Theoretical-empirical Article

Practices of Normalizing Political Violence at Volkswagen do Brasil during the Brazilian Civil-Military Dictatorship (1964-1985)

Práticas de Normalização da Violência Política na Volkswagen do Brasil na Ditadura Civil-Militar Brasileira (1964-1985)

Marcelo Almeida de Carvalho Silva[1]
Alessandra Costa*[2]

■ **ABSTRACT**

Objective: to investigate what the practices of normalizing political violence perpetrated by Volkswagen do Brasil against its workers during the Brazilian military dictatorship were, how they were configured, and how they were operationalized. **Theoretical framework:** the historical context of corporate collaboration with dictatorial governments allows us to identify the invisible face of organizational violence that results from routine practices that normalize political violence. **Methods:** historical research with documental sources from the National Archives, the APESP, the Public Representation opened against the company by MPESP, the newspaper *Tribuna Metalúrgica*, the magazine *Família VW*, and the press. The documents were analyzed in dialogue with the historiography and with analytical categories from the field. **Results:** the research identified five practices of normalizing political violence: formalization, division of labor, routinization, authority and obedience, and identity and non-identity politics. **Conclusions:** tunderstanding political violence as actions to dismantle workers' protest movements for better working conditions and the organization of workers around issues of national politics, the results suggest that the company, in collaboration with repressive forces, carried out practices to normalize political violence.

Keywords: organizational violence; political violence; normalization of violence; Brazilian dictatorship; Volkswagen do Brasil.

■ **RESUMO**

Objetivo: investigar quais eram, como se configuravam e como eram operacionalizadas práticas de normalização da violência política cometida pela Volkswagen do Brasil contra seus trabalhadores durante a ditadura militar brasileira. **Marco teórico:** o contexto histórico da colaboração de empresas com governos ditatoriais permite identificar a face de invisibilidade da violência organizacional decorrente de práticas rotineiras de gestão que normalizam a violência política. **Método:** pesquisa histórica com fontes documentais dos acervos: Arquivo Nacional, Arquivo Público do estado de São Paulo, Ministério Público do estado de São Paulo, Tribuna Metalúrgica, Revista Família VW e imprensa. Os documentos foram analisados em diálogo com a historiografia e com categorias analíticas provenientes do campo. **Resultados:** a pesquisa identificou cinco práticas de normalização da violência política: formalização, divisão do trabalho, rotinização, autoridade e obediência, política de identidade e não identidade. **Conclusões:** assumindo como violência política ações para desarticular movimentos reivindicatórios dos operários por melhores condições de trabalho e a organização dos operários em torno de questões de política nacional, os resultados sugerem que a empresa – em colaboração com órgãos de repressão – realizou práticas de normalização da violência política.

Palavras-chave: violência organizacional; violência política; normalização da violência; ditadura brasileira; Volkswagen do Brasil.

∗ Corresponding Author.
1. Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil.
2. Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil.

# of invited reviewers until the decision:		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1st round		👤	ⓧ	👤	ⓧ	👤							

1

Practices of normalizing political violence at Volkswagen do Brasil during the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985)

M. A. de C. Silva, A. Costa

INTRODUCTION

"On September 23, 2020, Volkswagen do Brasil announced an agreement with the Federal Prosecutor's Office (MPF), in which the automaker admitted that it collaborated with the repressive apparatus in the repression of its workers during the Brazilian dictatorship. The company undertook to spend R$36 million through a behavioral adjustment agreement to compensate former employees who suffered human rights violations during the regime and to finance projects of remembrance, research and funds dedicated to issues related to the violence committed during the dictatorship… This is the first case in which a company has been taken to court in Brazil for crimes related to repression during the civil-military regime. Although there is evidence that Volkswagen was not alone and that other economic groups collaborated with the repression, the case gained prominence and made progress because it was supported by the testimonies of former workers who suffered violence and, above all, because it was duly supported by extensive documentation confirming the company's collusion with the repressive forces" (own translation).

The aim of this article is to investigate what the practices of normalizing political violence perpetrated by Volkswagen do Brasil (VWB) against its workers during the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964-1988) were, how they were configured, and how they were operationalized. According to Oliveira and Nunes (2008, p. 30), violence in work relations can be characterized as "physical or psychological harm inflicted by an individual or group against an individual or group in which work relations are established". In addition, the authors explain that any negligence, deprivation, or violation of the fundamental principles of work, as well as the omission or naturalization of death and illness as a result of work, can also be considered violence in work relations (Oliveira & Nunes, 2008). In a recent article, Costas and Gray (2019) state that organizational violence can be visible and invisible, absent and present, omnipresent and rare. This paper argues that this interpretation — which identifies invisibility, absence, and rarity — only makes sense as a result of practices that normalize violence within organizations, allowing it to be committed without due criticism or even understood as an acceptable activity. In other words, although it is often omitted, denied, or hidden, it can be said that violence is present in organizations and in their everyday bureaucratic practices and processes (Bishop et al., 2005; Clegg et al. 2006; Clegg, 2009; Kenny, 2016).

Although violence is almost inherent in organizations, it is only since the beginning of the 21st century that there has been a growing interest in understanding this phenomenon analytically in organizational studies (Bishop et al., 2005). Since then, there has been not only an increase in publications on the subject, but also a more general definition of what is meant by violence. Thus, it is possible to find articles in which organizational violence is present in various forms, such as acting in genocides (Stokes & Gabriel, 2010), in the practices of total organizations and in oppressive contexts (Clegg et al. 2006; Clegg et al., 2012), the promotion of symbolic violence (Harrington et al., 2015), the perpetuation of torture practices (Chwastiak, 2015), the search for legitimacy and the maintenance of violence (Kenny, 2016), suicides (Chan, 2013), harassment (Harris et al., 2019), or corporate crimes (Alcadipani & Medeiros, 2020; Oliveira & Silveira, 2021). The study of violence in a broader sense was also addressed in a special issue of the journal *Organization*, entitled *Licence to kill? On the organization of destruction in the 21st century*, which dealt with the organizational forms of wars and destruction (Bloomfield et al., 2017).

Thus, even if it appears under other names, it is undeniable that organizational research on violence has advanced in recent years since Stewart Clegg claimed in 2006 that there were few studies on the subject. It is safe to say, then, that violence — a reality in everyday organizational life — has been studied by researchers in the field in its most diverse manifestations.

On the other hand, given that the Holocaust and other genocides require organization and management (Bauman, 2002; Clegg, 2009; Stokes & Gabriel, 2010), it is possible to notice an absence of research that emphasizes the production of violence using organizational management theories and practices as a lens (Clegg, 2009). Despite some previous studies (Bishop et al., 2005; Clegg et al., 2006), it is only in recent years that it has been possible to notice a greater interest in organizational literature in this area (Chwastiak, 2015; Kenny, 2016; Varman & Al-Amoudi, 2016; Costas & Grey, 2019).

While Costas and Gray (2019) understand that violence is both visible and invisible, absent and present, omnipresent and rare, Bishop et al. (2005) examined how violence was normalized by management's failure to recognize it. Chwastiak (2015), for his part, shows us how certain procedures can normalize violence and thus be perceived as a routine operational act, and Varman and Al-Amoudi (2016) explain how the derealization of people has been able to create conditions for the practice of violence even in regulated environments. Similarly, violence against schoolchildren in Ireland was normalized because they were constituted as 'abject beings' that did not need rights or

2

Practices of normalizing political violence at Volkswagen do Brasil during the
Brazilian civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985)

M. A. de C. Silva, A. Costa

protection (Kenny, 2016). These contemporary discussions are in some ways in dialogue with other texts that seek to explain how different acts related to violence can be normalized depending on the organization or the process adopted in its management (Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Ashforth et al, 2007; Martí & Fernández, 2013).

