

# The ambiance of workers who deal with death: an investigation with necrotomists from Rio Grande do Norte

## Ambiência dos trabalhadores que lidam com a morte: uma investigação com Necrotomistas do Rio Grande do Norte

Julia Maria dos Santos de Freitas<sup>1</sup>; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4257-3320>; Agostinha Mafalda Barra de Oliveira<sup>2</sup>, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6055-1758>; Juliana Carvalho de Sousa<sup>1</sup>, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0388-3959><sup>3</sup>

1. Graduada em Administração pela Universidade Federal Rural do Rio Grande do Norte (UFERSA). Universidade Federal Rural do Semi-Árido (UFERSA), Mossoró, Rio Grande do Norte, Brasil. E-mail: [juliamariasf11@gmail.com](mailto:juliamariasf11@gmail.com)

2. Mestre em Administração pela Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (1999) e Doutora em Psicologia Social e Antropologia das Organizações pela Universidade de Salamanca (2009) - titulação validada pela Universidade Federal da Bahia (2010).

Psicóloga pela Universidade de Fortaleza (1993), docente na Universidade Federal Rural do Semi-Árido no Departamento de Administração. Universidade Federal Rural do Semi-Árido (UFERSA), Mossoró, Rio Grande do Norte, Brasil. E-mail: [agostinhamafalda@ufersa.edu.br](mailto:agostinhamafalda@ufersa.edu.br)

3. Doutora em Administração pela Universidade Potiguar (UNP). Mestre em Administração pela Universidade Estadual do Ceará (UECE). Especialista em Gestão Estratégica de Pessoas e Liderança Organizacional, pela Faculdade Vale do Jaguaribe (FVJ), Docente da Universidade Federal Rural do Semi-Árido no departamento de Administração. Universidade Federal Rural do Semi-Árido (UFERSA), Mossoró, Rio Grande do Norte, Brasil. E-mail: [juli.cs1009@gmail.com](mailto:juli.cs1009@gmail.com)

### Abstract

This study aimed to understand the work context dimensions in light of the Psychodynamics of Work from the perspective of necrotomists. This qualitative descriptive research was conducted with seven necrotomists from a Legal Medical Institute in Rio Grande do Norte. A semi-structured script of questions based on the Assessment Scale of Work Context (ASWC) was used. The strategy used to process the acquired data was content analysis. Based on the data found in the work context construct, social environment where the organization operates, working conditions, and socio-professional relationships, categories were identified, and they involve lack of adequate materials and equipment, insalubrity, task division, self-management, overload, strictly professional relationships, open dialogue, and internal conflicts. This research is expected to constitute an instrument for reflective discussion and debates about the perception and attribution of meaning to work for this occupational group.

Keywords: necrotomist, work context, workers, psychodynamics of work

### Resumo

Este estudo objetivou compreender as dimensões de contexto de trabalho, à luz da Psicodinâmica do Trabalho, na perspectiva dos necrotomistas. Trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa de caráter descritivo, realizada com sete necrotomistas de um Instituto Médico-Legal localizado no Rio Grande do Norte. Utilizou-se um roteiro semi-estruturado de perguntas baseado na Escala de Contexto de Trabalho (EACT). A estratégia utilizada para o tratamento dos dados adquiridos foi a análise de conteúdo. Com base nos dados encontrados no construto de contexto de trabalho, ambiente social onde operam a organização, condições laborais e as relações socioprofissionais, identificou-se categorias que envolvem: falta de materiais e equipamentos adequados, insalubridade, divisão de tarefas, autogestão, sobrecarga, relações estritamente profissionais, diálogo aberto e conflitos internos. Espera-se que essa pesquisa se constitua como instrumento de discussão reflexivas e debates acerca da percepção e atribuição de sentido ao trabalho para esse grupo ocupacional.

Palavras-chave: necrotomista, contexto de trabalho, psicodinâmica do trabalho.

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## 1 Introduction

Although work has had a historically negative trajectory, it is worth noting that it is part of an individual's life and occupies a virtual space within their social context. Thus, it can be seen as an essential element for building their identity, valuing cognitive aspects, and personal, professional, and social recognition, whose pleasure is reflected in a constant search for all workers to maintain their psychic balance (Glanzner, 2010).

