



180.1 - Work Contexts and Pharmaceuticalization: Theoretical and Empirical Challenges

 Tuesday, 23 February 2021

 20:45 - 21:00

Abstract

Based on empirical information obtained through an ongoing research project funded by the Portuguese national funding agency for science, research and technology and in the (scarce) sociological literature on the subject, this communication proposes revisiting the dissemination of pharmaceuticalization. This will be achieved through a reflection on the theoretical and empirical challenges that arise from analysis and research on the relationship between organizational and professional transformations that have been verified in work contexts with implications on changes in the nature of work and the use of medicines, food supplements or others natural products by professionals to enhance their physical, intellectual and social performance (here designated as performance consumptions), within their work place.

This approach focuses on the analysis of the performance consumptions on the transformations of the professional work contexts, in different dimensions, such as the organization of work, technologization of the work process, standardization of professional tasks, unpredictability of occurrences and work situations, new practices and routines, polyvalence and multifunction/multicompetence, extension and irregularity of schedules, increase of workload together with the reduction of deadlines for completing tasks, new forms of relationship with the public. We propose to analyze how these changes, concerning the various aspects of the nature of work and the contextual conditions in which it is developed, marked by increasing pressure on work performance with consequent heightened demands on physical and/or cognitive/mental performance, lead to changes in strategies to manage performance. In particular, in the social practices and dispositions of adherence or resistance to the different types of natural and pharmaceutical resources, mobilized for the work performance expressed, for example, in memory enhancement, sleep management, weight loss, bodybuilding, combat physical and mental fatigue, anxiety control and ability to concentrate. The empirical support for this approach concerns three professional groups associated with contexts of high pressure for performance.

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