Socialization Process in the Brazilian Public Sector: The Case of Petrobras

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ABSTRACT: *This research explores socialization in the Brazilian public sector (BPS) and Petrobras, the largest semi-public company in the country. It investigates the challenges faced by new employees and the factors influencing socialization in the public sector. Using Behavioral Event Interviews with experts, the study aims to understand how dissatisfied employees handle their relationship with work and the company when they perceive no risk of being fired. It also explores the situation when new employees reach their limit of coping but choose not quitting the job due to the high investment and benefits. The study also examines how the socioeconomic context influences socialization in the public sector, as new employees expect to spend their entire productive years in the company until retirement.*

KEYWORDS: Socialization process; Social Interactionism; Brazil; Public sector

INTRODUCTION

Socializing refers to engaging in social interactions and participating in societal gatherings. The fundamental implication of this statement is that it involves a procedure connected to acquiring knowledge and uniting people and social groupings in various situations (Saks & Ashforth, 1997). This paper is a component of the PhD thesis authored by one of the authors (Aylmer, 2019).

Socialization in organizational studies refers to preparing new members to join an existing group. This involves adapting to the group's norms and values, as well as learning to think and behave in ways that are considered appropriate by the group. Socialization aims to enable individuals to become active and contributing members of the group. Various researchers have explored this topic, including Levine (1982, 2001), Persell (1990), Black and Ashford (1995), De Vos et al. (2003), De Vos and Freese (2011), Myers and Oetzel (2003), Myers and Sadaghiani (2010), Van Maanen and Schein (1979), and Wang et al. (2015, 2011). *Socialization* is the process by which a person acquires the behaviors, attitudes, and information necessary to become a group member. The business environment refers to joining an organization as a member (Bauer et al., 1998; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979; Cable & Parsons, 2001).

The importance of researching the socialization process in the Brazilian public sector (BPS), although focused on one unit of analysis (Petrobras), goes beyond numbers and productivity; it touches the realm of physical and mental health, exposing a hidden aspect of promised land and, therefore, demanding from HR staffs and managers, mentioned here as supervisors, a closer look to their role as people enablers since day one, mainly in the Brazilian State-owned companies (SOC) that compete equally with private companies in the market, but with legal restrictions and limitations.

This article presents the analysis of the findings that came from raw data collected in N=13 interviews, or units of analysis (Yin, 1988). The findings are related to the research questions, drivers of the present work, however, they also presented unexpected elements that surprised the researcher either for its incidence and its severity and harm for newcomers' socialization in the BPS.

METHODOLOGY

This research study is an exploratory approach that uses qualitative, inductive, interpretive, constructionist, idiographic, and cross-sectional methods. The study involves conducting qualitative in-depth interviews and Behavioral Event Interviews (BEI) supported by toy-based research, specifically LEGO® Serious Play®. We followed the coding process and triangulation techniques proposed by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009) and Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) and used the Gioia method (Corley & Gioia, 2011; Gioia et al., 2013) with the assistance of CAQDAS Nvivo, and Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel software. Thirteen interviews were conducted during two periods (2016 and 2018), and the raw data was recorded via audio and video. The data was further analyzed following the methods proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), Corley & Gioia (2011), and Gioia et al. (2013).

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

An analysis was conducted to investigate the significance of supervisors and peers in the BPS (Brazilian Public Sector). The study focused on the key advantages of decent earnings and work security, particularly valuable in light of the unpredictable Brazilian economy. This fact presents a significant deterrent to leaving the BPS since the costs are much higher than other options, referred to

as side bets (Becker, 1960). During the interviews, other factors emerged that had yet to be previously taken into account, such as the significance of organizational reputation as a determining factor in selecting a public profession. Another remarkable aspect the family asserts is their resilience and unwavering commitment to work obligations, to the extent that leaving a job is entirely unthinkable. Nevertheless, the interviews revealed that the most unexpected problem was the clear recollection of the initial distress and the development of psychological conditions (such as worry and fear) and physical ailments (such as persistent headaches and stomachaches), which are often referred to as common mental diseases (CMD). The discussion of these components will be presented together in chapter 5.

The interviews were conducted solely with Petrobras' workers in Rio de Janeiro, who were accepted via a formal contest approval process. Outsourced employees were excluded from the interviews due to the differences in their labor contracts, particularly regarding job security and other perks. The disparities in the labor agreement result in a noticeable difference in the workers' mentality. This distinction may be illustrated in the "brown tags," which refer to the outsourced labor, instead of the "green tag." Within the Petrobras workforce, the brown tags are renowned for their unwavering commitment and diligence in maintaining a superior performance rating, ensuring retention in future contracts. This field observation was noted in almost all casual conversations with respondents and others from the locations.

To mitigate the influence of Elite Bias (Myers & Newman, 2007), a diverse group of employees from various ranks were included in the study. This group consisted of high-level managers (HLM) who oversee other managers, as well as low-level managers (LLM) who supervise specialists (S) and technicians (T). The average tenure of these employees is ten years, encompassing both those who joined the organization after a prolonged period without public tender and new hires. The Petrobras' public tender has two distinct options, one for university-educated staff and another for non-graduates. These options include variations in income and career prospects, which this research will not examine. All 13 interviewees were from administrative areas, not operational areas like offshore and industrial ones. This distinction may indicate a cultural difference in routine, safety requirements, and specific production indicators. Therefore, a more comprehensive analysis is needed to account for these differences.

