

Resistance to electronic surveillance: the response of call center team managers

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Abstract

Studies show that managers' responses to resistance to electronic surveillance in the workplace affects the behavior of resistance and its effects on organizations. However, there are few studies about managers' responses to these behaviors and the following questions remain unanswered: "How do managers respond to resistance to electronic surveillance in the workplace?" and "Why do managers respond in this way?" This study seeks to answer these questions in order to understand managers' response to resistance to electronic surveillance in the workplace. The theoretical framework adopted combines Coetsee (1999), Lapointe and Rivard (2005), Regan (1996) and Rivard and Lapointe (2012). The data was collected through interviews with nine call center team managers working in companies of different sectors and was analyzed by Content Analysis with the support of Atlas.TI® software. The results suggest that managers respond to resistance to surveillance in three ways: they try to convince the employee to abandon the resistance (dissuasion), they do not act on it at all (inaction) or they change the surveillance system (rectification). Four aspects lead managers to these responses: resistance behavior, frequency of resistance, target technology and size of the managers' team. The participant with the smallest team did not report resistance to surveillance, which could indicate the absence of these behaviors in some contexts. This study helps researchers to define the theoretical framework of their work, to better understand the issue of control on organizations nowadays, as well as to define new research' problems. As for managers, this study clarifies aspects regarding technologies targeted by acts of resistance and the resistance behavior that may be present in the workplace.

Keywords: Managers' response. Resistance. Electronic surveillance. Call center.

Resistência à vigilância eletrônica: a resposta dos gestores de equipes de teleatendimento

Resumo

Os estudos mostram que a resposta dos gestores à resistência à vigilância eletrônica afeta o formato da resistência e seus efeitos na organização. Contudo, há escassez de pesquisas sobre a resposta dos gestores a esses comportamentos, permanecendo as seguintes questões sem resposta: "Como os gestores respondem à resistência à vigilância eletrônica?" e "O que os leva a responder dessa forma?". Para respondê-las, este estudo busca compreender a resposta dos gestores à resistência à vigilância eletrônica. A base teórica adotada combina as classificações de Coetsee (1999), Lapointe e Rivard (2005), Regan (1996) e Rivard e Lapointe (2012). Os dados foram coletados por meio de entrevistas com 9 gestores de equipes de teleatendimento que trabalham em empresas de setores variados e submetidos a Análise de Conteúdo no programa computacional *Atlas.ti*®. Os resultados sugerem que os gestores respondem à resistência à vigilância de 3 formas: tentam convencer o trabalhador a desistir da resistência (dissuasão); não tomam uma atitude (inação); ou modificam o sistema de vigilância (retificação). Quatro aspectos os levam a tais respostas: tecnologia-alvo; formato da resistência; frequência da resistência; e tamanho da equipe do gestor. O participante com a menor equipe não relatou resistência à vigilância, o que pode indicar a inexistência desses atos em algumas configurações. Esta pesquisa auxilia os pesquisadores a definir a base teórica de suas pesquisas, entender o controle nas empresas atuais e definir novos problemas de pesquisa. Aos gestores, sugere as tecnologias-alvo de resistência e o formato desses comportamentos.

Palavras-chave: Resposta do gestor. Resistência. Vigilância eletrônica. Teleatendimento.

Resistencia a la vigilancia electrónica: la respuesta de los administradores de equipos de teleatención

Resumen

Los estudios muestran que la respuesta de los administradores a la resistencia a la vigilancia electrónica afecta el formato de la resistencia y sus efectos en las organizaciones. No obstante, son escasos los estudios sobre las respuestas de los administradores a estos comportamientos, motivo por el cual las siguientes preguntas permanecen sin respuestas: "¿Cómo los administradores responden a la resistencia a la vigilancia electrónica?" y "¿Qué les hace responder de esa manera?" Para responderlas, este estudio pretende comprender la respuesta de los administradores a la resistencia a la vigilancia electrónica. El marco teórico adoptado combina las clasificaciones de Coetsee (1999), Lapointe y Rivard (2005), Regan (1996) y Rivard y Lapointe (2012). Los datos se recopilaron mediante entrevistas con nueve administradores responsables por equipos de teleatención de empresas de distintos sectores y se sometieron a análisis de contenido con el software *Atlas.TI*®. Los resultados indican que los administradores responden a la resistencia de tres maneras: tratan de convencer al trabajador a que abandone la resistencia (disuasión), no toman una actitud (inacción) o cambian el sistema de vigilancia (rectificación). Cuatro aspectos los llevan a estas respuestas: formato de la resistencia, frecuencia de la resistencia, tecnología objeto de resistencia y tamaño del equipo del administrador. El participante con el equipo más pequeño no reportó resistencia, lo que puede indicar la ausencia de tales comportamientos en algunos entornos. Este estudio ayuda a los investigadores a definir el marco teórico de sus investigaciones y entender el control en las empresas actualmente. A los administradores, este estudio les sugiere las tecnologías objeto de resistencia y el formato de esos comportamientos.

Palabras clave: Respuesta del administrador. Resistencia. Vigilancia electrónica. Teleatención.

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INTRODUCTION

Electronic surveillance technology is widely used in organizations seeking productivity. However, studies indicate that these technologies are subject to intentional opposition by workers (BALL, 2010; LAWRENCE and ROBINSON, 2007; SPITZMÜLLER and STANTON, 2006; ZWEIG, 2005). This opposition, known as ‘acts of resistance to electronic surveillance’, may have negative effects on the organization (ALDER, NOEL and AMBROSE, 2006). Therefore, organizational research seek to understand the elements that influence resistance to surveillance in the workplace (HOLLAND, COOPER and HECKER, 2015; JENSEN and RAVER, 2012; MARTIN, WELLEN and GRIMMER, 2016).

