POLYSEMY OF ORGANIZATIONS AND ORGANIZATION OF POLYSEMY: A FRENCH APPROACH

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Abstract:
The concept of organization, as support for collective action, is polysemic, paradoxical, and inevitable. It catalyzes the conflicting perceptions of living together and, in return, we can ask not only how "little arrangements" needed to coexist or to build collective cohesion develop but also how we are integrated into reality. The balance achieved between experience and representation we can have is sometimes a source of discord. This paper considers organization as a social unit, submerged by societal constraints. This unit pursues a social purpose, negotiated with both its external environment, particularly in the fight for resources necessary for its survival, but also with its internal environment through ongoing negotiation of quality. Our developments aims at putting into light this quest which is a paradox, since from sense of convergence emerges discourses mobilized to orchestrate some kind of leak relations, due to instrumented shifts in assembling arguments to reduce the final essence of the subject.

Keywords: polysemy, organization, fragmentation, professionalism, discourse

Introduction

The concept of organization, as support for collective action, is polysemic, paradoxical, and inevitable. It catalyzes the conflicting perceptions of living together (hell as defined by Sartre). We asked in return, not only how the "little arrangements" needed to coexist or to build collective cohesion but also how we are integrated into reality and how we represent the world. The balance achieved between experience and representation that we can have is sometimes a source of discord. These dissonances are often objectified in the contrast of antagonistic views qualified sometimes paired concept (Bendix, Berger, 1959): Real / Utopia, individual / collective, visible / hidden...

The positioning of organization as support for collective action remains ambiguous both in its essence and in its purpose. The sophistication of analytical discourse on the dichotomy between essence / purpose results from controversies which fertilize conceptual quibbles rather than commitment to scientific investigation of complex subject, since social constructions called on are sometimes biased, partial, implicit when looking at coherence.

This paper considers organization as a social unit submerged by societal constraints that it cannot escape. The unit pursues a social purpose, negotiated with both its external environment, particularly in the fight for resources necessary for its survival, but also with its internal environment through ongoing negotiation of quality: its members' contribution. The contribution / reward link is often called on to understand the place of man in organization in conventional analysis that subscribes to a representation based on homo economicus. In this

narrow sense, psychological dimensions of actors enclose motives of action (and / or non-action or action against).... not taking into account social and societal abstract contingencies. "Altruism is only long term selfishness!" (Crozier, Serieyx, 1994) establishes the illusion that it is possible to deal with collective action by avoiding the prospect of a relationship to another. Replication by isomorphism, if it draws a picture of multiple elements, does not establish a pluralistic community (Durkheim responding to Spencer "this logic would be a miracle if we could deduct the altruistic egoism"). The legitimate question of understanding the motives of action should analyze its deployment, the actor, the active will, "saying a man gives himself gratuitously, is saying something absurd and inconceivable. » (Rousseau 1966). In this sense, recognizing man as a subject is putting in perspective the basis for modeling the organization to get closer to a representation of reality and of ideal type.

On the other hand, Bourdieu (1988) analyses the mobile action in the field of social interaction. He uses the term "*illusion*" for the concept of interest that is to give a game social significance, what happens is what matters. From the Latin root "l*udus*", interest reflects the idea of being caught by a game, which is worth to be played. The concept of interests opposed is opposed to the one of indifference, but also of disinterestedness. We may be interested in a game while being unselfish. Indifference can be seen as ataraxia, "the fact of not being disturbed," not being agitated. Illusio is the opposite of ataraxia, it is being invested by a role to play. For Dejours (2001, individual investment in an organization is above all a commitment of personality to a task framed by constraints (social and physical) since there is always a gap between actual and prescribed actions. In this sense, the deployment of a business organization is characterized by a dialectic confrontation with reality. The feeling of freedom that comes with mastering a prescription alternates with that of a failed reality. This break in the action feeds a subjective posture of the subject, a consideration both for the emotional world in which he operates and for himself: the dream is stronger than the experience (Bachelard, 1938). In the same vein, Kesselring (1928) always analyses the subject, not the object, to determine his philosophy of meaning. "... Knowledge is the perfect expression of a fair balance between the real self and the real world outside the mind, an organization that needs to be fertilized to grow beyond its limits (. ..) the universal and the single meet within spiritualized being."

