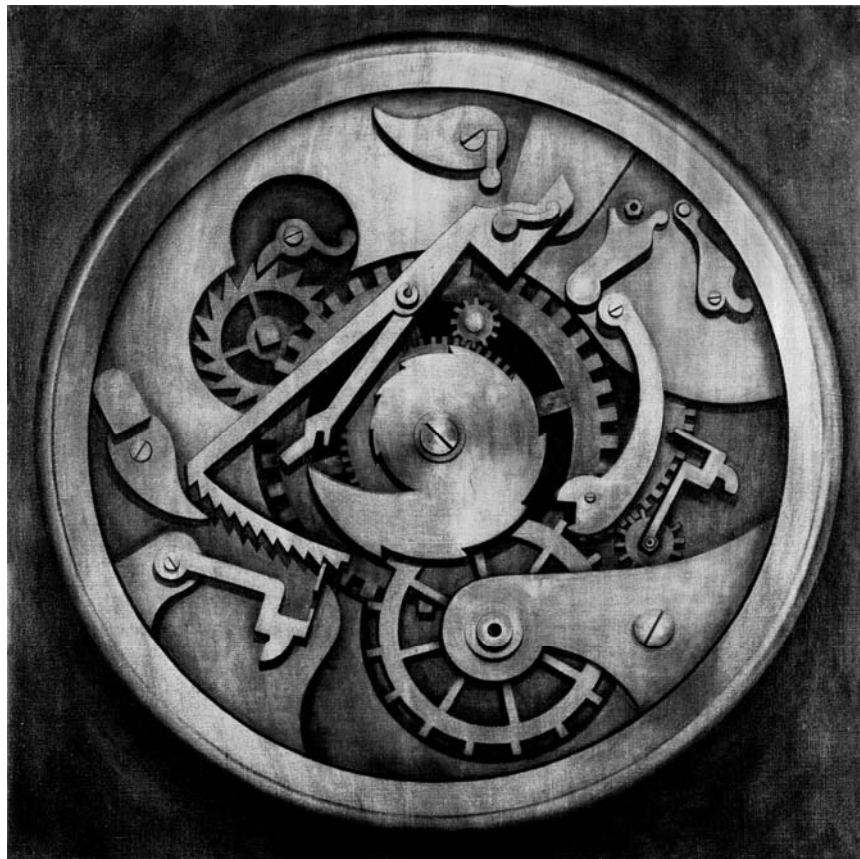


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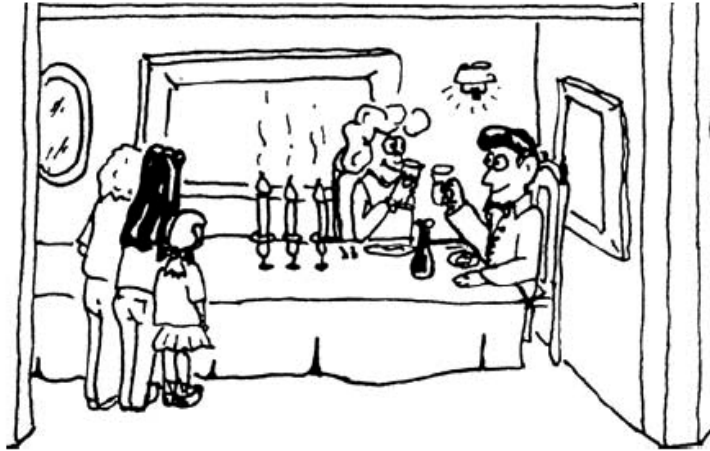
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REFLEXIVITY IN RESEARCH: THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER, THE RESEARCH PROCESS, AND THE NATURE OF FACTS IN THE STUDY OF ORGANIZATIONS

The nature of the production of knowledge and scientific “fact” has received growing attention in the study of organizations. Organizations cannot be perceived directly, experienced as such and, therefore, come to be understood through theory and conceptualization. The whole field of organizational research is highly determined by antecedent knowledge, metaphors and concepts. This call for papers is inspired by emergent developments in the field, and notably by two recent articles: “Reflexivity in Organization and Management Theory: A Study of the Production of the Research ‘Subject’”, by C. Hardy, N. Phillips and S. Clegg, *Human Relations*, May 2001, and “The Problem of Experience in the Study of Organizations”, by L. Sandelands and V. Srivatsan, *Organization Studies*, 1993, 14/1. Both of the papers, in different ways, contribute to a broader understanding of knowledge production and reflexivity.