Manager’s response is an element that is little studied but is influential when it comes to resistance in the workplace (BALL, 2010; BALL and MARGULIS, 2011; LAPOINTE and RIVARD, 2005; RIVARD and LAPOINTE, 2012; ZWEIG, 2005). The study by Lapointe and Rivard (2005, p. 484), for example, “reveals that inappropriate responses (from managers) to resistance behaviors ultimately provoke resistance escalation”. “However, there is very little research on those who supervise using monitoring information” (BALL and MARGULIS, 2011, p. 121). Faced with the scarcity of studies, Ball and Margulis (2011, p. 121) stress the need to understand managers’ response: “We need to understand how the configurations of monitoring and worker attitudes affect the way supervisors behave when they are giving feedback”.

Studies seeking to understand managers’ responses to resistance to surveillance, as highlighted by Ball and Margulis (2011), were not found. This research was carried out using the Google Academic, Science Direct, Scopus and Web of Science databases, using the following keywords (in both Portuguese and English): “surveillance”; “monitoring”; “electronic surveillance”; “Electronic monitoring”; “resistance”; and “manager”. The only similar study was by Rivard and Lapointe (2012), which proposes a classification for managers’ responses to resistance to information systems in general. Their study does not investigate the aspects that lead to such responses. The assumption here is that the investigation of these aspects contributes to the understanding of the phenomenon and the improvement of managerial practices, as well as pointing out problems for future studies.

Based on this context, this research aims to understand managers’ responses to resistance to electronic surveillance in the workplace. The study seeks to answer the following questions: “How do managers respond to resistance to electronic surveillance in the workplace?” and “Why do managers respond in this way?” For this research, interviews were carried out with team managers in call center companies operating in several areas, identifying situations of resistance and the responses observed. Situations of resistance were analyzed according to Lapointe and Rivard (2005) and the managers’ responses based on Rivard and Lapointe (2012). When analysing the results, the information was cross-referenced to identify patterns between the reports and the aspects that lead managers to adopt such responses.

This article is structured in five sections. In this introduction, the research problem is contextualized. The second section presents the theoretical framework on the topics of resistance, electronic surveillance and management responses. The third section describes methodological procedures, followed by the fourth section where the results are analyzed. Finally, the fifth section presents the conclusion.

ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE: WORKER RESISTANCE AND MANAGERS’ RESPONSES

There are several concepts of resistance in the literature (CONTU, 2008; HOLLANDER and EISENHOWER, 2004; JOHANSSON and VINTHAGEN, 2014; PRASAD and PRASAD, 2000). Hollander and Einsehower’s (2004) review of the use of this concept in several areas identifies 07 types of resistance (overt, covert, unwitting, target-defined, externally-defined, missed, and attempted resistance). Among these seven types, this study adopts “overt resistance”, where resistance is an act of opposition that is necessarily intentional of the individual and perceptible to the target. This concept is adopted considering that resistance is an effective act of expressing an individual’s dissatisfaction, different of ‘bad behavior’ (lack of purpose) and ‘noncongruent’ (not perceptible to the target) (ACKROYD and THOMPSON, 1999)

In the organizational field, researchers have different theoretical perspectives on worker resistance. Ball and Margulis (2011), Fleming and Spicer (2008), and Thomas and Davies (2005) separate these perspectives into two currents of thought: functionalist and critical. Functionalist researchers defend the regulation of the status quo and perceive resistance as a

possible dysfunction of the antagonistic relations between capital and labor, which can be avoided. Critical researchers, on the other hand, take a stance in favor of radical change and understand resistance as a legitimate response of the worker in search of emancipation, which never disappears. Box 1 was developed based on these definitions and classifies the studies on resistance in the workplace cited in this study.

Box 1

Classification of studies on resistance in the workplace

Category	Author
Funcionalist	Alder and Ambrose (2005); Lapointe and Rivard (2005); Alder, Noel and Ambrose (2006); Ball (2010); Ball and Margulis (2011); Coetsee (1999); Holland, Cooper and Hecker (2015); Jensen and Raver (2012); Jeske and Santuzzi (2015); Lawrence and Robinson (2007); Martin, Wellen and Grimmer (2016); McNall and Roch (2009); Rivard and Lapointe (2012); Sewell, Baker and Nyberg (2012); Spitzmüller and Stanton (2006); Stanton (2000); Thomas, Sargent and Hardy (2011); Zweig (2005).
Critical	Bain and Taylor (2000); Barnes (2007); Contu (2008); Courpasson, Dany and Clegg (2012); Ellway (2013); Fleming and Spicer (2003); Fleming and Spicer (2008); Johansson and Vinthagen (2014); McCabe (2014); Mulholland (2004); Paulsen (2013); Prasad and Prasad (2000); Knights (2002); Korczynski (2011); Rodrigues and Collinson (1995); Taylor and Bain (2003); Thomas and Davies (2005); Townsend (2005).

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

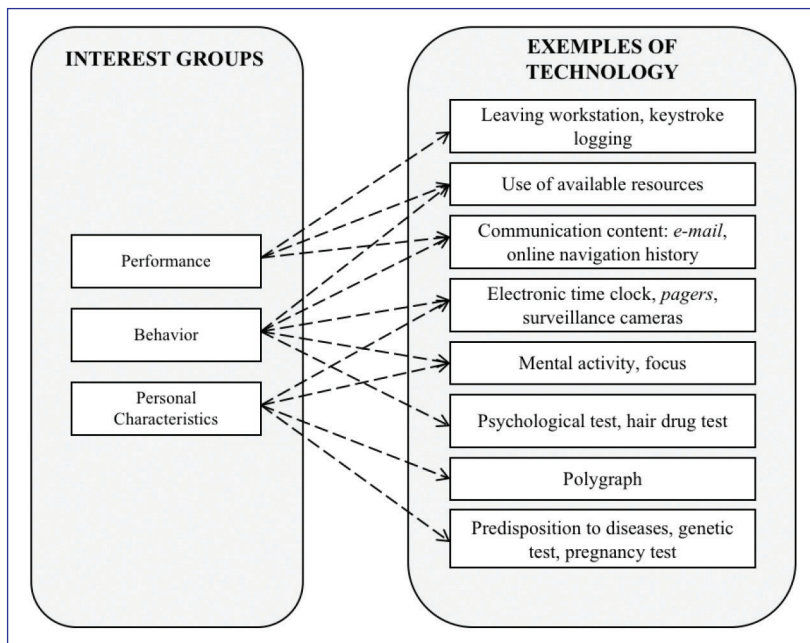
In general, functionalist studies consider that resistance in the workplace arises from specific factors such as commitment, trust, control intensity etc. (ALDER and AMBROSE, 2005; JESKE and SANTUZZI, 2015; MARTIN, WELLEN and GRIMMER, 2016; SPITZMÜLLER and STANTON, 2006). Critical studies use Foucault’s (1987) ideas to assert that resistance is inherent in social relations (BAIN and TAYLOR, 2000; ELLWAY, 2013; JOHANSSON and VINTHAGEN, 2014; PRASAD and PRASAD, 2000; THOMAS and DAVIES, 2005). This study adopts the functionalist theoretical perspective, since it clearly seeks to regulate the status quo, although using Foucault’s (1987) ideas about the panopticon the study establishes a contrast and understand the phenomenon studied. Other studies in this current also cite Foucault (HOLLAND, COOPER and HECKER, 2015; JESKE and SANTUZZI, 2015).

