenges and intervene in organizational determinants usually invisible to public agents.

Keywords

Destructive management behavior, Organizational pathology, Worker's health, Trade union movement.

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INTRODUCTION

Main transformations which took place in global capitalism and its impacts in labor world were seen in the 1990s, basically characterized by a major change on accumulation pattern due to huge financial capital concentration and market globalization, therefore strengthening and favoring mobility of financial capitals, freely circulating and choosing most profitable world regions, and also “no land” industrial capitals, exploring workforce in different countries, considering comparative advantages regarding salaries, taxes, labor laws and trade union organizations (LIMA, 2011).

Krein (2013), states that this global economic and political reorganization led to a redefinition of Brazilian public policies. They mainly drove to fulfill abstract capital accumulation needs than to an economic development favoring the community, regarding production and distribution.

Another important facet related to these economic and political changes is productive restructuring within companies, performed at the same time as sustentation and consequence of these changes in the form of capitalist accumulation (KREIN, 2013:16).

New communication technologies played main role in this process, since microelectronic equipments allowing production to be adjusted to product modification requirements are programmable technologies granting rapid adaptations to market fluctuations and can be used to produce large series of goods as small and mediums lots, reducing production time and reaching much more higher paces than electro-mechanic machinery. (BAUMGARTEN, 2002).

Lima (1997), states that zero inventory and *just in time* production, both flexible production model organizational determinants, are anti-ergonomic labor organization ways since lack of buffer stocks to absorb incidents of production and coworkers pressures when another gets delayed, leads to a forced pattern of work acceleration: *“If pace ceased of being imposed to produce maximum quantity of products in a minimum time, such as mass production, work will keep same intensity since it must be produced a necessary quantity at the right time (lean production). This means, in practice, having instantly answering to demands always almost unpredictable”* (LIMA, 1997:242).

The main feature of “lean production model” is to produce “more with less”, or in other works, less workers, less inventory - *just in time* -, less costs. Its effects, verified in many studies have been very properly summarized by Lima (2011:163): working pace intensification, many time reaching unbearable levels; abusive quality requirements, particularly because of not always being given necessary conditions to meet such quantitative target requirements, making worker to face dilemma of attending quality demands without reaching quantity demands; suffering a multi task system, disguised under positive ideology of multi-purpose; abusive extension of working hours, many times

together with unpaid imposed overtime.

Maria E. Antunes Lima also states that world financial capital rising has been accompanied by aggressive and brutal ways of increasing labor productivity, through subcontracting and outsourcing activities to reduce costs and cushioning economic conjuncture unexpected impacts (LIMA: 2011:163).

Outsourcing is a management technique focused in costs. It began to be applied in the 1950s in Brazil (HÄTÖNEN, 2009). However it was during implementation of productive restructuring when became widely used by organizations to reduce payroll accounting expenses, by avoiding legal working costs or by salary differences and benefits between outsourced and hired workers. (KREIN, 2007; KREIN, 2009).

Outsourcing is considered the guiding thread of Brazilian working precarization, ubiquitous in every working field as a managerial practice, which at the same time is a flexible contract without labor rights, and is also synonym of health and life risks, since it establishes a “mantle of invisibility” on working class social conditions, acting as non compliance on labor laws intermediary, ideal way for businessmen to avoid state regulated limits regarding workforce and its exploitation as if were goods. There is also an adverse effect – the fragmentation of collective entities, which in spite of being a phenomenon of Latin American countries going back to State’s protectionist intervention during first decades of last century (URIARTE, 1994) became deeper in current historical context. In it we have outsourcing acting as an instrument to increase Brazilian trade union organization structural fragmentation, encouraging competition among workers, among them and trade unions and among trade union, intensifying workers’ alienation and human mocking (ANTUNES and DRUCK, 2013:224).

After implementation and generalization of these working organization models in Brazil, many studies have been done providing excellent diagnosis on impact of these measures in workers’ health. The intensification of work, in all its variations, led to an increase of repetitive stress injuries (LER) and work related musculoskeletal disorders (DORT) being on top of Brazilian statistics of occupational diseases. Also work related mental disorders became significant, among them nervous fatigue, panic syndrome and depression. We may add to this occupational classification an increase of working accidents with its multiple incapacitating consequences, especially among outsourced workers, besides alcoholism, anxiety and suicide, reaching certain professional categories. (LIMA, 2011:166).

