

“SEVERAL BATTLES A DAY”: SUBJECTIVE MOBILIZATION OF RESEARCHERS IN A RESEARCH COMPANY

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to discuss how a given work group deals with the different situations in the work context, identifying psychic aspects that these workers mobilize when facing the constraints and adversities imposed by the organization of work. This research is a case study that investigates, through the psychodynamics of work, elements of the category “subjective mobilization”. The space for collective discussion allowed the collection of data, which was submitted to Clinical Analysis of Work. The results indicate that suffering at work is denied by workers and neglected by the leaders, and also demonstrate the main coping strategies used by workers when facing suffering at work.

Keywords: *Psychodynamics; subjective mobilization; suffering at work.*

1 INTRODUCTION

Deep changes in the world of work, such as precarious labor conditions, loosening of work relations, outsourcing, and massive layoffs create an insecure scenario for workers. On this subject, Diniz and Goes (2012) remark that the conditions and complexities of the world of work (high competitiveness, rewards based on performance, fragile employment relationships, strict hierarchy, harassment, among others) lead to fragmentation of relationships and the development of work-related diseases. “we live in a time of sickness of body and soul”.

For Fleury and Macêdo (2012), the current organizational context, permeated by the logics of neo-liberalism, promotes the exploitation of human suffering by making the person believe that the desires of the organizations represent their own, for this representation strengthens their identity and frees them from the fear of social exclusion and unemployment. Thus, the worker develops individual and collective strategies to mitigate the suffering imposed by the organization of labor, which fits the principles of efficiency in the current work context.

Studies by Dejours (1999); Macêdo and Mendes (2004); Roik (2010); Diniz and Goes (2012); Aguiar (2013); Werlang (2013); Fleury (2013) on the relationship between health and work have showed that several conditions (gastrointestinal diseases, dyslipidemias, changes in blood pressure, cardiovascular diseases, musculoskeletal diseases, and mental diseases) are related to the degree of control of workers by the organization of work. The work environment, with hierarchical structures, models of work performance evaluation models, pressure for productivity and qualification, is an environment prone to causing suffering which may cause diseases in the workers.

For Diniz and Goes (2012), work-related diseases, especially in public service, cause losses to the sectors involved: to public institutions, because they employ workers who are unproductive due to constant disease-related work leaves; to public workers, who, due to diseases, cannot practice their activities and use their technical and creative potential; and to the citizens, who pay the public workers' salaries without receiving the services they need. All the new work-related diseases are, nowadays, loneliness diseases: loneliness among the crowd (DINIZ; GOES, 2012).

And how does the worker cope with this scenario? How do workers mobilize facing the constraints and adversities imposed on them by the organization of work? In the model of psychodynamics of work, suffering triggers a subjective mobilization in the worker so that he can look for solutions to cope with it. How do the subjects engage? How do they react to transform the organization of work and themselves? These are some of the issues investigated in this study through the psychodynamics of work.

This study investigated how the researchers from a Brazilian agricultural research company react to these pressures and what are the main consequences for their health. The theoretical-methodological approach adopted

in this study is Dejours's psychodynamics of work (1999), which considers work as a central aspect in the (worker) subject's psychic constitution.

The literature on the subject indicates that several professional categories were objects of study in psychodynamics, but, up to this point, we identified only one research, by Câmara (2007), which focused on experiences of pleasure and suffering by researchers from a research company and presented a comparative analysis between the careers of research and research support at Embrapa (a state-owned Brazilian company devoted to research on agriculture) from the perspective of psychodynamics of work.

Thus, we stress the contribution of this study to expand the research on psychodynamics of work, with a possibility of unraveling strategies for intervention on the suffering of a category of workers still little surveyed. This methodological approach may also be applied to any other professional category.

2 PSYCHODYNAMICS OF WORK

Psychodynamics of work is a field of study created in 1980s in France by Dejours. Christopher Dejours is a French physician, professor at the *Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers* in Paris and oversees the em Paris and coordinator of the Psychology of Work and Action Laboratory. Dejours bases his work on psychoanalysis, ergonomics and psychosomatic studies in order to investigate the workers' psychic life, especially psychic suffering and the coping strategies used by workers to convert this suffering into a source of pleasure (BUENO; MACÊDO, 2012).