Our developments, devoted to an analysis of the place of human organization, aims at putting into light this quest that is the paradox, since, from a sense of convergence, emerges discourses mobilized to orchestrate some kind of leak relation, due to instrumented shifts in assembling the arguments to reduce the final essence of the subject. The first part of the paper analyses this problem at the overall level of organization, the second part explores the level of stakeholder activity.

Discourse on the disjonctive organization

Many terminologies were used to account for human within organization,: agent, actor, resource potential, ... Those terminologies, more than the difficulty in identifying the scope of the position of individuals within organizations, put into light the assumptions underlying their recognition.

UTOPIA AND MANIPULATION: HUMANS AS ORGANIZATION'S MEMBERS

The thesis of human condition in organizations is based on an anthropological approach. The etymological Maussian sense (Chanlat,

1990) has been set aside, especially in "organizational behavior" mainstream. This field is mainly dominated by the Anglo-Saxon literature, focused on organizational effectiveness. The limitations of early work on this subject are a focus on adaptive learning (Cyert and March: 1963, March and Olsen 1976), on dominance of explicit knowledge (Huber: 1991) and on lack of clarification between individual learning and group (Argyris and Schön 1978). Briefly defined, organizational behavior is the field that is oriented towards developing a better understanding of human behavior and uses this knowledge to make people more productive and more satisfied within organizations (Mitchell, Larson: 1987). In this context the objectives pursued are the understanding, the prediction and the control of "human "behavior" in organizations (Aubert 1991). Nobody seems to be outraged that we dissert on human behavior, disseminating opinions approximately clear on issues we have known few things of for decades (Rojot, Bergman 1989).

The concept of organizational behavior is ambiguous. Indeed, what is to be understood when we associate the terms behavior, human, organization? Of what kind of human behavior are we talking about? Are we talking of real organization or of "built organization" presented as concrete, assuming that no one can represent it? Dealing with the assumption of the primacy of a representation of human behavior in organization excludes, in our view, any attempt to better understand the place of man in organization and social sciences develop then a fragmented vision of man only in productive organization (company, association ...).

Human beings are generic (Granger 1967), that is to say, defined by their membership to human species, but also unique: they carry with them the entire form of humanity. The man is an abstract construction, a representation,

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since he still appears to be generic in reality, a being which can concretely identified (man, woman, child) in special situations (family, school, work, recreation). The reconstitution of the integrity of man in organization has been achieved by stages; from the Taylorist hand to the heart of human relation theory, the head has been added, that is to say, freedom, or more specifically, recognition that an autonomous agent develops manipulative acts, invents and adapts according to circumstances and movements of its partners (Crozier, Friedberg: 1977). The human being is active, reflexive, "the agent" acts, is "not only acted" (Perroux, 1975). Reflection and action are two fundamental rights, to deny it would reject man in a world where Pavlovian conditioned reflexes would act as socialization (Chanlat: 1990). An agent who acts has a plenary strategic capacity which is not only inferred ex-post (Savall, Martinet: 1979). The strategic modeling of individual, according to a reactive rather than proactive logic refines the image of "lookalike" in a crowd of lookalikes (Albouy: 1995).

Defining man only as a support unit of activity or only in the context in which he deploys its activity reinforces a disjunctive approach. The dichotomy drawn promotes the production of symbolic landmarks that blur the overall perception and develops representation more accessible, inspirational and "assimilated" (cult of performance).

Our representation of the place of human within organization is developed from the strong assumption of individual as actor, producer, consumer, and citizen (Savall: 1975). We borrow from Perroux (1975) the notion of active unit to model a human approach to the individual (and not humanist actor), transverse to the economy and sociology. The author uses within his demonstration distinctive terminologies to define what is conventionally termed an actor: the terms "agent" and "subject".

The agent is defined as a living being: would the agent still be when deprived of the attributes that characterize him as agent and distinguished him from subject? The agent gives us the image of a "biopsychosocial" being which is an unified conception of human beings (Chanlat: 1990).