The primary data was obtained from the semi-structured Behavioral Event Interviews (BEI, Delorme, 2007; McLelland, 1961, 1973), supplemented by research utilizing Toy models or LEGO Serious Play (LSP) techniques. During the interviews, participants constructed symbolic and metaphorical models that evoked vivid memories of their initial experiences upon joining the company. By presenting these models to the interviewer, participants were able to recall and express the emotions associated with these experiences (Frick et al., 2013; James, 2013; Kristiansen et al., 2009). For clarification, the image below depicts a double-sided model that includes both good and negative experiences of BEI (Behavioral Event Interview). The interviewee's characterization of each portion is also included in the image, as seen in Figure 1:
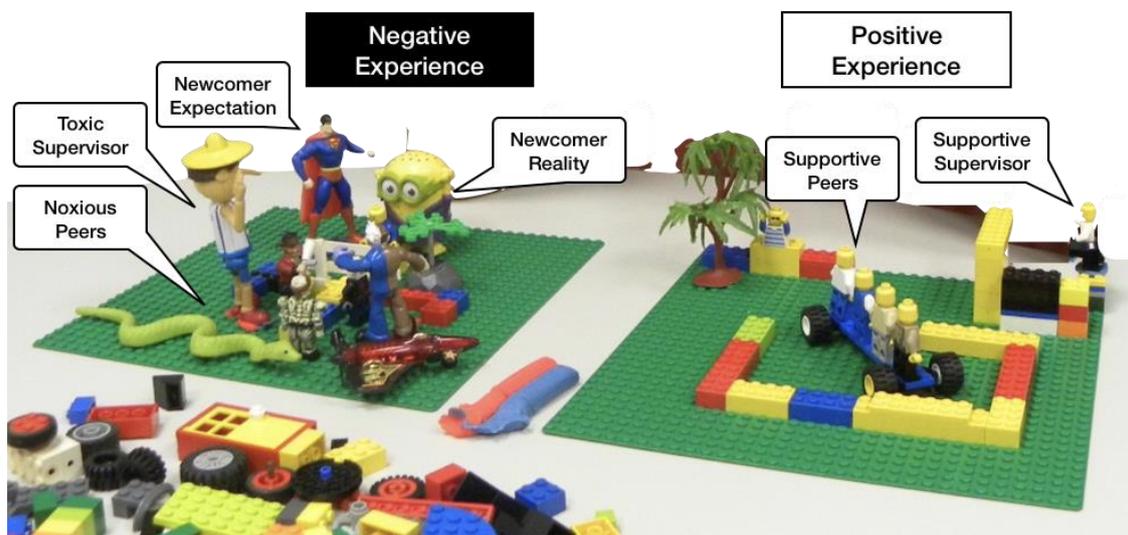
Figure 1 BEI toy model with Negative (left) and Positive (right) socialization experiences.
Source: Aylmer, 2019. Reprinted under permission

All the N=13 interviews were audio and video recorded, and field notes were extensively taken, to give growing support understanding over the interviews. The recording transcriptions were kept using the interviewees' native language, Brazilian Portuguese, and only translated into English after the coding process was complete. This choice also held the analysis preserving the interviewee's voice and perspective, trying to keep a naturalistic approach (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009), though "no one would claim to enter the field completely free from the influence of past experience and reading" (Heath & Cowley, 2004, p. 173).

Considering the underlying assumption that the organizational world is socially constructed Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton (2013) considered that the people constructing their organizational realities are ''knowledgeable agents," in other words, that people in organizations know what they are trying to do and can explain their thoughts, intentions, and actions. Therefore, they refer to researchers as ''glorified reporters" whose main role is to give an adequate account of the informants' experience giving the informants a priori explanation for their own experience. They call the researchers' attention to give voice to the informants in the early stages of data gathering and analysis and to represent their voices conspicuously in the research reporting, "which creates rich opportunities for discovery of new concepts rather than the affirmation of existing concepts" (p.17).

To enhance the qualitative data gathering, we opt for the BEI technique (see Section 3.3.1.1) supported by the toy models or LEGO Serious Play as visual and kinesthetic aids (Bürgi & Roos, 2003) and creating dynamic metaphors (Frick et al., 2013; Jacobs & Heracleous, 2006; Jacobs, Statler, & Roos, 2005) to illuminate the socialization experience in a State-owned company in Brazil. The use of metaphors as an analytical tool is supported by Miles & Huberman (1994), once they can be considered data-reducing devices; pattern-making devices; decentering devices; and help to connect findings to theory.

