06 - LABOR GYMNASTICS, IS CORPORAL EXERCISE LEISURE?

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INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of this study gymnastic labor (instructed corporal exercise) was seen as an activity until then realized only in gymnastic academies, health clubs, military institutions and schools. Today it is part of the labor process, and is, in some way, related to the need by capital to maintain the most suitable conditions for production. Many authors explain that the use of exercise programs in factories is influenced by "new" forms of organization of the labor process, principally by the so-called "Toyoto" model. It was with these ideas and questions that the process was analyzed.

We found during the study that labor gymnastics can constitute what Covre (1983, 1990, 1996) called: a technology that organizes labor. In the process of the investigation, our concerns took another course and we sought to understand the perception of workers and their possible effects on the true dimensions of the program's consequences for the labor process. Thus, we asked, what practice is this? What does it do for people and the internal labor process?

Some authors justify that factory gymnastics programs are a form of "leisure activity" or even a way to improve workers' "health". We had many doubts that we sought to clarify with the collection of empiric data, in a concrete reality. The situation is quite confusing. For this reason we selected an electrical motor factory of a large company in Santa Catarina State, Brazil, and the workers who were willing to be part of the research group. There were 118 workers who responded, most of them were younger than 35. We observed that the work activities demanded considerable strength for the handling of the motors and that the few respondents who were older than 35 worked in furnace maintenance. The predominant tasks were the assembling of electrical motors. This involves manual labor in complex routines that required considerable attention and concentration.

We emphasize the specific need, in this type of assemblage activity, for precision of movement in a short space of time. The workers are required to produce a minimum number of parts in a brief period of time and without mistakes. This implies repetition, in combination with the demand for intense productivity, with perfection and without errors.

The gymnastics program executed is organized by the Industrial Social Service (SESI) entity. It is called Gymnastics at the Company and is considered "a product". It has been implemented for nearly 10 years in many regions of Brazil. SESI sought to stimulate corporal practices as a way to maintain health, by means of a program it classifies as a leisure activity.

To properly plan the corporal exercise, the proponents of the program needed to conduct a diagnosis of the movements that the workers conduct daily. Once this was completed, they selected exercises that could promote the movement of those parts of the body that are not solicited in that kind of work. This is known as compensatory gymnastics. The exercises for preparatory gymnastics (another classification) seek to activate the entire body, in order to prepare it for the day's activities. SESI of Minas Gerais was responsible for establishing a model for the program in Brazil and became a reference for ISO 9000. It created a *software* program with corporal exercises, of the compensatory type, which are linked to the body's organic functioning. The program is sold to companies throughout Brazil. These practices are exercise sessions with duration of 12 minutes, which are conducted at two different moments during each work shift, in the case of the factory studied.

TECHNOLOGY THAT ORGANIZES WORK THROUGH THE BODY THAT PRODUCES AND ALSO PLAYS

In the assembly of electrical motors the workers have their entire body in uninterrupted contraction, because of the general force and tension required by these movements and because of the need to produce a given quantity of pieces per day. Therefore, it was not by chance that the majority of those interviewed said that fatigue was the principal reason, as well as a lack of time and money, that they do not participate in leisure activities that take place in the city, outside of working hours.

Muscles are responsible for sustaining and moving the body. Command of the muscles is the responsibility of impulses originated in the nervous system, according to Schmolinsky (1982). To contract the muscles, we need these impulses and the more impulses that arrive to the muscles in less time, the faster and stronger are the contractions that will generate force. These impulses come from two regions of the brain: the pyramidal and the extrapyramidal, according to Schmolinsky. The impulses that come from the pyramidal tract are conscious and voluntary responses. Those that come from the extrapyramidal tract (and from certain complementary tracts) are the automatic stimuli (walking, for example). In static movements, it is possible to produce a maximum force, or that is, use maximum muscle tension. However, this maximum tension contracts the blood veins and does not allow a sufficient supply of nutrients and oxygen to the muscles. The metabolic residues are eliminated inefficiently and heat is also not eliminated. To maintain the muscular contraction, the nervous system does not interrupt the transmission of the impulses. This causes fatigue and tiredness.