From our perspective, these studies converge on three fundamental points. First, they highlight the relevance and timeliness of research aimed at understanding the practice of violence in organizations. Second, the articles argue that in some cases, organizational violence can be practiced in an invisible or normalized way, and thus can be carried out without being perceived as an unwanted, vile, or abject act. This can mean that the practice of violence is sometimes even accepted as an everyday activity in organizations (Chwastiak, 2015; Costas & Grey, 2019). The third point that this research suggests is the possible existence of organizational mechanisms that, intentionally or not, make the practice of violence permissible. The use of these techniques suggests that organizations can adopt ways of managing violence so that it is perceived as just another organizational process and is internalized as routine, thus facilitating its acceptance and recurrence (Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Bishop et al., 2005; Clegg et al. 2006; Costas & Grey, 2019; Martí & Fernández, 2013; Chwastiak, 2015; Varman & Al-Amoudi, 2016). Although these works discuss different phenomena, they are united in suggesting that violence, when managed, can take on ordinary contours and be seen as a practice embedded in organizational procedures and, for this reason, invisible to a less critical eye that is unable to distinguish violence from everyday practice.

The normalization of violence cannot be considered a novelty, as it has stimulated research for decades, especially after the Second World War and the discovery of the violence practiced in the concentration camps, such as "the technical support provided by IBM to the Third Reich to organize, account for and manage the deportation, forced labor and extermination of millions of victims of Nazism … [and] the supply of the insecticide Zyklon B, used in the gas chambers of Auschwitz in Nazi Germany, by the company IG Farben (which was later closed down and reopened under the name Bayer by the same founder, Friedrich Bayer)…" (Costa & Silva, 2018, p. 16).

Various authors (Arendt, 2014; Bauman, 2002; Kelman, 1973) have tried to understand how the atrocities committed by Nazism were possible and have pointed in the direction of processes that make violence permissible. In a complementary way, the historical context of Latin American governments of exception and the active collaboration between dictatorship and business also created fertile ground for the promotion of recurrent violence and violations of workers' human rights, as shown, for example,

in the collection of research by Victoria Basualdo, Hartmut Berghoff, and Marcelo Bucheli entitled *Big Business and Dictatorship in Latin America: A Transnational History of Profits and Repression*, published in 2021 (Basualdo et al., 2021a).

Thus, drawing not only on this seminal literature, but also on the aforementioned works that seek to discuss forms of normalization of violence, this article aims to investigate what they were, how they were configured, and how the practices of normalization of political violence perpetrated by Volkswagen do Brasil (VWB) against its workers during the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964-1988) were operationalized. To do this, we looked at documents from the period that allowed us to understand the company's practices of violence against its workers.

This article contributes to the advancement of knowledge by responding to both Clegg's (2009) call for expanding research in organizational studies on cases of violence, and to the debate proposed by Costas and Gray (2019) on the invisibility of violence, by analyzing practices that were able to normalize political violence against VWB workers during the Brazilian civil-military regime and the process of normalizing unwanted activities. As we will discuss here, we believe that violence becomes invisible (to use the authors' term) precisely as a result of the normalization process.

In this sense, after this introduction, we present the literature on the practices of normalizing violence. After briefly explaining the nature of the research data, we analyze the documents in order to reveal how these procedures were able to normalize the violence practiced by VWB, not without first contextualizing the socio-historical moment in which these events unfolded.

NORMALIZATION OF VIOLENCE IN ORGANIZATIONS

Violence is a diffuse phenomenon with many different meanings that can vary in terms of legitimacy, nature, authorship, and intentionality (Domenach, 1981; Galtung, 1969; Kilby, 2013; Michaud, 2006). In this research, we understand violence from a sociological perspective that emerges from social relations whose understanding is based on the specific socio-economic, political, cultural, and historical dimensions of each era and context (Chesnais, 1981; Domenach, 1981; Kilby, 2013). Thus, for the purposes of this research, we reject theoretical lines that perceive violence as something natural, biological, and instinctive in human beings (Özcelik, 2017), as we agree that violence should be studied according to the society that produced it (Burke, 1995). In this sense, violence can be practiced by

Revista de Administração Contemporânea, v. 28, n. 2, e230162, 2024 | doi.org/10.1590/1982-7849rac2024230162.por| e-ISSN 1982-7849 | rac.anpad.org.br

3

Practices of normalizing political violence at Volkswagen do Brasil during the
Brazilian civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985)

M. A. de C. Silva, A. Costa

different agents (self-inflicted, interpersonal, or collective), of different natures (physical, psychological, sexual, or due to negligence), or of different types (structural, political, symbolic, or economic), but always constituted through social relations.

From this perspective, some authors (Arendt, 2014; Bauman, 2002; Kelman, 1973), in an attempt to understand the conditions that made the Holocaust possible, have examined the practices of the German army and its efficiency in exterminating prisoners. The instrumentalization of social relations based on rationality provides the technique for these criminal acts to be committed. Bauman (2002) attributes the Nazis' ability to kill on a large scale to this rationally managed technique. According to the author, anger and rage alone were not sufficient as instruments of mass extermination. Rationalization could also be seen in the hierarchical and functional division of the Nazi army, which was able to distance the executor from the victim. The separation between the two was useful for the army because it made it impossible for the former to realize the consequences of their actions. In this way, their actions were not identified with the deaths. Eichman, the Nazi officer whose trial was followed by Arendt (2014), claimed that he never kill any Jews because his responsibility lay in the logistics of transporting them to the concentration camps, just as a supplier of steel to a bomb factory may not feel responsible for the deaths caused by the product of their work (Bauman, 2002). In other words, dividing the work reduces the need for the executor to think and make decisions, and makes it more difficult for the executor to be involved in the ultimate meaning of their activity. The logic of rationality, as Stokes and Gabriel (2010) teach us, separates the ends from the means, making the murderous act more distant and therefore possible, since the perpetrator is unable to perceive the effects of their actions in due time.

The hierarchical structure, as well as the division of activities, plays a fundamental role in the practice of violence. The insertion of individuals into the organizational layers succeeds in turning them into mere cogs in the machine, depriving them of their humanity through the limits of autonomy imposed on them. The subordination of individuals to the organizational structure eliminates their freedom of action and causes their responsibility to be transferred to the structure (Arendt, 2014). The diffusion of responsibility is common in any bureaucratic system and occurs due to the division of labor, where each person is responsible only for their own task, making it difficult to identify who is responsible for all the activities performed (May, 1997). In this case, responsibility is not perceived in someone else, but is transferred to the bureaucratic

system and thus removed from the human domain. The impersonality required in the rationally established structures of organizations contributes to the anonymity of the person who performs the activity, because without political ideals, they protect themselves, because "in order to carry out their work, the bureaucrat must feel safe from controls — both praise and disapproval…" (Arendt, 2015, p. 305). By being perceived as a position, a function, anonymous within the organization, the subject can lose the personal dimension and escape personal contact, that is, confrontation with the other and, above all, with the consequences of their actions. In this way, rationality contributed to the trivialization of the Nazi initiative by giving it an entire management technique based on instrumental and rational criteria, which, except for the final objective, differed in no way from other organized activities, outlined, monitored, and supervised by ordinary departments (Bauman, 2002).

Rationality is also responsible for the routinization of activities as a practice of normalizing violence (Clegg et al. 2006; Chwastiak, 2015; Kelman, 1973). When analyzing total institutions, Clegg, Courpasson and Phillips (2006, p. 176) denounce techniques capable of "making the everyday acts of extreme power easier to think about and do," indicating that for these institutions to be successful, there needs to be a greater interest and concern for the means rather than the outcome, which must be passively accepted. Thus, in addition to the distance between the executor and the victim, the hyper-division of labor requires the execution of activities through continuous and automatic action, limiting the space for thought, reflection, and criticism, since the transformation of activities into routine, mechanical, and highly programmed operations reduces the time and psychological conditions for elucidating the morality of that task (Clegg et al., 2006; Kelman, 1973). Routinization can operate both at the individual level through requiring reports, hiring staff, and accounting, and at the organizational level by distributing activities among different sectors and departments, each responsible for a part of the activity (Kelman, 1973).