The Psychodynamics of Work (PDW) theory stands out in this context. This current emerged in France in the 1980s with the work of Dejours, an occupational physician, psychiatrist, and psychoanalyst (Sichère, 2010). According to Mendes (2007), the object of study of the Psychodynamics of Work is the dynamic correlations between work organization and subjectivization processes. These subjectivization processes attribute meaning to work according to the worker's correlation with their work context.

In this sense, the PDW lens was chosen (Mendes, 1995, Areosa, 2021). Thus, it is emphasized that the Dejourian current suggests that PDW has two core essences: context and work content (Dejours, Abdoucheli, & Jayet, 1994; Mendes, 2007; Silva, & Cappelle, 2015; Petriglieri, G., & Louise Petriglieri, 2022 ). However, this article will address only the work context dimensions.

From this perspective, the context dimensions are composed of the following elements: a) working conditions: subdivided into physical, chemical, and biological aspects and involve issues such as safety and hygiene at work, remuneration, and equipment, among others; b) work organization: division of work, the content of tasks, hierarchical levels, power relations and division of work; and c) social relations: associated with social bonds and hierarchical interactions (Dejours, 1992; Dejours, 1994; Mendes, & Ferreira, 2008; Bernardo, 2009; Dejours, Abdoucheli, & Jayet, 2010; Mesquita *et al.*, 2016).

Among the interest groups, we chose to work with necropsy agents, commonly known as necrotomists, who are allocated to a still peculiar category since their work is directly related to death, associating it with a perspective of stigma (Silva, & Souza *et al.*, 2016). In addition, even if indirectly, this occupational group is experiencing the risks arising from the pandemic affected by COVID-19.

Faced with the need to explore this existing subjectivity in collective labor relations, this study aims to analyze the work environment of necropsy agents who provide services to the Legal Medical Institute (IML) in Rio Grande do Norte. Thus, this work's general objective is to understand the dimensions of the work context, in the light of the Psychodynamics of Work, from the perspective of necrotomists.

In a search carried out on Google Scholar by the author in April 2021, using only "Necrotomist" as a descriptor, without a time frame, 30 references were located, of which 20 were discarded – 5 for repetition and 15 for addressing other issues such as legislation, necropsy results, and legal, medical files – or even literature reviews on Psychodynamics of Work or Work Psychology in Brazil. Of the remaining ten, only six had necrotomists as their occupational study group (Silva, Souza, & Araújo, 2014; Silva, Lopes, & Silva, 2015; Silva, & Souza *et al.*, 2016; Paula, 2016) and four dealt with other professionals who deal with death such as drivers, funeral directors, civil and military police, and health professionals (Glanzner *et al.*, 2017; Anchieta, V. C. *et al.*, 2011; Winter, ALF, 2019).

Based on the above, this work is justified for the academic community given the observed need to explore and investigate the correlation between the work context and the psychological illness of these professionals who deal directly with death.

Finally, this work comprises this introduction, the theoretical framework, the methodological procedures, the results and data analysis, and the final remarks.



## 2 Work context

The work context, initially called the context of producing goods and services, refers to the social space where the organization and working conditions operate and socio-professional relationships (Mendes, & Ferreira, 2008). In these respects, the theory of Psychodynamics of Work (Lawlor, & Sher, 2021) looks at the perception that the worker has about the content, rhythm, and distribution of tasks, norms, demands and negotiations, division, integration, communication, and support between people, and the environment, instruments, and resources available for the production process (Maissiat *et al.*, 2015). So, work context can be divided into three dimensions: work organization, working conditions, and socio-professional relationships.

The systematic fragmentation and task division define the work organization dimension and time in the face of certain groups of workers, the specializations resulting from each activity, and the required qualifications. To Mendes (2007), work organization is defined as the division and content of tasks, rules, controls, and work rhythms.

The work organization establishes the sequence of events, the rhythms, cadences and patterns and even adjusts the worker's participation in their task program (Reis, 2014). This organization can be constituted by the prescribed elements, formally and informally, which express the conceptions and practices of people and work management.