Work is central for psychodynamics of work because the subject develops himself with work. In the model of psychodynamics of work, suffering triggers a subjective mobilization in the worker so that he can look for ways of coping. How do the subjects engage? How do they react to transform the organization of work and themselves? These are some of the issues investigated through the psychodynamics of work.

This way, according to Silva (2012), this theoretical-methodological approach does not seek to investigate the causality of phenomena, but their meaning and dynamics. In psychodynamics, the way the subject engages at work and converts pathogenic suffering into creative suffering is called "subjective mobilization". It is a strategy of suffering redefinition and rescue/emancipation, as well as the resistance instrument used by workers when facing antipersonification contexts (DEJOURS; ABDOUCHELI; JAYET, 1994).

The Dejours approach seeks to understand the dynamics of the relations established in the workers' collective by listening the workers' speech. By establishing a collective discussion space, the proposed method can describe the individual subjective process and the mobilizing collective strategies developed in front of the pressures and constraints imposed by the organization of work.

Facas (2009) highlights that the psychodynamics of work concentrates on the content, the signification and the form of pleasure and suffering, emphasizing investigation at the infra-pathological or pre-pathological level. One object of study in psychodynamics is the analysis of suffering intervention strategies used by workers in pursuit of a better health, considering subjectivity at work as a result of the interaction between the subject and the dimensions of the context of production of goods and services. In short, the survey in psychodynamics of work is not intended to transform work, but to modify the subjective relationship of the worker with his or her work (MOLINIER, 2001).

The premises of psychodynamics of work are centered in the possibilities of developing the subjects through their relationship with work. In this approach, according to Uchida et al. (2011), it is necessary to consider that there is no isolated subject; he exists in an inter-subjective relation inseparable from work.

3 SUBJECTIVE MOBILIZATION: Evaluation Category in Psychodynamics

For Dejours (2004), mobilization is made through subjectivity, which makes it possible to understand why do people engage in work and how they organize their behaviors in the face of work situations. It is an answer by the worker due to difficulties imposed by the organization of work.

In this sense, mobilization includes the assimilation of practical rules that promote the maturation of the identity of the worker. Therefore, subjective mobilization is a process that allows the expansion of subjectivity. In this case, work is a form of pulsional investment, sublimation and symbolic resonance (Mendes, 2007b). It works also as a means of converting suffering into pleasure through elaboration of the meaning of the work.

This mobilization must be considered as a specific and irreplaceable contribution from workers to the conception, adjustments and management of the organization of work. Mobilization promotes the creation of practical rules

and decisions and influences identity and personality. A discussion space is necessary to understand the conditions of subjectivity mobilization (MEDEIROS, 2012).

When there is a large amount of work-related suffering, anxieties, injustices and a need for adjustments, the worker uses subjective mobilization. This mobilization is loaded with affections because the subjects are affected by work (anger, joy, suffering, etc.). Mobilization is an experience of pleasure and suffering (MENDES, 2011).

The subjective mobilization of workers is meant to avoid suffering and to obtain the long-awaited recognition. For that to occur, the worker uses defensive and confrontational strategies as well as their practical intelligence. Work-related subjective mobilization is strong for the majority of healthy subjects. It certainly does not extend to all workers, but most of them overcome the difficulties found at the workplace and obtain, from these difficulties, the symbolic gains of a well-done job (MENDES, 2007b).

According to Dejours (2004), subjective mobilization joins ways of engaging the individual at work. It is the investment of the cognitive, affective body as well as an action on reality in order to obtain success and pleasure in accomplishing the task. For Dejours, the process of subjective mobilization is not an established one; each worker experiences it in a particular way.

Workers, when coping with pressures, contradictions, demands, threats and fear imposed by the organization of work, create strategies, collectively or individually, such as “quick-fix” practices, in order to perform the prescribed job. For this purpose, they use subjective mobilization, making use of their intelligence, accessibility, ingenuity, inventiveness and cooperation (ROSSI, 2012).