Over the past 10-15 years qualitative approaches to research in organizations and management have become increasingly popular. at least this is the case in Europe and there is evidence of a broader coalition of interests in qualitative work across the international management academy. Many of these studies share similar concerns albeit at a range of different levels of analysis and with different means of conceptualization: the position of the researcher in the research process, the special features of data gathering and, even more importantly, the analysis and interpretations of the data in the search for new knowledge. Positioning oneself as researcher in the study, the special nature of the data and various ethical considerations are everyday questions to be dealt with by researchers during the process of research. Attitudes to these issues have changed considerably over the past twenty five years as has the acceptability of various qualitative approaches.

Because qualitative studies do not usually start from a strict theory or model, reflexivity on the researcher's part is an essential part of the research process. Indeed, the qualitative approach has sometimes been criticized for not being able to add to the knowledge in the studied field and ending up with isolated bits of knowledge and pieces of understanding. The subjectivity of the researcher is sometimes seen more as a threat than an opportunity for the outcome. Moreover, the polarity of quantitative and qualitative is something of myth since it is the extent to which interpretation is an acknowledged part of knowledge production which sometimes appears to characterize the distinction. Study designs such as case studies may use several kinds of data and analysis, qualitative as well as quantitative. However, it is not just the use or non-use of numerical analysis that differentiates research. It is the whole research process covering data collection, analysis and interpretation, and the trajectory of theoretical development.

In this special issue we welcomed submissions dealing with questions like:

- o Reflexivity and the “production” of the research “subject”
- o Position of the researcher in the research process
- o Auto-ethnography
- o Voyeurism and the researcher
- o Subjectivity, honesty and disclosure
- o Subjectivity and selectivity in the presentation of findings
- o The interpretative framework of research
- o The research community and legitimization of research
- o The production of “community in research”
- o Evaluation by peers
- o Researcher as ingénue
- o Theory development as “production”
- o The role of epistemology
- o The manipulation of findings

In this issue we have seven papers that all approach reflexivity and cover the presented questions, the way or another.

Iiris Aaltio's article discusses the meaning of newness in research in the times when science have become more and more fragmentary by nature. Social science is based on writing and emerging texts. The context where they become live is social and historical, and not innocent in due to power. Writing research reports is political by nature but so is also reading them. Nowadays when subjectivity is grown into social science, seen in methodology and method choices, pure analysis of an empirical data get less and less impact. When social science publications are based more and more to collaboration and joint work, individual subjectivity gets compensated by inter-subjectivity in writing because of co-authored texts.

Becoming a researcher with the right to access science text publishing is not only professional but more and more narrative by nature, including a person's credibility, biographical notes and wider understanding of his or her background. Personality and social context of a researcher are perhaps becoming more important than they used to be and that makes the impact of the individual researcher stronger, at the scientific career it is important to administer one's reputation, image and "social frames". Gatekeepers of science and administrative processes that they guide form criteria according to which researchers are selected and promoted further, on who passes the gate of becoming a knowledge holder in the future.

Secondly, Heather Höpfl takes issue with the way in which reflection has been valorized. Drawing on Lacoue-Labarthe (1989) who argues that in the face of the tragic one can only "attempt to circumscribe it theoretically" (1989: 117), she argues for a reassessment of the use of reflection. Lacoue-Labarthe is saying that when the object is elevated to the status of *subject of speculation*, it is mortified by *insight*. His analysis suggests that the object of the speculation is mortified by that

speculation: annihilated by reflection. As in the story of Medusa slain by her own reflection. Consequently, the paper deals with issues of the frame, liminality and definition. Höpfl draws on blindness and seeing, blindness and reflection. She also writes about the body, flesh, about the resistance that is in the touch, in the recovery of the physical as counterpoints to the passivity of reflection.