The panopticon is a project of architecture proposed by Jeremy Bentham in the late eighteenth century (BAIN and TAYLOR, 2000). It consisted of a central tower surrounded by a circular building, with the building divided into cells, leading the occupants of the cells to be in a “a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (FOUCAULT, 1987, p. 166). They know that there is someone in the tower watching, but the architecture does not allow them to see who is watching or when. For Foucault (1987), this state of visibility discipline the subjectivity of the individual, who start to act according to norms, even when not supervised. However, Foucault (1987) considers that resistance exists because power and resistance are two sides of the same coin and come together. The similarity between panopticon and surveillance technologies, which are also visible but unverifiable to the worker, led to the emergence of comparisons and terms, such as “electronic panopticon” (BAIN and TAYLOR, 2000).

According to Lapointe and Rivard (2005), resistance is formed by different dimensions: there are a) the object of resistance (target of opposition); b) the subject (number of actors showing resistance behavior); and c) the behavior (characteristics of the behavior). As for this study, the object of resistance is the electronic surveillance devices, which are electronic technologies that seek to collect, store and report, instantaneously and continuously, the worker activities (WEST and BOWMAN, 2016). Currently, there are several of these devices in the market (e.g. surveillance cameras and telephone call recording systems). Regan (1996) classifies these technologies into three groups of interest, according to the monitored object: performance, behavior and personal characteristics (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Categories of workplace surveillance



Source: Regan (1996, p. 24).

In the group “performance”, the object of interest of the surveillance is the work, not the worker; in the “behavior” group, the focus is on the work and the worker; in the “personal characteristics”, the focus is the worker. Some technologies can be classified into more than one group simultaneously (REGAN, 1996). In Brazil, there is a law and a federal order that regulates the use of some of the surveillance technologies. Law 7.855/1989 makes changes in Labor Laws and allows recording the time worked by employees in a company using an electronic time clock (BRASIL, 1989). Order 6.523/2008 provides the norms regarding Customer Services and makes it mandatory to record all calls made and received by customer services. According to the order, the recordings have to be available for consultation for a minimum period of two years (BRASIL, 2008).

The subject offering resistance can be an individual, a group or an organization (LAPOINTE and RIVARD, 2005). In the case of resistance to surveillance, studies indicate the predominance of individual acts (CONTU, 2008; FLEMING and SPICER, 2003; KARREMAN and ALVESSON, 2009; PRASAD and PRASAD, 2000; RODRIGUES and COLLINSON, 1995). As for behavior, studies indicate that resistance to monitoring may be presented in different ways, such as sabotage (MULHOLLAND, 2004; PRASAD and PRASAD, 2000) and avoiding work (PAULSEN, 2013; TOWNSEND, 2005). Coetsee (1999) classifies the resistance to change in four levels: apathy, passive resistance, active resistance and aggressive resistance (Box 2). According to this classification, the act of resistance can evolve or decrease in level, over time. This classification was adopted here to identify the level of resistance faced by managers. It is important to say that, as “apathy” is not perceptible to the target, this behavior is not considered in this study.

Box 2

Defining the resistance level

Resistance level	Definition
Apathy	Neutral behavior. The person knows about a specific change, but their perception and attitude towards the change are neutral.
Passive resistance	Weak opposition, evidenced by the existence of the negative perceptions and attitudes expressed when a point of view is vocalized and negotiation is searched.
Active resistance	Strong opposition, but not destructive. The employee doubts the efficacy of the dialogue and then challenges the rules, protests or diminishes the rhythm of work.
Aggressive resistance	Destructive opposition, such as making mistakes on purpose, sabotaging, destructing and acts of terrorism.

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on Coetsee (1999).

Several studies indicates that the evolution of resistance, over time, is related to the response of the manager (BAIN and TAYLOR, 2000; BALL, 2010; BALL and MARGULIS, 2011; LAPOINTE and RIVARD, 2005; STANTON, 2000; ZWEIG 2005). Bain and Taylor (2000) and Zweig (2005), for example, indicate that managers who respond to resistance with increasing control, increase the level of opposition. Despite this influence, studies show that there is a lack of knowledge about managers’ responses to resistance to surveillance (BALL and MARGULIS, 2011; RIVARD and LAPOINTE, 2012). The research identified that studied this theme was Rivard and Lapointe (2012). However, the study refers to the implementation of information technology (IT) and not to surveillance. The authors selected 89 studies published between 1974 and 2010 and analyzed 137 resistance episodes described in these works. From this analysis, Rivard and Lapointe (2012) propose four categories of manager responses to resistance: inaction, acknowledgement, rectification, and dissuasion. The authors separate the categories into subcategories for more detailed examination. Box 3 presents the description of categories and subcategories, which is the classification adopted in this research. The subcategory “unaware” is not related to the concept of resistance adopted in the study and, therefore, was not considered.

