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LIFESTYLES OF WORKERS IN THE EXPATRIATION CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: To highlight and analyze lifestyles of expatriate workers.

Originality/gap/relevance/implications: Since the expatriation involves processes of deconstructing and reconstructing the self, it is important to recognize lifestyles invented or adapted during an international experience.

Key methodological aspects: Exploratory research with qualitative approach. Data collection was carried out through focus group with managers of the same company who shared similar expatriation experiences. The transcribed material was submitted to content analysis.

Summary of key results: The ways of moving around the city, the routine and the leisure activities, the sightseeing trips, the expatriation valuation and the abnegation as a way of life were observed according to control-stimulation perception. Such elements highlighted lifestyles based on the former life, in the control, in the abnegation and in the established period of validity. Proved to be consistent with immaterial labor logic that reaches the unprecedented life, requiring intellectual and affective mobilization of individuals to new situations and indicating both intensification of control and submission forms, with so far expected freedom.

Key considerations/conclusions: The lifestyles, common to all research participants, were molded, intertwined and intensified in each other. They resulted from the daily shock between the non-normalizing prescriptions and the plurality of possible options lived in expatriation.

KEYWORDS

Lifestyles. Self-management. Expatriation. Control-stimulation. Immaterial labor.

1 INTRODUCTION

Recent configuration of the work taken with respect to its non-materialization (Lazzarato & Negri, 2001; Gorz, 2005) led to a discussion that highlights the

problematization of lifestyles or mode of existence (Deleuze, 1998; Deleuze & Guattari, 1995; Pelbart, 2000; Bauman, 2001, 2007a, 2007b, 2011; Giddens, 2002).

Issues formerly linked to a life project, which presented as being long lasting and contemplated time for leisure and familiar relationships under the private life domain, for example, start to be involved by the worker/manager relationship constituting the capitalism core that reaches all the daily life spaces (Pelbart, 2000). A liquid life lived in a liquid and unpredictable environment of rapid flow, which cannot maintain the form or remain in its course for long periods of time, becomes noted (Bauman, 2007b). The always implicated lifestyles, in their turn, “constitute us on a way or another. [...] of no personal way, but the invention of a possibility of life, of a mode of existence” (Deleuze, 1998, p. 126, free translation). They present themselves as “routine practices, the incorporated routines in dressing habits, eating, mode of action and preferred places to meet others” (Giddens, 2002, p. 80, free translation).

The dynamics which takes work and life intertwined in all the circumstances has peculiarities related to the drop of time and space borders, the concreteness of which can be viewed on a marked way in the expatriation condition. Current phenomenon sometimes called professional mobility in order to assign the responsibility exclusively to the individuals, expatriation refers to a business need which is understood as a new symbolic capital in the organizational world (Freitas, 2009). The expatriation context is related to a lifestyle production due to its peculiar characteristics and for making imperative adaptations to the expatriates’ routine.

In addition, the shift from solid modernity to liquid modernity indicated the mobility as a coming characteristic (Bauman, 2001). Understood as a current organizational practice encouraged by the current management modes usual to the immaterial labor, expatriation can be viewed through the logic of the liquid-modern life on which the central point “is not the construction of identity, but escaping from staying” (Bauman, 2011, p. 123, free translation).

In expatriation context, taking into account the management perspective, strengthened in the form of self-management (Gaulejac, 2007), interest is put upon individuals with ability to transit in different situations, opened for continuous development experiences, directed toward strategic activities, analytical, symbolic and communication tasks, used to solve new problems when dealing with information and making decisions, in order to maximize the offer or services and competitiveness between the companies in the immaterial labor perspective (Lazzarato & Negri, 2001; Negri, 2003; Grisci, 2006). The immaterial labor announces increased freedom by decreasing alienation, borders and confinement spaces; however, it faces new and subtle control ways (Grisci, 2006). The expatriate worker is responsible for mobilizing the experiences and references of the country of origin and also for continuously pursuing personal development so as to

meet new situations related to the organization project. Therefore, it was considered pertinent to question: what lifestyles can be noted among expatriate workers?

In order to highlight and analyze the expatriate workers' life, an exploratory qualitative research was conducted with managers from the same company who shared similar expatriation experiences. The results indicated lifestyles based on the former life, in the control, in the abnegation and in the established period of validity.

This article is structured as follows: this introduction is followed by the literature review, methodological procedures, presentation and result analysis and the final considerations.