Although we acknowledged that analysis always uses the researcher's tradition and cultural lens (Ashworth, 1997), we consider researchers as social beings whose experiences, ideas and assumptions can subsidize their understanding of the social processes under analysis (Baker, Wuest, & Stern, 1992). Therefore, the understanding of a group dynamic relationship helps to grasp hidden aspects that would not be mentioned if not evoked by the researcher argued by Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton (2013):

> We also make some fundamental assumptions about ourselves as researchers. We assume, for instance, that we are pretty knowledgeable people too—that we can figure out patterns in the data, enabling us to surface concepts and relationships that might escape the awareness of the informants, and that we can formulate these concepts in theoretically relevant terms. (p.17)

The interviews and analysis were steered keeping in mind that approaching social construction processes means that the focus relies more on the means by which interviewees construct and understand their experience in the socialization events and less on the number or frequency of measurable occurrences (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013).

In the same vein, and following the authors above, the research orientation does not inflict previous constructs or theories in order to explain their experience. On the contrary, it makes "an extraordinary effort to give voice to the informants in the early stages of data gathering and analysis and also to represent their voices prominently in the reporting of the research" (p.17), creating avenues for the emergence of new concepts rather than verification of existing ones.

The interviews were conducted in two waves. The first one with eight interviews in June 2016, and the second one, with five interviews, in February 2018. The main reason for a second wave was to assure that the interviewees had covered enough experiences to support analysis. Thus, N=13 employees were interviewed, with an intensive and simultaneous data collection, data coding, and analysis, comparing incident to incident, as preconized by Glaser & Strauss' (1967) Constant Comparative Method enhancing the analysis regarding interviewees' issues, problems and concerns. The aim was to identify issues that were related to the study's initial objective.

Interview overall findings: BEI positive events.

The BEI positive events related to the presence of supportive figures as the supervisor (I#01, I#02 [first supervisor], I#11, and I#12), peers (I#03, and I#10), and the satisfaction with the company's structure (I#09 and I#13) as seen in the following Figures 2, 3 and 4:
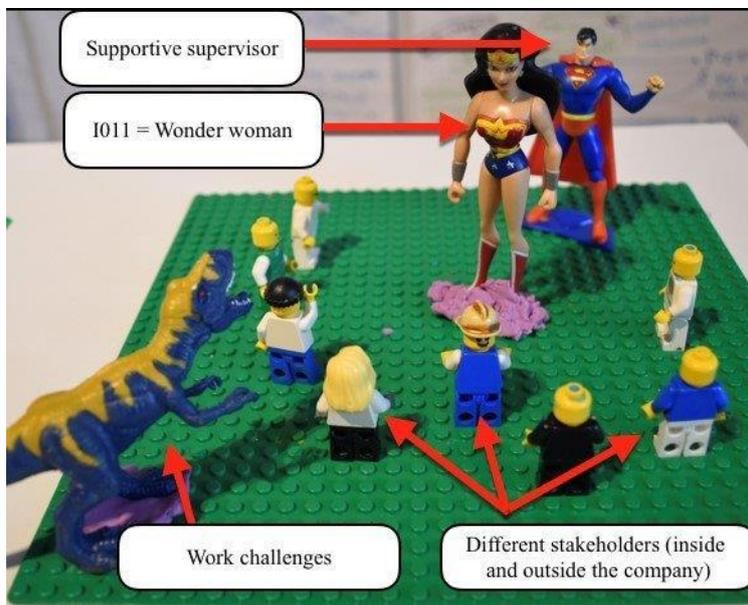
Figure 2 BEI Positive event - model I#11 supportive supervisor.
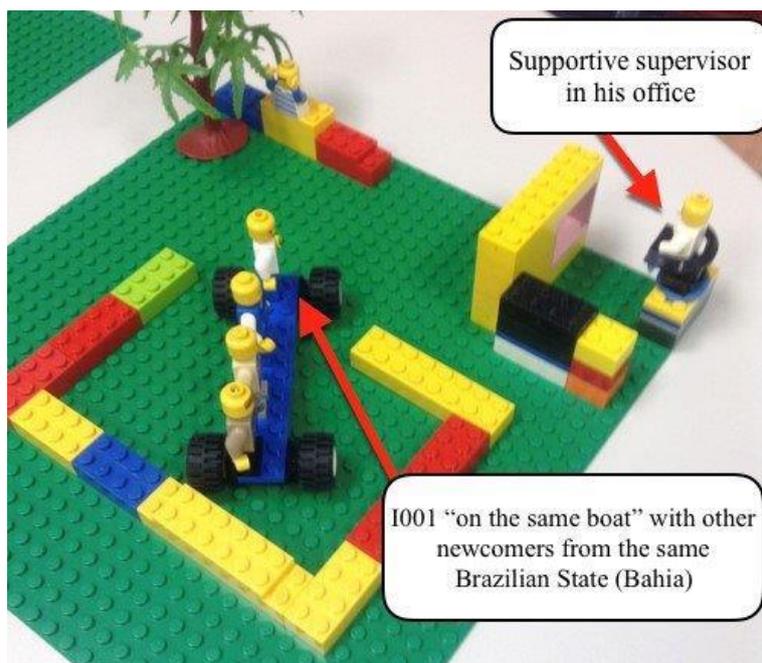Source: Aylmer, 2019. Reprinted under permission