Heidi Keso, Hanna Lehtimäki and Tarja Pietiläinen write and narratize on "Engaging in Reflective Acts - Sharing experiences on reflexivity in empirical qualitative research". The article presents the experimental narrative of reflexivity in a joint qualitative research process. Even if academic works are often joint contributions, it is seldom asked how they come as they are after the joint collaboration. The social processes including sharing experiences and the processes of theoretical decision-making are of value, when making of work methods and in trying to understand academic work as a shared reflection. Researchers who are in the middle of field work certainly benefit thinking over how their work actually gets organized, constructed and done.

The article by Alf Rehn "On the Economy of Research: Gifts, Contributions, and Commodities in Organization Studies", which covers the nature of academic work analyzing its economic nature and suggesting that we can also see it in the eyes of a 'gift economy'. The article overbridges the difficult questions of what is social in research work, what is subjectivity in research process and how contributions are in fact something beyond gifts. He outlines a post-moralizing social science, on which greater awareness of the ideological underpinnings of our actions and there political spheres is acquired, and therefore asks the broad spheres of reflectivity in our academic doings.

Charalambos Tskeris and Nicos Katrivesis write about “Ethical Reflexivity and Epistemological Weakness”, about the ethical nature of reflexivity. They write that reflexivity is a contingent chance and not a fixed or black-boxed model. Fruitful pluralist maximization of both ethical and cognitive possibilities, the way “it would be otherwise” clause of radical intellectual inquiry remains central, as they end.

Annikka Tapani’s paper we could describe as a one with “hands in the mud” state. She reflects her researcher identification, its process and nature while working with the Ph.D., in her article “Is Being a Researcher Some Kind of Role-playing – a Reflective paper on Researcher’s Professional Growth”. While seeing that research is based on social identity construction inside the academia, we end up to questions like what is the researcher’s role in the collective as well as how a personal professional identity inside academia becomes shaped. This is a question of working styles but even more importantly, has also to do with how knowledge is shaped and what we understand by contributing. The forming and shaping of researcher identity when one gathers data and analyze it within the academia is discussed and this paper

outlines, referring to earlier work by Eriksson and Tranquist, four different roles of the researcher: the tourist, the spy, the missionary and the prisoner. These are used in the paper more as analytical heuristic to explore and reflect the research process and the construction of one’s identity as a researcher, than something that are real alternatives of the researcher to make a choice between. In her work Tapani shows out how the researcher starts with the idea of contributing to the Truth and finds oneself as a novice, finding one’s way out of the, in George Mead’s words, “Generalized other” towards “I, the owner of the process and her life”.

We feel grateful for reviewers and the authors who have taken part of this process and hope that writing and discussion on these issues will continue. Among all, research is contributing to welfare of people who are the actors, to the community where they work. Writing and contributing happens in the frame of emotions and reflections, and the more reflective the processes of gate-keeping are, the better the results.

Helsinki, 23th February 2009

Iiris Aaltio & Heather J. Hopfl, Guest Editors.

HOW TO BECOME A KNOWLEDGE HOLDER: CREATING A PIECE OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE WITH ORIGINALITY

Iiris Aaltio
University of Jyväskylä

ABSTRACT

In this paper we discuss the meaning of newness in research in the times when new paradigms of science are emerging and the sciences have become more and more fragmentary. In the positivistic and monolithic era of social science, before Kuhn and year 1966, methodologies and methods interpreting newness were simpler. In this paper it is argued the newness is more and more in the text itself, and that the dynamics of texts comes from interrelations between the subject of the text (the researcher self) and the object of it (the research audience). Scientific knowledge becomes new when it is substantiated and connected to the prior one

Writing the research reports is political by nature but so is also its reading. While citation index makes researchers powerful, in gaining decisions whom to refer the colleagues make political choices that are bound to some political contexts they live and career. Building a theoretical frame is not a pure and objectivistic thing but many ways a path of choices that build the research field. Behind is a lot of social capital of the academia and at the same time the text shows and even builds it. Again, it is less and less the empirical facts itself that contributes to newness, but the ways to conceptualize and contextualize empirically based knowledge.