2 IMMATERIAL LABOR AND LIFESTYLES

This study is based on the discussion on the production of lifestyles (Deleuze, 1998; Giddens, 2002; Bauman, 2007b), compatible with the immaterial labor notion (Lazzarato & Negri, 2001; Negri, 2003; Gorz, 2005). Immaterial labor is understood as the set of activities inherent to the worker demanded as an indispensable requirement to production, sought in the "forms of a living knowledge acquired in the daily transit, belonging to the everyday culture" (Gorz, 2005, p. 9, free translation). Such activities require the full delivery of the individual to work, once "it is his/her personality and subjectivity that must be organized and commanded. Work quality and amount are reorganized around their immateriality" (Lazzarato & Negri, 2001, p. 25, free translation).

In the industrial production or in the service sector, the immaterial labor demands continuous personal development of a worker who must be "mobile, multiform and flexible" (Negri, 2003, p. 67, free translation). The self-production results in the accumulation of responsibilities in all the spheres of life (Negri, 2003) and valuation relies on here and now, in a perspective that gets close to the liquid life understood as "a succession of restarts" requesting "rapid and painless ends, without which restarting would be unthinkable" (Bauman, 2007b, p. 8, free translation).

Concerning this scenario of the liquid-modern society to contemplate the fluidity and obsolescence idea, Bauman and Dossal (2014) enter into a discussion that takes freedom and safety in a pendulum perspective. By moving between the pendulum's extremes, the individual sometimes feels free, sometimes feels safe, but unable to reach the balance between both. Close to this idea is the problematization of the lifestyles of expatriate workers who, in response to the immaterial labor requirements, oscillate between the two ends, and see themselves unable to reach the freedom without giving in exchange a part of safety, and vice-versa.

The expatriation experience can imply in giving up the safety related to the familiar environment; and acquisition of liberty upon the open opportunity that a geographic and culturally distant reality tends to provide. It can equally imply in giving up such freedom as a result of the commitment with the organizational project (Gaulejac, 2007) in face of the safety perspective the company lends to the individual abroad.

As a consequence, acting accordingly or limiting to the “short game” (Bauman, 2011, p. 122, free translation), is presented as an attempt to prevent “mortgaging the future” (Bauman, 2011, p. 154, free translation). In a society that requires rapid choices, safety and freedom portions are balanced as the demands appear, preventing, therefore, the anticipation of what will be given up in the future.

The notion of lifestyle could seem to be “a little trivial because it is many times thought only in terms of a superficial consumerism – lifestyles as suggested by the images seen in illustrated magazines and publicity” (Giddens, 2002, p. 79, free translation), but “a lifestyle can be defined as a more or less integrated set of practices that an individual takes” (Giddens, 2002, p. 79, free translation), what does not only mean an individual choice. As the author warns, there is something special that deserves to be highlighted and goes beyond such perception. In the current society we live in, the lifestyles are imposed, and the control-stimulation (Mansano, 2009) contributes for such appreciation, as it can be seen below.

3 CONTROL-STIMULATION AND SELF-MANAGEMENT

Control-stimulation refers to a way to connect individuals to discursive plans given as true and which form variable ways of life (Mansano, 2009). Run!, Move!, Consume! are examples, and result from the glamorous image of independence and freedom, which just for their idealized character become an object of desire and is positively valued in society. In addition, for the author,

[...] one of the discursive plans which are currently much disseminated and rapidly multiplied in our daily life is the so-called “watchword”. These call the population to the self – and the others’ control, complaint, observation, as well as to the exercise of a permanent evaluation which falls upon the activity, appearance, the others’ way of life (Mansano, 2009, p. 55, free translation).

The managerialist logic, which imposes the self-management compatible with the notion of immaterial labor, contemplates a dominant and invisible stimu-

lation for the worker not to be stopped, under the penalty of being replaced at any time. Mansano (2009) emphasizes the competitiveness and the unemployment rates as elements fomenting such adherence. And Freitas (2009) warns that there are companies that fire those who refuse expatriation or do not respond favorably to the cultural adaptation.

Bauman (2001) already noted changes in the labor logic and indicated a growing capital mobility, which would modify the entire scope of social relations. Such change would directly affect what we currently have as a management model, especially the managerialist management which imposes flexibilization as a rule. Under this perspective, the worker desired by companies is the one that takes risks and easily moves because of his/her profession, and thus,

[...] must be available to change job, place, way of life. The opposing one is listed as non-employable. The continuous adaptability to socioeconomic changes becomes a rule, particularly in the labor world, on which it is considered as a need. The managerialist management states that mobility is a progress factor once it encourages the initiative, the individual merit, the motivation to be successful and increase equality of opportunities (Gaulejac, 2007, p. 241, free translation).