In addition, they also present productivity goals in quantitative and qualitative terms, which must be achieved under formal rules and legal procedures based on a determined time of workday, production pace, and discipline controls. The latter are also components of work organization and help determine how processes should occur.

In this sense, Reis (2014) emphasizes that a rigid work organization, which hinders the manifestation of subjectivity, or which is based on the culture of individualism, disrupting the work collective and the dynamics of recognition, proves to be harmful, predisposing to pathogenization defenses and the emergence of social pathologies at work.

In turn, working conditions, another dimension of the work context, encompass environmental conditions and the risks involved in work, being a structural dimension (Reis, 2014). To Mendes (2007), working conditions can be conceptualized as the quality of the physical environment, workstation, equipment, and materials available for carrying out the work. Working conditions encompass the structural elements that express the conditions present in the locus of production. Its components are the physical environment, instruments, equipment, raw materials, and organizational support.

The physical environment is made up of structural factors of a tangible nature that contribute to the performance of the activity, such as signage, space, air, light, temperature, and sound. Instruments concern mainly tools and documentation. The equipment also includes the necessary materials, equipment, and furniture. The raw material, in turn, consists of material or symbolic objects that serve as a source of input for producing goods and services and as a source of information. Finally, organizational support, exemplified by information, supplies, funds, and technologies, serves as a basis for maintaining these conditions (Mendes, & Ferreira, 2008).

Finally, socio-professional relationships complete the three dimensions present in the work context. One of the premises of this dimension is the awareness of conflicts in every organization (Reis, 2014). To Mendes (2007), socio-professional relationships are conceptualized as ways of managing work, communication, and professional interaction. These relationships are made up of interactional elements that express professional work relationships. In this dimension, the following are integrated: hierarchical interactions, collective interactions between work team members and members of other groups, and external interactions with



users, consumers, and suppliers (Veras, & Ferreira, 2006).

According to Mendes and Ferreira (2008), hierarchical interactions, which are the relationships distributed in grouped categories of employees, established according to a certain filter, happen between the members of a workgroup with their immediate superiors and with their immediate superiors. Collective interactions occur between workers at the same hierarchical or different levels within a group; that is, this communication can occur between members of the same workgroup and between these members with members of other groups and can be facilitated through collective speech spaces (Winter, & AIF, 2019). According to Veras and Ferreira (2006), external socio-professional relationships are those established between individuals external to the organization. They are represented by groups of individuals with great diversity and mutability, whether external clients, commercial partners, suppliers, and institutional representatives.

In short, the work context construct encompasses all conditions for the production of goods and services, as well as the functioning of the work activity and is divided into three dimensions: work organization, work conditions, and socio-professional relationships. Table 1 presents a summary that characterizes the analytical dimensions of the work context mentioned in this topic; work organization, working conditions and socio-professional relationships; and their respective definitions and components to facilitate understanding of this construct.

Table 1 – Dimensions, definitions, and components present in the work context

Analytical Dimensions	Definition	Components
Work Organization (WO)	Expresses the division of tasks, norms and controls, and work rhythms.	Division of work; Rules; Rhythm; Time; Control and Task Characteristics.
Work Conditions (WC)	Expresses the quality of the job, as well as equipment and material made available.	Physical environment; Instruments; Equipment; Feedstock; Organizational support.
Socio-Professional Relationships (SPR)	Express the modes of work management, communication, and professional interaction.	Hierarchical interactions; Intra and intergroup collective interactions; External interactions.

Source: Adapted from Mendes and Ferreira (2008).

Paula (2016) carried out a study to know the necropsy assistants' perceptions of the Ceará State Forensic Expertise, or PEFOCE, as well as analyze the implications that work with cadavers results in the health of these workers. In this study, he concluded that in the perception of his subjects, PPE and other work equipment conditions are precarious and outdated. Based on this, we observed that each work context has its particularities. Furthermore, the definitions and components of each of these dimensions are determining factors for the individual to signify work as either positive or negative.

According to Antloga *et al.* (2014), based on a study carried out in a body of the Brazilian Judiciary Power based in Brasília, the evaluations regarding work organization factors and socio-professional relationships were considered critical, which means that these two factors in this public body can be seen as a source of psychic illness.

