Human Resource and Organization

Resistance and organized counter-resistance in conflict areas: an ethnography with Embraer's workers

Resistência e contra-resistência-organizada em espaços de conflitos: uma etonografia com trabalhadores da Embraer

Resistencia y contrarresistencia organizada en contexto de conflictos: una etnografía con empleados de Embraer

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyze the specificity of the conflict between capital and labor in the context of a global company like EMBRAER that has a strong influence in the region where it is located in Sao Jose dos Campos in São Paulo, Brazil. Since the resignation mass held by Embraer of more than four thousand workers in 2009 intensified labor conflicts, resistance movements of workers as strikes, labor mobilizations, labor, dissatisfactions and union complaints against the company that had adopted a flexible paradigm organization. Interestingly, these areas of conflict is explained in an unprecedented way a counter-resistance organized movement of employees whose culmination was a decision contrary to the continuation of a strike erupted in 2014. It was thought until then that the counteraction to union resistance movement of workers occurred only ideologically, personal or small groups despite being beneficiaries of the shares, never participate in such movements. This time participated, managers and technicians were organized against union resistance movement in defense of the values of the company to settle with the movement and unseat union leaders seeking to address labor dissatisfaction.

In the contemplation of this study was carried out an ethnographic approach to mold a study of extended case reasoned by the Public Sociology (see Burawoy, 2005). The ethnography option was due to its ability to identify how the contemporary global capitalism processes are mediated locally with various effects on the lives of workers, a difficult reality for the foundation of an opposition unions and the left in Brazil. The research process began in the Metalworkers Union of São José dos Campos and Region and approaches with the workers of Embraer were held for two years. The main conclusion of the article points out that there is a dialectic of conflict in contemporary capitalism than the same time promoting the workers' resistance movements also reveals the effectiveness of consent policies of the typical business of post-Fordism, which in this case was manifested if as an unprecedented move against resistance-organized.

Resumo

Neste artigo, analisa-se a especificidade dos conflitos entre capital e trabalho no contexto de uma empresa global como a EMBRAER, sediada no Estado de São Paulo, Brasil. Em 2009 a EMBRAER demitiu mais de quatro mil trabalhadores, o que provocou acirramento dos conflitos

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trabalhistas. Curiosamente, ao lado desses conflitos surgiu um movimento de *contra-resistência-organizada* de funcionários da empresa cujo ponto culminante foi uma decisão contrária à continuidade de uma greve eclodida em 2014. O contra o movimento de resistência sindical se posicionava em defesa dos valores da empresa. Tendo como pano de fundo esses conflitos, a pesquisa realizou uma abordagem etnográfica aos moldes de um estudo de caso ampliado fundamentado pela Sociologia Pública. A pesquisa foi realizada no Sindicato dos Metalúrgicos de São José dos Campos e Região e com os trabalhadores da Embraer durante dois anos. A conclusão principal do artigo aponta que há uma dialética do conflito no capitalismo contemporâneo que no mesmo tempo que promove os movimentos de resistência dos trabalhadores revela também a eficácia das políticas de consentimento da empresa típicas do pós-fordismo, que, neste caso, manifestou-se como um movimento inédito de *contra-resistência-organizada*.

Resumen

En este artículo se analiza la especificidad de los conflictos entre capital y trabajo en el marco de una empresa global como Embraer, con sede en el Estado de São Paulo, Brasil. En 2009, Embraer despidió a más de cuatro mil empleados, lo que produjo un recrudecimiento de los conflictos laborales. Curiosamente, en paralelo a estos conflictos, surgió un movimiento de contrarresistencia organizada de empleados de la empresa que tuvo como punto culminante una decisión contraria a la continuación de una huelga iniciada en 2014. A partir de dichos conflictos, se ha llevado a cabo un análisis etnográfico con base en un estudio de caso ampliado y fundamentado por la Sociología Pública. Se ha realizado el estudio en el Sindicato de Metalúrgicos de São José dos Campos y Región, y con los empleados de Embraer, durante dos años. La principal conclusión apunta hacia la existencia de una dialéctica del conflicto en el capitalismo contemporáneo que, al mismo tiempo que promueve los movimientos de resistencia de los trabajadores, revela también la eficacia de las políticas de consentimiento de la empresa, típicas del postfordismo, y que en este caso, se ha manifestado como un movimiento inédito de contrarresistencia organizada.

Introduction

Resistance movements and conflicts between labor and capital in Embraer are related to processes of privatization and restructuring that started in the 1990s. In the first phase—between 1997 and 2007—the firm experienced business and employment expansion after its restructuring, and conflicts inherent to labor relations had little public visibility. With the 2008 global financial crisis, which directly interfered with the firm's market, the logic of productive restructuring showed its darker side with the mass redundancies of workers. Embraer can be understood as a global neo-capitalist and post-Fordist firm, despite the specific conditions and peculiarities of peripheral Brazilian capitalism. In Brazil, inconclusive or peripheral Fordism moved to incomplete forms of participatory and socio-technical management (Alves, 2000; Braga, 2015), and productive restructuring strongly appeared with the intensification of globalization, labor flexibilization, and rising unemployment, especially in the 1990s.