In the times when subjectivity is grown into science and pure empirical data does not work in the same way it used to be, becoming a researcher with the right to access science text publishing is not only professional but more and more narrative by nature. The credibility and trust is of a lot of worth at the society of today, not least in academia. Personality, biography and social context of a researcher are perhaps becoming more important than it used to be and that makes the issue that the impact of the researcher on has grown. Gatekeepers of science and administrative processes that they guide form criteria according to which researchers are selected and promoted further. That way individual background issues like gender and ethnicity may either grow or diminish the credibility of the individual researcher and have a lot of impact on the fact on who passes the gate of becoming a knowledge holder in the future.

In the paper we also argue that subjectivity is more and more compensated by inter-subjectivity in writing because of joint texts. In gate-keeping about who enters the knowledge holder-limit this states as well.

INTRODUCTION

“A text of jouissance imposes a state of loss. It is a text that discomforts, unsettles the reader’s historical, cultural, psychological assumptions” (Barthes, 1975)

Originality and insight label any scientific contribution. But what makes the contribution

novel? Often study results are raised in light, which means, what is found based on empirical data and compared to earlier studies. Social sciences however not so often build their results strictly on earlier study results, at least not in the same way as do technical and medical sciences. There are not so concrete products coming out using the study results. In addition, studies based on inquiries and on quantitative

data analysis methods meet the requirements about “what is novel” other ways than do studies based on qualitative data and interpretations. Publications based on qualitative research are probably more flexible in their structure and writing. Quantitative research uses more numbers to document the novelty. In addition, results of studies are multiple. The way to raise the problems, the discussion between the problem and earlier research and the way to refer it are as important as are the results themselves. Also the text itself stimulates the reader, as we can see in citations from the articles. The creative process behind the text is of meaning as well. Citation index for instance is based on citations made out of the text by other researchers and these can concern whatever part of the article texture. The more citations, the more impact the text and the researcher(s) behind have. The more academic power they have. The text is found interesting, it has maybe “unsettled the reader’s historical, cultural, psychological assumptions” (Barthes, 1975). The interaction process is not only technical and data based, but also emotional. Earlier texts must raise desires as well as be formally right to become cited.

Citations and interaction in a way show and make the novelty of the research and text. To create a new scientific piece of knowledge does not happen in a knowledge vacuum, but is substantiated and connected to other knowledge in the field.

As an overview of using scientific method, the researcher makes many steps before her product becomes novel. A research process is chronological, phased but at the same time iterative chain that cumulates learning and knowledge. It outlines the research theme into the problems which enable the study, and which can be solved by the means of research. The written research product, such as a research report, constitutes an entity, the parts of which are related to each other.

A professional researcher shows a proper scientific data gathering process and the use

of scientific methods, as well as the knowing of the paradigms of science. The ontological and epistemological training is required for instance from doctoral candidates who are novices of “knowledge holders”. A researcher is a part of the reality he or she studies, and the study can be evaluated also from the ethical point of view. Professional researcher studies only questions that are human, knowing that the study results do not hurt socially and culturally any human being or group of them. This is the ethical dimension of the text. Novelty of the text becomes not only from its being interesting to colleagues but also from the nature of its social consequences.

Applying the methods is a professional but also unique event in every individual research setting. Social research methods are more than tools because they are individually applied in every case. Especially qualitative methods need a lot individual judgment every time they are used. Also applying earlier theory is professional, because the theory consists of a set of concepts and relations, which combine together the multiple dimensions of the studied phenomenon. The concepts are used in abstracting the observations, and that way the study serves a theory formation and development. In university researcher training methods and theory knowledge are important parts. Like in Finland one has to learn at least 10 credits methods and philosophy of science in doctoral programs of management studies. Method and methodology skills somehow make the body of the program. In addition one has to know the history, the body of the theory in the field, show this in writing and also be able to discuss and interact using the central concepts. In doctoral classes, seminars and conferences this happens.