It is of course possible to conduct a movement either to acquire strength, as in an exercise, or to assemble a motor. The organic process is the same. Concerning the physiological processes, it is known that for the physical capacities of strength and

1- The emphasis here on the corporal, is not to be understood in isolation from the mind, spirit, or ideas. The intention is to define this focus of the analysis by the specificities that are restricted to corporality. Gymnastics is understood as instructed corporal exercise that necessarily involves a theoretical systematization of movements. Labor gymnastics are therefore based on specific scientific studies that require conceptual, academic training of the gymnastic "teachers".

2- About this model of labor organization see Mauro Zilbovicius, 1993.

3- We did not go into greater depth here about the profile of the workers studied, nor into many details related to the type of productive activity, or to the history of the company that is linked to the history of the city of Jaraguá do Sul. Nor did we examine the Gymnastics at the Company program, as a product of the Industrial Social Service (SESI). The group studied was that which had the most amount of time practicing gymnastics.

4- This is an electrical motor factory, located in the city of Jaraguá do Sul, in Santa Catarina State, Brazil. The workers involved in the study are involved in the production of electrical motors. This company is the largest producer of electric motors in Latin America. It operates, with commercial success, throughout the entire world.

5- The company was chosen after research of information from various sources from the Study Center on Industrialization of Santa Catarina - CSE/UFSC, DIEESE, FIESC, SESI and the Escola Sul of CUT. They both indicated that this program met the needs of the study.

6- We did not find information about how and why this program arose in Brazil, nor with the workers of SESI in Minas Gerais or with the workers of the state administration of SESI/SC. We understand that this may indicate that the proposal was constructed without planning, as part of a trend or as an imitation. According to Costa (1990), the relationship between companies and physical education was organized during the rule of President Getulio Vargas, and made official for the first time in Decree Law nº 3.199 of April 14, 1941. The second wave of interest in the issue, according to the author, took place soon after the Second World War with the creation of the Industrial Social Service (SESI) agency and the Commercial Social Service (SESC) agency and Decree law 9.853 of 1946 which established compulsory payment of 1.5% of each company's payroll to these entities. For many years these so-called social-cultural and sporting-recreational institutions centralized, and in many ways still do, the promotion of leisure for workers. The third wave of interest in the issue, according to the author, began in the 1970's and was made effective in the 1980's when there was a reformulation of the concept and companies concentrated their sports and leisure activities on company grounds.

7- Information obtained from the state coordinator of SESI/SC program. More information was found at *http: //www.cds.ufsc.br/nupaf.html* and *http://www.fiescnet.com.br/SESI.* From my point of view and analysis, this understanding of active leisure and passive leisure is outdated, because the presumptions that guide this classification indicate that it is an expression of social fragmentation, to paraphrase Mészáros (1987): a form of "perfect social control". It can be said that the human being is a whole, if it is suffering, it is suffering as a whole, if it is happy, it is happy as a whole. It is known that there is no situation in which a person can be passive, except when they are dead. Even when sleeping, the metabolic processes, for example are active. Thus, we do not distinguish between active and passive leisure, but leisure activities that can be characterized as consumption, and leisure as an activity that promotes the human being in his or her playful dimension, obviously outside of labor hours (Sousa, 2002).

8- Information obtained in 2001 with the coordinator of gymnastics at SESI/SC.

9- ISO 9000: refers to " *International Organization for Standardization*, an entity that joins the normative agencies of 91 countries and publishes international norms" (Dieese, 1994, p. 103).

10- SESI selected an average of 100 exercises that can, notwithstanding the risk factors (which are surveyed in the diagnostics of the working conditions) improve the possible corporal alterations that occur because of the movement executed in the labor activities.

force, necessary for this type of work, to be at their maximum potential, some essential requirements must be met, because the movements of the body absorb these influences and can generate good or bad performance.