Figure 3 BEI Positive event - model I#01 Supportive peers (same cohort)
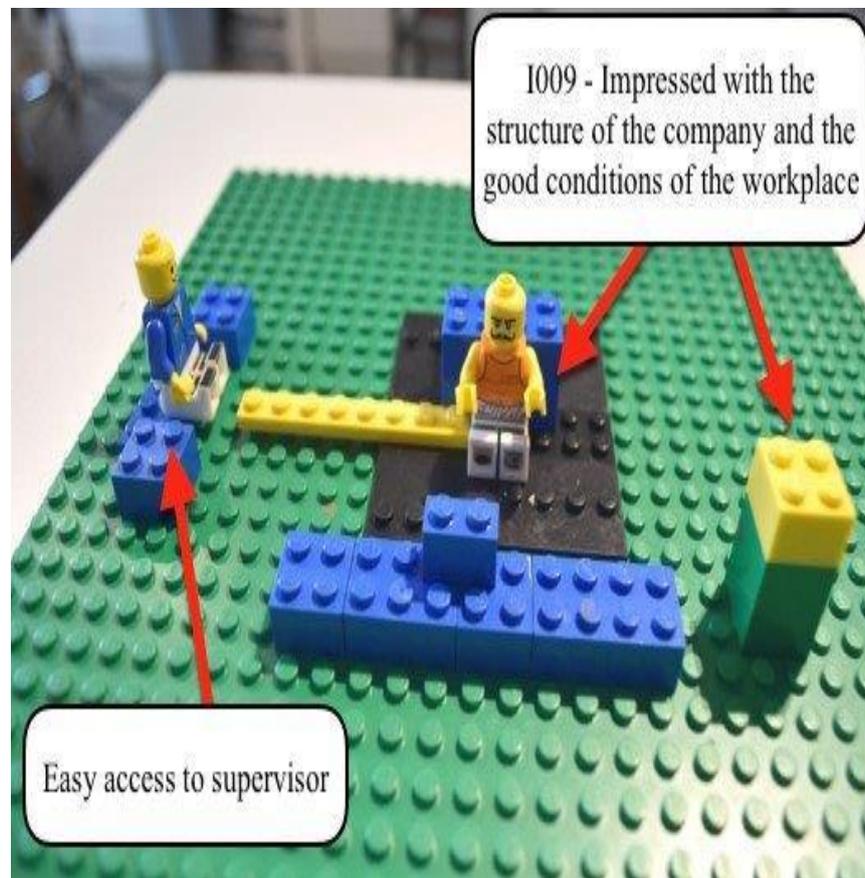Source: Aylmer, 2019. Reprinted under permission

Figure 4 BEI Positive event - model I#09: satisfaction with the company structure
Source: Aylmer, 2019. Reprinted under permission

In N=10 of the positive experiences, there is a mention of a supportive supervisor. In N=3 of the positive experiences there is no mention of a supervisor, and the positive experience is connected to peers and/or the company facility and grandiose structure.

Interview overall findings: BEI negative events
The negative experiences in the socialization were represented with more dramatic toys as dragons, snakes, Pinocchio. These toys are very well-known and express strong reactions towards something or someone, for instance, the dinosaur (T-Rex) is used to represent a straightforward threat while the snake an insidious threat and the Pinocchio something linked to a lie, not trustworthy, as seen in the Figures 5 and 6 as follows:
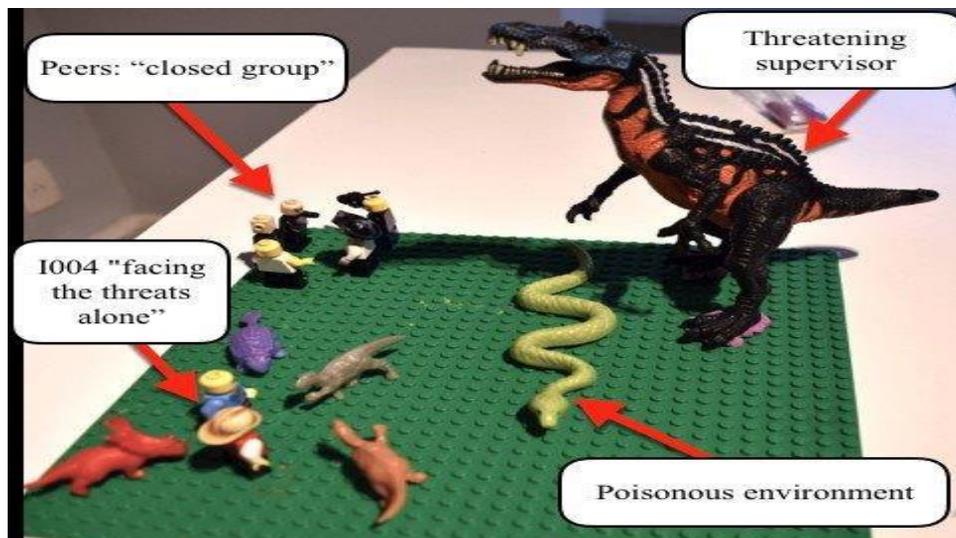
Figure 5 Model I#04 BEI Negative event.
Source: Aylmer, 2019. Reprinted under permission