Embraer—as well as other large national companies—began to restructure in the 1990s with the impact of the domestic market opening to international competition under the aegis of privatization policies and the reduction of state intervention. This demonstrated that Brazilian capitalism left a national and developmental perspective aside, integrating into global flexible capitalism in a subordinated and dependent manner. Embraer is a symbol of success in this process, becoming one of the most competitive companies in the global aviation industry with the production of business and high performance aircrafts, which are mainly sold on international markets.

Post-Fordist restructuring processes congregate objective aspects, such as new flexible technologies, cellular manufacturing, labor flexibilization, and reducing supply in accordance to demand, as well as subjective aspects such as teamwork, self-control, versatility, and commitment to the firm. The effects of this included disruption to the labor market and job insecurity. Post-Fordism, flexible capital accumulation, and flexible capitalism are terms that—in the critical literature—denounce the profound changes and disruptions to the labor market caused by productive restructuring, which also greatly reduces the power of unions and pressures for social and labor legislation flexibility (Antunes, 2002; Faria, 2004, 2007; Harvey, 1994; Heloani, 2003; Nogueira, 2007; Sennett, 2004; Vidal, 2013).

In Embraer, the most explicit conflicts in the field of labor and union relations arose with the firm's crisis in the international market from 2008 onwards. Its ramifications were the object of study of this article, which is based on an ethnographic case study.

In this context, metallurgical trade unionism in São José dos Campos, which is notable for its left-wing ideology, undertook radical action against so-called firm abuses. It condemned Embraer for sacrificing the workforce through culls and redundancies, harsh negotiations on wages and working conditions, and seeking to maintain an above average return on investment for shareholders. It was therefore placed in an institutionalized conflict between labor and capital, union and firm. There was a dispute of power influence, leadership, and subjectivity over the Embraer's workers between the trade union and the firm.

With the use of critical theory in organizational studies, manifestations of resistance and "organized counter-resistance" bring the following discussion: How does one analyze the increase in conflict and the particular form of worker mobilization observed in Embraer, with special attention to the year 2014? And: How does one understand the fact that leaders, managers, and technicians organized themselves against the union resistance movement in defense of the firm's values and its hegemony? There is no record in the literature on resistance in organizations for the phenomenon of "organized counter-resistance". This new configuration of social and labor conflict that pits employee against employee will be reflected on.

In Embraer, the subjective appeal of adhering to firm values proves to be more valuable and effective for groups of intermediate employees in the social pyramid, whether they are blue- or white-collar workers, or members of the new middle class. Those who tend to disseminate and protect firm's values are managers, leaders, and production superiors, who explicitly and deliberately organized and mobilized against the union's resistance. Support for vindicatory action and union resistance is usually found at the bottom of the social pyramid in areas like production. The union weakened under privatization in 2000, but has experienced a gradual revival, mirroring the more general trends of trade union movements in Brazil (see Boito & Marcelino, 2000; Nogueira & Basilio, 2012; Nogueira & Oliveira, 2015).

Post-Fordist hegemony

According to Gramsci and his seminal article *Americanism and Fordism*, capitalist hegemony in the United States was born from the Fordist factory model, in the context of flexible capitalism. Post-Fordism, where hegemony and the power of domination are based on a complex combination of neoliberalism and organizational Toyotism. This model of flexible production is driven by demand and commitment to work. Reordered subjectivity and self-coercion established the rules of the game, where management of production processes is—as well as being a technique—a clear manipulation of the unconscious (Heloani, 2003; Nogueira, 2007).

The arrival of the great crisis of fordism model in 1973—when all the advanced capitalist world fell into a deep and long recession—combined low growth rates with high inflation for the first time, changing everything (Vidal, 2013) and, "since then, neoliberal ideas began to gain space" (Anderson, 1995, p. 10). Contemporary capitalism supports itself by the growing assimilation of its theoretical concepts and neoliberal politicians, which was a vehement reaction against state intervention and social welfare policies. Led by Friedrich Hayek in 1947, liberal theorists such as Milton Friedman, Karl Popper, Lionel Robbins, Ludwig Von Mises, and others founded the Mont Pèlerin Society in Switzerland, which was "a sort of neoliberal freemasonry. Its purpose was to combat Keynesianism and the reigning solidarism, as well as to prepare for another type of capitalism" (Anderson, 1995, p. 9).

At this time, deregulation and constant disconnection prevailed between traditional social welfare, industry, and labor market policies, between the labor process and labor relations.

Employers did not compromise with employees because of the pressures from credit markets, the dogmatic concern with shareholders, and, in particular, the competitive environment (Thompson, 2003). "A period of institutional disorder prevailed, where events in the real world were ambiguous, diverse, and disconnected" (Vidal, 2011, p. 276), where the public lost ground to the private. The post-Fordist context creates a set of closely related and mutually reinforcing material transformations. These included internationalization, the growth in the services industry, flexibility, outsourcing, and subcontracting. Consequently, it produced a working structure with a large percentage of low autonomy jobs, a polarized labor markets, and increasingly created a class of poor workers, whose wages were kept low by the existence of an army of unemployed reserves (Cappelli, 1995; Vidal, 2013), where the very opportunity to be employed was already a privilege (Zizek, 2012).