Routinization is effective in normalizing violence to the extent that it keeps members of the organization physically and mentally distant from the results of their work. In his study of the adoption of techniques to normalize torture during the 'War on Terror' promoted by the Bush administration, Chwastiak (2015) points to the detailed description of the procedures to be adopted, which described all the necessary steps in the treatment of prisoners. This, according to the author, creates a process of routinization of torture, capable of normalizing it. The sequence of logically thought out and described steps would allow anyone who followed

Revista de Administração Contemporânea, v. 28, n. 2, e230162, 2024 | doi.org/10.1590/1982-7849rac2024230162.por| e-ISSN 1982-7849 | rac.anpad.org.br

4

Practices of normalizing political violence at Volkswagen do Brasil during the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985)

M. A. de C. Silva, A. Costa

them to carry them out, as well as formalizing the procedures for treating prisoners. In order to carry out torture, known as 'advanced interrogation techniques,' documents had to be created and circulated, duly approved by higher authorities according to their validity (Chwastiak, 2015). This documentation, combined with routinization, instrumentalized the process to the point where the procedures could be reproduced in a uniform manner, believing that it was only necessary to follow instructions and apply the predetermined methods. This allows for the replication of violence in different settings and by different people, constituting a factory process of violence and, if necessary, employing rules and indicators to measure performance (Clegg et al. 2006; Chwastiak, 2015). This factory process of violence may also require the transformation of people into impersonal forms such as codes, numbers, or tokens.

This practice contributes to the dehumanization to which victims are subjected and that facilitates the practice of violence against them. Although there are works that point to the limitations of dehumanization as a producer of violence (Lang, 2020), the literature, especially in psychology, is consistent in pointing to the removal of human characteristics as a catalyst for violence (Clegg et al., 2006; Haslam, 2019; Kelman, 1973; Methot-Jones et al., 2019; Rai et al., 2017; Steizinger, 2018). In this sense, Kelman (1973) states that in order to produce mass murder, it is necessary to attribute a non-human aspect to the victim. By stripping the victims of any trace capable of identifying them with the human race, the moral constraints for committing violent acts against them are easily overcome. By not identifying them as individuals, capable of having their own lives, goals, and choices, consensual murders become easier to carry out. Thus, Clegg, Courpasson and Phillips (2006) explain that the promotion of a politics of 'identity' and 'non-identity' facilitates the imposition of violence against those marked as 'without identity.'

Haslam and Loughnan (2016), in the same vein, teach us that dehumanization is not limited to a particular group and can extend to people of different ethnicities, genders, social behaviors, and compliance with the law. In Germany under the Nazi regime, ethnic groups were divided into an Aryan identity and a Jewish 'non-identity.' In this way, violence against those with a 'non-identity' is more easily accepted, and thus the construction of this policy functions as a practice that normalizes violence. This practice can become more manifest when the individuals subjected to it are stripped of their individuality through the use of uniforms, marking, derogatory terms, and physical separations that help stigmatize 'non-identities.' Martí and Fernandez (2013, p. 1202) explain that during the Second World War,

part of the process that made it possible to kill countless people who had previously had a name and a history was to turn them into "transparent and 'material' figures within a fairly normal, albeit abhorrent, administrative and productive process (of death). The extraordinary and unacceptable became normal and routine." It should be noted that the practice of normalizing violence does not lie in dehumanization, but in the construction of an organizational policy that is capable of segregating and marking those subjected to violence. In this way, Clegg, Courpasson and Phillips (2006) remind us that the stigma imposed on a particular group is nothing natural, but is constructed by an organizational apparatus in order to appear naturalized.

The authors also explain that power in total organizations is more easily used when the obedience of the members is fully obtained. In this sense, Kelman (1973) explains that mass killings depend on authority and obedience, since when violent acts are ordered, encouraged, approved — even tacitly — or at least permitted by legitimately constituted authorities, people's willingness to engage in or tolerate them increases. The influence of obedience on the process of violence cannot be considered new, as this relationship has been studied for decades (Burger, 2009; Cunha et al., 2010; Milgram, 1963; 1965; 1974). To understand obedience, Milgram's[1] studies have proven to be a reference to this day (Burger, 2009; Cunha et al., 2010). Milgram (1963; 1965; 1974) showed how people can be obedient in an unthinking way, without asking any questions, when they receive an order from an authority. As a result of his findings, several subsequent studies have attributed obedience to the performance of actions even when they may cause harm and suffering to someone. This is largely because people are socialized throughout their lives to take orders from various authorities, such as parents, teachers, police officers, and bosses (Burger, 2009). Milgram's study (1963; 1965; 1974) is consistent with Arendt's (2014) questioning of the trial of Eichman, who claimed in his defense that he was only following orders and therefore had no responsibility for the deaths. Throughout Milgram's experiment, participants asked about responsibility for the trainee's suffering, but the researcher, representing the authority figure, responded by claiming to be responsible for any harm to the trainee (Burger, 2009). We can see how the relationship between authority and obedience can also be related to the diffusion of responsibility by the organization, thus protecting the individual who commits the act. In this sense, Kelman (1973, p. 39) explains that in the face of authority, "the individual does not see himself as personally responsible for the consequences of his action. … he does not feel personally responsible for it. He was not a personal agent, but an

Revista de Administração Contemporânea, v. 28, n. 2, e230162, 2024 | doi.org/10.1590/1982-7849rac2024230162.por| e-ISSN 1982-7849 | rac.anpad.org.br

5

Practices of normalizing political violence at Volkswagen do Brasil during the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985)

M. A. de C. Silva, A. Costa

extension of authority." In this way, authorization from authority eliminates the need to make judgments and choices, because in contexts where authority is strict, moral principles can be submitted to authority, even if this goes against the values of the person doing the action.

Political Violence

Reflections on the concept of political violence (and its various configurations) are not new, and various researchers have highlighted its complexity and interconnections with other forms of violence (Crettiez, 2011; Della Porta, 2006; Michaud, 2006; Miguel, 2014).

For Odália (1991, p. 48), for example, political violence can take the form of "a political assassination, the invasion of one country by another, the disappearance of dissidents, electoral laws that falsify public opinion, laws that do not allow social classes, especially the working class, to organize their unions." Dumouchel (2012), for his part, suggests using legitimacy as a criterion for distinguishing between political violence and criminality. According to this criterion, an act of violence can only be considered political violence if it is legitimized by a certain community. This criterion creates a separation between the political nature of acts of violence and the beliefs, intentions, or motivations of the perpetrators. Thus, political violence does not depend on the intentions of the perpetrators of violence, but rather on the identification that observers have with the act. If these observers somehow understand or identify with the violent act and accept it as a justification for some position or claim, they give it legitimacy (Dumouchel, 2012).

But how can we say that an act of violence has or has not been legitimized, even partially, by the community? How do we proceed when an act is legitimized by some social groups but not others, when legitimacy can be guided precisely by political positioning? Della Porta (2006) argues that the assumption of legitimacy as a way of operationalizing the concept of political violence poses the challenge of measuring or determining the degree of legitimacy. For this reason, the author reflects on this form of violence based on the use of a repertoire of actions, usually collective, against an adversary in order to impose or assert political objectives. In this way, political violence can be understood as a means of responding to domination. Violence emerges as a means of achieving political decisions, access to which is blocked by strategies ranging from financial resources to the use of force, including regulated forms of demonstration and demand, of which trade unions are a model example. In a complementary way, Crettiez (2011) explains that one of the mechanisms of adherence to violence is political marginalization, i.e., those who are excluded from political

arrangements use this resource as a way to reach political decisions. Therefore, he believes that this violence is produced by three social actors: social movements and trade unions, armed struggle organizations, and urban rebellions. According to the author, this view of political violence shifts the understanding of violence as a marginal and degenerate attitude that causes social destabilization to highlight the "imperfections of the system [that] no longer induce a reflection on the abuses of the contestants, but on the abuses of the regime, which is not contested in itself" (Crettiez, 2011, p. 32).

In this way, political violence in this research is considered to be both the action of seeking to promote a change in social structures and the repression and/or terror suffered as a result of this action. In line with this argument, the research seeks to investigate more specifically the normalization of political violence, taking as the definition of political violence "… any action intended to promote changes in the social structure and also any repression or terror suffered as a result of this attempt" (Silva, 2022, p. 193). In other words, it is all violence practiced for political purposes.

RESEARCH METHOD

In order to carry out this research, we undertook a historically oriented study in a way that was integrated with organizational studies (Decker et al., 2021; Maclean et al., 2016), where we assume that the past cannot be fully recovered, but only partially through traces and delimited by the researchers' inquiries (Prost, 2019). Thus, the researcher assumes a fundamental role in offering their interpretations of the historical sources studied. In other words, historical facts come from the perspective of those who expose them (Munslow, 2006), and historical sources are the main way of accessing the past and validating historical interpretations. It should also be noted that historical research prioritizes documentary sources (written or oral) produced in the actual historical context of the event being researched (Costa & Silva, 2019; Yates, 2014).