Practical intelligence means shrewd intelligence, which is originated in the worker's body, perceptions and sensitive intelligence and is, above all, an intelligence that constantly breaks norms and rules and is fundamentally transgressive (MENDES, 2007b). Practical intelligence, for Lancman and Uchida (2003) is always mobilized during the actual work situation and involves creativity, initiative and body engagement.

It can be stated that social interaction is an integral component of cooperation. Working is not limited to production. It is also living together (DEJOURS, 2012a). When cooperation is effective, the formal space (company meetings, moments of conversation and statements by the managers, etc.) is the space in which the orders given become a common reference for all the members of the collective.

It means that the desire of working together in a common project is what mobilizes the formation of bonds between individuals. For Dejours (2012a) what matters is not libido or love, but esteem and trust regarding the common respect to work rules and moral posture regarding the real work.

Dejours (1999) points out that work is not a trivial element for health. Working may promote psychic balance, identification with the activity, and self-actualization, because it is an essential means for the search of meaning.

The building of a collective and of a public space for collective discussion influence the quality of life at work, because they create purpose and a space for sharing experiences of pleasure and suffering at work and looking for possible solutions. The public space, according to Mendes (2007a), is built by the workers themselves by sharing cooperation, trust and common rules. It is the representation of a space of speech, collective expression of suffering and search for ways to transform the current situation.

3.1 Pleasure and suffering at work

According to the psychodynamics of work, work is always going to generate suffering and pleasure. Therefore, work may be understood as a paradoxical element for the subject, because it, beyond generating pleasure and fulfillment, it is also a source of suffering and may lead to diseases.

Experiences of pleasure and suffering are considered by Mendes (2011) to have the following aspects: appreciation and recognition as pleasure; and work exhaustion as suffering. Pleasure is experienced when the person is appreciated and recognized in the job for the activities conducted. Mendes (2007b) points out that pleasure often does not manifest itself in a noticeable (conscious) way. Pleasure at work is:

[...] an experience manifested through fulfillment, which is the feeling of satisfaction, pride and identification with a job that satisfies professional needs, and freedom to think, organize and talk about the world (MACÉDO; MENDES, 2004, p. 66).

Pleasure is generated by situations where the worker perceives the recognition, appreciation, and by activities where they can clearly see the beginning, middle and end (MENDES; ARAÚJO; MERLO, 2011). For these authors, recognition, when related to pleasure, is not limited to rewards and bonuses. It is related to the relationship between the organization of identity and the social field. The interaction between individuals favors the building of this identity and comes from a dynamics that requires an exchange with the environment and the historical, personal and social context of the worker, in a work collective.

Judgment or recognition are not directly related to the subject's being, but to what they do (DEJOURS, 2012 b). What is expected is an attribution (appreciation) of the other on the product of work, more specifically on the quality of this work. After peer recognition they may transfer this recognition from their doing to their being, that is, to their identity (DEJOURS; ABDOUCHELI; JAYET, 1994).

However, when there is no recognition, work loses its subjective meaning and there is a threat of destabilization of identity and of the pleasure experienced in the relation with the self. Thus, when the organization of work does not allow work to be a source of investment of pulsional energy (which accumulates in the psychic apparatus), there is suffering and a feeling of displeasure and tension (DEJOURS; ABDOUCHELI; JAYET, 1994).

According to Macêdo and Mendes (2004), suffering happens when the relationship between the worker and the organization of work is blocked; when the worker uses his full intellectual, psycho-affective capacity for learning and adaptation, thus feeling worn out and unable to see reality in a way that promotes pleasure.

In this context, several feelings appear, such as tension, displeasure, dismay, strain, anxiety, fatigue, incompetence at facing the pressure to deal with the work requirements. These are some ways in which the worker may experience suffering when there is a block in the relationship between work and worker.

The pressure to work badly would lead to embarrassment of performing his job badly; the lack of hope for recognition is decisive in the dynamic of subjective mobilization of intelligence and personality at work (motivation). The meaning of the suffering depends on recognition. Normality would not imply the absence of suffering, but the use of defensive strategies that would act as a trap that desensitizes the person against what makes them suffer (FLEURY, 2013).

Suffering at work may be creative or pathogenic. Creative suffering arises when the subject produces solutions that benefit their life, especially their health. Creative suffering manifests the health solutions created by the worker.