In flexible capitalism, due to the progressive abandonment of traditional institutional forms of identification and protection, the firm is established as the main author of contemporary society. It externalizes and ratifies values (of competition and economic success) and its pragmatic vision of the world, its efficacy norms for combat and self-defense (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992; Motta, 1990). A common-sense management technology was created, where protest does not fit, showing the people that they "have become themselves", the ones responsible for their own success, in line with the competitive and individualistic lifestyle found in firm environments (Aktouf, 2004).

Similarly, Oakes and Berry (2009) view managerialism (the subjectivation of the firm's values beyond the work environment) as a fundamental process for the legitimation of power relations, sharing the meaning of "truth, reason, and progress" with people all over the world, defining the issues that are relevant and suggesting the best way to treat them. Social identity and organizational experiences are aligned with the interests of business (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992), where forms of management influence individuals (Alcadipani & Tonelli, 2014).

Subjective appeal in flexible capitalism goes beyond offices and factories. There is a new kind of worker: the "boss worker". It seems clear, therefore, that the current boss worker is a political product of strategic capital action as much as the old "standard worker" was (Mota, 1994, p. 116). "The behavioral literature, for example, seems to see organizations as one happy big family, with benevolent managers giving rational orders and workers who faithfully obey" (Fleming, 2001, p. 191). The "social factory" concept extends this analysis, observing how processes and working relationships have "gone out of the factories' walls" to the whole of society, increasing the control of the production process. This does not mean that the distinction between productive and unproductive labor is outdated or that Marx's value theory is obsolete; "[n]or is it to say that the labor relations are becoming irrelevant. Far from it" (Beverungen, Böhm, & Land, 2015, p. 477).

There is an even greater antagonism in post-Fordism and "financialized post-Fordism" with regard to the discourse proposed by firms. They position themselves as protagonists and major economic and social references for families, but in reality they flexibilize and make precarious relations and working

conditions. At this juncture of subjective appeal and contempt for labor, resistance in organizations gains ground. There are a number of studies showing firms that are unable to restructure themselves according to the flexibles models of management, which are free of reactions and individual and collective forms of worker resistance.

Resistance in organizations

The right of senior management to manage does not guarantee the legitimacy of their political actions. Resistance in organizations is the irreducible expression of relations of opposed interests between owners and employees, between managers and workers, and between capital and labor. Resistance in organizations—or "misbehavior" in the words Ackroyd and Thompson (1999)—comes from this assumption and covers any form of reaction, be it individual (see Kosmala & Herrbach, 2006) or collective (see Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999), spontaneous or organized, or in confrontation (or not) with the hegemonic values of the working environment. Resistance is conflict, from worker cynicism to collective and organized action in opposition to firm values and standards. The firm brings people of different classes, values, and distinct cultures closer together.

Post-structural or post-modern research on critical organizational studies mostly emphasizes behavioral and individual resistance in organizations. It highlights cynicism, humor, and irony as forms of resistance in contemporary organizations. One of the pioneers in research on individual resistance was Collinson (1994), who identified humor as a form of resistance in organizations. Fleming and Costas (2009) called these behaviors "dis-identifications", which are responses to "emotional bargains" offered by companies. Cynicism provides the employee with a kind of temporary relief to their subordinate position, which helps them stay in this position (Fleming & Spicer, 2003). In the same vein, Alvesson and Kärreman (2009) identify in a consultancy firm how resistance is contained and neutralized (though not eradicated) in the routine of work. They used the term counter-resistance to show how resistance is countered and neutralized by firm. We added the idea of collectivity and suggest the expression "organized counter-resistance" to define how Embraer oppose and neutralize the workers's resistance.

Our critique is based on labor process theory (LPT), which has been pioneered in critical organizational studies (Alcadipani, 2005; Thompson & O'doherty, 2009), inaugurated by the work of Braverman (1974) (Adler, 2007, 2011; Beverungen et al., 2015). LPT is a Marxist-based sociology research program that builds an analysis based on resistance in organizations from the perspective of relations between classes. LPT's inconsistency is in its view of the mode of production, since it establishes an oppressive character between employer and employee, a relation that pervades the social and subjective spheres of individuals. It tries to relate the labor process to the condition that implements it, either through a coercive process that "incapacitates" workers' reaction (Weil, 1996) or through "voluntary" worker collaboration as part of a team (Burawoy, 1982).

LPT understands that in modern industrial societies, hegemony— and therefore attempt at subjectivization—are performed by institutions of education, government, health, and employment, in order to observe, measure, monitor, evaluate, compare, contrast, examine, and subjectify all of us as individuals. A young Marx claimed that the isolated man does not exist: all of us are shaped by the existing society (Giddens, 1971, p. 13). However, LPT understands that "over time, not only the necessities of materials and service, but also patterns of emotional life are channeled through the market" (Braverman, 1987, p. 231). The second generation of thinkers—inaugurated by Michael Burawoy in 1979—aims to understand how organizations benefit from common-sense fragmented subjectivity. Burawoy (1982) bases his perspective on ethnographic research conducted in a factory in the America during the 1970s. For the researcher, the organizations did not subjectify workers from nothing, nor were they hegemonic; they used worker subjectivity (already pre-designed and fragmented) for a construction of subjectivity that they considered appropriate for their required labor processes (Burawoy, 1982). The author rejects the idea that the working process reduces the worker to a passive victim. The reproduction of the labor process as a result of the exclusion of worker subjectivity was not supported, but worker's subjectivity was incorporated into the production process (Burawoy, 1982; Wray-Bliss, 2002).