Thus, the corpus of the research — Table 1 — consisted of a set of documents analyzed in an articulated manner and coming from: (1) the collections of the National Archives (AN) and the Public Archives of the state of São Paulo (APESP); (2) the public representation opened against Volkswagen do Brasil by the Public Prosecutor's Office of the state of São Paulo and attached to the lawsuit; (3) the ABC union newspaper — *Tribuna Metalúrgica*[2]; (4) the magazine *Família VW* [3], published by the company in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s; and (5) sources in the mainstream newspapers of the time.

Note. Prepared by the authors.

Revista de Administração Contemporânea, v. 28, n. 2, e230162, 2024 | doi.org/10.1590/1982-7849rac2024230162.por| e-ISSN 1982-7849 | rac.anpad.org.br

6

Practices of normalizing political violence at Volkswagen do Brasil during the
Brazilian civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985)

M. A. de C. Silva, A. Costa

Table 1. Sources and number of documents reviewed.

Documents	Origin	Quantity
Tribuna Metalúrgica (1978; 1979)	ABC Metalworkers' Union	639 editions
Suplemento Informativo da Tribuna Metalúrgica (1981)	ABC Metalworkers' Union	678 editions
Documents found in the union archives	ABC Metalworkers' Union	95 pages
Família Volkswagen magazine	Personal files of former employees	116 editions
Documents from Volkswagen and other organizations sent to the DEOPS	Public Archives of the state of São Paulo DEOPS fund (in-person search)	499 pages
Documents from Volkswagen and other organizations sent to the DEOPS	Public Archive of the state of São Paulo DEOPS fund (virtual search)	49 archives
Documents from the security and intelligence agencies and personal documents of former presidents	National Archives (virtual search)	61 archives
Old issues of the mainstream press	Newspaper and Periodicals Collection of the National Library (virtual search) (Biblioteca Nacional, 1979a; 1979b)	
Documents from the Federal Prosecutor's Office	Federal Prosecutor's Office of São Paulo	1 document (346 pages) sent by Volkswagen do Brasil; 1 statement by Adhemar Rudge to the MPF; 1 statement by Lucio Antonio Bellentani

The intention was to collect as much evidence as possible from different sources so that, when analyzed and compared together, they could contribute to the objective of the article. Since traces of the past only become historical sources through the eyes of the researcher (Pinsky & Luca, 2013), the documents collected here were subjected to a historical operation (Costa & Silva, 2019), aimed at interpreting the source according to its historical context and the research objective. In this sense, it was necessary to carry out an internal and external critique of the sources: to verify the authenticity of the documents, their respective content, the reliability of their content, and their context of production and consumption (Aróstegui, 2006; Tosh, 2011). Thus, the documents were read and interpreted under the guidance of the research topic, with the aim of analyzing and promoting an articulation to build an argumentative chain around the research problem (Costa & Silva, 2019).

The documents collected were analyzed in light of an analytical conceptual framework that was first developed from the literature. Subsequently, the framework was supplemented with analytical categories from the field. The analysis was carried out in two stages. The coding and categorization procedures took place in two steps. First, the violence practiced by VW was identified and analyzed. Then the forms of normalization of the violence practiced by the company were identified and analyzed.

ANALYSIS: THE NORMALIZATION OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE AT VW DO BRASIL

As a brief historical context for the period, three important points should be highlighted. First, the civil-military dictatorship installed in Brazil with the 1964 coup d'état had as one of its driving forces the implementation of a conservative modernization project that offered new bases for capital accumulation. In other words, it aimed to "preserve the internal capitalist order in the face of supposed communist threats and adapt the state system to the dynamics of world capitalism" (Lemos, 2020, p. 3). In order to achieve this, it was necessary to establish a new form of relationship with the working class, which had been asserting its rights through demonstrations and strikes for more than a decade. In the more specific case of VW do Brasil — the first automobile manufacturer outside of Germany, which began operations on March 23, 1953, with significant financial support from the Brazilian government —, the company, for example, was already "showing concern" about the decline in Brazilian economic growth in 1963, which it attributed to the "climate of unease and political and social instability that translated into an endless series of strikes and other protest movements" (Silva, 2020, p. 470).

A second point is that the link between the military government and the business community became significant in this context. On the one hand, the military could provide the essential repressive forces, and on the other, the business community had the capital to make the structures and maintenance of the regime financially viable (Costa

Revista de Administração Contemporânea, v. 28, n. 2, e230162, 2024 | doi.org/10.1590/1982-7849rac2024230162.por | e-ISSN 1982-7849 | rac.anpad.org.br

7

Practices of normalizing political violence at Volkswagen do Brasil during the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985)

M. A. de C. Silva, A. Costa

& Silva, 2018). In addition to material and ideological support, companies also supplied cars, food and, above all, information to the political police, represented at the time by the State Department of Political and Social Order (DEOPS) and Operation Bandeirantes (OBAN), which later became the Information Operations Detachment — Internal Defense Operations Center (DOI-CODI). Also in the specific case of VWB, according to Silva (2022) and Silva, Campos, and Costa (2022), the company provided the political police with various documents containing personal information on workers considered to be subversive and reports on their actions in strikes and union meetings. The company also collaborated with the political police in the dismantling of a PCB cell that was forming inside the factory, which culminated in the arrest of six factory workers. One of them, arrested by the police inside the factory, began to be tortured while still at his workplace, while another was arrested without a warrant, apparently also inside the factory. As a result of these cases, a public complaint was filed against VWB in 2015. As a result of this process, three civil investigations, and the subsequent signing of a behavioral adjustment agreement, VWB became legally committed to a series of restitution procedures (Silva, Costa, et al., 2022).

Finally, as a third point, tranquility and stability could be achieved and were "obtained during the Brazilian military regime through specific legislation that harmed workers, intervention in trade unions and repression against claim movements…" (Silva, 2020, p. 470). Thus, in addition to economic measures to squeeze the working class, the state turned against workers, intervening in unions and repressing demonstrations and strikes (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014).

In this sense, in the research we considered as political violence the actions that aimed to dismantle (a) the workers' protest movements for better working conditions and (b) the workers' organization around national political issues. Through the analysis of the documents, we identified five practices of normalizing political violence adopted by VWB during the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship, categorized as follows: formalization, division of labor, routinization, authority and obedience, and identity and non-identity politics. Each of these practices will be treated separately, with reference to the documents analyzed.

Formalization

In the case of VWB, the Department of Industrial Security (DSI) was primarily responsible for the exercise of political violence against workers. This department's official function was to provide security for employees and company assets (Volkswagen do Brasil, 2015), but during the dictatorship its activities included surveillance, coercion, control, and repression of workers, often in conjunction with

the political police. However, the DSI was not a clandestine department within the company, but one that was formally established through the company's organizational chart (Volkswagen, 1964, Aug.; Volkswagen do Brasil, 2015). Beginning in 1970, the functions of the DSI were changed to emphasize safety-related issues, leaving only the areas of safety techniques and industrial safety (Volkswagen do Brasil, 2015). This change was reflected in the organizational chart of the corporation, with the aim of making the department more specialized. The members of the DSI — mostly military and ex-military — were selected through formal hiring processes, according to the specifications required for the position. It should be remembered that in the late 1960s and early 1970s VWB was involved in its plan to increase production, which would require a larger workforce.

In this way, the DSI enjoyed the appearance of normality, since it coexisted with other departments of the company that did not practice violence. Moreover, in order to create the organizational chart, it was necessary to give specific attributions to each function, far removed from the practice of violence. In this sense, the formal existence of the department made it difficult for workers who were not victims of its actions to perceive it, as well as the rest of the population, as an agent of violent or illegal actions. In addition, this department used formal and official VWB documents in its joint surveillance, monitoring, and collaboration with the political police (APESP, 1969; APESP, 1976; APESP, 1980). The entire process was regularly recorded in documents, some of which bore the symbol of the VWB logo (APESP, 1969; APESP, 1980).