In this discouraging scenario, a new labor social morphology is characterized by psychosocial dynamics which besides implying negatively in workers class conscience, also work as mechanisms of “capture”⁵ of its subjectivity. By adopting flexible remuneration strategies, tied to production targets and award fees, workers become “their own executioners” dismantling class sub-

5 The word “capture” between quotes means it does not happen literally, but is result of consent, not perennially developed, without resistances and daily fights.

ject socio-metabolic links, with an “administration of fear” destroying living labor autonomous personality, rebuilding a personal individuality more susceptible to capital demands. (ALVES, 2011:42).

Work, in turn, took distance from its original technical skills meaning and got a behavioral connotation expressed in the profile of a multipurpose worker, innovative, participative, cooperative, and constantly called, as we have seen before, to discuss issues regarding quality and productivity of the area or sector where he works, in a real psychical mobilization process of strong implications in its subjectivity. (DEJOURS, 1999, apud GUANAIS, 2006).

For the author, efforts spent to obtain workers adhesion to productive process requirements meet formulation and consolidation of a working ideology driving to the organization through existing rules, leaving to the management capacity of mobilizing its values and aspirations and becoming habits and practices articulated with organization objectives. (GUANAIS, 2006:111).

Currently, workers need to have more cognitive resources than in Ford / Taylor model. This knowledge is driven in an ever-growing volume to deal with unforeseen daily matters. Subject to a working intensification process, workers feel productive activity invading their private lives, therefore losing family contact and time off during weekends. These new management modalities submit workers to a set of techniques and strategies trying to make them prototypes of flexibility, productivity and multitasks, tied to market logics and companies ideals, requiring them to be more and more careful in their jobs, since parts they produce have their identification.⁶

Current business speech tries to overcome previous conflictive character system to build a relationship of cooperation (partnership)⁷, granting company's competitiveness and consequently workers jobs. So, flexibility and individualism become the values, through a renewed bond between worker's continuity in the job and economic “good luck” of the company. The objective of this is mobilizing workers skills in a cooperative way. However this forced cooperation is based in workers understanding that lower than requested individual performance will make them losing his job or could partially compromise his remuneration. At the same time, increasing challenges regarding production targets are imposed in a scenario of intense competition ideologically disguised as cooperation.

In short, economic flexibility has two main objectives: first, allowing companies to have higher freedom to employ and setting salary levels. Second, allowing adjustments in workforce volume and price to reduce costs. These objectives are achieved by reducing social protection through withdrawal of benefits and labor rights and/or collective norms, and by introducing new laws or collective norms granting to adapt labor rights to flexibility, particularly regarding remuneration, working hours, hiring contracts and workers allocation.

⁶ It is the case of an automotive assembler company from Piracicaba, state of S. Paulo. When finishing an assembly cycle, each worker must stamp his “personal mark”. Based in this, warnings regarding quality problems may be issued to a worker, identified through this “personal mark”.

⁷ This business ideology is represented by the word *collaborator*, when speaking about workers.

(KREIN, 2013: 17).

Based in her own research conducted with metallurgic workers, Guanais states an important contradiction in these contexts: – *“the simultaneous interaction with innovation organizational processes (...) involvement and commitment of workers (...) and management centralizing practices, justified by the conception that management takes decisions, defines priorities and forwards daily activities – usually established in a authoritative manner.* (GUANAIS, 2006: 118).

Management practices go far beyond technical actions and means, granting optimization of use of resources to save and accumulate capital (BENEDETTO-MEYER et al., 2011). These practices imply in a psychical cost, derived from a violent dynamics of pathological effects in human relations, as we will see in workers statements. This association between an explicitly violent management due to a goal-driven basis is accompanied by other abnormalities such as high turnover, loss of productivity, quality services problems and high disease prevalence reaching the whole organization. Some authors classify these organizational symptoms as an “organizational pathology” (JACKSON FILHO, 2004).

The author, based in Daniellou (1999) states that the expression “organizational pathology” regards situations where not only workers suffer, but also middle level and management employees. Middle level employees suffer because of being submitted by the company to such implicit pressures as *“I don’t care if you have a broom, just sweep the floor”* or in other words they are compelled to “disclose downwards management messages, without any possibility of transmitting upwards daily found difficulties, to find solutions in the medium term” (DANIELLOU, 1999:34). On the other side, management employees feel helpless to modify the situation, because they have little room for manoeuvre to face it.