Box 3

Classification of managers’ responses

Category of response	Sub-category of response	Description
Inaction	Unaware	Manager does not know the worker is showing resistance
	Intentionally ignores	Manager chooses to ignore resistance
	Powerlessness	Manager does not consider themselves able to respond
Acknowledgement	–	Response that aims to acknowledge the resistance
Rectification	Congruent	Corrects the system according to what is requested
	Noncongruent	Corrects the system ignoring what is requested
Dissuasion	Coercion	Forces the worker to stop resisting, using threats
	Authoritarian persuasion	Censure the worker, force to use the system, without threatening
	Support persuasion	Provides support by explaining, using trust and granting benefits

Source: Adapted from Rivard and Lapointe (2012).

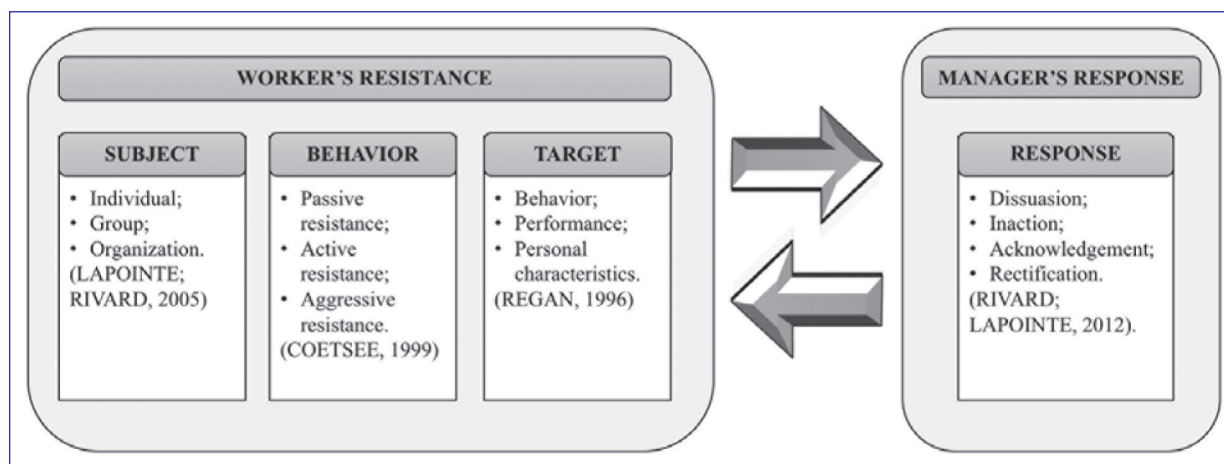
Most of the functionalist studies consider that resistance generates effects contrary to the interests of the organization (ALDER and AMBROSE, 2005; JENSEN and RAVER, 2012; MARTIN, WELLEN and GRIMMER, 2016; SPITZMÜLLER and STANTON, 2006). Among the functionalists, only Rivard and Lapointe (2012) and Thomas, Sargent and Hardy (2011) were found addressing resistance behaviors that can have positive effects. Critical studies, however, point out that less apparent resistance generates

small concessions in favor of workers (RODRIGUES and COLLINSON, 1995; MCCABE, 2014). These results have led some researchers to question the efficiency of these behaviors in reaching the goal (FLEMING and SPICER, 2003; CONTU, 2008). Thus, Prasad and Prasad (2000) indicate that the more active and disruptive the resistance, the greater the possibility of changes occurring in favor of the worker.

Based on the literature discussed, Figure 2 was developed, presenting the research landscape (theoretical framework and classifications). The classifications presented were those used for data analysis.

Figure 2

Research context



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative and exploratory approach in order to understand the response of managers to resistance to surveillance in the workplace. The research subjects were team managers of call centers, working in companies operating in several areas in Natal city, Brazil. Call centers intensely use electronic surveillance, which makes them ideal for studying phenomena related to the use of this technology (BALL, 2010; BALL and MARGULIS, 2011; ELLWAY, 2013; SEWELL, BARKER and NYBERG, 2012). It is important to say that there are other forms of client service – such as e-mail or online chat – which were not part of this study. The choice of studying companies operating in different areas sought to avoid that the particularities of a specific market influenced the results. The subjects were not selected based on specific hierarchical positions. They could participate in the survey as long as they were responsible for a team of operators/workers.

The number of participants was established based on accessibility (VERGARA, 2009). This criterion was used due to the difficulty of access to the subjects. According to Flick (2009), this criterion may represent the only way to carry out an evaluation when resources are limited. The participants were identified by recommendation, on social media and in visits to the companies. At the end of this process of identification, 09 managers agreed to participate in the study. The participants work for companies in the following areas: car sales, software development, fuel distribution, health plan administration, travel agency, telecommunications, university, teleservice and fashion retail. Searches for participants were ended when, after a few weeks, no new contacts emerged.

Data collection was conducted through a semi-structured interview, a technique that allows to capture, using questions as guidelines, meanings, feelings, the reality experienced by the interviewee (VERGARA, 2009). The questionnaire was developed by the authors based on instruments developed by Oakland and Ostell (1996) and Cooper, Dewe and O'Driscoll (2001), as well as in the literature on resistance. The questions were validated by a specialist in qualitative methods and by submitting two pilot interviews with managers. The final questionnaire contained 07 main questions on the topic resistance to electronic

surveillance in the workplace, 08 questions about the profile of the manager and 03 escape questions, in case the interviewee did not identify acts of resistance. The 07 main questions sought to identify the acts of resistance perceived by the participants and their response to these situations, while the 03 escape questions sought to explore their relationship with the workers to confirm (or not) the non-existence of acts of resistance.

The data was collected in February and March 2015, at the interviewees' workplace. Before the interviews began, all participants were informed about the purpose of the research, audio recording and ethical procedures (such as confidentiality). In order to formalize the authorization of the participants and the commitment of the researchers, participants were asked to sign a free and informed consent form, as well as receiving a confidentiality contract signed by the authors. Throughout the interviews, some questions were introduced to explore the interviewee's responses. Each participant was interviewed once (cross-sectional research).