Consequently, there is nothing else to the worker except accepting the “invitation” to mobility and enter into the fight for a position in organizational projects. Such projects mobilize the subjectivity in order that the adherence to the organizational objectives occurs with enthusiasm and spontaneity. The logic is no longer the management by orders, but that of a free adherence available for the companies (Gaulejac, 2007), as it is can be verified in the peculiarity of expatriation.

4 EXPATRIATION

Expatriation is defined by Caligiuri (2000) as the transfer of a professional from one country to another, in order to exercise a certain function, during a pre-defined period and upon a formal and legal process. Mobility, considered as a symbolic capital (Freitas, 2009), is exacerbated in the liquid-modern society where fluidity and drop of borders, among them, the geographical one, are highlighted.

Mccall and Hollenbeck (2003, p. 37, free translation) emphasize that “the expatriates work crossing borders – business, products, functions and country borders”. However, apart from the issues related to the professional opportunities, the experience of being an expatriate changes the individual’s life and

routine and his/her social environment, making a previous preparation with guarantees of what he/she will have to face difficult, and making him/her to change his/her way of being from the lived experience. Clearly, “living abroad, especially in a cultural environment very different from yours, is an experience which leads us to confusion. The reference schedules how structured our personality is not able to give a sense to the happenings harassing us” (Joly, 2009, p. 84, free translation).

Challenges related to expatriation, such as those related to process failures, essentially concerning the early return to the country of origin and the low retention of repatriates (Tung, 1984; Dowling, 1999; Hiltrop, 1999; Chew, 2004; Pattie & Parks, 2011), are recurrent approaches in international studies related to the subject matter. In the same strategic line of thinking expatriation and recognizing the “global executive” (Caligiuri & Stroh, 1995; Stroh & Caligiuri, 1998) analyses on how to select, develop, train and maintain workers who may work abroad are also frequent (Oddou, 1991, Arthur & Bennett, 1995, Riusala, 2000; Varner, 2002; Mol, Born, Willemsen, & Molen, 2005; Osman-Gani & Rockstuhl, 2009; Ramalu, Rose, Kumar, & Uli, 2010; Ko & Yang, 2011).

The efficacy of an expatriation experience appears as guaranteed since the learning prescribed by Mccall and Hollenbeck (2003) occurs so that the expatriate takes the first step in the international experience. They refer to the acquisition of a foreign language, knowledge concerning specific culture and peculiarities related to the life and work in foreign cultures. Expatriation further requires full availability with respect to other ways of living and loosening of pre-existing emotional ties. Freitas (2009, p. 249, free translation) provides us the argument required to relate expatriation and lifestyles.

Well, learning and capturing the diversity of the world may be a wish for the individual, but it is clearly an urgent need for the companies operating in a global market. Therefore, we understand that the glamorization of the professional mobility is intentional, planned and aims to encourage in the individual a powerful imaginary traveler, transforming this in a personal life project only.

If the move is to an unknown country, where it will be necessary to stay for a long period, the good and bad perceptions of the new parameters are enlarged, being crucial to brake codes originally established, because “it means another life, making new representations and giving different meanings to the thinks which were already familiar” (Freitas, 2000, p. 24, free translation). Joly (2009) contextualizes expatriation as an intercultural, psychic and emotional experience, which involves personal disruption and restructuring processes, something corroborated

by González and Oliveira (2011) and Freitas (2010). Therefore, it is important to recognize the invented or adapted lifestyles in international living.

For this study, the methodological procedure described below was used.

5 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURE

The exploratory qualitative research provided the approach of a subject matter with few systematized knowledge (Vergara, 2006), with respect to the adoption of lifestyles of workers in the expatriation context by means of control-stimulation (Mansano, 2009) and plurality of possible options (Giddens, 2002).

Except for the difference related to expatriation periods and the number of destination countries, the seven participants of this study work for the same Brazilian company of the metal-mechanic sector, subject to an internationalization movement, and shared similar expatriation experiences. This empiric reality was considered as convenient for the study considering that other studies related to expatriation tend to contemplate situations different from this one (Oddou, 1991; Arthur & Bennett, 1995; Riusala, 2000; Varner, 2002; Mol *et al.*, 2005; Osman-Gani & Rockstuhl, 2009; Ramalu *et al.*, 2010; Ko & Yang, 2011). Among the expatriation destinations, India was the country common to six men and one woman, with ages between 40 and 60 years. The fact that only one woman was part of this expatriate group reinforces other findings that indicate women at lower number among the expatriate workers (Altman & Shortland, 2008; Brookfield Global Relocation Services, 2014). It must be emphasized that five of the seven individuals remained in the country of destination for at least three years in their last expatriation experience. Chart 1 shows the specificities related to expatriation.