In turn, pathological suffering occurs when the individual produces solutions detrimental to their life while damaging their health. According to Mendes (2007a), pathological suffering is a consequence of detrimental strategies and affects all aspects of the worker's life. Pathogenic suffering, when facing the depletion of all mobilized defensive resources pushes the subject into a feeling of incapacity. The feeling of being incapable to deal with the ever-changing work demands justifies the focus by work psychodynamics on the workers' way of life (LANCMAN; UCHIDA, 2003).

Therefore, pathogenic suffering is mediated by several strategies that may also serve as an alternative for disease (medication, individualism, trivialization of evil, moral harassment, suicide, aggression, pathologies).

When suffering is not reframed, the worker cannot find a way out through their subjective resources. They may even lose their effect and become social pathologies, such as overload, voluntary servitude and violence (MENDES; ARAÚJO; MERLO, 2011). Thus, when the worker converts creative suffering into pathological suffering, they may present illnesses.

It should be noted that what is most exploited by organizations is not the workers' suffering itself, but the defense mechanisms used against them, which keep a constant work rhythm. That is to say, coping strategies may serve both as protection mechanisms, for the worker to do their job without psychic problems, and as enablers of exploration of suffering and defenses for a better productivity that comes from adaptation (MULLER, 2012).

3.2 Coping strategies

Defensive strategies, for Dejours, Abdoucheli and Jayet (1994), are defined as a mechanism through which the worker seeks to modify, transform and minimize his perception of a reality that makes them suffer. According to Segnini and Lancman (2011), this modification process is strictly mental, because it does not modify the reality of pathogenic pressure imposed by the organization of work.

The difference between individual and collective mechanisms of defense, for Dejours (2012b) is that the former remains without the physical presence of the object, which is internalized, and the latter depends on the presence of external conditions and is founded on the consensus of a specific group of workers.

The creation of coping strategies or strategies for defense from suffering has the goal of diminishing suffering through an altered perception of reality which conceals the psychic risk to which workers are exposed (FLEURY, 2013).

Defense strategies, according to Dejours, Abdoucheli and Jayet (1994) are created for mediation and for coping with suffering, and enable an understanding of the process of subjectivation demonstrated in individual and collective behaviors at work. However, Dejours (2005) points out that, despite defense strategies having the role of suffering attenuation, they do not provide cure and hamper re-appropriation, emancipation and change.

Defense strategies, according to Dejours (2007) are not limited to the work environment, but affect also the private space, because life inside and outside work are not independent. This happens because defense strategies transform the psychic operation, which does not change by changing the place.

Workers, when facing pressures, contradictions, demands, threats and fear imposed by the organization of work, create strategies, collectively or individually, such as “quick-fix” practices, in order to perform the prescribed job. For this purpose, they use subjective mobilization, making use of their intelligence, accessibility, ingenuity, inventiveness and cooperation (ROSSI, 2012).

Defense strategies, thus, vary according to work environment and arise when facing work adversities, so that the subject can bear them. They are created in daily life and used to face the harsh reality imposed by the organization of work.

Among individual coping strategies, Segnini and Lancman (2011) use as example those created by workers who undergo repetitive and fragmented work situations, which include: acceleration of production, hyperactivity, limitation of the capacity for thought and fantasy, and recurring thoughts on the task itself. In turn, Bueno (2012) points out that the most frequent psychological mechanisms in individual defense strategies are denial and rationalization. Both come from Psychoanalysis.

Collective coping strategies may allow for the subject some stability in fighting suffering. This stability, in other situations, would be impossible to achieve with their individual defenses only (DEJOURS, 2007).

Segnini and Lancman (2011) highlight some collective strategies: trivialization of risk, exaltation and denial of danger, exaltation of virility, among others. These psychic defenses partly explain behaviors that seem irrational, such as workers who, when exposed to highly dangerous work conditions, do not wear protective equipment or ignore protective measures.

The defensive strategy, for Dejours (2012b), may become an objective in itself in order to face psychological pressures at work, which leads to a process of alienation, and to block any attempt of transforming the current situation. When these strategies are stabilized, the subject is discouraged and resigns to a situation that only generates suffering and no pleasure.