Metzger et al. (2012) are interested in knowing why Gaulejac (2005) states, *“the company became a quarrelsome and destroying world, encouraging adhesion of its members”* (GAULEJAC, 2005:12). They think it is due to management techniques leading to convince workers accepting profitability requirements imposed by main shareholders. Them, through measures, records, statistics, quantifications and graphs build around workers an organizational reality representation considered the only one valid, logical and rational.

This new “managerial philosophy” provides “definitions of the situation”, making management tools to drive and channel the activities of each worker, supervisor or manager, helping to produce and perpetuate dominance relationships on the pretext of rational performance management. Acting under the impulse of management figures and incentives, individual conducts seem to escape from any possibility of deliberation (METZGER et al., 2012:229).

The management daily defines actions regarding cash, based in analysis of financial indexes and other means. The objective is granting collective performance as prescribed by the organization. As an example, if production schedules don’t reach targets, or if productivity of some line is poor, immediately a correction action is established, no matter if workers are already submitted to

hard work conflicting with quality requirements – “it is up to worker’s solving their problems!” (METZGER et al., 2012: 236-237).

The ways how management devise and drive actions and their relationship with violence in work will certainly depend of such constraints as forms of leadership and idiosyncrasies of each manager. However, authors state that it depends in first place of “mission” the owners told them to perform: *“In a world where everything is assessed in terms of value creation for the shareholders, every manager will be conducted – by force of instruments developed to measure this value, by principles he has received and by the general philosophy basing it – to become a fraction of this power, of this overwhelming domination that financial economic actions gave to shareholders.”* (METZGER et al., 2012:237).

In turn, ways of resisting management control will depend on the degree of understanding workers have regarding oppression to which are submitted and consequences of an insubordination, since a huge reserve army of unemployed waiting at factory gates drives them to submission. Nevertheless if this threat is not enough, other coercions like transfers to other sectors or facilities are a way to extort workers investment and sacrifice.

It is therefore a dominant ideology, globally disseminated by entrepreneurs – large companies, bank executives and their hordes of sharp consultants – associated with the majority of the political elite political and press at their service, searching for incontrovertible financial markets performance to allocate resources, being able to extract from workers consent to efforts required by the management (METZGER et al., 2012:238).

This strategies implementation scenario built to crush workers individual and collective subjectivity arises in spite of open or underlying resistances. The persistent belief on a joint confrontation – academic groups, worker’s health services and trade union movement – holds expectation of initiatives developed through a shared agenda may boost fight for transformation.

ACTING ON ORGANIZATIONAL RESOLUTIONS – BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF A PATH

Worker’s health movement in Piracicaba, state of São Paulo, began with initiatives regarding surveillance and measures to prevent accidents and work related diseases by means of an inter-institutional articulation including public surveillance services, workers representatives and academic groups from universities and research centers. This articulation produced important initiatives of positive impact. Among others: the paper and pulp industries sectorial accident prevention agreement; the first municipal agreement of prevention of accidents in building industry freight elevators, later extended to the Permanent Regional Committee of Piracicaba, a tripartite space of discussion for issues regarding the building industry and maintenance of agreed conditions; the Forum of Citizenship, Justice, Culture and Peace, which processed inter-

-institutional actions of surveillance in lodgings and sugarcane sector working conditions; and development of working accidents surveillance system of Piracicaba. (VILELA, 2003)

Initiatives went gradually fulfilling an agenda of obligations and legal norms, until reaching some working organization aspects: work accidents and musculoskeletal diseases, and more recently psychical disorders. Professionals in charge realized that legal and conceptual aspects of Occupational Hygiene, Medicine and Safety at work were insufficient and outdated (Vilela et al. 2012a). Then they formed an alliance with the academic group, therefore developing a good team of technical and trade union professionals with deep knowledge of Activity Ergonomics, also known as French ergonomics. This brought another view and important advances in understanding work determination and its risk organization. (VILELA, 2011; MACHADO, 2011). During this process, besides formation and conceptual discussion, the academic group contributed to elaborate three research projects supported by FAPESP, allowing development of certain relevant products, such as following:

The consolidation at Piracicaba, of SIVAT (Monitoring system for work-related accidents) a continuous notification system for any work accidents seen at municipal urgency and emergency units. Serious and fatal events happened to people under 18 years are selected for surveillance actions at working places, followed by workers representatives (Cordeiro et al., 2005). Most significant cases were verified through companies' sectorial actions or by branch of activities, as in previously mentioned initiatives (bakeries, paper and cardboard industries, carpentries, potteries, building constructions, companies with high rates of working accidents)

The alliance with the academic group also created and developed an Accident Analysis and Prevention model (Almeida e Vilela, 2010) orienting analysts to reconstruct details of the accidents, by using such concepts as Ergonomics to find through immediate causes the organizational background (underlying causes) that should be adjusted to prevent from new accidents.

The Forum of accidents was created to strengthen methodological aspects and as space to spread organizational approach, in opposition to behavioral safety, in Brazil expressed through the notorious concept of unsafe act, where the victim is responsible of its own tragedy (Vilela et al., 2012b).

The history of the group was consolidated with approval of a thematic project: *"The work accident, from a social and technical analysis to social construction of changes"* FAPESP 2012/04721-1 with following thematic axes: (1) prepare diagnosis associated to information related to use the Change Laboratory Method, developed in Finland (PEREIRA-QUEROL et al., 2011); (2) improve SIVAT and build an information room in a sociable environment to provide information on accidents and other diseases through the Internet; (3) identify and improve, respecting SUS (Single Health System, Brazil's public health care system) integral health care principles, therapeutic background of workers accidents; (4) check participation of justice to address injured or ill workers, and

(5) dissemination of an organizational safety approach at the Forum and its Internet page (www.forumat.net.br).

In March 11, 2015 was held the 45th meeting of the Forum of Accidents, and previously in August 2014 the organization of First 1° International Seminar on Analysis and Prevention of Accident – SIAPAT, in the city of São Paulo, where a workshop was conducted on *“Brazilian worker’s health scenarios and current challenges: building joint confrontation agendas”*, with participation of many important Brazilian trade union members.

Together with the workshop in October and November 2014, in Piracicaba was held the first diffusion course on *“Workers representatives’ actions in defense of working places”*. These two initiatives were important for the group, since represented an effort to strengthen more organic ties among three mentioned poles.

The objective of this paper is to describe and analyze working organization aspects lived by participants of the National workshop and the course of diffusion, to reflect and enlighten future ways to be followed jointly.

Every meeting was recorded, transcribed or entered with the authorization of participants. Declarations and dynamics of the two events were analyzed, focusing current working management ways strongly emerging in both occasions, apparently being behind harmful contemporary working methods. This paper is result of research named *“The work accident, from a social and technical analysis to social construction of changes”* FAPESP 2012/04721-1.

INCREASING PRODUCTION THROUGH EMPLOYERS’ PRESSURE AND ARISING OF REPETITIVE STRAIN INJURIES (LER) AT MEAT PACKING INDUSTRY

The work management through symbolic violence presents nuances even more perverse in ways how companies manage working incapacity arising from occupational diseases and accidents of work. Statement of woman worker Valdirene, with 11 years of experience in the meat packing industry in boning and cutting chicken legs meeting production goal of 11 pieces per minute, when average for this activity is between 6 to 9, is emblematic of this situation. She controlled her insidious way of getting sick with LER/DORT (repetitive strain injuries / work related musculoskeletal disorder) through intense ingestion of analgesics and anti-inflammatories, granting work presenteeism until all her fingers became trigger fingers⁸ and she no longer could keep same productive capacity and a prolonged period of absence from work became inevitable. Then, the company through their managers showed her harshest face, not valuing more than a decade of rendered services and denied accep-

⁸The trigger finger is characterized by a disorder of fingers’ deep flexor tendons and thumb flexor tendon. The disease is triggered by a combination of effort repetitive movements when holding firmly cylindrical objects, especially if there is a compression over tendons synovial sheath. In the clinical context, we see difficulty and/or impossibility of extending fingers. In case of forcing the movement, patient will suffer a painful clicking (Brazil, 2001).

ting Valdirene's illness as occupational. Instead of it, the company drove cause of the illness to using a motorcycle to go and come from the work.