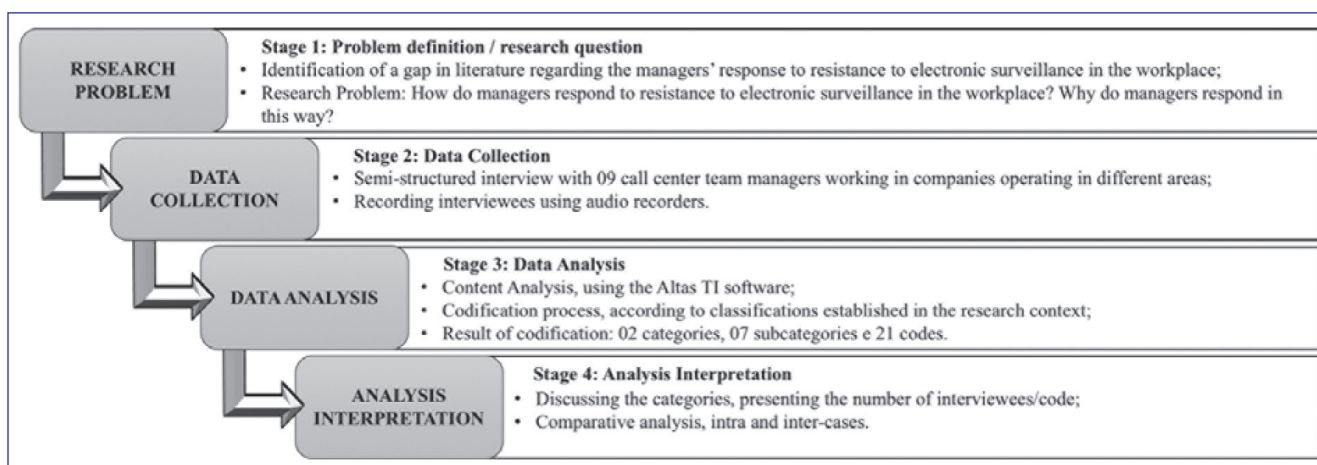
After collection, the data were submitted to content analysis, a technique that makes inference through the systematic and objective identification of the characteristics of the text (BERG, 2001). This technique was considered adequate for the type of material collected. Initially, audios were transcribed in 32 pages, following the guidelines of Flick (2009). Then the transcriptions were encoded, which is a process of separating texts into labeled information units (codes) and grouping them into categories (CRESWELL, 2014). In coding phase, the themes presented in the research context were identified: resistance to surveillance and the response of the manager to this situation (Figure 2). Thus, 65 parts of the interviews were coded, generating 21 codes.

Subsequently, the codes were grouped according to the pre-established classifications in the following subcategories: subject (02 codes), target (02), behavior (08), dissuasion (03), inaction (01) and rectification (02); 03 codes did not fit into these subcategories, because they dealt with the frequency with which the participants noticed the resistance. Therefore, a seventh subcategory was created: "frequency". The subcategories subject, target, behavior and frequency are related to the situation of resistance observed in the workers, while the other 03 are related to the managers' responses. Thus, the first 04 subcategories were included in the category "situations of resistance" and the last 03 in the category "managers' responses". The section 'analysis and discussion' will discuss the results according to these categories.

The entire coding process was performed in the *Atlas.ti*® computational software. The software tools were used to systematize the process and make the results more explicit (MILES and HUBERMAN, 1994). The "code tree" tool allowed to illustrate the relationships between the codes and subcategories in the categories created. As for results interpretation, the codes cited more often by the respondents were discussed according to the content analysis (BERG, 2001). The comparative analysis intra and inter-cases were conducted, seeking to cross the data (MILES and HUBERMAN, 1994). Figure 3 illustrates the research's methodological procedures.

Figure 3

Methodological procedures of the research



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section is divided in three subsections: presentation of the participants; resistance of the worker to electronic surveillance; and managers' responses to the resistance.

Presentation of the Participants

The majority of the participants of this research were female (66.7%) with a university degree (88.9%). Box 4 presents data on the profile of the interviewees. Because of the confidentiality terms, fictional names were used.

Box 4

Presentation of the participants

Name (fictional)	Gender	Education	Position	Time in the position	Size of the team
Gabriel	Male	Degree	Owner	4 years	4 workers
Rodolfo	Male	Degree	Owner	4 years	14 workers
Geórgia	Female	Post-degree	Manager	8 years	52 workers
Mariana	Female	Post-degree	Manager	4 years	60 workers
Raimundo	Male	Degree	Manager	6 years	180 workers
Amanda	Female	Degree	Supervisor	2 years	8 workers
Paula	Female	Degree	Supervisor	10 years	8 workers
Rita	Female	Post-degree in progress	Supervisor	1 year	8 workers
Susi	Female	Post-degree in progress	Supervisor	3 months	19 workers

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

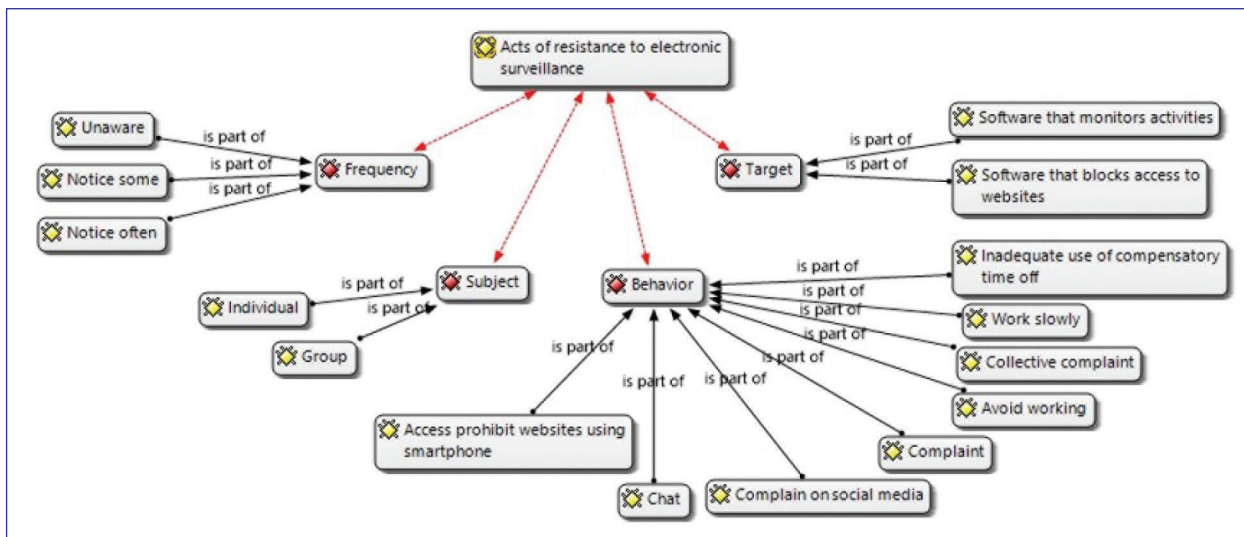
According to Box 4, all participants were call center team managers and were mostly in charge of supervision. Due to the difference of positions, it is important to register some information about the participant's workplace: the supervisors worked in the same room as the operators and had daily contact with them; the managers and owners worked in a separate room with a view (Rodolfo, Georgia, Raimundo) or not (Gabriel and Mariana) of the operators' workplace. Managers and owners (except Rodolfo) had subordinates who supervised the operators daily.