In the explanation of I#04's negative event, the T-Rex (the biggest and most threatening toy among all available), represented the supervisor, the snake represented the toxicity of the work environment and the small predators surrounding I#04, represented hostile peers in her first year. The storytelling of this scenario incited strong emotions and the interviewee cried while explaining the negative event.
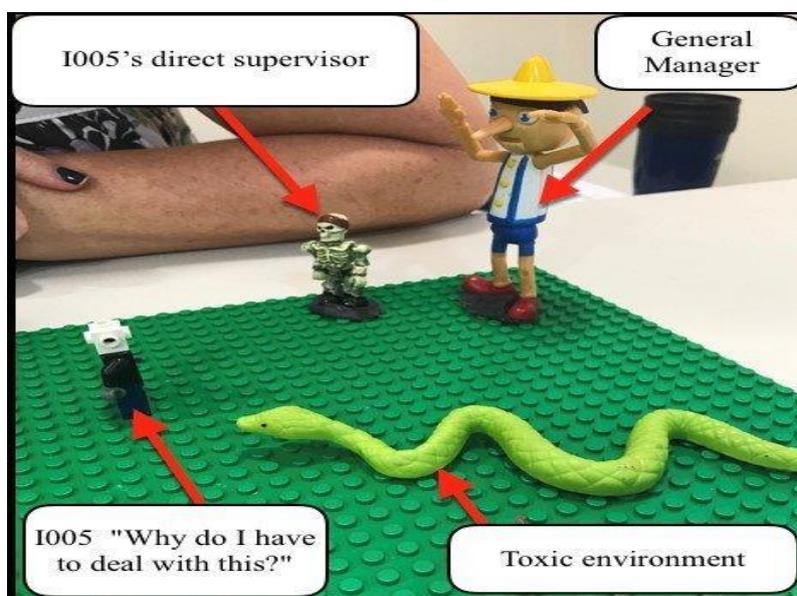

Figure 6 Model I#05 BEI Negative event.
Source: Aylmer, 2019. Reprinted under permission

In BEI negative event in model, I#05 the executive manager is pointed as the Pinocchio that avoid accountability for the situations saying "No, I have nothing to do with it" and the supervisor as the Skull doing "the dirty work for him because she was more capable of it. I think there was this 'death' thing, because it was at this time that I had labyrinthitis. I was very lost."

I#05 mentioned a toxic environment, representing it as the green snake, creating a connection of her daily experiences with the consequences to her health (labyrinthitis), as explained in another part of the interview:

> It was so uncomfortable, that after a month in the company, I had a labyrinthitis crisis that the doctor here wanted to call an ambulance to take me home because I could not walk straight. I have never had labyrinthitis in my life, neither before nor after. It was such discomfort that my body manifested this. (I#05)

In the BEI negative event in model I#08, a similar relation of old-timers and supervisor representing a barrier for the newcomer adaptation. The Skull is representing the old-timers and is pointing a weapon at the newcomer, likewise, the Dark Villain is threatening the newcomer with a weapon and the description of this model by I#08 is revealing: "One thing that really shocked me [when] arriving here was the relation of the employee with his manager [points to the toys in the model] like the villains here pointing the guns, like that." I#08 mentions the company rigid and hierarchical culture as intimidating: "The thing with hierarchy was a very strong issue at Petrobras [pause] and that scared me."

The model also evinced the I#08's perceived barrier for his adaptation: "People here are very vain. The environment in which I entered was an environment of huge leadership egos', and at the same time we saw a group of newcomers as a young workforce, motivated and eager for new knowledge, information and everything else - with ideas, proposals - we saw a big barrier in terms of leadership. So, it was a very hostile environment."

Figure 7 Model I#08 BEI negative event.
Source: Aylmer, 2019. Reprinted under permission

Interview overall findings: BEI summary.

The BEI supported by the building of the opposite positive and negative toy models were somehow surprising. Considering the time consumed in the interviewees, about 70% of the time was taken by explaining the negative events, or negative aspects present in a positive event (e.g. I#01 reported a supportive immediate supervisor and newcomers' peers from the same region and

public tender – positive event- but in a hostile environment where the executive manager moral harassed them in many situations).

The vividness of memories of events that happened seven to ten years before the interview, the intensity of the emotional expression of disgust, anger, sadness among others was not expected. The interviews pointed to the emergence of psychological symptoms (e.g. anxiety, phobia) and physical symptoms (e.g. constant headaches and stomachaches, labyrinthitis), known as common mental disorders (CMD) that were not present in the primary literature.