In this environment strongly characterized by pressures to reach quantitative performance, a trade unionist statement regarding Valdirene's seriousness of the case leads us to reflect on worker's depersonalization effects, seen by the company as mere object of production:

Valdirene's case is the most serious we have seen in Brazil, we never had any similar to this one (...) She had to amputate her arm because it had shrunk and atrophied. Nobody could do anything. Her fingers drove into the palm of the hand, penetrating it. She had to sanitize the hand every 15 day, to avoid rotting tissues. She had to take morphine every 4 hours to endure the pain. Since she could not bear her own rotten flesh smell, she decided to do the amputation. (A food industry trade unionist)

Management strategies imposed pressure by establishing pace, rhythm, objectives and working intensity leading this woman worker into an unstoppable way of reaching and surpassing her body limits. This was the rule to be recognized as an efficient worker, therefore reducing risk of losing the job. But it also was the reason of her sickness, ending with working incapacity and body mutilation due to the amputation. The definitive and extremely disabling impact to carry on Valdirene's life without one of the superior limbs was a terrible consequence. This clearly reflects what we are classifying as organizational pathology, result of business strategies to shorten working time analyzed by Lima (1997).

WORKING "CONTEST" TO ACHIEVE GOALS OR BANKING SECTOR "TERRORISM"?

On banking sector, banks developed an extremely competitive environment among employees, teams and branches, where being promoted to higher positions became a captivating objective. Bank employees quickly learn that recognition can be financial, moral or both of them, and must be obtained at any price although in spite of moving away from family environment which becomes a second priority, or by adopting unhealthy habits or sleep deprivation. Most efficient employees are rewarded with notebooks, smart phones or fringe benefits such as upgrade in luxury hotels; productivity and efficiency rankings are made and updated as if were football tables; best employees get offers of better positions, to these standing out are offered client's portfolios, and even trophies are given at end of year to winners of the "period competition".

After recovering sales target of a small branch with only 4 employees, a woman employee was rewarded with the possibility of becoming manager of

a banking service point in a large multinational. The position demanded an unconditional dedication to solve countless and urgent problems arising at any moment. Since she has as personal objective to become superintendent, she accepted any demand to improve and went into a post-graduation management course. When at last she became superintendent, rewards increased but also challenges and requirements of the new position, more and more complex:

As a matter of fact, when you are promoted you go to the top, and you get a notebook and a Blackberry. With them I thought I was mighty, don't you think so? I had won a gift from the bank, but I did not know what kind of gift it was. Many times I had to wake up at 05.00 in the morning, and answering e-mails while being in the toilet, or at 11.00 PM, midnight or 02.00 in the morning developing targets for next day, to make the time go on. Then I found that this gift had been a "deadly" gift. But the fact is that at the beginning I had not realized things will be like they were. (Bank Superintendent)

Management strategies work as a sort of filter, choosing workers willing to do higher sacrifices to get better positions, salaries and status. The illusion of getting a professional and financial stability influences decision of giving up other important values like family, in search of company's progress. Career advancement fetish, including better salaries and responsibilities, led bank superintendent occupying this high working position to an anxiety situation, with weight gain and family distancing. She spent most of her time sleeping in hotels, always almost fully dedicated to her job. And she was aware that her work brought profits to the bank:

I went after rewards; I am a very determined person. I did everything they asked to do, ok? I got the first position as superintendent during three consecutive years. (Bank Superintendent)

After being transferred to a risky area in Rio de Janeiro where she faced dangerous situations, her workload increased even more. She became responsible for new agencies in other Brazilian states. At that time she considered any new promotion as "deadly" gifts. However, and due to efficiency showed in achieving targets she became eligible for other promotions in the bank, so she assumed superintendence of other agencies.