4 METHOD

The methodological proposal was a descriptive and exploratory case study, using the assumptions and categories of Dejours's psychodynamics of work (1992). As an instrument of data collection, we used a space for collective discussion with the research workers. We used Clinical Analysis of Work to analyze the material collected.

The method focuses on investigation of the visible and invisible subjectivity, on latency, and considers speech as mediating the interaction between individual and reality. The clinical analysis of work has a goal of contextualizing the origin of the experiences of pleasure and suffering at work, and participation and engagement of the subjects is essential (FERREIRA, 2010).

Detailed information on the organization surveyed will not be disclosed in order to preserve the identity of the workers. It is a Brazilian research company. Only a few data from the participants shall be mentioned. Seven workers participated on the research: four women and three men. According to Mendes (2007a), six participants is an adequate number for research in work psychodynamics and work clinics. She recommends a minimum of six and a maximum of twelve.

The sessions were scheduled, with an average duration of two to three hours, in a way that did not impair their work routine. The researcher explained the objective of the research and that they would be recorded (audio and video), and guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality.

The group went through five sessions. The company managers gave their authorization and participation was voluntary. The sessions were recorded and fully transcribed, considering the subject's speech, a crucial aspect for object apprehension and data implementation (DEJOURS, 2008). After transcription, recordings were validated by the interviewees and sent for treatment through the Clinical Analysis of Work method by the Psychodynamics of Work group at PUC-GO, Brazil, and to judges triangulation.

5 RESULTS

The workers presented several individual coping strategies and few collective coping strategies. The reaction of researchers in difficult situations is shown on the following accounts:

I lost almost eight hours with a psychologist. Asking me questions. Eight hours taking about the structure of the unit (E1)

I went to college again, I graduated last year. And...this is why, you see, if this place stays like this, I don't think it's going to work anymore. (G1)

Coping strategies attempt not to harm the worker's state of mind. They are behaviors and reactions which vary between isolation, purchase of materials and equipment to work with their own resources, denial and even aggressive practices to deal with suffering and pressure at work.

Look, this has been a reason for so much fighting, I have been called to so many meetings. I WON'T DO IT. I WON'T DO IT. Because I've got a career. (E1)

DECENT CHAIRS for us to work? No way. I bought mine with my own money, as well as my computer, and my printer. You see? (G1)

(...) Hiring personnel. Last year, I used a different strategy. Instead of sending it to the management, I sent it to all sectors, (...) all you have to do is to print another copy. Then I sent it to HR, Personnel Department (Brasília), management, research, general...(F1)

The answers to difficult situations that cause anguish and suffering in workers are found daily. The rationalization of activities, expression of the feeling of dissatisfaction, jokes/humor, irony, trivialization of injustice, conformity and denial, fun and relaxing activities, and professional activities beyond work are ways for individual defense found in the following excerpts:

I don't mind STAYING. I want to do my JOB. Time doesn't matter, as long as I can do my job. (F1)

Oh, what pisses me off is when you have to do USELESS things inside the company, USELESS AND DISTRACTING. That is it. These are details. Fine. You've got to fill it, thirty days on the form, researcher so and so from eight to seventeen. You've got to fill it. I do fill it, but this is an example of a useless thing, you know? (F1)

Other people's suffering. It comes to a point when you don't even realize you are being ridiculed, right? (D1)

I won't be distressed, I won't. You're right.(C1)

We make do as well as we can. (G1)

(...) I get a room at the hall and I will start producing lots of paper, since they enjoy paper anyways. (B1)

So, things like that. Heck, it wears you, makes you mad, but what can you do? (E1)

Regarding the strategies identified from worker accounts, we must point out their modest functional value and their narrow dimension compared to the vastness of suffering. On the other hand, these mechanisms cannot be said to be enough when fighting anguish and mental pain (DEJOURS, 1992).

Unbalanced feeling hampers the psychic equilibrium and contributes to the destruction of the mental apparatus, favoring the emergence of mental or psychosomatic diseases. For Abrahão and Sznelwar (2011) this might be the main source of injuries, which result in a crowd of sick people.