Fatigue and tiredness can occur in the realization of dynamic movement, but if we conduct these exercises with little repetition and in a short period of time (the twelve minutes of the gymnastics program meets this criteria) this probably will not happen; because this form of corporal exercise compresses the muscle fibers by extension and contraction. For this reason, this contraction compresses the blood that goes to the veins, the pressure is reduced and the blood is able to irrigate the tissue once again. The blood circulation is also improved, thanks to a true vascular massage; the nutrients and oxygen arrive with less difficulty and also provide relief to the nervous system, because the impulses are alternated.

Now the problem of a muscle that is always contracted and tense is that, in addition to consuming a lot of energy to maintain this condition, there is a shortening in the length of its fibers which limits its potential. The shortened muscles do not have as much energy, because they cannot contract very much. If a muscle is elongated, when there is a solicitation of contraction, the volume contracted is greater as is the strength produced. Thus, the body involved in production lacks the stimulus of the body that plays, since it is through this dimension that these factors are present (in the stretching, encouraged by the instructed relaxation).

It is known that the useful body, or that which produces, contemplates the functional dimension; it is that which is steered by biological factors (Rodrigues, 1980). However, we see that this same body that produces (reduced to the biological) also thinks, feels and plays, it simply needs to be solicited and taught to do so. It also feels emotion, paraphrasing the author named above, it is necessary to consider that “feeling emotion” is also a learned process and knowing how to identify it, is a process of apprehension of knowledge of human beings.

In this sense we imagine that, since expressing emotions (happiness) is permitted during gymnastic exercises, greater relaxation becomes indirectly possible in the dynamic of the activity. The body that is playing thus combines the polarity of tiredness and pleasure while involved in the relations experienced at work. The tiredness caused by producing electrical motors is forgotten by the happiness and the pleasure of the moment of gymnastics, because of the contact between the workers and the games they play. In practice, the body that plays is present without eliminating the body that produces. In this situation this body is no longer producing individually, because the workers are organized in production cells, they produce in a team, or in group; although there is almost no contact between them. On the other hand, in the practice of gymnastics there are other live bodies - playing. Many of the workers interviewed said that, although they work at the same place and often alongside each other, assembling motors, before the existence of the gymnastics they did not know each other.

The affirmation that there is greater contact between them reveals that this practice is in fact contributing to the idea (by the impression that it gives) that there is a type of sociability that is not objectified in the internal labor relations. We had the impression that, at this company, there is contact among the workers, or that is, humans are not objectified, in that they are considered a family. We found that company managers had an explicit interest in constantly maintaining friendly relations among the workers. Nevertheless, Marcuse (1981), sustained by Freud's studies, maintained that two principles govern the polarity between pain (that exhaustion that causes tiredness) and pleasure. One is the principle of reality (of performance) and the principle of pleasure, whose connection when alternated, in synthesis, can mobilize our energy for work with less pain and in this way consolidate a physiological equilibrium and the stability of the body that produces. It is worth saying, that it is not a more human sociabilization that is present, but it is a type of contact that inhibits the expression, by other means, of this polarity as a social product, considering that all of this takes place in the work environment.

There is a clear solicitation of the principle of performance of the body in this program which also has moments of stimulus to pleasure through gymnastics. Could it be that the program seeks to assure, as Marcuse (1981) identified, excellent conditions for productivity and to anesthetize the senses to a life of pleasure outside of work? In these conditions, because the human being is completely absorbed by work, when they leave the factory grounds, and have to conduct so many other activities to maintain their life, they do not even have a little time or disposition to do anything but that which is related to work. Most of those interviewed maintain that “when I get home, the exhaustion prevents me from doing anything”