Nevertheless at this point her physical and psychological limit got the top – and no more than that. Then this woman formerly reaching targets, assuming management of other agencies and growing within the bank was somebody holding back company's targets. She was no longer productive and stopped generating profits, thus a person to be ruled out, and therefore was quickly being substituted by other manager. She went to see a psychiatrist:

diagnosis was *burnout syndrome*⁹. Bank's attitude with her disease was disregarding and INSS (National Institute of Social Security) did not recognize the disease as occupational:

The bank managed to suck out my mind. Everything lost importance and it was then when I realized that, opposite to what I thought glass was (not half empty but completely) full. (Bank Superintendent)

The fact work was not recognized as origin of her sickness and medical treatment received allowed her seeing real business interest in her working activity and left lasting marks of life. The psychological treatment, having drugs of continued use, the impact that depression period brought to her relationship with her husband and her daughter remained as a legacy not foreseen in her working contract signed twenty years ago when she was looking for a career allowing to realize her material dreams. Nonetheless, option of fighting to overcome difficulties imposed by the bank always was stronger than quit the job:

My working problem almost destroyed my family; I am trying to rebuild it. I've been married for 27 years; my husband has been very understanding, and however problems are there! I take medicines; I have lost my libido, the will to live. My husband comes back at home and everyday he sees me still in pajamas. Once I remained three days without having a shower... This is true, my youngest daughter when seeing me like this she tried to commit suicide; she jumped out from a car after being helplessly asking me - in my room, to react. But reacting did not depend on me.... My INSS sick leave register still remains same when I had a bladder problem. (Bank Superintendent)

This bank's woman employee statement was done in a course of diffusion. She told that during her upgrading career she was permanently and incessantly compelled to meet targets:

If you reach 100 in a month, next you must make 150! (Bank employee)

According to her, who reached a manager position, superior hierarchy forced workers to use family and friends network, including Facebook social network to sell banking products, many of them considered dangerous. Pressure and internal competition led her to depression and an attempt of suicide, but later she recovered forces when joining the trade union:

⁹ It is a long-term professional exhaustion syndrome, which became epidemiological due to huge organizational changes arising from last decades' productive restructuring. These changes to reach targets put extreme and continuous pressure on workers, becoming exhausting and driving to professional wear out. Clinical picture of disease begins with exhaustion, breaking out in an apparently abrupt way, followed by a second characteristic manifestation of the syndrome – an acute emotional rejection reaction to what formerly was object of dedication and care in the job (Seligmann-Silva, 2013).

In banks we do not suffer pressure, what they do there is “terrorism”. Or you reach targets or you will be destroyed! (Bank employee)

OUTSOURCING, DOWNSIZING AND RISKS IN THE ELECTRIC POWER SECTOR

Another work management practice done through symbolic violence was lived by an electrician and electric power sector trade union directors. According to them main change was personnel downsizing: fifteen years ago they were 10 teams of 6 electricians each, and currently only two of four people each to do same work than before.

These measures brought dire consequences for the workers. Main one was increasing and higher work density, with major increased risks. One of the electricians stated he believed in the company during his twenty years of professional life because procedures used granted safety, even working in energized lines. But this changed after a colleague died. He lost the trust in the company; bringing an unsafe sensation for him and team.

Downsizing is a management strategy not respecting limits to grant profits, such as disconnecting power to work. This would imply in economic losses, since shutting off electric power supply will impact in regular income. Another loss may arise from ANEEL – the National Electrical Energy Agency which through FEC¹⁰ and DEC¹¹ indexes, controls frequencies and power supply interruption time. If utility concessionaire consumed under the established indexes could get up to 1% more of annual turnover. If consumption indexes remain over, the concessionaire could have a financial loss of 1% of next year’s annual turnover. Therefore, to avoid the company having losses and increase profits, life of electricians might be at risk. In following statement of an accident, the company did not authorize shutting off power supply. This was a key factor for the disastrous outcome: a fatal accident resulting in death of a colleague with twenty years of profession:

We went out to install a temporary circuit breaker for mates working ahead. When going to install it on the post we saw the cross beam was not OK, so we had to change it, but also verify that other cross beams were as well in bad shape... they were around five. We contacted our team leader and he told us it was not anymore possible shutting off, and then doing work like this... We changed the first cross beam, in two levels. It was quite difficult so two pairs of men went up and also another one. One of them got tired and a mate said: leave it to me; I will go up in his place. He did so and finished the job, but when they were finishing, cover for protecting the energized line slipped and my colleague was

10 Equivalent interruption frequency per consuming unit – FEC.

11 Equivalent duration of interruption per consuming unit – DEC.

hit by the electrical shock.(An electrician)

Such measures are related to actions driven by a financial logics based in very short term. Electrical sector companies target granting high profits, demanding and transferring to their workers maximum team pressure and high productivity return by reducing working costs. To do so they use illegal and dangerous ways of outsourcing, driving to a vertiginous increase of accidents involving workers and population as can be verified in 2010 Dieese report.