CHART 1

CHARACTERIZATION OF THE INTERVIEWED INDIVIDUALS

PARTICIPANTS	GENDER	COUNTRY OF DESTINATION	LAST COUNTRY OF DESTINATION	PERIOD OF THE LAST EXPATRIATION
E1	M	Mexico, India	India	42 months
E2	M	India	India	36 months
E3	F	India	India	39 months
E4	M	Mexico, India, Argentina	Argentina	24 months
E5	M	India	India	38 months

(continue)

CHART I (CONCLUSION)

CHARACTERIZATION OF THE INTERVIEWED INDIVIDUALS

PARTICIPANTS	GENDER	COUNTRY OF DESTINATION	LAST COUNTRY OF DESTINATION	PERIOD OF THE LAST EXPATRIATION
E6	M	Portugal, Russia and India	India	36 months
E7	M	India, China and Russia	Russia	13 months

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The data collection, occurred in 2014, was carried out through a focus group with these seven participants, in their working hours and sites, with an approximate length of two hours. The focus group, recorded by means of a digital recorder with the participant's consent, used the request for them to talk about their experience concerning expatriation as stimulation. It was decided to use such technique considering the possibility of the participants to have shared living and experiences, so that the speech of one of them favors the speech of the other(s), contributing in remembering the facts or in the development of explanations. The recording was fully transcribed and the recorded material intended to support the content analysis evidenced the pertinence of the collection technique with respect to the study objective.

The content from the focus group was submitted for analysis according to Minayo's (2001) guidance. For that purpose, the following steps were sequentially conducted: 1. reading and organization of the transcribed material so as to divide it into sense units; 2. gathering of the sense units into collective categories, considering the previous study categories – expatriation and lifestyle; 3. exploration of the categorization result allowing to verify lifestyles based on the former life, in the control, in the abnegation and in the established period of validity; 4. interpretation of the results in view of the theory.

This analysis procedure is justified by allowing to present and to discuss, from the study purpose, collective categories related to the lifestyle of expatriated workers. The speeches illustrating them were overwhelming with respect to the thinking or feeling presented by the group of expatriate workers of this study.

6 RESULTS AND ANALYSES

6.1 LIFESTYLES IN EXPATRIATION CONTEXT

The following actions were evidenced in the conjugation related to expatriation, which precedes the arrival to the destination country.

Verbs conjugated before the departure. Preparing for an environment that is more difficult than the environment known so far. Studying, researching and counting on the references of those who preceded them in the expatriation experience. Consenting with the rules established by the company. Anticipating the possible difficulties to be lived. And imagining the way of life to come. Some aspects showed to be favorable to the individuals, but not enough in face of the other conjugations upon arrival to the destination country.

Verbs conjugated upon arrival. Shocking with reality. Being hurt due to loneliness. Asking what he/she was doing in such a place. Such conjugations remained or unfolded in face of the plurality of possible options (Giddens, 2002).

Verbs conjugated in the daily life during expatriation. Shocking and asking were continuously present. Living, in the sense that nothing replaces the living itself. Getting used to, accommodating, getting depressed, bearing, interacting, gaining confidence, improvising, learning were the verbs excessively conjugated by the expatriates, sometimes in singular, sometimes in plural. Sometimes in harmony, sometimes in cacophony.

I spent months living in a place where the neighbors did not even greet me (E1)
[...] getting time to gain confidence [...] over the time you finally gain confidence (E7)
Let's go and see what happens (E2)
We learn a lot (E2)
You learn to value everything (E3).

The conjugation follows the logic of adherence to the organizational goal, as suggested by Gaulejac (2007), but it has also shown to be open, and in no way personal, to remind Deleuze (1998). From the conjugation of the daily actions, expatriates' lifestyles were observed.

6.1.1 Lifestyles based on the former life

Life abroad reserved embarrassing and surprising situations to the expatriates, particularly to those considered as unadvised. The individuals sought to protect themselves from unexpected situations seeking for information about the country of destination in their relationship network, books and content published in the internet, and also sought to maintain close to them elements comprising their daily life in the country of origin.