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

In this section, four themes emerged from the analysis of findings: (a) the importance of the socialization process in a State-owned company. (b) the importance of the supervisor in the socialization process in a State-owned company. (c) the importance of peers in the socialization process in a State-owned company. (d) the importance of the organization in the socialization process in a State-owned company, detailed as follows:

Theme one: the importance of the socialization process in a State-owned company.
 Our initial findings and research revealed a void in the literature about the dynamics of the Strategic Planning (SP) in Brazilian State-owned businesses (SOC), namely Petrobras, the biggest Oil & Gas company in Latin America. The only entrance door to the public sector in Brazil is via a public tender. The public service represents a shelter against economic instability and unemployment, once it means a lifetime job. Therefore, it is the aspiration of thousands of public tender candidates. Petrobras was elected as the most desired public company to work for in Brazil. Petrobras' workforce counted 86,000 direct employees in 2013 (Petrobras, 2018), and it has operations worldwide. Therefore, approved candidates arrive with high expectations for their professional life in the company, as mentioned in all interviewees. This contrast between the harshness of the Brazilian economy and the belief of the public sector as a protection shield was named Promised Land, a metaphorical reference to the quest for a place of rest after a long journey in the desert, as written in the book of Exodus, in the Bible. The promised land concept appears in some interview quotes, such as I#01 explaining his reasons for trying the public tender: "… since I was a child, I always dreamed of working in three companies, and Petrobras was one of them." As well as I#10's answer to the question, "Have you ever considered leaving?" She answered: "No, no… It is comfortable here. I would never earn as much money as I do here anywhere else. Besides, (here) I will not fear losing my job tomorrow."

However, 10 N=13 interviewees mentioned intense adverse experiences after admittance, naming it "reality shock." The distance between expectancies and experiences violated the beliefs created around the promised land. Considering a cost/benefit equation regarding staying or leaving,

interviewees endured through the socialization, looking forward to making sense of that experience and creating alternatives to handle the constant hindrances for their adjustment. This equation results in staying due to the side-bets or the lack of better options. Therefore, although newcomers who reported painful experiences in their first months may have had the freedom to resign from the job, the set of organizational benefits, in contrast with the uncertainty of the private sector, retained the vast majority of newcomers, which framed the concept of a "golden cage," representing newcomers 'dilemma that keeps them tolerating suffering beyond their coping capabilities, leading to dramatic consequences.

I#07's experience is a clear example of this perception. In his model, he describes himself as a superhero "trapped in a cubicle that has an exit door open, but he cannot see it." He also describes the insecurities and instability of the private sector as a "frightening dinosaur." The superhero "sees things through the window," mentioning the Microsoft operational system and making a wordplay with the office window showing the world outside. Seducing him to stay, there is "Uncle Scrooge representing the money and benefits the company offers to employees, as a strategy to hold us here," despite his discomfort and low person-environment fit.

During the interviews, a pattern of common symptoms was related spontaneously and lately classified as Common mental disorders (CMD).CMD does not imply a formal psychiatric diagnosis, but it is considered a sign of psychic suffering. CMD compromises performance, constituting a frequent cause of work withdrawal and absenteeism, increasing the demand for health services. Beyond the suffering, CMD also represents hidden economic losses and is a potential causal agent for the development of more severe disorders such as Burnout Syndrome. We found substantial evidence that the higher the violation of expectations, the stronger the signs and symptoms of CMD once leaving the hostile workplace is not considered an option due to the company benefits and family pressure to stay.

The impact of the socialization process was evidenced as CMD in several interviews, presented in the sequence below:

I#05: "I was so lost… I had such discomfort that after one month, I had a labyrinthitis crisis,"

I#11: "Back then, I was so stressed out that my stomach was destroyed!"

I#13: "I was always feeling down. At the end of the day, I used to have a headache and arrived home with no energy at all."

I#06: "When I went back to work with that supervisor, I had panic syndrome."

Other similar symptoms appeared within the I#02, I#04, I#07, I#08, I#09, and I#12 interviews. The frequency and intensity of the suffering were not expected and pointed to the supervisor's importance as a key element in the socialization process.

Therefore, once sunk costs and side bets are influencers in the Brazilian public sector socialization process, leading newcomers to endure situations that, without such advantages, they would not handle, it would be wise to monitor their well-being and adaptation to the new environment in the same way operational employees are supported in high risks' areas.

Likewise, mental distress and CMD have underestimated issues in newcomers' socialization, but with a significant likelihood to jeopardize employees' health and productivity; therefore, monitoring and assessing their stress level may reveal problems in their early stage, facilitating management. The elements above represent significant hidden losses that need to be addressed urgently.

Theme two: The importance of the supervisor in the socialization process in a State-owned company

Our findings and analysis indicated that the supervisor influences the confirmation or breach of newcomers' expectations. Almost all (11 of N=13 or 84,6%) reported that the supervisor had a central role in their first socialization experiences. We found evidence in the present company that the success or failure of newcomers' socialization depends to a great extent on how supervisors support and validate newcomers in the new workplace. For instance, I#02 had a frustrating beginning in the area she worked in. She said, "I did not like coming to work at all. I would come, do little things, and leave." Moreover, when she was asked whether that was related to her supervisor, she answered: "Unquestionably, that was because of my boss then. [PAUSE] When my boss changed, everything changed."