Another study by Maissiat *et al.* (2015), which aimed to evaluate the work context with 242 primary health care workers in a municipality in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, found that the factors of work organization and working conditions obtained the worst evaluations. These two factors are likely to cause the mental suffering of these workers.

Based on the exposed results, we observed that each work context presents its particularities and dimensions. Furthermore, the definitions and components of each of these dimensions determine the individual's ability to signify work as either positive or negative.



### 3 Methodological Procedures

This research is characterized as a descriptive (Denzin, & Lincoln, 2016) case study (YIN, 2005) with a qualitative approach (Merriam, 1998).

The research was carried out in a Legal Medical Institute in Rio Grande do Norte (RN). The subjects of this study are servants who occupy the position of Necropsy Agents. Eight of the 67 servants assigned to the unit's body make up the Necropsy Agent scale. Of these eight, seven participated as subjects in this study. The reason for the non-participation of one of them was that he was on vacation.

The collection method chosen for this study was the semi-structured interview (Godoy, 2007). The script used was based on the questionnaire validated by the authors Ferreira and Mendes (2003; 2009), entitled Assessment Scale of Work Context (ASWC), which involves three dimensions: work conditions, work organizations and socio-professional relationships. Based on this, a semi-structured research script was prepared.

In order to capture with greater eminence the subjectivity of the information contained in the subjects' speeches, this collection instrument was applied in person, in the work environment itself, on different days of the week, according to the agents' schedule, in April and May 2021. The content was recorded, with the informed consent of each server, for later transcription and interpretation of the collected information. It is noteworthy that the average time of each interview was 40 minutes.

Thus, the strategy used to treat the acquired data was content analysis, a research method developed by Bardin (2010, p. 280), which has the following conduction phases: a) organization of the analysis or pre-analysis; b) exploration of the material; c) treatment of results, inference and interpretation of results.

In the pre-analysis, the collected data were gathered and organized through an analytical reading to establish a correlation with the work objective. When exploring the material, the data were grouped according to the type of response the subjects gave. Then, the treatment was carried out by attributing categories to each existing group, serving as marking elements to extract information precisely (Urquiza; Marques, 2016). Regarding the information referring to the second part of the interview script, we decided to use categorization and framing by construct.

## 4 Results and Discussions

### 4.1 Characteristics of Research Subjects

To respect the research subjects' anonymity, the seven participants are represented in the order in which they were interviewed and by an alphabet letter. Table 2 presents the profile of these subjects, containing gender, age, marital status, schooling, and time on the job.

Table 2 – Sociodemographic description of research subjects

Subjects	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Schooling	Time on the Job
Subject A	Female	57 years	Married	High School	22 years
Subject B	Male	36 years	Single	Higher Education	2 ½ years
Subject C	Female	25 years	Single	Higher Education	2 ½ years
Subject D	Female	29 years	Married	Higher Education	2 ½ years
Subject E	Male	32 years	Married	Higher Education	2 ½ years





Subject F	Female	41 years	Married	Higher Education	2 ½ years
Subject G	Male	52 years	Divorced	High School	16 years

Source: Research data (2021).

Concerning the gender of respondents, the data collected showed that four of the seven subjects are female and three are male. Regarding the age of respondents, the survey data showed variations. Four subjects are between 25 and 36 years old. The others are between 41 and 57 years old.

As for the level of education, two of the interviewees completed only high school, while the rest have completed higher education. Concerning the time on the job as a Necropsy Agent, five informants have about 2 and a half years, and the other two have 22 and 16 years of experience in the institute in this same function.

#### 4.1.1 Perception analysis of the work context

As for the first construct, work context is divided into three analytical dimensions: working conditions, work organization, and socio-professional relationships (Dejours, 1992; Dejours, 1994; Mendes, & Ferreira, 2008; Bernardo, 2009; Dejours, Abdoucheli, & Jayet, 2010).

Regarding the working conditions dimension, according to Reis (2014) and Mendes (2007), it encompasses the structural elements that express the conditions present in the work environment, such as physical structure and equipment. Two categories were observed: lack of materials/adequate equipment and insalubrity.

