



Workers' Resistance in the Area of Degradation at Work in Cold Stores

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Introduction: Work in Brazilian cold stores, and throughout the world, is marked by intense degradation of work. Working conditions in this sort of employment require very repetitive movements often causing repetitive strain injuries (RSI/WMSD) and mental disorders. It is a fact that in Brazil to-day 23% of all cold store workers are out of work or waiting court decisions with regard to work-related illnesses. This situation is also true in the west of the state of Paraná, one of the principal regions for cold stores in Brazil. The number of adverse health conditions noted in western Paraná in the course of our mastership research led us to consider cold store factories from the perspective of the workers as part of degradation of labour. Obviously, we began with an understanding of the multi-dimensional nature of the field. And, from this observation, it was noted that, if the factory cold store takes up space to increase surplus value, this can cause effects which subject workers to degrading work conditions which can affect their health. Here are the areas of degradation of labour. **Development:** The objective of this PhD is to understand the collective resistances built by workers in western Paraná. Thus, the methodology of the research agenda will prioritize both quantitative character and qualitative approach. With regard to the first item, we will try to investigate the number of work-related diseases in cold stores in western Paraná, mainly by seeking information from the Ministry of Labour (MPT) and Social Security data. With respect to qualitative methodology, we will make use of oral history, interviewing workers, trade unionists and members of collective associations in order to understand how the problem of working conditions in cold stores in the region is being tackled. The combination of these two approaches will contribute to achieving the objectives of the research. **Final considerations:** In short, it can be seen that there are some pointers in the building of resistance in western Paraná which is not part of the main thrust of union action. An Association for Patients with RSI has been among the first to oppose despotism in factory cold stores, reporting cases to the MPT, organizing demonstrations in defense of workers' health, and winning some important judicial results for all workers. Thus, our main hypothesis is that the union action in western Paraná state hasnot been the workers' base and that they have sought other forms of organization such as the AP-LER to represent them. This points to the need to think, discuss and, if possible, modify the role of trade unions in contemporary Brazil, which have limits imposed mainly by the structure of the union within the state.

Keywords: Work; field; workers' health; resistance.