The time that the participants occupied their positions varied between 3 months and 10 years. The participant with the shortest time in the position was newly promoted from the position of operator. The size of the teams ranged from 04 to 180 workers. The three managers with the largest teams (Georgia, Mariana and Raimundo) held management positions and were responsible for the call center of the company.

Worker Resistance of Electronic Surveillance

In this section, situations of resistance of electronic surveillance reported by the interviewees are described. The information follows the codification for the category "situation of resistance". Figure 4 shows the codes and subcategories created during the analysis, as well as the relationship between them.

Figure 4
Code Tree for the category “situation of resistance”



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In the subcategory “frequency”, the code “do not realize” was cited by one interviewee who did not identify acts of resistance. Gabriel was the owner of the company identified with the smallest phone center (04 operators); According to him:

[...] here it is more likely for me to have to tell people to stop creating new things than for someone to complain that they are monitored too much.

In order to prove this point, Gabriel reported a situation in which the workers proposed to adopt a technology that registers internal conversations:

[...] The chat system [...], they [the workers] researched and implemented it. In the system, all internal conversation – among themselves – is registered.

The reason for this, according to Gabriel, is the culture of the organization, which seeks

[...] to have good people, mature enough to manage themselves. People you do not have to monitor all the time.

According to the manager, the workers liked to have their service evaluated.

Gabriel’s responses reflect the functionalist researches, which deal with the possibility of resistance not manifesting (MCNALL and ROCH, 2009; ZWEIG, 2005), of operators liking assessment (BALL, 2010), and workers proposing improvements in the control system (RIVARD and LAPOINTE, 2012). When it comes to research from the critical current of thought, however, workers proposing improvement of the control system generated a series of questions for critical researchers: if resistance always exists (FOUCAULT, 1987), even hidden behind a behavior of consent (MCCABE, 2014), how can resistance act in favor of its own domination? It is important to say that, from a critical perspective, the distance between Gabriel and the workers may have prevented him from identifying acts of resistance (TAYLOR and BAIN, 2003).

The other 08 interviewees reported situations of resistance to surveillance with different frequencies: 06 reported noticing few acts of resistance and 02 reported noticing it happening regularly. Those who noticed few acts considered that the use of surveillance as a common and recognized practice of call centers (BALL, 2010). In Geórgia’s words:

[...] when it comes to call centers, it is well known that there is closer monitoring and we make it clear what we will demand from them.

The other 02 managers who reported noticing acts of resistance in the workplace were Raimundo and Rita. Raimundo's testimonial indicates that these acts are frequent:

And, usually, instead of being a peaceful conversation, it becomes hostile. Why? Because usually they do it [inappropriate use of internet at work]

In the subcategory "subject", 07 managers said they noticed only isolated acts from individuals. The only manager that reported resistance of a group was Rita, who suggested that the small number of people in the team led to the act:

[...] we are a small team, so the complaints were collective.

Regarding the characteristics of the subject, 02 managers (Mariana and Paula) pointed out that complaints came from employees who had held their positions for more time. Paula said:

They are laid back, they don't like changes, new things, novelties, mainly these technologies. That's it, this monitoring thing... they think it is annoying.

Mariana suggested a possible reason:

There is the issue of self-indulgence. People that are there for a long time, laid back, who have that feeling "I'll never get out of here".

The predominance of individual acts of resistance (CONTU, 2008; FLEMING and SPICER, 2003; KARREMAN and ALVESSON, 2009; PRASAD and PRASAD, 2000; RODRIGUES and COLLINSON, 1995) and the observation of the collective act (COURPASSON, DANY and CLEGG, 2012; BARNES, 2007; KORSZYNSKI, 2011) are in agreement with the functionalist and critical literature. The influence of team size on collective action is also in agreement with the researches, which indicate that environmental and social aspects influence the employee's reaction to surveillance (SPITZMÜLLER and STANTON, 2006; STANTON, 2000). This study did not find researches on the connection between the time in the position and resistance behavior to electronic surveillance.

In the subcategory "target", 04 managers cited the software that blocks access to specific websites through the company's computer ("behavior" group) and 04 cited the software that monitors the activities of the worker during working time ("performance" group) (REGAN, 1996). Raimundo exemplifies the dissatisfaction of workers on the software that blocks certain website access:

[...] not very happy, mainly when it comes to the use of free internet on our computers.

Susi brings an example of the resistance on the software that monitors the activities:

[...] the main resistance, I believe, is related to the control over the intervals. Even though we discuss this in meetings, they complain. Today we just received a report showing that there are people that stay in the bathroom for one hour and thirty minutes.

It is important to say that the software that monitors the activities was used in 09 companies, while the software that blocks websites was used in 07 companies.