This issue is so negative. When there is a public notice offering funding, you still think. Do I really want to do a PROJECT? We can approve it, but I will not be able to finish it, then WHY am I going to do it. So it's like that. (A1)

(...) not matching what I wanted to produce, you know. This is my biggest fear. (D1)

What makes me most anxious is that I am afraid time will run out, you know. And that the problems will not be solved, and it in general gets very ugly. (F1)

I myself have this in my head. If I cannot create anything, I'm out! (E1)

The objective of peer judgment is the recognition facing the social relations established at work. It can be noticed that the devaluation of the worker to their peers and leaders appears to cause damage to their identity. There is the hope of being rewarded, and an expectation that runs into the limitations of the current management system, according to the following accounts:

Fear of not being able to do your job, fear of remaining in the group of outcasts, the frowned upon, those who are not productive (E2).

A good training, you know? It must be good so that the boss sees your job and you can show it to him, because you must show you like his presence, it can't be otherwise! (C1)

According to Fleury (2013), this fear – of belonging to a group of negatively-viewed people – contributes for groups to use competition to achieve the much-wanted recognition, which generates conflicting interpersonal relationships, individualism, isolation and suffering. And, when facing suffering, the subject develops defenses that, when altering the perception of what makes them suffer, may alienate the workers, such as: denial, self-acceleration, isolation. Bueno (2012) adds that, as soon as the subject assimilates the subjective recognition of their efforts to control anguish and suffering, they will look for other ways to overcome the resurgence of suffering.

From the accounts, we can notice that recognition is obtained from the external audience (interns, partners, clients and consumers). Without internal recognition, the subject “fights” not to lose the external recognition (from society), because this is what holds them together and prevents their psychic imbalance and consequent disease.

Interns, nowadays, are my clients. IN THIS MOMENT, my interns are my clients. /.../ capacitate! (D1)

(...) And nowadays, after I started to work with interns, I can see that my quality of life has improved a lot. It is a moment when I feel useful, when I see I am making a difference in society /.../ by training people. (E1)

You come to do your internship with me. It makes my day, my month, my year, these six years of suffering, because this is recognition, isn't it? Because you are there in your daily routine with them and they are with us, right? (B1)

And outside the company, I can see I am well recognized, you know? But I noticed that I am much weaker here. I am much weaker at imposing what I think is correct here than when I leave this building. (F1)

I think I am strong in other places, but not here. People elsewhere treat me very well, as a researcher! OH MY, I was invited to do a job at (...), I was treated as a world-class researcher, you know? And here this guy treats me as an intern. This makes it difficult for us. (C1)

For recognition, self-actualization at work, survival and wish fulfillment, the subject submits himself to the discourse and pressures from organizations. Workers, therefore, put their physical and psychic potential into work. There is also the ghost of dismissal. The fear of dismissal is a strong aspect that makes the worker silent and compliant with certain organizational practices.

A lot of anguish. We are worried about our job. Our livelihood. We are worried about our career because it's our reputation. What if we lose this job? (B1)

The following excerpts show the concerns of researchers regarding their psychic identity. Putting at risk their self-image and psychic identity causes suffering to the researchers. If the subject has stains in their self-image, they may become ill. In a nutshell, "I am my career", for work is the worker's psychic support.

And this is my main anguish. I don't want to stain my reputation. I have my reputation! I! I! (...) I don't want to stain this reputation, you know? (E1)

If you lose your reputation, what are you going to do? (C1)

I am here because I like what I do, because I want to be a researcher. (D1)

A feeling of being free and trusting you. Putting it in our hands. That you may now do what is best /.../ This is the feeling I want. (G1)

Therefore, we can see how concerned workers are with the meaning of the work. Work is important for the subject's psychic constitution. Lancman and Uchida (2003) speak of work in adulthood as a central mediator for construction, development and complementation of identity, and constitution of the person's psychic life. They also point the relevance of work as the biggest factor of meaning for social integration.