Revealing that the "people are prisoners of the happenings and pre-constructed situations" (Giddens, 2002, p. 70, free translation), the individuals evidenced the importance of the search for information.

Before going, of course, I got information with the friends who had been there, with colleagues who were still there at that time (E3).

I was able to talk to a person who lived there. He was in Mexico and met me and told me a series of things about the expectation, concerning the city, habits, basic food issues, then we make questions trying to make the future environment better known... for me it was an estimate of what was going to happen. Nothing better than having someone who was already there to say. When I came back, I said: 'Well, the things you told me really happened, and very precisely' (E1).

Arriving in Mumbai at 03:00 a.m., an infernal heat and you say: 'Where did I arrive?'. Then, the preparation was reading a little bit, but nothing replaces what you live, nothing replaces that (E4).

Reports of experiences lived abroad provided the future expatriates with certain predictability, but did not prevent the surprises of experience, "nothing replaces that" (E4). There is an obligation of "making a rupture more or less complete with the past, if necessary, and you must contemplate new courses of action which cannot be simply guided by established habits" (Giddens, 2002, p. 72, free translation).

Supported by the experience of expatriate colleagues and in their former life in the origin country, the participants made efforts to balance the baggage content to the received information, to the environment they have found and to the possibilities to individually and collectively organize the time. The dialogue sequence allows us to see the melody's harmony.

We drank mate every day, every day... (E6)

And the cheese and salami... (E4)

"Salami, cheese and mate... (E3)

Velho Barreiro Cachaça... (E6)

Pork meet... (E1)

The bags were food bags. One of the times, they took two or three kilos of pine nuts (E3).

The life planning gains importance and "it is a way to prepare a course of future actions mobilized in terms the individuals' biography" (Giddens, 2002, p. 83, free translation). The significant events experienced in other countries started to make part of the expatriate's life, forcing them to "maintain a dialog with the time [what] means to identify the stress causing events (real events in the past and events subject to be found in the future) and understand their impli-

cations” (Giddens, 2002, p. 70, free translation). The stress resulting from the shock with the culture was recurrent in the expatriation situation, although it was different from country to country – Portugal and Mexico were considered as better experiences than Russia and India; and by the time of expatriation – the first group expatriated to India faced more deprivations than the following ones concerning food, hygiene and hosting.

In India, we did not stay in houses, it was not the safety issue, it was really the basic sanitation issue (E3)

The best clothes we had were washed by ourselves [...] the worst difficulty we had there was food. In the first week, we had 28 ill people (E2)

Considered as aces in the hole, the information attenuated the insecurity of the future expatriates guiding them for the solution of routine problems. To some extent “the selection or creation of lifestyles is influenced by group pressures and by the visibility of models” (Giddens, 2002, p. 81, free translation) supported in the former life. Such pressures also indicated another category of analysis presented below.

6.1.2 Lifestyles based on the control

Although it seems that the individual has a free will to adopt his/her lifestyle, the context and the interaction delimit the options and all the individuals watch each other in order to maintain themselves cohesive with respect to the organizational goal. E2, one of the managers transferred to India, reported how the relationship with the team was in that specific situation:

We had an obligation with the 70 workers who were there under our responsibility. We were there as group leaders, then, we had to take care of the others, we had the obligation to maintain them motivated and not to bring them with problems. We were concerned with the fact that if people did something, the company was responsible. ‘How did the company allow that?’ Then, we took great care. We thought about going to Thailand two, three times, but it did not work... we did not go, among other reasons, because we did not want to be considered as bad examples (E2).

His speech reminds Mansano’s (2009) discussion concerning the current devices that promote the disseminated surveillance and, in case of the expatria-

tes, are evidenced in the aspects related to the ways of moving around the city, to the sightseeing trips, to the habits and customs, and to the relationships with the opposite sex, as illustrated below.

We walked around as a group there (E3).

The kids [young workers] knew everything. They were constantly checking, checking and knew everything [...] Then, if people got out, we were very careful, the kids wanted to get out, particular those who were working there in the painting sector... No and no! [...] At night, they started drinking alcohol... and we had to say: 'alcohol only on the weekend and it is only on Saturday night' [...] Any harassment against a woman was a risk. 'Do not seek, do not do, no, no and no, respect that!' (E2).