Gramsci's theory of hegemony offers us interesting resources for the understanding of resistance in organizations. The concept of hegemony is broad and goes beyond the concept of ideology and culture; it involves all living social processes, seeing them as a praxis: representations, norms, and values are social practices and, therefore, are organized by dominant and determinate social practices. Gramsci's concept sees culture as a global social process, which is the "worldview" of a society and period, and ideology as a system of representations, norms, and values of the dominant class that hides its peculiarities, which are inserted into an abstract universality. It is impossible to separate the ideas of the dominant class from the dominant class itself because, to achieve their objectives, they tend to present their interests as everyone's interests and therefore they are universally accepted (Burawoy, 2014; Chaui, 2014).

Resistance is conceptualized by Gramsci as the "cries" of non-hegemonic subaltern classes, a social phenomenon that seeks the achievement of a socio-political identity. Its purpose is to denounce and try to reverse conditions of oppression, marginalization, and exclusion in search of new ways of thinking and a critical and coherent conception of world. These need to be overcome in order to make subaltern classes capable of producing non-sectarian "counter-hegemony" in society.

The "organized counter-resistance" is a peculiar form of protest observed and recorded at Embraer in 2014, where—unlike the traditional concept of resistance in organizations—leaders and managers organized themselves against the resisting union movement in defense of consent (as adherence and commitment to the firm), the firm's values, and hegemony. In critical literature on organizations, there is no record of this "organized counter-resistance" phenomenon.

Ackroyd and Thompson (1999) divided resistance movements in organizations into different types of action: the action of resisting when taking ownership of the time of work (strikes and stoppages); products (damaging or interrupting its production), and firm identity (demonstrations that are harmful to a firm's image). We propose the addition of a collectivity dimension in order to identify resistance in organizations that separates individual and behavioral resistance from organized and collective resistance, like the case of "organized counter-resistance" presented here.

Restructuring, labor, and subjectivity in Embraer

Embraer was founded in 1969 as a state-owned firm. It was part of an important strategy for national defense and security, which were symbols of the military regime established in 1964. The firm expanded its activities into aeronautics and became one of the leading companies in this niche sector. The origin of Embraer resembles that of the oil and steel industry, which also counted on the active participation of the military government for its installation (Forjaz, 2005). The firm has more than 19,000 employees spread across four major continents; it has produced over 5000 aircraft; it is the third largest manufacturer of commercial jets in the world; its shares are often highly valued by stock brokers. The global firm has a diversified, heterogeneous, and flexible business network and is run by professional business people, who, first and foremost, solve problems in the interest of shareholders.

Like other large national companies, Embraer only began its post-Fordist production restructuring in the 1990s, with the impact of the opening of the national market and the National Privatization program. Immediately after its privatization in 1994, the firm began a series of strategic programs in its finance, production, and personnel management sectors, based on the then-hegemonic Japanese school of administration. In the late 1980s, the firm already had numerical control lathes, five axis milling machines, and CAD-CAM software for projects and automated operations. However, a rationalized model of production that was closer to the concepts of Toyotism only appeared after the production of the ERJ-145 jet, which had already been designed and conceived in its period of state ownership (Moraes, 2013).

Restructuring was directly related to the privatization process of Embraer and the adoption of a neoliberal management model that ensured return on investment for shareholders and its global competitive position (Nogueira & Oliveira, 2015). It is with privatization that a new organizational paradigm starts to be implemented based on global competitiveness, high-performance technology, and strong management of human relations and human resources. This creates a relationship of work dependency and certainly influences commitment, creating an atmosphere of consent that prevails over the conflict that is inherent to labor relations. From here, we will look at this historical process in the firm and the existing dynamics of conflict.

Major restructuring of Embraer occurred immediately after privatization in 1994, and again in 2006 and 2009. The injection of capital after privatization enabled the implementation of new technologies that reshaped the production of the firm, like computer-aided design (CAD) and computer-aided manufacturing (CAM). Other software such as systems, applications, and products (SAP) improved communication with suppliers and contractors impacted the environment of labor relations in the firm. In 1995, 1200 workers from the administrative sector and 500 from production were made redundant. In 2006, the firm pulverized capital and changed its name from Embraer to Embraer S.A. In that year, all shares became common stock and, therefore, the firm did not have a controlling shareholder. The capital pulverization decreased the cost of financing and increased liquidity, which enabled the development of new cutting-edge technologies as well as the intensification of work (Moraes, 2013).

There had already been outsourcing before privatization—one of the key tools promoted by the flexible production models in Embraer; however, salaries paid by the firm to its registered employees were the same. Just after privatization, restaurant services, security, building maintenance, computer maintenance, transportation, cleaning, and the printing sector were outsourced, reducing costs by 80 million dollars. Also, the administrative body was re-engineered, and multi-purpose teams were formed, which consequently reduced wages by an average of 25% (Bernardes, 2000).