There are some researchers who have asked for a leave of absence because things here... It is not an individual problem. You know, we are not being able to produce day after day. I am going to die of so much work, and what about my health, which was already low? (F1)

In the new laboratory, if the person does not find a solution, she stays isolated. Isolated! (B1)

The researcher talked to me and said: I am here to work, but people don't want to work and I can't find a team to work with me! (A1)

Regarding the problems we've got here. I think many people have the same problems. ... Only we don't know it. (E1)

Individuality is reinforced by organizational practices that include excessive bureaucracy and slow managerial processes, overload, unfair performance evaluation and absence of collective discussion spaces. These practices hinder the establishment of trust and cooperation. For Giongo (2013), in a nutshell, individuality is used by the organization of work and acts against the workers themselves. As a way of meeting organizational demands and trying to "fit into the group", some researchers isolate themselves to produce more and with a better quality.

Sometimes, researchers cannot discuss issues related to work. Then they try, according to Fleury (2013), remaining active using their mostly individual defenses, resisting work-related embarrassments as well as they can. Isolation, individualism and self-acceleration takes up the place of cooperation and collective deliberation.

The researchers' accounts indicate insufficient ways of cooperation between sectors and peers. Individualism and competition, used as coping strategies, hinder the creation of bonds of solidarity and cooperation, as shown on the following testimonies:

If there was a vision of teamwork, the first teaching we should have had here is that you've got to work as a team. So please, let's everyone work together as a

team. You'll help one another. But this is not what happens. There's a support sector that thinks they are doing you a big favor. They forget they're hired exactly to help you! (A1)

When you need this support core and you don't have it, you become frustrated. The biggest harm I see is the PSYCHOLOGICAL harm. I... I... I... have no doubts. And I think it affects most of the researchers here. (E1).

Collective strategies are not very evident in these accounts. In fact, Dejours (1992) points out that when there is no longer space for collective defense, the collectivity of the working class is already weakened. The suffering engendered by the organization of work demands strongly personalized defensive responses.

At the end of the sessions, the researchers showed satisfaction, a feeling of “relief”, approximation and care for the others. The participants suggested that we should publish the material as a dissertation and scientific articles. They also suggested that the leaders should become aware of it and use the findings of this research to support their managerial practices. They insisted that the study should not be restricted to one dissertation, but that the practice could be conducted again to a larger group of workers and that the material should be published.

Yesterday, when researcher C1 arrived for this meeting, I didn't... I was very shocked with HIS REACTION! I thought he wouldn't stay. And then I was very moved ... After we left, he stopped me at the car and said he was sorry. I NEVER... Imagined... I didn't know you were suffering this much. Yes... I think we become closer due to this suffering, because we identified with the pain right away. (E1).

I don't know if it's going to be valid, but I hope I contributed with anything. You see? I committed and delivered. /.../ I don't know! (B1)

One thing I told several times my shrink and the HR supervisor: someone must write some paper on it. This is a material for a thesis, a dissertation, several papers, because it's not normal! This is not normal. So I'm very happy to know that at least, after so much talking, complaining, shouting. Yeah! Someone did something about it. Right? Because I really said it a lot. Because this is not normal. Someone will know there's something wrong here! Someone saw... Someone has acknowledged that there's something wrong here! I am really happy about it! Yay! (D1).

6 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Companies are contradictory in their discourses and practices, for they preach equal conditions but act in an unequal way; they preach innovation, but a monitored innovation; they preach participation, but a controlled participation; they preach freedom, but practice control (ARAÚJO, 2008). Despite suffering being present at work situations, according to Fleury and Macêdo (2012), it is denied by political and union organizations with the goal of reality concealment and promotion of behaviors increasingly more committed to organizational challenges.

Monteiro (2012) points out that suffering sometimes is not expressed because workers actively try to protect and defend themselves. To do this, they use defense mechanisms or group defensive strategies.

In face of the analyses guided by the categories of Psychodynamics of Work and the results presented do not offer conditions for the conduction of work or spaces for discussion and deliberation by the workers. This creates suffering and may lead to diseases.

There are too few experiences of pleasure, attached to external recognition, and the researchers are in a condition of suffering. The result of working is suffering. Organizational goals, exploitation of suffering, a wish for recognition, excessive bureaucracy, and a fear of dismissal were some of the aspects showed in this research that represent the dynamics of researchers' suffering.

It is worth highlighting the issue of recognition, which was recurrent in the researchers' accounts. The lack of recognition by some of the peers and the leaders is a cause of anguish and suffering.