These two categories suggest that the working conditions are not satisfactory, either due to the lack of adequate materials and equipment to carry out the task or due to the lack of proper disinfection and cleaning, which ends up making the environment even more unhealthy, as exposed by the subjects' statements B, D, and E.

In turn, regarding the work organization dimension, which establishes the sequence of events, the rhythms, cadences, and patterns and even adjusts the worker's participation in his task program (Reis, 2014), three categories were identified: task division, self-management, and overload.

The subjects see work organization positively since, in general, there is, in their perceptions, a good division of tasks, as seen in the testimonies of subjects A, B, and F in Table 3.

However, it is worth noting that this division happens much more through the process of self-management between individuals and that despite the evidenced harmony, there is an overload of functions caused by the insufficient number of servers, as perceived by individuals B and C.

Regarding the overload division, the data obtained showed that the relationships with some servers are built based on the hierarchical notion that the agents themselves have, which directly entails charging for an answer or for an exercise of function that they cannot give, according to what was exposed in the statements of respondents E, F and G.

Concerning socio-professional relationships, a dimension that encompasses work management, communication, and professional interaction (Mendes, 2007), three categories also stood out: strictly professional relationships, dialogue with management, and internal conflicts.

Based on the analysis of the reports, the agents realize that despite the existence of open dialogue and clear discussions in the environment and the activities carried out in the daily lives of the servers (Hoffmann *et al.*, 2017), evidenced by the testimony of subject A, there is also



the existence of internal conflicts that cause discomfort at work, conditioned to the groups that form according to the length of service provided.

Subject E points out an internal divergence between the individuals who have been at the institute for a longer time and the newcomers. These conflicts manifest themselves, among other points, in the overload category, since the more technical work, such as handling virtual systems, is accumulated in the newer servers (Dejours, 1992; Mendes, & Ferreira, 2008; Bernardo, 2009).

In addition, subjects B and D's perceptions are related to the strictly professional character of the relationships. According to these individuals, the partnership and mutual companionship of the servers are just part of the work environment (Hoffmann *et al.*, 2017), not extending beyond the unit of expertise.

Table 3 summarizes the categories identified for each dimension of the work context and their respective statements.

Concerning the unhealthy categories and lack of adequate materials/equipment identified for the working conditions dimension, Silva, Lopes, and Silva (2015) showed the same reality in their study, exposing the precarious conditions of the place where these professionals perform Necropsy in addition to the lack of PPEs such as caps, masks, and gloves.

Table 3 – Categories identified for each dimension of the Work Context construct and their respective statements

Dimension	Category	Statements
Work Conditions	Lack of adequate materials and equipment	<p><b>The working conditions are not adequate</b> in the morgue. As I said, we work in conditions that are not ideal for an LMI, a morgue, or due to the lack of adequate PPEs. [...] <b>The physical structure is very precarious</b>, whether in the morgue itself <b>because the instruments are far below</b> what a morgue should have, and a lot is missing. In informal and colloquial language, we must extract milk from a stone because <b>the material is precarious</b>; sometimes, one thing or another is missing (Subject B).</p> <p>[...] the institute also <b>leaves much to be desired in terms of equipment</b>; for example, some are broken, [...]. I think the institute still works in a rather obsolete way, and <b>there is a need for an update regarding equipment</b> (Subject D).</p> <p>[...] we use some <b>precarious equipment</b>, some we even have to work around, some archaic, old equipment and technologies have evolved a lot, especially concerning necropsies, but we do not have access to these advances and tools (Subject E).</p>
	Insalubrity	<p>If we are talking about the physical environment, concerning the morgue, I consider it an <b>unhealthy environment, extremely unhealthy</b>, [...], so it is an environment that <b>requires constant cleaning, adequate disinfection, which requires adequate PPEs for the servers</b> since we also constantly deals with sharp-pointed objects (Subject D).</p> <p>My environment is a <b>very unhealthy environment</b> and is not adequate for what it really should be, it does not follow all the safety standards as it should be followed, and it is an <b>environment that exposes the server to a risk of biological contamination</b>, a risk of accidents at work, so it's not a 100% suitable environment (Subject E).</p>
Work Organization	Task division	<p><b>Very good</b>. I love the way I work. I do it responsibly and am very confident in what I do (Subject A).</p> <p>The performance of tasks is <b>well defined</b>, [...] the division of tasks is <b>very well done in crime scenes</b>, together with the criminalistics staff and in the morgue too, with most of the colleagues. <b>In general, the divisions are very well done with the experts, the forensics assistants</b>, at least with me, are</p>