It was now the turn of the sectors directly related to the firm's production to be outsourced. The sector for engineering projects, software production, plastic molds, and stamping, bending, and machining services (among others) were outsourced. Firms dependent on Embraer form, in large part, the production chain of the Brazilian aircraft industry. As the market is global and restricted, these companies claim to have difficulties to export, affirming that their demand depends almost exclusively on Embraer, which—according to Pinho (2002)—reaches between 80 and 90%.

The major restructuring of its production area came next. Under the justification of the global crisis of 2008–2009, EMBRAER made more than 4274 workers redundant in February 2009. In the same year, the firm broke a production record, delivering 244 aircrafts; and in 2010, it produced even more (281). For the purposes of comparison, the company produced 169 aircrafts in 2007 and 204 in 2008. Only with the introduction of new technologies and the intensification of work was it possible for the organization to have such gains in productivity.

There was a qualitative leap in the sense of taking ownership (though never completely or of all) of worker subjectivity (Moraes, 2013). All these organizational changes also led to transformations in the human resources department, which developed its main project from the Toyotist perspective. "[T]he transformation program's purpose was to improve communication between the firm and employees in order to meet the objectives of the action plan" (Moraes, 2013, p. 180). From this angle, the project Good Idea (based on the Toyotist philosophy of kaizen) is highlighted for saving 1 million dollars for the firm between 1995 and 1997 (Bernardes, 2000). The goal was to make the employee a contributor, and give them a feeling of responsibility for the organization's project.

Embraer's subjectivation capacity was noticed on the first days of field research. We observed in the largest mall food court in São José dos Campos city that many employees had lunch wearing the white coat (similar to those used by doctors) from the technical area of the firm's production. When we asked one of the employees why he had lunch in his work clothes, we received the following answer: "I feel comfortable with it—I do not see any reason to change" (Respondent 09). We think that working at Embraer is more than comfortable. It brings, for many, a sense of meaning to life; a job that is synonymous with happiness for any Brazilian workers, or at least it should be. Embraer has a respectable image in the specialized media, financial markets, and general society. As stated above, producing aircrafts in the country of Santos Dumont and being part of the most important firms in the world, is a source of pride for employees. This is essential both for commitment (in the language of organizational behavior), but also for the manipulation of subjectivity (in the language of critical studies).

The Metalworkers' Union

Since 2004, Brazil has had a paradoxical recovery of union activity, which is gaining ground and power; however, there has been political accommodation. The impetus of neo-development has coopted many of the movements, which are positioned next to the government and its social-liberalist project. However, this policy accommodation has not meant the disappearance of struggles, since strikes have continued to grow in recent years (Boito, Galvão, & Marcelino, 2009; Trópia, Galvão, & Marcelino, 2013).

The workers of Embraer's headquarters are represented by the Metalworkers' Union of São José dos Campos e Região (SMSJC), which is connected to a union called Central Sindical e Popular (CSP-Conlutas). In March 2004, CSP-Conlutas followed from a current that, by then, formed the main union of Brazil called Central Única dos Trabalhadores (CUT), which is linked to Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT); Movimento de Tendência Socialista (MTS), linked to the Partido Socialista dos Trabalhadores Unificados (PSTU); and some currents of Partido do Socialism e Liberdade (PSOL) (Trópia et al., 2013).

As pointed out by Baccaro, Hamann, and Turner (2003) CSP-Conlutas—as well as some European trade unions of the early twenty-first century, have expanded their political actions in line with the need for alternatives to the current market dynamic. They are organizations that seek to advance new political subjects, in addition to traditional activities of collective bargaining and seeking regulations in the workplace. CSP-Conlutas is an innovative practice that covers not only trade unions, but also grassroots organizations and urban social, rural, and student movements (Trópia et al., 2013). Besides Embraer's employees, the SMSJC also serves other global firms and subsidiaries like General Motors do Brasil (GMB), Panasonic do Brasil, Ericsson Telecomunicações, Hitachi, and Chery Brasil, among others. GMB's industrial complex is located in Paraíba Valley, São José dos Campos, which was established in 1959 (ten years before Embraer) and has 7000 employees, one of the largest facilities of the firm in the country.

The aeronautical segment has no employer trade union, so all the arrangements are made via the Federation of Industries of State of São Paulo (FIESP). One of the workers' demands is that agreements are made directly with the firm's management. Embraer—as well as other firms in the industry—are part of a non-organized category, a small group compared to other categories.

Research methodology

Based on public sociology (see Burawoy, 2005, 2014), an extended ethnographic case study approach was undertaken. The choice of extended case study was due to its ability to identify how processes of contemporary global capitalism are mediated locally in everyday life. The extended case study allows one to go deep into the political dichotomies of colonizer and colonized, white and black, metropolis and periphery, and capital and labor, in order to uncover multiple processes, interests, and identities. It is a reflective model of science applied to the technique of participant observation. The extended case study applies reflective science to ethnography, in order to extract the universal from the particular, move from the micro to the macro, connect the present to the past, and anticipate the future—all of this built on pre-existing theory (Burawoy, 2003, 2014).