Division of Labor

The division of labor analyzed here is not about the division of activities in the vehicle manufacturing process, but in the production of violence. The production of violence was compartmentalized in such a way that the perpetrators were shielded from the possible consequences of their actions. One of the main documents used as an instrument of political violence was called the 'occurrence report,' in which the DSI recorded actions and complaints against unionized workers or those considered to be subversive (APESP, 1980). At the bottom of the document, it was possible to identify at least five different bodies responsible for filling out and approving the report. The document was completed by the issuer, who was responsible for describing the events that occurred, usually through a witness account. The report would then be signed by the guard foreman, then passed to the supervisor, the section chief, and then to the manager (APESP, 1980). After completing the form and collecting the signatures, the DSI would forward the document to the Labor Relations Division, the department responsible for the decision to be made in each case (Volkswagen do Brasil,

Revista de Administração Contemporânea, v. 28, n. 2, e230162, 2024 | doi.org/10.1590/1982-7849rac2024230162.por| e-ISSN 1982-7849 | rac.anpad.org.br

8

Practices of normalizing political violence at Volkswagen do Brasil during the
Brazilian civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985)

M. A. de C. Silva, A. Costa

2015; APESP, 1976). In this way, it is possible to see how the work of producing violence — represented here by the preparation of the reports — was divided to the point of distancing those who prepared them from the results of their actions. The issuer, responsible for collecting and writing up the events, had no connection to those who would decide what would happen to the worker reported. Those who drafted the documents were only involved in the drafting, as the documents followed a chain of approvals within the company's bureaucratic process.

As mentioned earlier, this helped the executor avoid blame for the violence that occurred as a result of their actions. This exemption from responsibility can be seen in the words of the head of the industrial safety department when he says that "it wasn't safety that judged this whole group, it was labor relations" (APESP, 1976). By attributing the judgment to the labor relations division, this manager is trying to absolve the industrial safety department of responsibility for the consequences of the actions. Moreover, not only the reports, but also other documents issued by VWB attesting to the surveillance and control of the workers were distributed with copies to various levels of the company such as the director of industrial relations, the legal director, the personnel administration manager, the general service manager, and even the president (APESP, 1974; APESP, 1979). Responsibility for the political violence perpetrated through these documents was shared not only with the members of the industrial safety department, but also with various managers at different hierarchical levels within VWB.

As mentioned above, the organizational structure associated with the division of labor allowed the executors to dissipate responsibility for their actions through bureaucracy. The official 'occurrence report' document passed not only through different workers, but also through different hierarchical levels, and was able to guarantee a certain degree of protection for the decision-makers. Even if there was some degree of autonomy, decisions about the fate of the reported worker were not up to the issuer of the report, nor to the manager, nor even to the industrial safety department, as evidenced by its manager's statement above. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the organizational bureaucracy ended up being a protection mechanism, since despite collecting the testimony, writing and signing the report, which could lead to the dismissal, imprisonment, torture, and even death of the worker, the issuer shared responsibility with the entire procedural chain.

Routinization

The routinization identified in the VWB documents refers to the creation and standardization of documents and procedures related to the practice of violence. As mentioned

in our discussion of the division of labor, once the information was collected, there were meticulously described procedures for how the documents were to be processed and how the worker was to be treated. These predeterminations routinized the violence practiced by VWB. This can also be seen in the standardization of the documents used. Once again, the occurrence reports produced by the company shed light on this. The documents produced during the 1980 strikes are standardized and pre-completed (APESP, 1980). At the top of the document, there are spaces to fill in the report number, date, department, factory, and time of the event, as well as the time of the statement. Then the bulk of the document is used to describe the facts in the 'breakdown' field, and at the bottom, there is a form to list the witnesses, distributor, issuer, foreman, supervisor, section chief, and manager. This standardization served to routinize the filling out of the report, thereby speeding up the process of producing violence. This can be seen in the analysis of the reports, because despite the change in the people who produced the documents, they had the same standard, i.e., their predefined form helped in the routine surveillance and monitoring of the workers.

This standardization allowed VWB to instrumentalize the process of creating documents, guaranteeing their reproduction in a continuous and uniform manner, regardless of who was carrying out the activity. In this way, violence was normalized because all that was necessary to carry it out was to follow a set of common, predetermined procedures (Chwastiak, 2015). Combined with the division of labor, routinization also allowed VWB to create a factory process that produced violence against workers. By assuming compartmentalized work with clear instructions and predetermined documents, VWB was able to produce many documents that monitored workers and were shared with the political police. In relation to the 1980 strikes, more than 177 reports were produced in just 11 days, with a large concentration in the period from May 5 to 8 of that year, when 135 reports were produced in four days, an average of 34 per day (APESP, 1980). May 6, for example, was the busiest day with 71 incidents and up to 23 reports in one hour. These figures allow us to affirm that the assembly line for the production of vehicles was extended to the production of police reports and, consequently, to the production of political violence.

Authority and Obedience

The issue of authority and obedience, in our analysis, occurred in two ways. The first is the authority within the DSI for the production of violence by this department, and the second is the authority that this department had over the rest of the company. With regard to the first point, several companies at the time had

Revista de Administração Contemporânea, v. 28, n. 2, e230162, 2024 | doi.org/10.1590/1982-7849rac2024230162.por| e-ISSN 1982-7849 | rac.anpad.org.br

9

Practices of normalizing political violence at Volkswagen do Brasil during the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985)

M. A. de C. Silva, A. Costa

military personnel at the head of their respective security departments (Arquivo Nacional, 1980). In addition, VWB's DSI was founded in 1959 by a military officer, who was not only the head of the department, but also had a large number of military personnel not only in command positions, but also in various functions (Volkswagen, July 1963; Volkswagen, August 1964; Volkswagen, July 1975; Volkswagen do Brasil, 2015). Social relations in the Brazilian military context are guided by the rules of hierarchy and discipline, with the aim of obtaining total obedience (Rosa & Brito, 2010), and so it is not difficult to assume that a department full of military personnel was governed by these values. Similarly, the orders received by members of the DSI were followed without question or criticism. This normalized the department's production of violence. In an environment of rigid authority, acts of violence are more easily carried out because they are approved by an authority and eliminate the need for reflection and decision. As explained when we talked about obedience as a producer of violence, the responsibility for an act of violence can be attributed to authority, and in this way, its execution becomes easier.

Similarly, the DSI represented authority in relation to the rest of the company. This authority was legitimized by the formality with which the department was established and recognized by the other workers. Discipline was a value strongly cultivated at VWB since its inception (Salles, 2002) and, in the view of the director of Industrial Relations, the lack of it was responsible for the clashes between workers and the DSI (Biblioteca Nacional, 1979a). According to VWB, "giving and receiving an order should not be an imposition of will [but] as a service necessity for everyone to fulfill their obligations" (Volkswagen, February 1963). Not by chance, one of the DSI's functions was to maintain order and discipline (Volkswagen, November 1963). The DSI thus represented authority over the workers, and its orders had to be obeyed without question. These orders included the detention of workers for questioning and investigation, the removal of union material from inside the factories, the surveillance of workers, and the sharing of information with the political police (APESP, 1969; Biblioteca Nacional, 1979b; Sindicato dos Metalúrgicos do ABC, 1978; Sindicato dos Metalúrgicos do ABC, 1979; Sindicato dos Metalúrgicos do ABC, 1981). In this way, the violence practiced by the DSI could be normalized, since it was perpetrated by an authority formally established and legitimized to "enforce internal regulations" (Volkswagen, August 1964), in an environment where discipline and obedience were recognized as virtues.

Creation of Identity and Non-Identity Politics

This practice of normalizing violence requires the creation of an identity politics aimed at separating subjects into two distinct groups: desired and undesired. At VWB, this was done by separating workers who were union members or considered subversive from other workers, identifying them as a non-identity. Initially, all treatment of strikers and trade unionists was carried out by the DSI, which was also responsible for dealing with thefts and other illegal activities. In this way, it can already be seen that unionized workers and strikers were stigmatized by being equated with other workers accused of illegal activities. In other words, VWB treated those involved in union activities the same as those who committed crimes in the factory. Obviously, this tainted the unionized workers.