To a large extent, work experience is subjective to individual feelings (pain, fear ...) and can be not be objective, unless limited to the visible part of the production: its materialized dimension. Streamlining the functioning of organization based on taylorism has contributed to enclose working man in a frame of activity, deployment, intentionality, the projective dimension being orchestrated by dispatcher in an institutionalized alienated position. At the level of individual action, we can have a vision of a generalized nightmare as an orchestrated segmentation: the "head" and "body" coexist without the head and the heart being connected. Today new forms of work organization focus more on intangible contributions of individuals: modes of thought, knowledge, everything that can ease channeled intersubjectivity in the increasingly complex production process in terms of scope (global, integrated), responsiveness (just in time) and stakeholders relations (collaborative). This new stage of orchestration of activities does not lead to the integration of human within organization. The strengthening of immateriality of work is then combined with consideration of subjectivity previously rejected. The scope of the social world becomes an object of instrumentation: experience of social relations, deployment of intelligence and intelligence without questioning place we give to life in the design of action, (namely, ...what command human being) are less necessary circumstances than sufficient conditions for progress (Bachelard, 1932)

The ambiguities, generated the position of organization, induce a game played by the actors based on their specificities and characteristics.

CONTRIBUTION OF INDIVIDUALS: A PARTIAL VIEW

The inventory of resources mobilized for carrying out corporate strategy usually results in focusing on physical resources to maximize return on investment. Material resources are preferred to obtain new resources (logical quantitative ratios). A tangible investment may not immediately result in gains in productivity since the quality of resource used is essential both during the implementation and at the emergence of technology. The potential of development is the amount of resources the organization affects to the development of its offer to integrate and develop new technologies and develops long-term competitiveness. These actions are to increase competence of men according to learning process carried on at work to change human behavior in terms of responsiveness of membership and vitality.

It is therefore necessary to consider the link equipment / intangible investment to improve overall performance. The human potential is a vital energy factor. It is a source of competitive advantage if it supports recurrent actions of stimulation to transform results in the short term investments in creating potential.

Men of the organization are a resource that can be mobilized in promoting the acquisition and implementation of skills, implementing more complex tasks, allowing more initiative and responsibility, directing actions of communication, information, training, and organizing personal and collective work (Savall, Zardet: 1995).

The mobilization of men in an organization is sometimes seen as "incantation", sometimes an injunction depending on the assumptions of

individual representation. On a continuum, this incantation corresponds with the position of the School of Human Resources and the injunction to that opposite, channels the activity of actors in an instrumental performance. As part of our development we will stress the importance of negotiation among the actors (definition of the aim pursued and the means to achieve it). We borrow the concept of active unit proposed by Perroux (1975) to represent the actor in an organization. An active unit has the capacity for decision taking finalized by a project, the capacity for mobilizing resources and the capacity for organizing itself in relation to its environment through training and transformation of means of action which it acquires. Thus, the organization is both a space for actors, if one is positioned at the individual level, and an entity if one considers the result of combined actions. The characteristics of active unit apply to those two dimensions. Thus the local dimension of the organization consists of the space of heterogeneous actors with means of action "channeled" by collective dimension, a level of activity that is emerging as a constraint on individual action.

The representation is differential since it integrates two complementary dimensions: individual and collective dynamic as part of a recursive process (Le Moigne, 1990; Avenier 1997). The overall quality of the operation depends on the quality of the joint or coupling of different levels of negotiation with the environment. In this perspective, the projective dimension of each acting individual, negotiating and renegotiating tirelessly conditions and terms of conditions of membership in a collective group gives sense to an integrated view of the psychological dimension of human organization: Hell is other people! (Sartre, 1951).

Discourse as TOOL: instrumenting fragmented activity

The development of the issue of greater recognition of man in organization opens possibilities for generating change and moves from a perception of organization complied as conceptual (instrumental) to the "intelligent" modeling, where the meaning of action, of its elements would not only be defined based only on the action itself (Seeman, 1959). In other words, the company, by developing values based on rational and instrumented capitalism, has greatly contributed to primacy of technology over human and makes of each individual a perverse manipulator who cares about others only in the best interest of his desires ((Enriquez, 1993). Thus working together, extracted from social contingencies of real world, registers as a pure act of freedom, crazy, absurd, an act which cannot be accounted for (Gide's Lafcadio).