The attempt to know what it is to be someone else is the main claim of ethnography, with the intention of reaching the symbolic and cultural meanings behind human actions. It has never been a simple matter, but today it seems an almost enormous question, considering the problematic nature of identity in the contemporary world (Cavedon & Lengler, 2005; Geertz, 1978; Maanen, 2006; Rocha, Barros, & Pereira, 2005). The research process is developed and fragmented by the diversity, almost a carnival profusion of methods. Understanding how people think to observe the world through the lens of those surveyed assumes a tangle of information that requires time researching. Nevertheless, the perspective of the researcher is valued, taking into account their biases, values, and personal backgrounds (Alcadipani, Westwood, & Rosa, 2015; Alcadipani & Tonelli, 2014; Atkinson, Coffey, Delamont, Lofland, & Lofland, 2001). The growing interest in ethnography has been vital to develop a thorough understanding of the world of management, organizations, and work (Alcadipani & Tonelli, 2014; Cavedon & Lengler, 2005; Cavedon, 1999).

The extended case study enables us to understand the macro forces that influence people's lives. They are determinants of our behavior as people, which constantly change. There cannot be micro processes without macro forces, nor macro forces without micro processes. The question is how we deal with the relationship between them. The extended case study allows us to identify those assumptions in our object of study. People's ideology—way in which we interpret reality—do not get identified with qualitative or quantitative questions, we must observe and hear them over time. In our view, the best way to empirically obtain something close to reality is to experience this reality (Burawoy, 2014). "Through intensive knowledge of a small universe, wide interpretations and abstract analysis come from the conceptual structures that create the values in

the lives of the investigated social actors" (Rocha et al., 2005, p. 123).

Robust ethnographic research features details that are convincing and allow readers to recognize patterns and make connections between personal problems and public issues. Ethnography is particularly suitable for the research of complex social relations, exposing the intersections of history, institutional efforts, culture and structure, as well as being related to daily interactions and the meaning of individuals' social life (Vaughan, 2005). "Interpretations (developed provisionally) should always be passive, questioned, and/or reconstructed" (Junior, 2002, p. 78).

Choice of the research object

The extended study case was conducted by the author Marco A. Gonsales during 2014 and 2015. Rather than following the ethnographical tradition of many sociologists inside factories, I performed extensive field research in areas of conflict (e.g. strikes, movements, and assemblies) between Embraer and workers for two years in São José dos Campos. While Burawoy (2014) attended factories for 30 years to understand consent in capitalism and state socialism, I went to areas of conflict in the context of labor relations (resistance and consent) and peripheral Brazilian contemporary capitalism (Braga, 2015).

I met the Metalworkers' Union of São José dos Campos (SMSJC), called Sindmetal, after several attempts to communicate with Embraer. Then I discovered how closed the firm's doors are to any researcher who is not needed by it. As all attempts were denied, I went to SMSJC, where I could interact and participate in various activities with workers. Among them were participants of strikes, assemblies, and movements, which created openings for communication. I researched unionized workers, union leaders, union officials, non-unionized workers, managers, and leaders of Embraer, in order to discover areas of conflict between the firm and its workers.

For Fook (2002), it is important to use different approaches to data collection given the multiplicity of researchers focused on the practice. The author suggests that it is necessary to find the object through at least three perspectives: ethnographic and observational methods; existing documents, such as diaries, files, and records; and accounts of experiences through interviews and conversations. This approach is similar to Marcus's (1998), who suggests a multi-site ethnography in which the same people or groups of people are tracked through different settings that make up their world.

Ethnographic data collection can be diversified, which means that the use of diaries is important in the development of research. Several times, when re-reading my diary, I found subjects and information that I had forgotten—details that contribute to the end result of the research. Keeping a diary helps us map arrangements and process data, which guides the future narrative of research. Without a diary and the organizing of data, field research is affected. For this particular study, an average of eight diary pages were written per day. A total of 68 weeks of field research during a year and a half was carried out,

with weekly visits on normal weeks and numerous visits during weeks with assemblies and strikes. A total of 89 diary entries were written, which equaled almost 700 diary pages. A total of 22 interviews were conducted with non-union workers, union members, union leaders, managers, and others, most of whom were Embraer employees. Interviews were sparingly recorded in notepads instead of using tape recorders or other device as it was my preferred option. I gave most attention to important and distinct speeches and, when alone, I summarized the interviews and wrote the day's research in the diary.

Notes with dates, times, and titles were mostly taken in my car after conversations. At the end of most days, I reviewed all the notes I had made and transcribed them in Microsoft Word, along with other noted impressions that were still fresh in memory. Gradually over time, the field diary was constructed according to the ritual of most ethnography researchers (see Sanjek, 1990). After this process, I saved the file with the date of the researched day and a title on the main subject of the day, in order to facilitate the organization of research and future data processing.

Organized counter-resistance

> To striking at Embraer is almost impossible. Then, if you are allowed, these people against the strike would dig a tunnel to enter the firm. You close a gate, they enter through the other. Some of them sleep in the firm, sleep over, only to flatter the bosses (Participant 15).

Since 2009, with the dismissal of 4273 employees, the relationship between the firm and its workers has been marked by an increasing rate of strikes and stoppages. Almost 40 h of stoppages, and a 24-h strike that also included administrative workers, occurred in the turbulent year of 2013. After two decades without unified strikes of the administrative and production sector, Embraer saw its hangars and offices stopped three times. There was a four-hour shutdown on October 8 at the factory on Faria Lima Avenue and another on October 23 at Eugênio de Melo district's plant. Following these, a 24-h strike started on October 31 (Jornal do Metalúrgico, 2013).