In the reported situations, the use of the 02 types of software affected workers' interest (accessing specific information on the Internet, time to use the restroom or the comfort of the employees who have held positions for a long time). This relationship between workplace surveillance and the emergence of resistance is cited by Ball (2010), Lawrence and Robinson (2007) and Zweig (2005). This study did not find research indicating which of the surveillance technologies have generated more acts of resistance to compare results and identify patterns. However, some research identifies the object of resistance. In this sense, Vasconcelos and Pinochet (2008) also identified resistance to the software that blocks access to certain websites.

In the subcategory "behavior", the most cited behaviors were: complaining, avoiding work and accessing prohibited websites using a smartphone (02 managers each). The other identified behaviors were: chatting, working slowly, posting complains on social media, misusing the time clock and the system of compensatory time off and complaining collectively. Among the

behaviors identified, 04 were at the level of passive resistance (COETSEE, 1999), because they were not seen as challenges to the rules: accessing prohibited websites using a smartphone, chatting, complaining and complaining collectively. The others were at the level of active resistance, as they challenged the interests of the company, with no intention of destroying it. Mariana's response evidences the behavior of working slowly:

There is some with a laid back attitude. Something like "I'm going to take it easy here, slow down a little bit".

The "complaint posted on social media" was the highest level of resistance identified, as it took the case beyond the work environment. Acts of aggressive resistance were not identified (COETSEE, 1999).

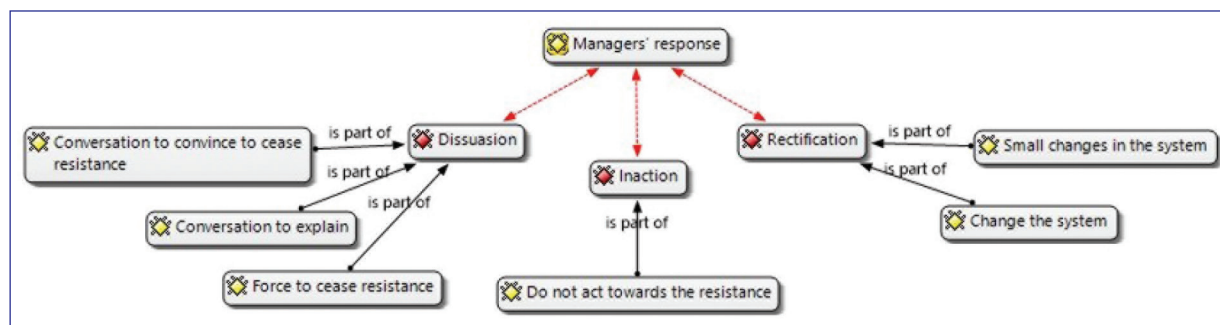
Most of the resistance behavior identified in the study is found in the literature: complaining (BARNES, 2007; BAIN and TAYLOR, 2000), chatting/negotiating (COURPASSON, DANNY and CLEGG, 2012; THOMAS, SARGENT and HARDY, 2011), working slowly (LAWRENCE and ROBINSON, 2007; MULHOLLAND, 2004), avoiding work (PAULSEN, 2013), collective complaining (KORCZYNSKI, 2011) and improper use of the time clock and the system of compensatory time off (JOHANSSON and VINTHAGEN, 2014). The acts of accessing prohibited web sites using a smartphone and complaining on social media were not found in the literature. Considered a similar form of complaining as that on social media, studies were found that showed workers created websites to complain about the organization (BALL, 2010; KARREMAN and ALVESSON, 2009). However, these behaviors are essentially different since creating a website does not necessarily identify the creator or involve personal networks as is the case with social media.

Managers' Responses to the Resistance to Electronic Surveillance

This section describes the managers' responses to the resistance to workplace surveillance. The information described reflects the coding of the category "managers' responses". Figure 5 illustrates the codes and subcategories created in the analysis and their relationships.

Figure 5

Code Tree in the category "managers' responses"



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

According to Figure 5, 03 of the 04 responses predicted by Rivard and Lapointe (2012) were identified: dissuasion, inaction and rectification. Dissuasion was the most cited response (04 managers), followed by inaction (02) and rectification (02). The fact that dissuasion was the most cited response differs from Rivard and Lapointe (2012), who indicate that the most common responses are, respectively: inaction, rectification, dissuasion and acknowledgement. This difference may be related to the difference between the phenomena and subjects studied. The fact that this study did not find "acknowledgement" among the responses can be understood, considering that in their research, Rivard and Lapointe (2012) found this response in only 05 resistance episodes out of the 137 analyzed. This study considers that the fact that the majority of the responses are identified as dissuasion and inaction shows that, in most situations, resistance does not change or improve the surveillance system, as suggested by Rivard and Lapointe (2012) and Thomas, Sargent and Hardy (2011). Box 5 relates the managers' responses to the characteristics of the resistances previously described.

Box 5

Situations of resistance to electronic surveillance in the workplace

Name	Response	Frequency	Subject	Target (Class)	Behavior (Level)
Geórgia (Manager/52 workers)	Dissuasion	Rare	Individual	Performance	Active
Mariana (Manager/60 workers)	Dissuasion	Rare	Individual	Performance	Active
Paula (Supervisor/08 workers)	Dissuasion	Rare	Individual	Performance	Active
Susi (Supervisor/19 workers)	Dissuasion	Rare	Individual	Performance	Active
Amanda (Supervisor/08 workers)	Inaction	Rare	Individual	Behavior	Passive
Rodolfo (Owner/14 workers)	Inaction	Rare	Individual	Behavior	Passive
Raimundo (Manager/180 workers)	Rectification	Frequent	Individual	Behavior	Active
Rita (Supervisor/08 workers)	Rectification	Frequent	Group	Behavior	Passive

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In the sub-category “dissuasion”, 04 managers reported to have responded to resistance with “authoritarian persuasion”. In their responses, they indicate they have repressed the workers so they would give up the resistance. As expressed by Paula and Susi:

[...] in several occasions they are doing something, the phone is there, ringing, and they do not answer the call. Then we have to address this abruptly. (Paula)

[...] I already held numerous meetings informing them about what is not allowed, but several operators insist on doing it. (Susi)

The 03 situations had the common fact that the target was a technology of the group “performance” (REGAN, 1996) and the behaviors were of the active resistance level (COETSEE, 1999), such as avoiding work and working slowly. It is possible to say that this result indicates a possible connection between the manager’s response to the resistance behavior and the target technology.