We also found evidence that the more friendly and caring the supervisor, the higher the newcomers' sense of gratitude, satisfaction, and engagement, as shown by theories studied as Psychological Contract, Perceived Organizational Support, and Leader-Member Exchange. For instance, I#01 reported moral harassment from the area manager, but its destructive effect was lessened by the good experience with his immediate supervisor. In his words: "He (the immediate supervisor) considered me as a person and not only an employee, he was different from the other managers. He tried wearing the other person's shoes, and that made all the difference. He influenced me in many ways. He sets a good example."

Conversely, when interviewees mentioned painful experiences with supervisors as moral harassment, apathy, and lack of interest, the socialization process' outcomes evinced frustration, isolationism, anxiety, depression, and CMD. In two cases, I#04 and I#07, there were shreds of evidence of burnout symptoms, but this was not explored in this study. More severely, I#04 described how she suffered moral harassment in her first year in the organization:

"My supervisor boycotted my work. She would not let me do my job and turned the team against me [PAUSE] and I was already too exhausted, I was starting to doubt my sanity, and I had no strength to do anything about it."

Another example comes from I#08's experience. After realizing the lack of person-environment fit in his area, he asked his supervisor to authorize his transfer. However, he received a very aggressive response, which generated what he described as a trauma.

"He called me into his office and said that it (leaving the area) was not an option. If I really wanted to leave (he said), I could write my resignation letter. It was quite traumatizing and generated this state of revolt in me… It made me rethink whether I wanted to be in the company or not."

However, the most patent finding of deterioration of mental and emotional capacities came from I#07. As the first in his public tender, he expected some differentiated treatment, or at least something that could take the best of his talents, but conversely, he was assigned to work alone in a small room with no windows. He described the experience with evident difficulty to keep the conversation flow, taking long pauses with no eye contact, starring at nothing. Seemed to the interviewer that those signs of apathy could be consequence of long period of suffering with no hope for changing. In his words:

"It got to a point I'm [LONG PAUSE] I could not concatenate ideas, because I did not deal with anyone; I only dealt with spreadsheets. [LONG PAUSE] I could not create anything. It's [PAUSE] language! I was losing my ability to express myself effectively. That was a huge blow to me. Huge! I was "dumbing down" to such an extent that I could no longer speak. So that was the feeling I had: "dumb." [LONG PAUSE] You have a certain shock, and you do not know why it is happening."

It is noteworthy that I#07 asked a temporary non-paid license and left the company a few months after the interview.

Therefore, we strongly recommend including the subject "Newcomers' Socialization" as mandatory subject for supervisors' training followed by frequent evaluations.

Another recommendation regards supervisors' managerial quality indicators. Usually, newcomers do not access the immediate supervisor in their routine because supervisors are handling "more important problems". Thus, we recommend constant assessments of supervisors' managerial abilities regarding newcomers' adjustment, including newcomers' performance as a supervisor's KPI. The visibility and accountability for newcomers' development may become an extra motivation (positive or negative) for changing this context.

Moral harassment scrutiny should be a routine, mostly considering newcomers' first year.

Theme three: the importance of peers in the socialization process in a State-owned company.

In the company under study, the importance of peers is interconnected with the supervisor's attitude. Our findings and analysis indicated that when the supervisor was supportive, that was termed as "bridge" in the model, no matter the hostility of peers, newcomers reported positive socialization experiences. That was the case of I#06, for example, that mentioned a solid bond with her supervisor, and reported having a proactive and productive behavior, helping him in different challenges, while her peers looked at her as a sycophant, and blocked her in many ways. However, when she described the outcome of that process, she compared their actual position to her fast growth in the company, mentioning that she advanced in her career while they stagnated, smiling in triumph she said: "They always chose the less-effort way. And now, they are all in the same place they were, or in another place, but doing the same job."

When a supervisor is hostile or unsupportive, termed here as a "barrier," recurring to peers is an alternative for overcoming difficulties in newcomers' adaptation. Favorable peers may help in newcomers' integration adjusting expectations and giving them a long-term perspective.

Peers' support is well described in I#01's model, in which a group of newcomers from the same region suffered from the executive manager's public xenophobic harassment. However, they managed to "survive together." He said: "These little figures (aligned in the model) are us, the guys from Bahia… we are in the same boat, in the same business. We understood that we would have to be a "pack" and be together to protect ourselves (against the hostile environment)."

However, when both supervisor and peers are perceived as "barriers," the interviewees mentioned a hopeless feeling that led them to progressive apathy and work withdrawal. Those were the cases with the highest level of emotional suffering and CMD symptoms. A clear example was I#06, who felt excluded from her peers: "I never felt truly integrated with my team," but the same peer exclusion was not a problem with their former supervisor because he was supportive. When her first manager left the area, another one took over, acting as a "barrier," she reported a psychiatric disorder: "When I went back to work with that (barrier) supervisor, I had panic disorder."