HUMAN PRODUCTION: WORK DEFINED AS ACTIVITY

Our definition of individual within organization, deriving from the models of Granger (1967), Perroux (1975), Savall (1975), Chanlat (1990), identifies it as a generic but unique being, with ability to work, reflect ona strategy applied to a project negotiated with his environment. In this broad sense, human activity is produced by the design of homo faber: the tendency to action, moving beyond immediate situations and beyond self-realization. According to Lefebvre (1948) man acts and is not passive towards nature: he alters and changes, changing his needs. The active relationship between man and nature is nothing mysterious: it is work ... an essential foundation of man. Form working, man (social) life goes beyond the immediate life in nature. He produces, creates around him objects and these objects satisfy his needs, but at the same time generate constantly

changing needs, converting existing needs ... In self-realization in the world of objects, externalization of self is not for a human being (real and social) a loss of self (alienation). It can then be seen as enrichment, an accomplishment.

The concept of human production cannot be confined solely to economic output (Marx) but should be extended to the whole field of human activity by sector or in terms of social position (Fromm, 1965; Rogers, 1966). In this sense, alienating condition perceived as an "obstacle" to the human production is polysemic.

In his remarks, Paul Ricoeur (1974) speaks of "word-hospital" where all the aches come to bed. In the sociological debate, this concept tends to be based on the status of the worker's relationship with product he produces, the institutions that determine him and consume his production: the situation where the employee has been divested by (and for) another. The challenge lies in the theoretical validity of the concept and how to identify more "surgery" (Seeman, Vidal, Amiot and Touraine, 1967) since it may be through situations with alienating components (or anomie) or through subjects suffering from " overall personality disorder" (Vidal, 1969).

This concept may also be different in content and reflect life as a largely unknown creative process whose fuel is autonomy. "Being as it is said to be." This commentary of Diane Pacom, insists on the central theme of the work of Castoriadis, that "life is always a process, and that the individual responsible [...] is an individual who is forged by life (Pacom, 1999, p. 177). In this reflection, the prevailing attitude is the notional one (Grell and Wery, 1993, p. 169). It gives of the same object different visions: it is both this and that (Maffesoli, 1985, p. 51). Speaking of "alienation" is part of this attitude. The word refers to a sense of lived global order. In this sense, we speak of "religious sentiment", "aesthetic feeling",

designating a type of sensitivity to certain things that had a global character (Ledrut, 1979, p. 81). The global nature leads us to the problem of social whole and to define the sense of alienation as a form of social disruption, practical and sensitive, manifested by obstacles, hardships, whose definition can be made outside meaning given in life, that working people hinder their ability to self-provision and self-organization. Alienation refers to social situations in which individuals and communities are deprived of their activity and sense of action and / or of designated laws and institutions by which they encounter obstacles, seeking to deploy and to exist socially. This feeling of alienation cannot be defined independently of consciousness that is gradually taking off. In keeping with the logic of an unlivable society, this sentiment continues to be ambiguous: both experience close to what Arendt (1983) calls the "desolation", defining it as "absolutely no experience belonging to the world "(Chaumont, 1991, p. 37) but also as hollow of a possible emancipation in the search for simplicity, even irrational", leading to paradoxical statements: losing to receive, to find out ... " (Cingolani, 1994, p. 102). It is both unwanted and intense experience «a hope that something is gained in return for what is lost; something is done through what is undone" (Ricoeur, 1974, p. 661).

As part of this paper, the alienating condition prevents the productivity of man: his wealth, his development, his tolerance (Sévigny, 1969) in a sense a deprivation of means of negotiation (referred to his project) with its environment. An analysis of the production of man cannot be done without taking into account its social and collective dimensions, whatever it is legal, organizational, ...