Researcher as a Self: Writing and Research

The heritage of postmodern thinking is in the questioning of subject and object position in research. It is argued that there are power aspects behind any text and that they are always rooted in a historic context (Foucault,

Aaltio

1991, Burrell, 1988). The researcher as a self meets impossible obligations in trying to be objective. The text she or he writes is contextual, and hides power aspects. The researcher as a self is powerless and swims in the stream of history even if not wants. This is a bit similar to the ideas of psychoanalysis. People are driven by their unconscious motives and desires. As Elliott However, there are approaches that state the place of subject and study the interrelations between the self and society, in new ways. Anthony Elliot argues that the nature of unconscious is a constitutive and creative source of human subjectivity and criticizes the way post-modernism rejects human consciousness and endeavour in his critical reading of psychoanalytic theory and social theory (1999, 2):

“The problem of human subjectivity, not as some pre-given substance but rather as a reflexively constituted project, has emerged as a fundamental issue in social theory at the turn of the twenty-first century. The post-modern celebration of the ‘death of the subject and arrival of a ‘post-ideological condition’, while fashionable for some time in certain quarters, are shown by current world events to be without the flimsiest political warrant. As several contemporary critics have argued, the postmodernistic deconstruction of subjectivity as sheer difference and heterogeneity is in many respects an ideological ruse of the late capitalist economy itself, masking the complex and contradictory ways in which men and women seek to appropriate and exert control over the conditions of their lives.”

When passing the postmodern constitution of the self, and analysing the research process, the subject of research is the researcher. Thereby, “researching” means the activity of the researcher, sitting by the computer, or even with a pen and paper, with transmitting his ideas and findings by writing to the scientific audience, which presumably is interested in them. Writing is the basic activity that ends to texts. Scientific writing

takes place in a different kind of context compared to, for example, writing of fiction or a letter to a friend. Nevertheless, these different examples illustrate the nature of writing itself. In research writing facts, metaphors, and stories are often woven together (Bahtin, 1988, Czarniawska 1997, Aaltio-Marjosola 1997). Use of qualitative data gathering methods creates data, which is narrative by nature. However, there is a clear difference between the ethnography and the narratives with scientific methodology background. For instance travel accounts might be near to ethnographic studies but usually not. A travel account may be an unfiltered flow of subjective observations and feelings, whereas ethnography filters the description through culture, collective structures, and historical relations. A well-known example of this is William Whyte’s (1943) ethnographical report of Boston’s Italian quarters. Methodological and methodical questions in culture research are examined, for example, in Van Maanen’s (1988) book ‘Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography’ and Clifford and Marcus’s (1986) book ‘Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography’. As Van Maanen (1988) has pointed out, while writing an ethnography the researcher of culture actually creates the culture of the community at hand. The culture of the particular local community becomes visible and is communicated and transmitted to the audience who reads the ethnography. The researcher as a self is more or less present in his or her text. The criteria for it being scientific does not depend on this farness: being less does not mean that the text is more objective or scientific.

Scientific writing is based on the rules followed by the academic community. It also reflects the research process, its characteristic features of which consist of the data gathering, interpretation, theoretical frame of reference, and conceptualisation. An empirical study is based on the research methods. The rules are not only routine traditions, but based on meanings. Even if being special, scientific writing can, however, be compared to other ways of writing. There is no need of mystifying

the scientific writing: writing itself is a physical activity, which is caused by the writer's hands, brains, nerve system, etc. At the same time it is an activity, which despite its apparent solitude is in fact an intense interaction between the writer and his audience. It is difficult to think any writing action without a conception of the audience. Writing is always meant for an audience, in addition to the fact that the writer uses this activity in clarifying his or her own thoughts. The context of scientific writing is different from any other forms of writing. In the activity of writing the gap between "the self and the world" is narrowed down – between the researcher and the studied phenomenon – when "the substance of the world" meets "the substance of the self" (Niiniluoto, 1990). I argue that the dynamics of texts comes from interrelations between the subject of the text (the researcher) and the object of it (the research audience).