Similarly, I#04 mentioned moral harassment from her supervisor, but her peers were also close to some support. Indeed, she had only one person that she could rely on, an outsourced employee. However, I#04 reported that this person was fired explicitly due to their relationship. After that, I#04 mentions symptoms that could be related to Burnout Syndrome. Below is an I#04 description of this episode:

"She was an outsourced employee, and when she was fired, my supervisor told her that the reason was our friendship. [….] I suffered so much because I was very happy about passing the public contest, and then, after this episode, I was thinking of leaving every single day. (…) This was the worst experience of my life. [PAUSE] It was the worst year of my professional and personal life."

We do recommend HR strategies for preparing peers to receive newcomers, providing incentives for the quality of newcomers' adaptation in the new workplace, smoothing the reality shock and creating a sense of community in the area. In the same line of thinking regarding newcomers' reception, we recommend creating a basic mentorship program in which incumbents will be evaluated by the quality of newcomers' adaptation to work. That may reduce competition and conflict, fostering a more collaborative environment.

Finally, although newcomers' peers are not eligible for ordinary leadership training, a unique program could foster ethical behavior in the area.

Theme four: The importance of the organization in the socialization process in a State-owned company.

The organization's reputation is very present before admittance. The promised land expectancy conveys a promise that the company will take care of its employees, assuring a safe, stable, and prosperous environment to work for the rest of newcomers' professional lives. After admittance, the first contact with the organization is via HR personnel in the integration week, where newcomers receive a bulk of information regarding the company, such as benefits, major ethical rules, and compliance issues.

After this "fast track integration," they are allocated to their sites. Nevertheless, seven of N=13 mentioned that they "felt abandoned upon arrival" once they had no minimum conditions to work, for instance, computer access, corporate login, or even a chair and a table. Some reported that they spent these first days asking for some orientation and something to do but doing nothing until the time to go back home.

First experiences send a strong message regarding the company's culture and what newcomers should expect from it in the future, as I#03 expressed in a revealing sentence: "What am I doing here?"

Supervisors are perceived as organization representatives for good and for bad. In two cases (I#01 and I#08) the general manager, one or two levels above the immediate supervisor, morally harassed them, leading them to question the organizational ethics. Painful experiences can damage the company's credibility, breaking the initial motivation and turning it into cynicism, as a reciprocation, or better saying, a retaliation. When asked to explain his first experiences after admittance, I#07 summarized it in a short sentence: "It was a lie!". This interviewee presented vital signs of mental suffering, with psychiatric symptoms. His thought pace was slowed down, and he mentioned a difficulty in speaking fluently, which was observable during the interview, as I#07 said:

"It got to the point that I... I could not concatenate ideas because I did not relate to any person; I only dealt with spreadsheets. (…) I had lost the ability to express myself effectively. That was a

huge blow to me. Huge! I was 'dumbing down' to such an extent that I could no longer speak. So that was the feeling I had: getting 'dumb'."

IMPLICATIONS AND MANAGERIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Our research aimed to provide suggestions on efficient strategies for establishing trust in virtual talks. These proposals aim to help other negotiators improve their distant bargaining abilities. Moreover, our objective was to contribute to the academic community by providing novel insights and relevant ideas for future study. These discoveries have diverse ramifications for study in several disciplines, including (i) business mediation (Dias, M., 2018); (ii) negotiations with governmental agents (Araujo, C.; Dias, M., 2022; Correa, Teles, Dias, M., 2022; Dias & Navarro, 2018); (iii) debt collection negotiations (Dias, M., 2019, 2019b; Dias, M. and Albergarias, 2019; Dias, M., 2022; Teles, A., Dias, M., 2023; Schimtz, T. & Dias, M., 2023); (iv) retail business negotiations (Dias, M. et al., 2015; Dias, M. et al., 2015, 2014, 2012); (v) industrial negotiations (Dias, M., Navarro and Valle, 2013, Dias, M., et al., 2014; Dias, M., et al., 2013; Dias, M., & Davila, 2018); (vi) interbank negotiations (Dias, M.; Pereira, L; Vieira, P., 2022); (vii) business lobbying (Fernandes & Dias, 2024); (viii) virtual negotiation (Santos & Dias, 2024, 2024b, 2024c).

The setting above should be seen as equally risky as the potential for an accident to be appropriately handled. HR personnel are so engrossed in dealing with "significant problems" that they often overlook minor concerns that may be readily resolved. However, these concerns significantly affect the development of newcomers' Psychological Contracts. When their challenges are given attention, it is seen as the organization needing to value their worth. Therefore, we suggest the following courses of action:

1. Establish a dedicated staff to facilitate the integration of immigrants, providing a hotline for help, particularly during the first months following admission.

2. Prior to the arrival of new employees, it is essential to verify that the workspace is adequately equipped with necessary items such as a chair, computer, and password access to ensure that they can immediately begin using the organization's system.

3. Attend the designated area for newcomers to educate peers and supervisors about the impact and significance of welcoming newcomers. Provide essential guidelines to current employees.

4. Selecting a volunteer mentor to assist with the newcomer's assimilation. It is advisable for HR to create a comprehensive 'newcomers' first month agenda' that includes a series of organized and gradual events. These activities, such as orientation sessions, team-building

exercises, and one-on-one meetings, will help newcomers feel a sense of belonging and make significant progress in their new environment.

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