The quality of the contribution of an individual to a collective organized system is part of the field of

management science. Of all the representations and model developed the concept of professionalism is fruitful: however the meaning of work is avoided in favor of a certain idea of the activity....

BETWEEN DREAM AND NIGHTMARE: THE CONCEPT OF PROFESSIONALISM

The model of professionalism distinguishes between artificial reference to "profession" and reference to life of the organization. The development of a moral code of a profession is a corollary development of devices that aim to channel, not the behavior of "professionals", but the behavior of employees to conduct more complex production process. Within organizations, professionalism refers to collective control of production process by the organization, linked to mobilization of actors, including discrimination which can be achieved socially or economically by level of compensation. The model of professionalism tends to homogenize social mode of recognition of the status of those involved in organization using wages. The wage system now includes all attributes of the profession: characterization, classification, existence of professional organizations, and recognition in collective agreements and reference to training and code of conduct. The reference to professionalism is inconceivable without a framework of realization of activity supporting the implementation of a profession: the employed and the model of work organization. Professionalism of the actors, in this sense, focuses on particular model of organizing work that evades its actual contents: conducting a group activity. Strategic analysis developed by Crozier and Friedberg (1977) defines a concrete action system as whole human structure that coordinates actions of its participants through mechanisms of games that maintain relatively stable structure (stability of its games and the relationship

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among them, by regulatory mechanisms which are other games). The prospect of concrete action system leads to channel capacity for action of the actors on their environment by «mechanisms games". They endorse the reduction of strategic capacity of individuals: a channeled representation of control system regulation (Laville, Sainsaulieu, 1997). The actor has a margin of freedom in the rules imposed; however, to what extent those rules are not an artifice? There are no social systems fully controlled. For Savall (1979) strategy (...) is inferred ex-post and based on regularity of behavior observed empirically. It does not seem deliberate, conscious and projective (...). Therefore, to avoid confusion, at least provisionally, we have to accept that a particular social organization is not a system, not a coherent whole whose parts are defined by their interrelationships, and modifications introduced at one point all lead to systematic changes in all components (Touraine, 1973). A social system is unique because of "its ability to transform (sometimes" forgotten "by some specialists that implement the system analysis to human systems). This leads to the fact that social systems are also activities and organizations do not mandatory coincide with those activities: mutual adjustment is one of the major problems of modern organization (Jarniou, 1987).

The behavioral criteria of professional actors must be factual to anchor the concept at the heart of business and operation of organizations. Professionalism is the ability of actors to implement professional behavior. Thus, in the context of conducting an activity deemed by others, the professional actor is someone who:

- Implements actions,
- Produces decisive action,
- Performs congruent acts

Our definition of the actor borrowed to Perroux (1975) confirms that the actor, an active unit, has a power to

transform his environment. The individual has an energy dimension that goes beyond the mechanistic view of workforce of passive actor in its environment. Equating the actor with active unit stresses the importance of the impact of active will of actors: human energy. Human energy is defined as physical and mental competences which has a human being, and allows it to take decisions and implement them. The outbreak is seized by the behavior of acting out. Implementing actions involves expenditure of energy, namely the transformation of information into action, or the realization of the intentions expressed or unexpressed in acts of physical implementation.

In an organization of production, acting out is channeled through the judgments of others, both at the production unit and at overall level of the organization and also at the intersection of the two.

Transforming knowledge into skills

Producing acts, not only includes an energy dimension, but also a capacity for interpretation, translation and arrangement of acts in context. We borrow from Faure (1996) the analysis of knowledge producing actions by the players. His approach highlights a distinction among knowledge, know-how and skills. The concept of knowledge has been subject to many discussions.

Knowledge is an abstraction of reality, according to Plato, Descartes and Rousseau it comes to have in mind a concrete or abstract, physical or mental object and be able to identify the corresponding concept.

The theory of cognition challenges the standard approach by introducing the concept of reality and of representation.

Piaget (1968) and Morin (1991) distinguish the diachronic (historic) and cognitive knowledge.

From philosophy, it is possible to extract for the management sciences three levels:

- Knowledge is abstract representations such as knowledge of nuclear material, or geometric intuition: "a space is given, generally, a geometric intuition" (Thom, 1993, p.16).
- Knowledge are concrete representations of the past,
- Knowledge is enriched by action.