ANEEL investments are directed to increasing units and building new facilities, while stopping preventive maintenance which formerly granted workers and population safety and protection. For example, placing a new post is an investment covered by ANEEL's budget. But changing a post or a deteriorated cross beam is an expense to be paid by concessionaire. This made workers to report serious situations, like completely rotten cross beams and feeders being reused beyond traditionally considered capacity percentage.

Then I began asking to myself: Oh my goodness, it was only the sliding of protecting cover¹²! And I began analyzing the case, lately I have noticed that cross beams are in very bad condition. Durability of this part should be between 15 to 17 years, while the cross beam of accident was at least 25 years old. Imagine if an energized electrical line would fall downtown...I was going to do the insulation, placed the protection cover and the line felt down. We were lucky that colleagues on the other side of the street were out for lunch, because if they were near the line, everybody would be dead.(An electrician)

Therefore changing a feeder previously considered a zero risk activity currently has a significant explosion risk when doing it, due to power supply network scrapping.

In view of above mentioned we may state that lack of preventive maintenance clearly emerges as a contribution to profit oriented management. These situations generate increasing risk for the workers, as this electrician tells:

It's the following: we have to inspect 50 feeders and we can't cope this amount of work, therefore we see worst in first place. If we verify that one can still hold another year, we put the plate and go in search of next one. Besides cross beams, we also look at the trees. When a tree touches the line, we have to prune it. So we keep a pace of seeing cross beams and trees, fixing both if necessary. But now this is not anymore done, you leave behind the rotten cross beam and do not prune trees touching lines. Preventive maintenance became outdated, now we only do corrective maintenance without shutting off power. But it can't be done like this: you can't work on a running pace. (An electrician)

12 It is a plastic insulating barrier used to prevent accidents by contact with any part of worker's body and the energized line.

DANGEROUS “MARATHON” AT SUGAR CANE PLANTATIONS

Work intensification carried by sugar cane and ethanol agro-industry managers' use payment by tranche of production, a management technique encouraging increase in output per person. To stimulate competition managers hire a pace-setter or “rabbit” worker who leads sugarcane cutting to grant competition at a fast pace among workers. These facts worry trade union leaders, since that management system induces workers to produce beyond their physiological capacity, with the objectives of improving payment. Next statement of a woman trade union shows another concern, which is keeping worker's capacity through *medicines* to support daily production target. It is part of documentary film “Linha de Corte” referred to pay based on individual performance, where we can see tough face of sugar-ethanol industry expansion in the state of São Paulo:

Valdecir da Silva Reis was a sugarcane cutter invited to Faustão, a famous Brazilian TV show, because of his amazing cutting capacity. He was named the “golden sugarcane pruner”. He was a young man full of life, everybody liked him, he was “the Guy” working, dancing, making jokes. Three years later, Valdecir came to me with a low voice, like if he were an old man almost without any capacity to speak. His left arm had diminished, it looked as dried. Sitting on a small wall in front of our trade union office, he told me: Carlita, I can't stand stepping on the ground; when I do so my whole body buries! He was so thin when he passed away! You know, I keep his pay-slip to be sure I am not talking nonsense, to confirm he really existed. When I see one day he cut 52 metric tons of sugarcane, and then he was so ill, what happened to him, to his body, what blew up within his body (Carlita, Rural Workers Trade Union, Cosmópolis Health manager – documentary film “Linha de Corte”)

Carlita's personal confession shows social impact arising from cutting sugarcane.

BEHAVIORAL OR ORGANIZATIONAL SAFETY? - DEBATES HELD IN THE COURSE OF DIFFUSION

During course of diffusion, when asking workers to say sentences for an safety campaign, we got two groups of messages: first one and most important had sentences focusing safety at work issue, regarding behavioral aspects and suggesting individual decisions with a reductionist approach, such as “*If you want to work safely, use PPI - personal protective equipment*”, “*learn to take care of yourself*” or “*work cautiously to prevent accidents*” while the other group of sentences, fewer in number, was focused in accidents of work in a much more

extended way, looking for organizational and alternative causes of collective confrontation, such as *“we are not looking for guilty people but for the causes, to prevent them”* or *“there are no individual solutions, let’s find one all together”*.