For their part, occurrence reports were used to keep track of strikers, but they were initially designed to record "employees involved in disciplinary transgressions and acts against company property" (Volkswagen do Brasil, 2015). In other words, according to VWB, strikes could be considered disciplinary transgressions or acts against company property. In fact, the text of the reports refers to the damage and tries to portray the striker as the author and responsible for the damage (APESP, 1980). In a curious example, the issuer of the report states that the work permit of the testifying worker was in the hands of the strikers, even though there was no mention of the strikers on the part of the deponent (APESP, 1980). The authorship of the robbery and assault was attributed to the strikers without this being explicitly stated and supported by the facts narrated by the deponent. At a meeting of the Community Security Center (CECOSE), where the security chiefs of various companies met to exchange information, a series of thefts and the actions of PCdoB and PT militants were reported (Arquivo Nacional, 1984). At another meeting, the VWB representative reported the sale of PCdoB books and newsletters, while the representative of another company explained that a former worker had been arrested during a robbery.

In this way, the striking worker, union member, or left-wing party activist was characterized as an 'internal enemy' of VWB, of its objectives, to be fought. This contrasted with the image of workers constructed by VWB. They were always portrayed as responsible, committed to their work, to the company, and thus able to enjoy the benefits that the work and the company could offer. The company's in-house magazine tried to tell bucolic stories of workers who, with determination, managed to write their own history along with the company's growth (Volkswagen, March 1963). The profile praised by the company extolled

Revista de Administração Contemporânea, v. 28, n. 2, e230162, 2024 | doi.org/10.1590/1982-7849rac2024230162.por | e-ISSN 1982-7849 | rac.anpad.org.br

10

Practices of normalizing political violence at Volkswagen do Brasil during the
Brazilian civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985)

M. A. de C. Silva, A. Costa

the commitment to work, discipline, and obedience of the 'good worker' and highlighted the benefits provided by the company, such as medical and dental care, a leisure club, among others, which could be shared with the family (Volkswagen, March 1963; Volkswagen, January1976). This division became more explicit during the 1978 strikes, when VWB's director of industrial relations, Admon Ganem, sent a telegram to the chief of police requesting that "the necessary measures" be taken to contain the strikes, claiming the protection of "employees who wish to continue their work" (APESP, 1978). Thus, even though they were not explicitly marked to identify them, it was possible to identify two types of workers within VWB: those who were undesirable and did not identify with the company, represented by union members, strikers, or left-wing party activists; and those who were wanted, who had an organizational identity built around what the company considered to be a good worker. This practice facilitated the violence practiced against workers without identification, because once they were equated with criminals, punitive actions against them were more accepted or tolerated.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

According to what was discussed in the previous section, we have tried to argue that five practices adopted by VW do Brasil were able to normalize political violence against workers during the Brazilian civil-military regime: formalization, division of labor, routinization, authority and obedience, and identity and non-identity politics. In other words, they normalized political violence within the company, making its execution more acceptable, or at least tolerable.

The manifestation of political violence was the blocking of workers' political actions. In this way, the company prevented unionized workers from organizing, removing posters, collecting newspapers, monitoring union meetings, and reporting to the political police. All these actions were carried out by a department that was formally set up in the company. This formality lends legitimacy to the acts committed. Thus, as a formally established department, the DSI produced political violence at an industrial pace, using managerial procedures such as division of labor and routinization. Just as the Holocaust would not have been possible without the necessary management (Bauman, 2002; Stokes & Gabriel, 2010), the violence produced by VWB through the recording and sharing of workers' actions was only possible, given its volume, because of the organizational procedures that VWB adopted in the production of reports that could lead to punishments such as surveillance, dismissal, imprisonment, torture, and death. This was possible thanks to the rigid authoritarian environment in the DSI. Obedience to this authority legitimized the actions

of subordinates whose reflection, criticism, and thought were not required when carrying out activities that could harm other workers. This practice was facilitated by the policy of non-identity attributed to unionized, striking or militant workers.

This analysis allows us to draw several conclusions. The first is that VWB carried out acts of political violence against its workers, limiting and preventing them from taking political action to demand rights and better working conditions. In light of the above, it is plausible to suggest that the violence conducted was normalized to some extent so that it could be carried out in a more acceptable and tolerated manner. This normalization occurred through the adoption of the five practices discussed above: formalization, division of labor, routinization, an environment of authority and obedience, and the creation of a politics of identity construction. It can also be concluded that the combination of these practices allowed VWB's political violence to be normalized as an ordinary company procedure. Workers could more easily accept the actions of a formally established department and find it harder to imagine that these actions violated workers' rights. Similarly, the guards involved in the preparation of the documents used to commit these violations may not have seen themselves as perpetrators of violence, since they were merely filling out or signing everyday forms that were signed and known to various levels of the hierarchy, including the president. It takes a great deal of criticism or reflection to challenge the orders of legitimately established authorities, including the top manager of the company, especially when this violence is directed against groups that are considered undesirable and that do not contribute to the company's growth and development.

Therefore, we believe that there are practices of normalizing violence that are used to make violence tolerable and thus recurrent in companies.

Finally, we understand that the practices of normalizing violence can be thought of as voluntary activities that can, intentionally or not, normalize the violence practiced by an organization. However, there are still significant gaps to be filled, for example with regard to the economic and political collaboration of companies with authoritarian and/or dictatorial governments, especially in countries where lawsuits are brought against economic groups that collaborated with repressive apparatuses in governments of exception, as is the case in Latin America (Basualdo et al., 2021b). Reflecting in an articulated (and/or networked) way on cases situated in similar contexts — as in the case of Brazil and Chile (Simon, 2021), Argentina, Colombia, Uruguay, Peru, and Central America — can contribute to thinking about violence as a structuring dimension of labor relations in capitalism. In this sense, we

Practices of normalizing political violence at Volkswagen do Brasil during the
Brazilian civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985)

M. A. de C. Silva, A. Costa

see possibilities for future research to explore the practices of normalizing violence, thinking not only about political violence, but also about how companies act to normalize the physical, psychological, or economic violence they practice. In short, thinking about these practices together and along a common path leads to a more structuring way of understanding the practice of violence by organizations.

NOTES

1. The experiment conducted by Stanley Milgram consisted of summoning a participant who was instructed to ask a trainee questions. The researcher (an authority figure) ordered the participant to apply an electric shock for every wrong answer. With each wrong answer, the voltage of the shock increased by 15 volts, reaching a maximum of 450 volts. In reality, the shocks were not applied, but only the researcher and the trainee knew this. The trainee behaved as if they were receiving the shocks, which did not stop the participants from continuing to apply the shocks. The experiment was stopped if the participant refused to apply the shocks or when the maximum voltage level was reached. The result of the study was that 65% of the participants administered shocks at the maximum level because they were instructed to do so (Milgram, 1963).

2. *Tribuna Metalúrgica* was the official publication of the Metalworkers' Union of São Bernardo do Campo and Diadema. It was founded in July 1971 with the aim of being the voice of the workers. To this end, the newspaper focused on reporting on issues such as wage shortfalls,

increases in the cost of living for workers, denunciations of violence and disregard for labor laws by factories, articles that sought to educate workers about their rights, or the difficulties faced by the working class in getting their demands met. Through *Tribuna Metalúrgica*, the union tried to inform workers about proposals for wage negotiations with the factories and the possibility of going on strike. In this way, the newspaper promoted its circulation among the workers by encouraging them to pass it on to their colleagues in the factory. In different sections, the newspaper tried to use simple language in order to be closer to the workers. Access to the newspaper was obtained through the union or by distributing it at the factory gates.

3. *Família VW* was the magazine produced and distributed internally by Volkswagen do Brasil. It was produced from November 1962. In this research, *Família VW* has been presented mainly as a means of understanding the internal workings of the company. The relevance of the magazine can be understood through its reach. In a survey published in February 1964, it was found that approximately 77% of the workers who responded to the survey read the magazine in its entirety, that almost all of the respondents said that they took the magazine home and showed it to colleagues at other assembly plants, and that both family members and other workers enjoyed reading the magazine. Based on this survey, the editors estimated that a total of 40,000 people read the magazine every month.

REFERENCES

Arquivo Nacional. (1980). *FUNDO SNI. ASP_ACE_2964_80*.

Arquivo Nacional. (1984). *FUNDO Centro de Informações de Segurança da Aeronautica. br_an_bsb_vaz_026_0088*.

Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo. (1969). *FUNDO DEOPS. DEOPS_50-Z-30-822*, 1969.

Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo. (1976). Relatório da visita e documentos fornecidos pelo major Rudge. FUNDO DEOPS. DEOPS_50-Z-30-828.

Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo. (1978). *FUNDO DEOPS. DEOPS_43-Z-C-4442*.

Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo. (1974). *FUNDO DEOPS. APESP_50-Z-341-1135*.

Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo. (1979). *FUNDO DEOPS. APESP_ doc01*.

Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo. (1980). *FUNDO DEOPS. APESP_ 50-Z-341 2979*.

Alcadipani, R., & Medeiros, C. R. O. (2020). When corporations cause harm: A critical view of corporate social irresponsibility and corporate crimes. *Journal of Business Ethics, 167*, 85–297. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-019-04157-0

Arendt, H. (2014). *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A report on the banality of evil*. Penguin Books

Arendt, H. (2015). *Origens do totalitarismo: Antissemitismo, imperialismo, totalitarismo*. Companhia das Letras.

Aróstegui, J. (2006). *A pesquisa histórica: Teoria e método*. Edusc.

Revista de Administração Contemporânea, v. 28, n. 2, e230162, 2024 | doi.org/10.1590/1982-7849rac2024230162.por | e-ISSN 1982-7849 | rac.anpad.org.br

12

Practices of normalizing political violence at Volkswagen do Brasil during the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985)

M. A. de C. Silva, A. Costa

Ashforth, B. E., & Anand, V. (2003). The normalization of corruption in organizations. *Research in Organizational Behavior, 25*, 1-52. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-3085(03)25001-2

Ashforth, B. E., Kreiner, G. E., Clark, M. A., & Fugate, M. (2007). Normalizing dirty work: Managerial tactics for countering occupational taint. *Academy of Management Journal, 50*(1), 149-174. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20159845

Basualdo, V., Berghoff, H., & Bucheli, M. (2021a) *Big business and dictatorship in Latin America: A transnational history of profits and Repression.* Palgrave Macmillan.

Basualdo, V., Berghoff, H. & Bucheli, M. (2021b) Crime and (No) punishment: Business corporations and dictatorships. In, *Big Business and Dictatorship in Latin America: A transnational history of profits and Repression*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Bauman, Z. (2002). *Modernity and the Holocaust*. Cornell University Press.

Biblioteca Nacional. (1979a). Jornal do Brasil. *Hemeroteca digital*.

Biblioteca Nacional. (1979b). Jornal O Repórter. *Hemeroteca digital*.

Bishop, V., Korczynski, M., & Cohen, L. (2005). The invisibility of violence: Constructing violence out of the job centre workplace in the UK. *Work, Employment and Society, 19*, 583–602. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017005055671

Bloomfield, B. P., Burrell, G., & Vurdubakis, T. (2017). Licence to kill? On the organization of destruction in the 21st century. *Organization, 24*, 441–455. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508417700404

Burger, J. M. (2009). Replicating milgram: Would people still obey today. *American Psychologist, 64*(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0010932

Burke, P. (1995) *Violência social e civilização*. Braudel Papers.

Chan, J. (2013). A suicide survivor: The life of a Chinese worker. *New Technology, Work and Employment, 28*(2), 84–99. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/ntwe.12007

Chesnais, J. C. (1981). *Histoire de la violence en Occident de 1800 à nos jours*. Laffont.

Chwastiak, M. (2015). Torture as normal work: The Bush Administration, the Central Intelligence Agency and 'enhanced interrogation techniques'. *Organization, 22*(4), 493-511. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1350508415572506

Clegg, S. (2009). Bureaucracy, the holocaust and techniques of power at work. *Management Revue, 20*(4), 326-347. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41783626

Clegg, S. R., Courpasson, D., & Phillips, N. (2006). *Power and organizations*. Pine Forge Press.

Clegg, S., Cunha, M. P., & Rego, A. (2012). The theory and practice of utopia in a total institution: The pineapple panopticon. *Organization Studies, 33*(12), 1735-1757. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840612464611

Comissão Nacional da Verdade (2014). *Relatório da Comissão Nacional da Verdade*. CNV. v. 1.

Costa, A, & Silva, M. A. C. (2019). A pesquisa histórica em Administração: Uma proposta para práticas de pesquisa. *Administração: Ensino e Pesquisa, 20*(1), 1-20. https://doi.org/10.13058/raep.2019.v20n1.1104

Costa, A. & Silva, M. A. C. (2018). Empresas, violação dos direitos humanos e ditadura civil-militar brasileira: A perspectiva da Comissão Nacional da Verdade. *Revista O&S, 25*(84), 15-29. https://doi.org/10.1590/1984-9240841

Costas, J., & Grey, C. (2019). Violence and organization studies. *Organization Studies, 40*(10), 1573-1586. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840618782282

Crettiez, X. (2011). *As formas de violência*. Editora Loyola.

Cunha, M. P., Rego, A., & Clegg, S. R. (2010). Obedience and evil: From Milgram and Kampuchea to normal organizations. *Journal of Business Ethics, 97*(2), 291-309. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-010-0510-5

Decker, S., Hassard, J., & Rowlinson, M. (2021). Rethinking history and memory in organization studies: The case for historiographical reflexivity. *Human Relations, 74*(8), 1123-1155. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726720927443

Della Porta, D. (2006). Social moviments, political violence and the State: A comparative analysis of Italy ans Germany. Cambridge University Press.

Domenach, J. M. (1981). La violencia. In, *La violencia y sus causas* (pp. 33-45). UNESCO.

Dumouchel, P. (2012) Political violence and democracy. *RitsIILCS_23*. https://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/acd/re/k-rsc/lcs/kiyou/pdf_23-4/RitsIILCS_23.4pp.117-124DUMOUCHEL.pdf

Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, peace, and peace research. *Journal of Peace Research, 6*(3), 167–191. https://www.jstor.org/stable/422690

Harrington, S., Warren, S., & Rayner, C. (2015). Human resource management practitioners' responses to workplace bullying: Cycles of symbolic violence. *Organization, 22*(3), 368-389. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508413516175

Harris, K. L., McFarlane, M., & Wieskamp, V. (2019). The promise and peril of agency as motion: A feminist new materialist approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. *Organization, 27*(5), 660-679.

Haslam, N., & Loughnan, S. (2016). How dehumanization promotes harm. In, A. G. Miller (Ed), *The social psychology of good and evil* (v. 2, pp. 140-158). Guilford Publications.

Haslam, N. (2019). The many roles of dehumanization in genocide. In, L. S. Newman (Ed.), *Confronting humanity at its worst: Social psychological perspectives on genocide*. Oxford University Press.

Kelman, H. C. (1973). Violence without moral restraint: Reflections on the dehumanization of victims and victimizers. *Journal of Social Issues, 29*(4), 25-61. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1973.tb00102.x

Kenny, K. (2016). Organizations and violence: The child as abject-boundary in Ireland's industrial schools. *Organization Studies, 37*, 939–961

Revista de Administração Contemporânea, v. 28, n. 2, e230162, 2024 | doi.org/10.1590/1982-7849rac2024230162.por | e-ISSN 1982-7849 | rac.anpad.org.br

13

Practices of normalizing political violence at Volkswagen do Brasil during the
Brazilian civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985)

M. A. de C. Silva, A. Costa

Kilby, J. (2013). Introduction to Special Issue: Theorizing violence. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 16, 261–272. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840615622069

Lang, J. (2020). The limited importance of dehumanization in collective violence. Current opinion in psychology. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 35*, 17-20. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2020.02.002

Lemos, R. L. C. N. (2020). A aliança empresarial-militar no Brasil: an comunismo e segurança nacional (1949-1964). In P. H. P. Campos, R.V. M. Brandão, & R. L. C. N. Lemos (Orgs.), *Empresariado e ditadura no Brasil*. Consequência Editora.

Maclean, M., Harvey, C., & Clegg, S. R. (2016). Conceptualizing historical organization studies. *Academy of Management Review, 41*(4), 609-632. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24906243

Martí, I & Fernández, P. (2013). The institutional work of oppression and resistance: Learning from the Holocaust. *Organization Studies, 34*(8),1195-1223.

May, L. (1997) Socialization and institucional evil. In R. J. Bernstein, L. May, J. Kohn (Eds). *Hannah Arendt: Twenty years later* (pp. 83-105). MIT Press.

Methot-Jones, T., Book, A., & Gauthier, N. Y. (2019). Less than human: Psychopathy, dehumanization, and sexist and violent attitudes towards women. *Personality and Individual Differences, 149*, 250-260. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2019.06.002

Michaud, Y. (2006). *A violência*. Ática.