These three levels of knowledge are constitutive of the deployment of the action of an individual and go beyond professional knowledge developed by the sociology of professions.

Expertise and transformation

The notion of expertise can be broadly defined as the transformation of a body of knowledge (Nonaka, 1991), implicit or explicit (Hall, 1992), within a context. The concept of knowledge can also be defined focusing directly on individual: knowing how to act. Knowledge is action of an individual acts in the exercise of an activity under production constraints. Thus defined, the concept of information act sets the notion of expertise in the conduct of the actor. Knowledge-action is the implementation by the actor of "intangible resources" resulting from a distinctive competence. The know-how is cross the operations of the work, understood as the realization of operations in an algorithmic process. It is a heuristic process of implementing knowledge of an actor and not only technical dimension.

The concept of competence "as the set of knowledge mobilized in a work situation" (Joras, 1996), refers to different levels of analysis of organization. Competencies can be assessed at both individual and collective levels. Competencies are defined in socio-economic development as a set of theoretical and practical knowledge held by an actor, used in the exercise of his profession in one or more

specialties (Savall, 1975) a combination of theoretical knowledge and practice that produce added value. The power depends then on the opportunities for implementation in the context of "work situations" and not on the ability of man to use means in order to achieve a goal (Gelinier, 1990).

The latter positioning of professional conduct for players, observable and measurable, is the reference to the context of the action.

Congruency: acting in context

Littre's Dictionary defines the term congruent as what is designed or expressed in accurate precise terms, the theological reference refers to the concept of proportionate relationship for a given effect and the ecclesiastical reference generalized the notion of bare minimum which by extension is limited to subsistence. The Concise Oxford Dictionary refers to the Latin origin "congruus" which means adequate.

We define a congruous act as an act done by an actor and adapted to a given situation. The act directed by an actor is congruent if it meets three criteria:

- relevant: it is contextualized by a situation,
- consistent: it is proportionate in its intensity or duration,
- suitable: carrying value and contributing to the overall performance of an organization.

The terminology of the congruent act was preferred to effective act or efficiency because we believe both efficacy and efficiency within the collective dimension of the organization tend to remove responsibility from the actor, minimizing his contribution in the implementation of regulatory action (Zardet, 1986) (desertion, absorption or equilibration) or his share of responsibility in the search for devices of equilibration.

The roots of professional actors in their production acts overcome the

limitations of the model of professionalism based on criteria of membership. The challenge of moving the starting point for analysis is substantial. Cauvin (1989) conducted an analysis of the withdrawal process involved in an educational body which is popular in this analysis (Seeman (1959)). This author has tried to find a translation of the operating concept of alienation that he broke down into five dimensions:

- Powerlessness or helplessness for an actor
- Meaningless,non-sense or lack of significance of a situation,
- Normlessness or lack of standards,
- Anomie, isolation value or sense of foreignness in relative to values,
- Self-estrangement or dependant personality compared with requirements that the indifferent.

The analysis by the author seems interesting since criteria put forward may be closer to our analysis of organizational steering as the nesting of two levels of active units differentiated. We use the criteria of Seeman explaining the lack of linkage between individual and collective dimensions of the organization taking into account social realities.

Conclusions

The inclusion of management science in the humanities as "science of action", induces a zone of confusion on how scientific discourse are appropriated and interpreted in relation to the world. Not that it reflects a significant reality of the world as it is forced on us, but in the context of a choice: our intelligibility. Analyzing the organization of men do not suppose that we take a sensitive analysis of a concrete artificial creation (Simon, 1969). The concept of meaning can be seen as accepting the mystery of consciousness of the individual. This

concept is made of objectives, values and experiences that develop in the minds of individuals (Lenhart, 1992).

A renewed perception of the organization involves men of passion, imagination, reference to an ideal, a desire not to leave the field of reality and its obligations and ultimately more ambitious dreams will not turn into collective nightmares. So ... thoughts rectified never return to their starting point (Bachelard, 1934).

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