		<p>very kind, and I return the kindness, and we do a good job (Subject B).</p> <p>I think <b>it's positive, it's good</b>, yes, there is a division of tasks, you still need to improve the strength issue, because then, there are a lot of tasks, at least in my role, that requires physical strength [...] (Subject F).</p>
	<b>Self-management</b>	<p>[...] <b>with most colleagues, we share everything half and half</b>, sometimes there is one or the other colleague who is a little relaxed, [...]. However, in general, the divisions are very well done with the experts; the forensics assistants, at least with me, are very kind, and I return the kindness, and we do a <b>good job</b> (Subject B).</p> <p>[...] we leave it very free, generally, [...] <b>me and my colleague, if one wants to go to external expertise, go, if the other wants to stay, stay, and then we leave it the way we want to get better for both</b> [...]. Everyone works, everyone does the <b>best thing for both of them, cooperates</b>, and really does their best to get the job done. [...] and anyway, it's a very friendly way of working (Subject C).</p>
	<b>Overload</b>	<p>At this point, the unit where I work leaves much to be desired; firstly, due to the <b>lack of a server</b>. It turns out that a server ends up doing the work of two or more servers so that the work flows in an organized way. [...] the division of tasks exists, the organization even exists, but there is also an <b>accumulation of tasks caused by the lack of servers</b> (Subject E).</p> <p>[...] in some shifts, <b>some colleagues do not want to contribute to a certain task</b>, put up some obstacle, and say that this is not their function [...]. And finally, <b>it ends up being more expensive for some other people</b> (Subject F).</p> <p>Regarding task division, it would be good if the doctors were more involved in the necropsy with us. Usually, we do everything alone, but I understand a little, right, because, hierarchically, it is like this, [...]. Sometimes <b>demand a lot from us when we are unable to respond</b> (Subject G)</p>
<b>Socio-professional Relationships</b>	<b>Strictly professional relationships</b>	<p>My relationship with them is <b>extremely professional</b>, 99%. And it is a <b>very good relationship, and there is a good partnership, good companionship</b>. [...] I have a good relationship with everyone, I have no problem with any of them, but <b>they are purely professional relationships</b> (Subject B).</p> <p>[...] I have a <b>good relationship with everyone; there are some servers that I avoid any other type of subject that is not professional</b>, even to avoid misunderstandings because some servers already have a reputation (laughs), it's complicated, but I never had and don't have a problem with anyone (Subject D).</p>
	<b>Open dialogue</b>	<p>Thank God, that is very good. I never had any attrition; <b>sometimes, I don't agree with certain things placed before our work, but that is discussed</b> and resolved, and everything comes to a consensus, and everything is fine. <b>I feel comfortable expressing my opinion</b> both with a doctor and with a criminal expert, as well as with the management itself and especially with my colleagues (Subject A).</p>
	<b>Internal conflicts</b>	<p>Polemic theme [...]. It's a good relationship, but as I'm a server who entered through the last public tender, <b>I realize that (...) it kind of created the clans</b>, right? So there's that group of old servers and new servers, and that's not good; <b>it sometimes generates uneasiness between these two groups</b> (Subject E).</p>

Source: Research data (2021).

Concerning the overload and division of labor categories identified for the work organization dimension, Silva, Souza *et al.* (2016) confirm what was said about the existing task division and hierarchies. They conclude that there is no hierarchy or division but overtaking, hyper-solicitation, and disrespect for professional boundaries and the functions assigned.