It is known that the chronometry of time into hours is an imposition of the demands for the organization of work from the point of view of economic references (Cunha, 1987). Therefore, leisure activities cannot be subordinated to this measurement and cannot serve an economic or functional purpose (purely organic).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It can be concluded that this technology exceeds that of microelectronics, given the presence of a character that, in addition to instituting one more illusion in the life of workers, embodies subtle dimensions from the point of view of the relationship between body and mind and in its ideological character, because it concentrates the focus on the subjectivity of human beings. It should be said, they exercise the body and control the mind to achieve greater productivity at lower cost. These workers live for the Factory, and in it, subtly; there is a stimulating and productive mood in the internal work environment created by this technology, which encompasses the relationship between the body that produces, while it also plays in the concrete body, which is the same. Therefore, leisure must be offered at a time of its own, outside of working hours, in order to truly promote development of human beings' (Sousa, 2002) essential characteristics design, elaboration, imagination their transformative and creative capacities. This should be done with the support of social relations outside the Factory (outside the social relations of production) and thus far from the demands of an insane productivity. In sum, this technology exists to insure that workers' are destined to be dependent on their relation to productive work.

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11- One of the ideas promoted by the company is that they form a family.

12- This study appears to us sufficiently rich to later deepen it in relation to the biological and the social, perhaps from a perspective more centered on psychoanalysis.

13- It would be the calming of a possible revolt from this condition of extreme exhaustion. For example, with the political struggle for reduction of the work shift. The critical awareness of this is a consequence of the intensification of labor. But this requires time outside the Factory. An amount of available time that is sufficient to allow a worker to rest and restore organically, given that this is a natural and biological need. And, to even have other material conditions for this purpose, such as

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LABOR GYMNASTICS, IS CORPORAL EXERCISE LEISURE?

ABSTRACT

The object of this study is a gymnastics program and questions instructed corporal exercises conducted during work hours at a factory. The analysis is supported by data gathered in interviews, observations and various other types of instruments. It adopts a theoretical approach that supports the elaboration of an empiric category: labor gymnastics as technology for organizing labor, and not as a leisure activity. This practice is found to constitute a technology because it subjectively controls human beings. The gymnastics program is oriented by playful activities and seeks to establish an organic equilibrium in workers. The need is recognized to be properly prepared for the high productive requirement of labor relations. In this way a conjugation is established between the physiological equilibrium and the capacity to produce more and better. Nevertheless, it was seen that the principal consequence for the internal process of labor is to achieve a greater general disposition and not only an organic one. It was also perceived that the idea is promoted that since exercise is a corporal practice, it can be considered to be a leisure activity. As a result, it is essential that we make explicit that leisure, although it has a common root human activity with work, is different from work. Since leisure is a consequence of the social division of labor, it should not be explained by feelings or sensations (pain or pleasure) but by the type of social relationship that is established in the activity involved. Key words Labor gymnastics Technology to organize labor Labor x leisure.

GYMNASTIQUE DANS LE TRAVAIL, UN EXERCICE CORPOREL SERAIT-IL UN LOISIR ?

RÉSUMÉ

L'objet de cette recherche est un programme de gymnastique dont la problématique a attiré l'attention parce qu'elle questionne les exercices corporels orientés qu'on réalise pendant les heures de travail. Ces analyses s'appuient sur des données obtenues moyennant des entretiens, de l'observation et plusieurs autres sortes d'instruments. Elles ont pour base, aussi, une théorie qui affirme l'élaboration de la catégorie empirique : la gymnastique dans les lieux de travail en tant que technologie du travail et non pas du loisir. Cette pratique se constitue en une technologie quand elle se fait aider par la subjectivité dans le but de contrôler les êtres humains. Étant donné le besoin d'être convenablement disponible pour le haut niveau de sollicitation productive des rapports de travail, elle s'oriente dans le ludique et cherche son équilibre organique. De cette façon s'établit une harmonie entre l'équilibre physiologique et capacité de produire plus et mieux. On a vu, cependant, que la conséquence première, pour la procédure interne de travail, est celle d'obtenir une plus grande dispositon d'ensemble, non seulement organique. Il a été constaté, également, que puisqu'il s'agit d'une pratique corporelle, prédomine l'idée qu'il s'agit d'un loisir. En conséquence, il est fondamental de préciser que loisir, malgré la racine commune l'activité humaine- avec le travail, sont deux choses distinctes. En somme, il reste établi que ce n'est pas l'activité en soi qui caractérise loisir ou travail. Le loisir étant une conséquence de la division sociale du travail ne doit pas être exprimé à travers des sentiments ou sensations (douleur ou plaisir) mais par le genre de rapports sociaux qui s'établissent dans cette activité-là.