REFLECTIONS, CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

The authentic speech at the course of diffusion allowed identifying that basic trade union ideas still carry on a behavioral safety reductionist approach, or still limited to what is prescribed by legal norms.

Such limitation shows presence of a hegemonic vision to explain diseases as arising from existence or absence of risk factors, including workers inappropriate behavior workers, based in classic disciplines: Medicine, Hygiene and Safety at work. This partial point of view masks or makes difficult to face organizational aspects presents in causality of work related accidents and diseases, and consequently limiting scope of actions.

On the other side, more in-depth discussion allowed identifying some important aspects of work management, being cause of accidents and diseases such as work pattern increase and work intensification, high turnover and workers drifting away, working contingents poorly dimensioned, pressure to increase production and outsourcing of some activities. To reach targets, some companies are using management practices including symbolic violence, authoritarianism in working relations, associated to increasing and abusive production targets, by organizational pathology’s parameters.

Trade union leaders coincide in need of improving actions by listening production workers and articulating inter-institutional procedures to face such complex challenges and improve trade union’s guiding role.

During national workshop we verified that different activities represented by their respective trade union leaders, show similarities in using current ways of symbolic violence. This was seen through statements of tacit or explicit threats to be fired, established psychological terror, managers’ moral harassment attitudes, and demands to do tasks which workers do not like or cannot perform within real context of work.

Such management characteristics impact organizational safety, reducing it and causing high rates of accidents of work, LER/DORT epidemics and work related mental disorders, present in each area of represented activities. The other side of this policy is discarding workers, also using symbolic violence when companies maintain expected productivity levels, due to loss of physical or psychological capacity arising from accidents of work or diseases.

Trade unionists participating in both activities – the national workshop and the course of diffusion – recognize invisibility and complexity of here enhanced organizational aspects, making even more difficult establishing causal links and more complex developing surveillance and prevention strategies. They also recognize importance of elaborating proposals to face these issues

involving institutions and civil society in a broader way, and that current initiatives are still of little efficiency to allow worker's health services and trade union foundations intervene in companies' day to day work.

The pedagogical strategy adopted in the course of diffusion inspired by works of Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire, allowed participants' experiences introducing Activity Ergonomics concepts. This was positively assessed by the group, to the point that some participants stated the course modified their paradigm on work and risks.

The national workshop and the course of diffusion stimulated and allowed workers statements to debate from an inter-institutional point of view, and develop a rich and promising environment by leveling surveillance agents, academy groups and workers representatives – the Brazilian worker's health movement strategic and founding tripod.

The initiatives granted participating agents seeing what is behind sickness in recent times, especially management centrality which in search of productivity at all costs, is increasingly revealing as abusive and violent.

It is our opinion than banking employees' statements show a new impersonal management style, more aggressive and ruthless, not withholding even top management positions. This violent profile seems to be different from business strategies used at the beginning of globalization intended to lure workers, then considered company's collaborators. The idea was convince them they were part of a family by using resources and subtle psychological strategies. This strengthens the argument that it is impossible and delusive waiting from public surveillance sector to face such challenges isolatedly, even reinforcing technical and analytical capacity than public and external action performs regarding working environments and processes. On the other side, the academic group alone would also have extreme difficulties to access the world of work. Depending on research, it could maximum deliver partial diagnoses, without targeting the effective transformation of pathogenic situations.

That said, it becomes capital to strengthen working places guiding role to improve this organized segment balance of power. This could be done by using tools and theoretical concepts to increase argumenting power means arising from the alliance with the academic group.

To achieve this complex and multi-task object, it is necessary developing collective, sectorial and multi-disciplinary strategies, plus new concepts, tools, diagnoses and intervention methods allied to strengthening subjects and community.

The strategies we have reported and analyzed here reassert need of setting networks and concrete bridges, joint and articulated initiatives among these three actors – workers, surveillance services and sectors engaged with the academic group, to develop joint interventions, where diagnoses and intervention will be part of a same development process, demanding three poles participants being committed to a common objective: acting on harmfulness determining factors to transform them into a new way of producing and living.

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