For Dejours (2004) the lack of recognition may impair the worker, who tends to demobilize, which entails grave consequences on their mental health. Therefore, if the dynamics of recognition is paralyzed, suffering cannot be

converted into pleasure anymore; it can only generate accumulations that will lead the subject to a pathogenic dynamic of psychic or somatic imbalance.

Coping strategies range from buying equipment with their own resources to performing tasks which are under the responsibility of other parts of the organization. Not complying with rules and practicing activities outside the company are other ways of coping with the difficulties and suffering that come from work.

After the sessions, participants showed some relief from tensions, because everyone could share their suffering and notice the suffering of the others. Mendes (2007a) remarks that, when talking about suffering, the worker mobilizes himself, thinks, acts and creates strategies to transform the organization of work.

The space for collective discussion, and the attentive listening of the workers' accounts makes the suffering visible and enables the taking of some action on it and it being thought and discussed by everyone, because, in the words of Lancman and Uchida (2003), suffering is individual, but its solution is collective.

The mobilization that results from suffering is tied to the emancipation and (re-)appropriation of the self, the collective and the power condition of the worker. Therefore, the creation of this space would allow researchers to reflect and discuss on the work-related issues that cause anguish and suffering. Other than that, the bonds of trust, solidarity and cooperation could be retrieved through the process of peer identification by coping with the daily difficulties (FLEURY; MACÊDO, 2010).

As the main objective of psychodynamics is the attempt of converting work-related suffering into pleasure experiences, we expect that the reading of the results presented in this study may give workers a basis for them to rethink their work practices. They may think of themselves as a participant and active subject, who writes their own history inside and outside the work environment.

7 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The results found allude to previous results (MENDES, FACAS, 2012; PIRES, 2011; BUENO, 2012; DINIZ, GOES, 2012; MONTEIRO, 2012) on subjective mobilization in front of conditions detrimental to the worker's health and on the need of a collective space for discussion. The results also show that the sessions could not achieve enough collective mobilizations to transform the actual work situations, because there is a need for a longitudinal discussion on this practice. As there is no organized space to this end, we suggest that the organization should enable conditions for the work collective to find themselves, discuss and share their experiences.

We observed that all coping strategies developed by researchers are individual. No collective strategies were registered. This fact does not happen often in researches on Psychodynamics of Work. Both coping strategies are usually used by workers as defense mechanisms. Thus, we infer that, depending on the organization's area of operation, one coping strategy might occur without the other.

Thus, the particularities of the work context and of the social relations established in the workplace, including aspects of the organizational culture, are factors that might favor the occurrence of one or both coping strategies. We may even say that there is an inverse correlation between collective coping strategies and suffering. The less space for collective strategies, the more suffering is experienced at work.

For Giongo (2013), the weakening of the working context, tied to individuality, intensifies exploitation, suffering and insecurity in labor relations. If the defense strategy were transformed, the workers themselves might share better work practices to improve their peers' work and/or mobilize themselves to share difficulties, enabling the transformation of work-related factors that create suffering. However, what stands out is the massive use of individual defensive strategies, that lead workers to a depletion of their potentialities and the generalization of a state of isolation, helplessness and sadness.

Based on principles of Psychodynamics of Work, the space for collective discussion is meant to understand the impact of the world of work on the subject's psychic apparatus. It values the importance of understanding the influence of the organization on the quality of life, mental health, generation of psychic suffering, strain and diseases (DINIZ; GOES, 2012).

The objective of the study was achieved, since the coping strategies were identified; all of them individual and none collective. The diverse individual strategies indicate the efforts in the daily life of the researchers to deal with embarrassments and suffering. In these terms, it is necessary to create strategies or management models so that the organization of work may include ways of having pleasure at work and avoiding suffering.

Due to the methodology of Psychodynamics of work, and considering the timeframe required for this research, an aspect that limits this study is the impossibility of reaching a larger number of participants, including from other positions at the same company (ZAGO, 2012). Another common difficulty in research on Psychodynamics of Work, according to Bueno (2012), is to adjust the schedule of participants and researchers for interviews and feedback meetings.

Lastly, we reiterate the importance of work for human existence and hope that this study might help researchers to tackle different professional fields, deepening the methodological approach and, above all, contributing to workers' health.

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