Miguel, L. F. (2014). Violência e Política. *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais, 30*(88), 29-44. https://doi.org/10.17666/308829-44/2015

Milgram, S. (1963). Behavioral study of obedience. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 67*, 371–378. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/h0040525

Milgram, S. (1965). Some conditions of obedience and disobedience to authority. *Human Relations, 18*, 57–76. https://doi.org/10.1177/001872676501800105

Milgram, S. (1974). *Obedience to authority: An experimental view*. Harper and Row.

Munslow, A. (2006). *Deconstructing history*. Taylor & Francis.

Odália, N. (1991). *O que é violência*. Brasiliense.

Oliveira, C. R., & Silveira, R. A. (2021). Um ensaio sobre crimes corporativos na perspectiva pós-colonial: Desafiando a literatura tradicional. *Revista de Administração Contemporânea, 25*(4), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-7849rac2021190144.por

Oliveira, R. P., & Nunes, M. O. (2008). Violência relacionada ao trabalho: Uma proposta conceitual. *Saúde e Sociedade, 17*(4), 22-34. https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-12902008000400004

Özcelik, A. D. O. (2017). Aggression theories revisited: Lorenz's neoinstinctivism, wilson's socio-biology and skinner's behavioral theories. *Journal of Asian Scientific Research, 7*(2), 38. https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.2.2017.72.38.45

Pinsky, C.B. & Luca, T.R. (2013) Apresentação. In C. B. Pinsky, & T. R. Luca (Org.). *O historiador e suas fontes*. Contexto.

Prost, A. (2019). *Doze lições sobre a história*. Editora Autêntica.

Rai, T. S., Valdesolo, P., & Graham, J. (2017). Dehumanization increases instrumental violence, but not moral violence. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 114*(32), 8511-8516. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1705238114

Rosa, A. R., & Brito, M. J. (2010). Corpo e alma nas organizações: Um estudo sobr edominação e construção social dos corpos na Organização militar. *RAC - Revista de Administração Contemporânea, 14*(2), 2010. https://doi.org/10.1590/S1415-65552010000200002

Salles, T. B. (2002). Trabalho e reestruturação produtiva: *O caso da Volkswagen em São Bernardo do Campo*. Editora Annablume

Silva, M. A. C. (2020). A expansão da Volkswagen do Brasil baseada em políticas econômicas e alinhamento ideológico. In P. H. P. Campos, R.V. M. Brandão, & R. L. C. N. Lemos (Orgs.), *Empresariado e ditadura no Brasil*. Consequência Editora.

Silva, M. A. C. (2022). *A Volkswagen e a ditadura: A fábrica de violência da multinacional no Brasil durante o regime civil-militar brasileiro*. Editora Consequência.

Silva, M. A. C., Campos, P. H. P., & Costa, A. (2022). A Volkswagen e a ditadura: A colaboração da montadora alemã com a repressão aos trabalhadores durante o regime civil-militar brasileiro. *Revista Brasileira de História, 42*(89), 141-164. https://doi.org/10.1590/1806-93472022v42n89-08

Silva, M. A. C., Costa, A., & Santos, C. A. S (2022). A responsabilidade política corporativa por atos de violência no passado: A colaboração da Volkswagen do Brasil com a ditadura civil-militar brasileira. *ReAd - Revista Eletrônica de Administração, 28*(1), 154-179. https://doi.org/10.1590/1413-2311.340.114505

Simon, R. (2021). *O Brasil contra a democracia: A ditadura, o golpe no Chile e a Guerra Fria na América do Sul*. Companhia das Letras.

Sindicato dos Metalúrgicos do ABC. (1978). *Tribuna Metarlúgica*. (49), Nov.

Sindicato dos Metalúrgicos do ABC. (1979) *Tribuna Metarlúgica*, (52), Fev.

Sindicato dos Metalúrgicos do ABC. (1981). *Tribuna Metarlúgica*, (Suplemento).

Steizinger, J. (2018). The significance of dehumanization: Nazi ideology and its psychological consequences. *Politics, Religion & Ideology, 19*(2), 139-157. https://doi.org/10.1080/21567689.2018.1425144

Stokes, P., & Gabriel, Y. (2010). Engaging with genocide: The challenge for organization and management studies. *Organization, 17*(4), 461–480. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508409353198

Tosh, J. (2011) *A busca da história: Objetivos, métodos e as tendências no estudo da história moderna*. Editora Vozes.

Varman, R., & Al-Amoudi, I. (2016). Accumulation through derealization: How corporate violence remains unchecked. *Human Relations, 69*(10), 1909-1935. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0018726716628970

Revista de Administração Contemporânea, v. 28, n. 2, e230162, 2024 | doi.org/10.1590/1982-7849rac2024230162.por| e-ISSN 1982-7849 | rac.anpad.org.br

14

Practices of normalizing political violence at Volkswagen do Brasil during the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985)

M. A. de C. Silva, A. Costa

Volkswagen (1963, Feb.). *Revista Família VW,* Feb.

Volkswagen (1963, Mar.). *Revista Família VW,* Mar.

Volkswagen (1963, Jul.). *Revista Família VW,* Jul.

Volkswagen (1963, Nov.). *Revista Família VW,* Nov.

Volkswagen (1964, Aug.). *Revista Família VW,* Aug.

Volkswagen (1975, Jul.). *Revista Família VW,* Jul.

Volkswagen (1976, Jan.). *Revista Família VW,* Jan.

Volkswagen do Brasil. (2015). *Documento entregue pela Volkswagen do Brasil ao MPF, 14 de dezembro de 2015*

Yates, J. (2014). Understanding historical methods in organization studies. In M. Bucheli, & R. D. Wadhwani (Eds.), *Organizations in time: History, theory, methods.* Oxford.

Authorship

Marcelo Almeida de Carvalho Silva

Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro

Av. Pasteur, 250, Urca, CEP. 22290-240 Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

E-mail: marceloacs@facc.ufrj.br

https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8970-1177

Alessandra Costa*

Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro

Marquês de São Vicente, 225, Gávea, CEP 22451-900, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

E-mail: alessandra.costa@iag.puc-rio.br

https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3207-2888

* Corresponding Author

Conflict of Interests

The authors have stated that there is no conflict of interest.

Funding

Copyrights

Peer Review Method

This content was evaluated using the double-blind peer review process. The disclosure of the reviewers' information on the first page, as well as the Peer Review Report, is made only after concluding the evaluation process, and with the voluntary consent of the respective reviewers and authors.

Authors' Contributions

1st **author:** conceptualization (equal), data curation (equal), formal analysis (equal), funding acquisition (equal), investigation (equal), methodology (equal), project administration (equal), resources (equal), software (equal), supervision (equal), validation (equal), visualization (equal), writing – original draft (equal), writing – review & editing (equal).

2nd **author:** conceptualization (equal), data curation (equal), formal analysis (equal), funding acquisition (equal), investigation (equal), methodology (equal), project administration (equal), resources (equal), software (equal), supervision (equal), validation (equal), visualization (equal), writing – original draft (equal), writing – review & editing (equal).

Plagiarism Check

RAC maintains the practice of submitting all documents approved for publication to the plagiarism check, using specific tools, e.g.: iThenticate.

Data Availability

The authors claim that all data used in the research have been made publicly available, and can be accessed via the Harvard Dataverse platform:

Silva, Marcelo de Carvalho; Costa, Alessandra Sá Mello, 2024, "Replication Data for: Practices of Normalization of Political Violence at Volkswagen do Brasil during the Brazilian Civil-Military Dictatorship (1964-1985)", Harvard Dataverse, V1eral universities" published by RAC-Revista de Administração Contemporânea, Harvard Dataverse, V1.
https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/EQBMNP

RAC encourages data sharing but, in compliance with ethical principles, it does not demand the disclosure of any means of identifying research subjects, preserving the privacy of research subjects. The practice of open data is to enable the reproducibility of results, and to ensure the unrestricted transparency of the results of the published research, without requiring the identity of research subjects.

Revista de Administração Contemporânea, v. 28, n. 2, e230162, 2024 | doi.org/10.1590/1982-7849rac2024230162.por| e-ISSN 1982-7849 | rac.anpad.org.br

15