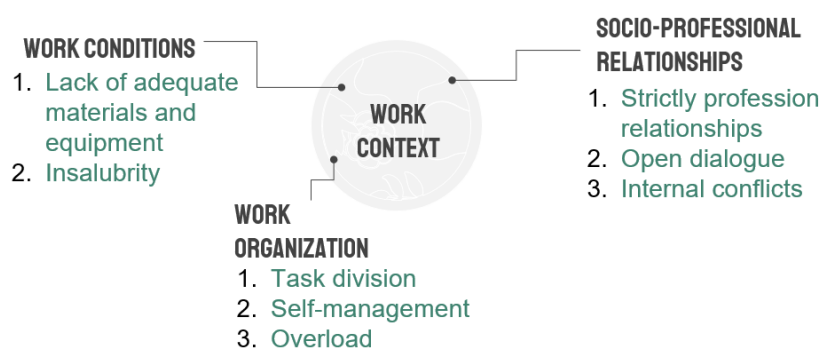
As for the self-management category, also identified for the work organization dimension, Silva, Souza *et al.* (2016) conclude, based on interviews with necrotomists, that the collective tends to transcend this existing hierarchy between agents and physicians with its capacity for self-regulation, resulting in a cooperative way of working, causing the medical hierarchy to dilute before carrying out the activity.

As for socio-professional relationships, concerning the category of strictly professional relationships, Capaverde, Oliveira, and Scheffer (2017) find different results. According to the authors, workers perceive social life as happy and pleasant and see their colleagues as family, where they laugh and relax together in the living spaces. The authors point out the importance of building these bonds in coping with suffering from daily living with death (Wienicke, & Driessen, 2021).

On the other hand, regarding the internal conflicts category, also identified as the dimension of socio-professional relationships, the work carried out by Anchieta *et al.* (2011) presents a different result. This work, which has civil police officers as its research universe, points out that there is a more positive assessment of labor relations in the view of younger individuals who spend less time in the workplace. In this occupational group, according to the study participants, the oldest servants are more critical and manage to score more deficiencies in the Institution.

Still, on the internal conflicts between new and old groups, the study's conclusions by Capaverde, Oliveira, and Scheffer (2017), which has funeral directors as its research universe, also confront the findings of this study since, according to them, there is a friendly relationship between old employees and new entrants. The authors explain that the oldest individuals in the company participate in recruiting new employees and teach the entire job to the new agent. Figure 1 illustrates the synthesis of research findings.

Figure 1 – Summary of the discussions of the categories of the Work Context construct



Source: Research data (2021).

The illustration above shows the main findings of the research regarding the three main aspects that make up PDW's work context dimension.

## 5 Final Remarks

This study's main objective was to understand the dimensions of the work context, in the light of the Psychodynamics of Work, from the perspective of necrotomists.

Based on the data found in the work context construct, social environment where the organization operates, working conditions and socio-professional relationships, it was possible to find categories that involve lack of adequate materials and equipment, insalubrity, task division, self-management, overload, strictly professional relationships, open dialogue, and internal conflicts.

From the research, we found that the data are relevant since the work environment, as a context related to the very nature of this work, offers risks of illness when categorized systemically. The analytical dimensions are related since organization, conditions, and the relationships of these agents' work interfere with what is required of them in the stages of the organization's processes. Thus, concerning managerial relevance, the importance of investing in improving working conditions stands out, which will cause the promotion and protection of mental health, launching effective actions.

With all the results collected in the research, we expect that the present study will bear fruits beyond the constructions, reflections, analyses, and dimensions developed with this occupational group in the data collection stage. We also hope it will increase the visibility of these professionals who perform work of essential nature for society and stimulate new reflections, as well as in other spaces where other similar groups carry out activities, that it becomes an instrument of discussion and debates about the perception and attributions of meaning to work by necrotomists and other agents of expertise. Thus, theoretical contributions can be evidenced by the understanding permeating the investigated public's work experiences.

The limitations of the research are concentrated in its cross-section, considering that it was carried out in only one specific unit of the institute and only one state in the Northeast.

Once the relevance and justification of the theme are guided, we suggest future works that use another methodological design of a positivist nature in order to allow possible generalizations of results, which may also involve other occupational groups, as well as address other PDW constructs, such as experiences of pleasure and suffering, costs and harm related to work.

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