However, it was in 2014 that the lack of consent for work took new proportions, which was perhaps considered unthinkable by the organization's directors. A five-day strike at Embraer with four consecutive days between November 6 and 10 took place. The first strike took place on October 21, when about 7000 employees in an assembly approved a strike that would last for 24 h. They paralyzed activities in protest against a proposed wage readjustment and the value of the Profit and Results Participation program (PLR) offered by the firm.

On the day after the strike announcement, a page on Facebook entitled *I am Embraer and I am not on strike* was created. In the first six hours, 2000 employees entered the group, which reached 4000 members in two days. On the page, there were posts complaining that the union did not listen to the administrative staff when voting for the strike. In turn, the union says that it had listened to factory personnel and invited the rest of the staff, who, nevertheless, did not get involved. As stated by the respondent Herbert Claros, "the administrative staff and engineers are

not used to participating." Engineers, managers, and technicians account for half of Embraer's employees in Sao Jose de Campos. From approximately 14,000 workers in this factory; half are in management positions and the other half are from the area of production.

The organized resistance movement grew on the fourth day with the help from social networks. Leaders rose "spontaneously", and employees were mobilized and agreed to participate in the assembly scheduled for Monday November 10, wearing the blue Embraer shirts used during work hours. On that day, the assembly would proclaim the end of the strike and one of the biggest clashes between workers and managers of this organization began. The movement started at 5:00 am in front of the main entrance of the firm. At 9:00 am, union leaders, workers, and students, as well as steel worker (the so-called "sound truck of the union") began the assembly for the potential continuation of the stoppage, which this time lasted for 120 h. The local police reported that Faria Lima Avenue was filled with about 10,000 workers, who remained on guard, watching without troubling the gathered crowd.

Early on in the last assembly, there was an unprecedented movement against the union resistance, which was organized by leaders and managers. Around 300 people dressed in the blue management staff shirt put themselves in front of the steel workers' protest truck and proceeded to swear and boo throughout the union leaders' speeches. However, many other management employees dressed in blue—as requested by managers on social networks—stayed away from the truck, participating only in the voting that was also underway. Speeches started again, and new protests by exalted blue leaders took place. Without the proper environment for more talks and speeches, voting was proposed and led by Herbert Claros after making his last speech of the day. He kissed and hugged the blue shirt of the production team and told the workers:

This blue shirt is not only used by you all," referring to the bosses, "all of us from Embraer use the blue shirt, and we all use it because everyone here is proud of working in this firm. Each one of us here in this assembly is proud to make jet planes, and each one of us here in this assembly is dedicated to this objective, went to Senai, university, or/and did an MBA course." He was interrupted by boos. "Here, there are not the 4000 people from the social networking websites used this movement, you are leaders—but we also have our blue shirt and we deserve respect. We have to be proud because since last Wednesday, we have shown that it is not like this; we want respect, we want to be heard—this is what each colleague is saying when participating in this strike (Respondent 02).

Boos, cries, and shouts of "go to work!" rang out, followed by many swearwords that impeded and then stopped the speech of the union's vice president. He went on to start the vote, leading it to the end. With about 70% approval, the strike movement lost the vote of the first assembly and, thus, thousands of workers went to the firm and returned to their jobs. Although the main demand of the workers was not met, salaries were increased.

Speeches and perceptions from the field work

Observations and interviews are key strategies of ethnographic work as data can be related and new conclusions can be obtained (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). I attended meetings and union events, listens to workers, participated in the delivery of news pamphlets, accompanied the protest before and during the strike movements, and interviewed workers from the production and management sectors of Embraer as well as some other companies in the region.

We have organized ourselves to show we do not agree with this strike. The union forbids us to work, this is nonsense. They are taking our right to work, they are opportunists. They did not talk to the administrative staff and went on strike anyway. If they want to protest, do it—let us work (Respondent 19).

We decided to create this movement because we believe in the firm—we like what we do. Embraer is admired for its people management; they are always seen as one of the best companies to work for in Brazil. I do not see why some workers stand against this firm, this national symbol (Respondent 16).

I studied a lot to enter Embraer. Here I can think about a better future of my children, my family, and myself. I do not want half a dozen trade unionists hindering my career. If you want better wages, you need to study and work hard—do not disturb the people who already do this (Respondent 23).

Production relations are linked objectively by such things as formal labor relations, contracts, and salaries, but also by subjectively by feelings of belonging, affiliation, recognition, and the fulfillment of desires (Faria, 2007). Embraer—as previously mentioned—was one of the first Brazilian firms to have a modern human resources department (Moraes, 2013), and is aligned with the flexible proposals of contemporary capitalism (see Harvey, 1994). These are responsible for promoting the values, culture, and behavior desired by the firm in a constant attempt to compromise their workers through subjectivity. However, we emphasize that the process of subjectivity is not homogeneous. "The subject is never coeval with language, because of the historicity of its condition of enunciation. Each statement—whether it is to express power or to confront it—is always the result of the way that the other interprets the statement issued by the subject" (Carvalho, 2001, p 125). With higher wages and more worker benefits, management workers and/or more qualified individuals tend to better absorb the subjective proposal of the firm.