In the category “inaction”, 02 managers reported having intentionally ignored resistance. Amanda and Rodolfo said that the companies they work for did not allow access to social media using the companies’ computer, but the use of smartphones was allowed. According to the managers, employees made comments on the software that blocks access to social media and started to access them using their smartphones in a harmless way (passive resistance). The managers did not act on the situation (inaction) and allowed employees to keep using social media on their phones. Thus, the inaction was for the benefit of the workers. Amanda exemplifies the situation:

Some of the pages are blocked. [...] All of the workers here use Whatsapp, Facebook. They use them and what can we do? We have to accept it and stimulate them to make positive use of it. [...] the manager has to be alert and lead the situation so it does not jeopardize the work.

Both situations of inaction involved managers responsible for small teams, the technology of the group “behavior” (REGAN, 1996) and behaviors typical of passive resistance (“chatting” and “access forbidden websites using smartphones”) (COETSEE, 1999). It is possible to say that this result confirms the connection of the manager’s response with the resistance behavior (level) and the target technology. It also shows that the size of the team is an aspect that can influence the response of the manager. Rodolfo expresses this:

[...] I adopt here a methodology of relationship that is very interesting. It is applicable because of the size of the company, it is a small company.

In the subcategory “rectification”, a manager reported having responded in an “congruent” way and another in an “noncongruent” way. Reports by Raimundo and Rita both indicate that changes were made in the company surveillance system in order to

assist operators. However, the changes reported by Raimundo did not meet all the claims of the workers, as they were limited to night staff and the access to websites related to universities. As a result, the rectification was classified as “inadequate”. Rita’s response, on the other hand, indicated that the claims were met and classified as “adequate”. In Raimundo’s situation, the rectification was influenced by a case of an employee who complained about the company on social media and was fired. In Rita’s situation, the rectification was influenced by the team’s collective complaint.

Both cases involved frequent acts of resistance, with more disruptive passive/active behavior (posting on social media, collective complaint) and the software that blocks access to websites, from the group “behavior” (REGAN, 1996). This result reiterates the relation of the managers’ response to the resistance behavior and its target technology, as well as pointing out another aspect: the frequency of the acts of resistance. This result is in agreement with the critical studies that suggest that disruptive resistance has more potential to promote changes (CONTU, 2008; PRASAD and PRASAD, 2000; RODRIGUES and COLLINSON, 1995; TAYLOR and BAIN, 2003). Finally, it was found that, when the target technology was in the group “behavior” the managers’ responses favored resistance (using rectification or inaction), and when the target technology was in the group “performance”, the managers used dissuasion to respond to resistance. This result indicates that managers are less open to negotiating technologies in the group “performance”, which has a strategic role for the organization.

CONCLUSION

The first question of this research was: “How do managers respond to resistance to electronic surveillance in the workplace?” The study answered this question by showing that managers respond in 03 ways: they try to convince the worker to give up resistance (dissuasion); they do not act at all (inaction); or they modify the surveillance system (rectification) (RIVARD and LAPOINTE, 2012). Among these responses, the most cited was dissuasion (04 managers), and inaction and rectification were each cited by 02 managers. This suggests that, in most situations, managers do not use resistance to make system improvements, as suggested by Rivard and Lapointe (2012) and Thomas, Sargent and Hardy (2011). Based on the positive results of resistance pointed out in these researches – such as contributing to identify problems in the system –, managers are recommended to use resistance as a source of strategic information in order to make improvements.

The second question of this research was: “Why do managers respond in this way?” The study presented four aspects: target technology; resistance behavior; frequency of resistance; and the size of the team. The response “inaction” is used in situations of resistance involving a technology considered in the group “behavior” (REGAN, 1996), or rare acts of passive resistance (COETSEE, 1999) and when it is a small team. The response “rectification” is used in situations involving passive/active resistance that are more disruptive, in cases of frequent manifestations and also when the technology is considered in the group “behavior”. Finally, dissuasion is a response used in situations involving technologies in the group “performance”, and in cases of active and rare resistance. The results suggest that managers are less likely to negotiate/change when the target technology is in the group “performance”, which has a strategic role for the organization.

This research brings practical and academic contributions to the field. In practical terms, the study highlights the target technologies and resistance behavior that can arise in organizations, which is information that can be used by managers to improve surveillance technologies. In academic terms, this research presents, for the first time, a theoretical framework to allow investigating the issue, as well as identifying and explaining the managers’ responses to resistance to electronic surveillance in the workplace. Such information can be used by researchers to define the theoretical basis of their studies, understand the relationship of control and resistance in organizations, and identify new research problems.

It is important to point out two limitations of this research. The first was the number of participants, since the closure of data collection occurred when the researchers did not obtain the contact of other managers, instead of the theoretical saturation, as planned. The second was the difference between the hierarchical positions of the participating managers, since critical studies indicate that the distance from the worker influences the ability to perceive more discrete acts of resistance (TAYLOR and BAIN, 2003). Based on this limitation, it is suggested that researchers interested in investigating the same phenomenon should consider only working with supervisors, who are closer to the workers operating the call centers.

The findings of this research allows to draw suggestions for future research. First, future studies may investigate, in other contexts, the 04 aspects that lead managers to adopt different responses (target technology, behaviors and frequency of

resistance, and the size of the team), in order to observe the emergence of new information. Second, to investigate the relationship between the employee's time in the position and resistance to electronic surveillance at the workplace, since 02 participants reported this relationship and it was not possible to find this issue in the literature. Third, to investigate the resistance to electronic surveillance in companies that have few workers and that do not make intensive use of surveillance technology, verifying whether there is opposition to the surveillance. This is because one of the participants, who worked in a company with this configuration, did not identify resistance and such research would contribute to the discussion between functionalist and critical currents of thought about the existence of acts of resistance. Finally, future research could investigate the response of managers to resistance using other methods (i.e. grounded theory, ethnography) and considering other subjects of the company.

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