Mots-clé : Gymnastique dans le travail, Technologie organisatrice du travail, Travail X Loisir.

GIMNASIA EN EL TRABAJO: ¿UNA EJERCITACIÓN CORPORAL SERÍA OCIO?

RESUMEN

El objeto de esta investigación es un programa de gimnasia cuja problemática llamo la atención por decir respecto a cuestionamientos sobre una ejercitación corporal orientada que se realiza en el tiempo de trabajo. Estos análisis están subsidiadas en datos conseguidos por medio de entrevistas, observaciones y varios otros tipos de instrumentos; y también en un abordaje teórico que sustenta la elaboración de la categoría empírica: gimnasia laboral como tecnología organizadora del trabajo, y no práctica de ocio. Esa práctica se viene constituyendo como una tecnología al fundamentarse, y controlar, por la subjetividad, los seres humanos. Se orienta por lo lúdico y busca el equilibrio orgánico. Haya vista la necesidad de estar, adecuadamente dispuesto para el alto nivel de solicitación productiva de las relaciones de trabajo. De ese modo se establece una conjugación entre el equilibrio fisiológico y la capacidad de producir, más y mejor. Sin embargo, se vio que el principal desdoblamiento para el proceso interno de trabajo es conseguir una mayor disposición general y no apenas orgánica. Se percibió también que es pasada la idea que, por ser una práctica corporal, se está ejercitando ocio. Por consiguiente, es fundamental explicitar que ocio, a pesar de poseer una raíz común - la actividad humana -, con el trabajo, se distingue del. En fin, se ve que no es la actividad en si que caracteriza ocio o trabajo. Pues, el ocio siendo una consecuencia de la división social del trabajo no debe ser explicado por sentimientos, sensaciones (dolor o placer), mas por el tipo de relación social que se establece en aquella actividad. Palabras claves Gimnasia laboral- Tecnología organizadora del trabajo- Trabajo x Ocio.

GINÁSTICA NO TRABALHO, UMA EXERCITAÇÃO CORPORAL SERIA LAZER?

RESUMO

O objeto desta pesquisa é um programa de ginástica cuja problemática chamou atenção por dizer respeito à questionamentos sobre uma exercitação corporal orientada que se realiza no tempo de trabalho. Estas análises estão subsidiadas em dados conseguidos por meio de entrevistas, observações e vários outros tipos de instrumentos; e também numa abordagem teórica que sustenta a elaboração da categoria empírica: ginástica laboral como tecnologia organizadora do trabalho, e não prática de lazer. Essa prática vem se constituindo como uma tecnologia ao se fundamentar, e controlar, pela subjetividade, os seres humanos. Orienta-se pelo lúdico e busca o equilíbrio orgânico. Haja vista a necessidade de se estar, adequadamente disposto para o alto nível de solicitação produtiva das relações de trabalho. Desse modo se estabelece uma conjugação entre o equilíbrio fisiológico e a capacidade de produzir, mais e melhor. Porém, viu-se que o principal desdobramento para o processo interno de trabalho é conseguir uma maior disposição geral e não apenas orgânica. Percebeu-se também que é passada a idéia que, por ser uma prática corporal, está se exercitando lazer. Por conseguinte, é fundamental explicitarmos que lazer, apesar de possuir uma raiz comum - a atividade humana -, com o trabalho, distingue-se dele. Enfim, vê-se que não é a atividade em si que caracteriza lazer ou trabalho. Pois, o lazer sendo uma conseqüência da divisão social do trabalho não deve ser explicado por sentimentos, sensações (dor ou prazer), mas pelo tipo de relação social que se estabelece naquela atividade.

Palavras chaves Ginástica no trabalho - Tecnologia organizadora do trabalho - Trabalho x Lazer.