The devices produced lifestyles based on the control. They subtracted the idealization of a previously glamorized "powerful imaginary traveler" (Freitas, 2009, p. 249) from the expatriation experience. Based on the organizational project, the devices reached the life in its entirety. They resulted in personal renounces that characterized lifestyles based on abnegation.

6.1.3 Lifestyles based on abnegation

Although personal renounces on behalf of the organizational project are evidenced over the professional career, they showed to be exacerbated in the expatriation context. An international assignment, despite of being part of the success imaginary and, for this reason, apparently validating any effort, requires the individual to be able to give up routine habits and customs adapting himself/herself to a new lifestyle.

Personal renounces related to freedom and safety has shown to be common in the expatriate life. In order to feel safer or freer, the individuals oscillated in the abnegation of safety and freedom parts, in a pendulum movement (Bauman & Dessal, 2014).

The routines acquired in the course of life helped them to compose a worldview and to formulate an emotional acceptance of reality. When talking about his experience in Russia, E7 remembered the emotional shocks experienced in the country, the necessary connection with the "safe existence" (Giddens, 2002) of the former life and the indispensable effort of silencing himself in order to meet the goals established by the company, in accordance to the immaterial labor logic:

The climate was also detrimental, practically six months of cold and snow; the temperature generally under 30 degrees is very depressing. This was the greatest difficulty to be handled, being so far away. You do not see the sun or people on the streets, if you want to see somebody you have to go to restaurants, bars [...]. We have to improvise a lot, to be very creative to reach the goal proposed when we leave here.

Other speeches complemented and highlighted the abnegation required and imposed by the scenario.

Sometimes we got to seat somewhere else and be thinking out loud: 'We fell like...' but it is not possible, because we had to motivate all the rest that came with us, then, if you are feeling bad, how can you manage to motivate the rest? Then, there is no chance for mistakes, for sadness. We had to be motivated so that we could motivate [...] And how to convince our staff? They were guys at the age of 21, 22. How will they manage to stay two years there? Without any contact? There is no bar, no restaurant, no nightclubs, you work from Monday to Sunday, we worked on many Sundays. What type of life will they have there? (E2).

The precarious conditions were attenuated compared to the exhaustive work routine which contributed to minimize the criticism.

We worked six days a week. We never arrived at the hotel before 08:00 p.m., 09:00 p.m." (E5)

We always worked on Saturdays and Sundays. In the evening, up to 10:00 p.m., every day [...] there was no weekend (E2)

We worked 75 km far from home, 150 km a day (E6).

To the collective valuation of abnegation reported by the conditionings established in the group (Giddens, 2002) and to the capacity to overcome in face of the imposed difficulties, small confrontation acts were joined legitimizing expatriation in favor of the organizational project and career:

When I was longing, I used to drink a whiskey, a beer and sleep (E4)

When longing arrived, we did not do anything, there was no time for that [...] they learned to go shopping, in that remaining time the personnel went to a *shoppin-zinho* [portuguese diminutive form for shopping center] (E5)

And...bought some *bolachinhas* [portuguese diminutive form for snacks]... (E4)

In the few remaining time, the options were very limited in fact (E5).

The sequence of the dialogue established in the cross-linked conversation, as well as the use of words in the diminutive form, indicate that the confrontation acts, although fragile, were essential for maintaining abnegation.

To the confrontations, the previously contracted expatriation period was associated as an element intended to soften the difficulties, as indicated in the literature (Caligiuri, 2000), constituting lifestyles based on the established period of validity.

6.1.4 Lifestyles based on established period of validity

Lifestyles based on the period of validity are supported under the view that “life is a project, a goal” (E2), indicating the total availability of the individuals’ life for work. This led them to feel that

[...] ‘the return before two years will only occur in case of a very severe health problem or in case of problems in the family, otherwise, nobody returns before two years, do we have a deal? Who is not willing to go, do not go’. But nobody gave up. Some of them cried, but they went [...]. And there are times that you say: only those who are willing to go will go. And it does not work this way. Sometimes, it is negotiation, ‘but we need you’, transforming such ‘we need’ into motivation. ‘Come on, it is two years, it is tough and such, but we will be together, day and night, we will be working’. And when we have a cohesive group, a united group, motivated, the difficult is overcome by such set that exists and you learn with people (E2).

When the period exceeded what has been initially proposed, a decrease in tolerance was common and the wish to return increased.

I started to get depressed after two years, when it reached three years I could not stand it anymore, I wanted to come back and the family wanted to stay. When I returned I was happy, I was in my homeland, with my habits, the things that I like (E6).