I am not part of the union, but if you hear what they have to say, they are right. They are fighting for peoples' jobs. We see how things are. The firm makes millions and our salary is lower than that of many colleagues working in other firms in the region. My son, a motorcycle courier, receives almost the same as me at Embraer (Respondent 17).

What is here in the news pamphlet [that the union delivered on the day of the strike] is true. The firm is not in crisis, it is selling a lot—look here. But they want to decrease our health insurance, salaries, and profit share. . .Every year it is

the same thing. I have been here for six years, and the firm have never offered a salary readjustment or something better. It is always worse. Small businesses in the region pay more than Embraer (Respondent 14).

Embraer is known in the Paraíba Valley for paying little, very little indeed. Any Paraíba Valley firm pays more than Embraer. You do not need to go to Boeing, no. Gamesa, Embraer's supplier, pays almost four times more—Kawasaki as well. Liebherr, which is close to here, is full of former Embraer employees. Even the highly skilled are going to other companies in droves (Respondent 7).

The new dream, but the older employees are already jaded and resigned to the situation. The young realize they will not get out of the production sector for administrative positions, and fewer still reach the position of director. That is why many give up. The production-sector wage is going down. But the work at Embraer is not bad. I was there for 25 years then fired during privatization. I am part of the union, but I understand that it is a good place to work (Respondent 11).

During these days of strike and many others in the field of research field, from one respondent and another, I realized that for some workers the job insecurity and low pay outweigh the subjective charms of the organization. I came across workers with many concerns, including job security: "We have nothing to lose but nothing is still a lot" (Respondent 26), said a production sector worker at the end of the 2014 strike, who was not part of a union and celebrated the end of the strike. She was more worried about her job, which she despised, criticizing its ability to guarantee her well-being. The very opportunity of being employed is already a privilege in contemporary capitalism (Zizek, 2012).

After two months, some respondents during the 2014 strike were spoken to again about the days of conflict. They reiterated that the strike resistance movement and the union were spontaneous and organized little by little by some employees. For one respondent, the movement must gain strength, "especially after our movement appeared in major media outlets" (Respondent 21). For Herbert Claros, the vice president of the union, the movement was induced by bosses and can be considered collective moral harassment.

In 2009, we had more than 4000 employees laid off. These were general and affected all departments of the firm. If the union does not let us work, we will take the risk of losing our productivity. See General Motors next door, because of the various protests, the firm wants to move from here. More than half the staff have already been dismissed. We do not want the same for Embraer. I think it is fair to demand better wages and such, but it does not need to stop the firm from working. Do it in a different way—like this they disturb the whole firm (Respondent 25).

Increasingly, the union radicalize, and we will organize ourselves. Our blue shirts have joined together because of dissatisfaction with the union, which causes more problems each year. If no one does anything, they will end up destroying this firm, the pride of São José dos Campos. The firm has moved

jobs out of Brazil. Phenom and Legacy jet production has already left the country. Our goal is to confront the union to save the firm and our jobs. For every strike they promote, we are here to prevent them from disallowing us into the firm. The problem of unionism in Brazil is that it is linked to political parties like PSTU and PSOL, which still live in the time of the dictatorship. The union has to stand alongside the employees who want to work, not the other way (Respondent 27).

While Embraer proposed structural reforms to production, personnel management, and its corporate model—mainly in an effort to promote boss–employee collaboration—the trade union movement has also reconfigured itself. This is represented by CSP-Conlutas through its closer positioning to the worker and greater confrontation—two competing proposals that come into collision.

Conclusion

Embraer has adopted the values and concepts of financialized post-Fordism that guides the focus of essential competencies—in the sense of strategically focusing on a small class of obstinate employees—which generate results for shareholders through manufacturing consent. Resistance—as a social phenomenon—is a moment of consciousness of differences and boundaries of relationships between classes, probably sharpened—among other complexities—by economic and social polarization, given wage dualization and the working conditions of Embraer's post-privatization flexible organizational model.

Collective resistance in the sphere of work—within organizations—has not yet essentially changed labor relations, but have relived the burden imposed by the flexible organizational model. However, indirect control over labor processes in contemporary capitalism, based on their ability to give meaning to workers' identity and value to work—what Bolton (2008) calls "emotional bargains"—stack up against the challenges that resistance poses.

The main conclusion of the article is that the dialectical conflict in contemporary capitalism awakens resistance movements of more precarious workers and, at the same time, also reveals the effectiveness of subjectivizing consent policies, where more skilled and better paid workers (in this case) present themselves as an unprecedented and "organized counter-resistance" movement.

This unexpected and unparalleled movement—here called "organized counter-resistance"—has defended the organization and its values against worker resistance (those who are dissatisfied with the firm's policy of people management), which represents the polarization between management and production workers. Those who have higher-wages—the remunerated bourgeoisie (Milner, 2003, p. 17)—differ from the working class masses, as they assimilate the values of the hegemonic class more easily. Because of this, they entry into conflict with other workers, who fear, according to Zizek (2012), that they themselves will become a proletariat or a poor worker.

Acknowledgments

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