Getting rid of the things, detach from the ties and facilitate the continuous restarts with painless ends (Bauman, 2007b), with the perspective of playing a “short game” (Bauman, 2011, p. 122), was something noted when departing and returning to the country of origin. “I think that you have to close, to lock your life here and freeze your life and start as if you were living a new phase” (E3).

The continuous restarts represented life intervals and “if the person keeps on comparing, life will become a hell” (E1). Life was characterized by intervals and started to be lived under the perspective that limits it to restarts with delimited starts and ends, in view of the liquid life.

The established period of validity has shown to be a decisive support to the expatriate life. Giddens (2002) argues that by being committed to a lifestyle, the individual usually has difficulty to accept other modes of existence, what was possible to note in the E4’s speech about the daily life with the residents of one of the countries of destination for expatriation. “We are impacted, but you start making part of their daily lives and that does not hurt you as before, you start getting accustomed to, you are not getting used to, but accustomed to”. In this case, the expatriates felt supported with the date established for their return.

The company gave the opportunity to the workers to return to Brazil at intervals of 75 to 90 days for visiting their families, what has shown to be valued in the speeches of those who positively evaluated the possibility to see their family and friends again in this interval of time.

My home and my family continued here, my home has ever been here. In fact, I relate the home with the family. Then, when I was returning to the hotel, I was returning to my base. When I was returning to Brazil, I was returning to my home (E3).

Interlaced and consonant with the established period of validity, words like home, longing and family acquired other senses in the expatriation context. To their home, they attributed senses just like a place to return, what could be the hotel; the place where the family is; the place for vacation. To longing, the senses of something to be administered; very difficult experience and something complicated anywhere; and something expressed in hours of displacement to arrive home, “approximately 50 hours from India to Brazil” (E4). To the family, they attributed senses of living with coworkers, something that did not happen in the country of origin; of intensification of the relationship with the family who accompanied the expatriate; of relationships intermediated by technology, “I had lunch with my parents through *Skype*” (E3). Anyway, it should be considered that “when the borders between the spaces are erased, everything is school, and everything is company, and all is family” (Pelbart, 2000, p. 30, free translation).

It follows below the study conclusion.

7 CONCLUSION

This study investigated the lifestyles noted among expatriated workers, from the theoretical support related to lifestyles (Deleuze, 1998; Giddens, 2002; Bauman, 2007b), to self-management (Gaulejac, 2007) and to expatriation (Cali giuri, 2000; Freitas, 2009) in the immaterial labor logic (Lazzarato & Negri, 2001; Negri, 2003; Gorz, 2005).

The analysis indicated lifestyles resulting from conjugations related to what the individuals incorporated as pertinent or non-pertinent under the view of the company management in the country of origin and took with them abroad, and to the plurality of possible options in the expatriation experience. The ways to walk around the city, the routine and leisure activities, sightseeing trips, and valuation of expatriation and abnegation as a way of life were seen under the control-stimulation perspective (Mansano, 2009), and visualized lifestyles based on the former life; on the control; on abnegation; and on the established period of validity. Under the managerialist management logic, the lifestyle presented by such expatriates is consistent with the *a priori* allowed life.

Understood as control-stimulation, even if not verbalized, some imperatives – Agree! Detach! Make efforts! Hold on! Participate! Motivate! Take care! Give the example! Respect! Communicate! Learn! Develop! – were incorporated into the individuals’ routines, whether in a barbecue on the weekend, drinking mate, listening to Mass on the radio, walking in groups or when packing the bags. They sanctioned and interdicted lifestyles. They have shown to be compatible with the immaterial labor logic that reaches the unprecedented life (Pelbart, 2000), requiring intellectual and affective mobilization of the individuals to new situations, and indicating both intensification of control and submission forms, with so far expected freedom. Freitas’s (2009) statements were corroborated in the sense that mobility is not only an individual aspiration, and intentional glamorization is not always supported.

It is worth emphasizing that the lifestyles showed to be common to all the individuals and although they have been separately presented, they molded, intertwined and intensified themselves in each other. They resulted from the daily shock between the non-normalizing prescriptions and the plurality of possible options lived in expatriation. Such modulation occurred in the “conjunction ‘and... and... and...’”. Such conjugation has sufficient power to shake and root out verb to be. “Where are you going to? Where are you coming from? Where do you want to go? These are useless questions” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1995, p. 18, free translation), in face of the imposed lifestyles with views to the adherence to the organizational project.

Among the pertinences/non-pertinences shared by the expatriates, concerning the actions and intentions, it is not up to judge what “is right, is wrong” (Deleuze, 1998, p. 125, free translation). They contemplate, through control-stimulation, what will delimit the lifestyles to be experienced in expatriation conditions. With this respect, concerning the conduction of a single focus group, the choice for the technique has shown to be appropriate once the individuals reported their experiences supported in each other, without moral judgments. They shared a view that may come to benefit other professionals who may be in expatriation experience, as well as it contributes to management perspective. For future studies, it is suggested to expand and deepens the analysis in order to reach the individuals for whom expatriation has become a constant in the professional career, as well as the understanding of the strategy of living the life evidenced by them.

ESTILOS DE VIDA DE TRABALHADORES EM CONTEXTO DE EXPATRIAÇÃO

RESUMO

Objetivo: Destacar e analisar estilos de vida de trabalhadores expatriados.

Originalidade/lacuna/relevância/implicações: Importa reconhecer estilos de vida que são inventados ou adaptados na vivência internacional, uma vez que a expatriação envolve processos de desestruturação e reestruturação de si.

Principais aspectos metodológicos: Pesquisa exploratória de orientação qualitativa. A coleta de dados realizou-se por meio de grupo focal, com gestores de uma mesma empresa que compartilharam semelhantes experiências de expatriação. O material transcrito foi submetido à análise de conteúdo.

Síntese dos principais resultados: Os modos de circular pela cidade, as atividades rotineiras e de lazer, viagens de turismo, e a valorização da expatriação e a abnegação como modo de ser foram vistos na perspectiva do controle-estimulação. Entrelaçadas e consoantes ao prazo de validade estabelecido, palavras como casa, saudade e família adquiriram outros sentidos em contexto de expatriação. Tais elementos visibilizaram estilos de vida pautados na vida pregressa; no controle; na abnegação; e no prazo de validade estabelecido. Mostraram-se condizentes com a lógica do trabalho imaterial que alcança a vida sem precedentes, requerendo mobilização intelectual e afetiva dos sujeitos às situações que lhes são inéditas, e apontando tanto acirramento de formas de controle e submissão, como liberdades até então aguardadas.

Principais considerações/conclusões: Os estilos de vida, comuns a todos os sujeitos, moldaram-se, entrelaçaram-se e intensificaram-se uns nos outros. Produziram-se do embate diário entre as prescrições não normatizadoras e a pluralidade de opções possíveis vivida na expatriação.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Estilos de vida. Gestão de Si. Expatriação. Controle-estimulação. Trabalho imaterial.

ESTILOS DE VIDA DE TRABAJADORES EN CONTEXTO DE EXPATRIACIÓN

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Desarrollar y analizar estilos de vida de los trabajadores expatriados.

Originalidad/laguna/relevancia/implicaciones: Se pretenden reconocer estilos de vida inventados o adaptados de la experiencia internacional, y la implicación de la expatriación en tales procesos de reestructuración y desestructuración.

Principales aspectos metodológicos: Investigación exploratoria de orientación cualitativa. La recogida de datos fue realizada conjuntamente por un grupo de trabajadores de campo así como por los gestores de una misma empresa que compartieron experiencias de expatriación similares. El material transcrito fue sometido a un análisis de contenido.

Síntesis de los principales resultados: El modo de circular por la ciudad, las actividades rutinarias y de ocio, el turismo, y las valorizaciones de expatriación y abnegación como modo de ser, fueron analizados desde una perspectiva de control-estimulación. La conexión con el periodo de validez, y palabras como casa, nostalgia y familia adquieren otros significados en el contexto de la expatriación. Tales elementos mostraron estilos de vida pautados en edades tempranas; en el control; en la abnegación y en el plazo de validez establecido. Los resultados fueron acordes con la lógica del trabajo inmaterial lo que adquiere una relevancia sin precedentes. Esta relevancia requiere de una movilización intelectual y afectiva de los sujetos a las situaciones que les son inéditas, remarcando tanto el aumento de las formas de control y sumisión, como las libertades hasta entonces esperadas.

Principales consideraciones/conclusiones: Los estilos de vida comunes para todos los participantes, se moldearon, entrelazaron e intensificaron entre sí.

Éstos fueron producidos por el impacto diario de las recetas médicas irregulares y de la pluralidad de las opciones vividas en la expatriación.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Estilos de vida. Gestión personal. Expatriación. Control-estimulación. Trabajo inmaterial.

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