Writing can be based on collective efforts of subjects. The researcher groups can also act as subjects of scientific research. The writing is filtered into a text through the discussions inside the group of researchers. The structure of a book may be outlined together, after which the persons responsible for different chapters of the book start writing, but also comment on other researchers' texts, and this way the book is done both in a collective process and by the subjects of the researchers'.

At the individual researcher level, research process can be compared with incidents, in which the researcher is constructing reality. In subjectivistic thinking of the reality it is theoretically constructed and contextual by nature. Taking the view of social constructivism (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), an individual creates culture in a dialectical process, which consists both a subject and an object. Culture is created through objectivising, in which different kinds of activities, such as writing, are used in making the subjective experiences into the objective ones, which then creates new culture (Wuthnow, Hunter, Bergewen, Kurzweil

1986: 21 – 77). Dialectical process is necessary and obligatory, since the individual is tied to the world due to her or his biological existence. People make interpretations on the surroundings, i.e. "the world", to themselves. A human activity, which moulds the "objective" world into a subjectively experienced reality, is based on the need to externalise. In the objectification the individual faces the external world. In the internalisation the reality becomes individual's consciousness, and the world-structure (so to say) becomes his thought-structure, the world becomes "his world" (prev. 41). Individuals inhibit the collective and dialectical processes, in which the individual's experiences are linked into the collected experiences. In the externalisation the individual reflects his own thinking back to the surroundings. The process itself is creative and unique.

Scientific work, writing and empirical data gathering take place in the dialectical process described above. Doing research and writing, creating texts, mean not any mechanical production of new knowledge but they receive their motivation from the researcher's curiosity, desire to understand better the phenomenon he is interested in, i.e. from the need to externalise. The researcher places himself into a situation, in which he aims at understanding the piece of the world, which she is unfamiliar with, and she tries to transmit this gained knowledge back to the scientific community. Emotionality and human desire explain research motivation of the researcher self.

Conceptual Work

In social sciences the object of research is a phenomenon, which is similar to the researcher himself/herself by nature. At the background there is a person/persons, groups, or a set of rules that make the identities of the groups and individuals. It is possible to get information about the research object by classifying, organising and storing experiences and observations. The data received on the research object is related to the prior

knowledge, and proving this relation makes the research knowledge new with respect to the prior one.

The researcher does not draw his/her conclusions from any *tabula rasa* –situations but his/her interpretations and conclusions are related to the scientific community and the pre-understanding of the researcher himself/herself. For example, when studying the affect of the amount of salary on the work motivation, it is worth knowing that there is a long tradition of studying work motivation, to which one's own research setting can be placed. However, it is the researcher that determines the basic concepts. If the concepts are completely detached from the concepts used in the scientific community, the study will end up being pseudo-science. It is necessary that the results can be communicated to the scientific community. Due to this, for example, the years of practical experience on business management alone does not make a person an excellent researcher of management. Conceptualising the experiences and ultimately showing the practical experience in the results and overall, in the research report makes the managerial experience valuable from the viewpoint of research.

“Concepts offer categories by classifying, organising and storing experiences. They are ideas, which are formed in the process of abstraction... Concepts are like empty baskets that are filled with experience. The concept is empty if it is adopted from the academic research. It needs to be filled with a meaning by attaching personal experiences into it, which then makes the concept rich. In the same way as a child learns the concept ‘dog’.” (Hatch 1997: 10)

Research is conceptualises, outlines, classifies and abstracts the gathered observational data. For example in qualitative research these concept baskets may be filled with rich descriptions of the data and with the interview quotations. They often find typologies to promote new understanding.

The Researcher's Self and Novelty of the Study

Overall, the research process has several writing stages; the researcher writes drafts and revises them, and finally polishes the final outcome – a research report, a scientific article or a book. At its best the final outcome is an outlined, logical, substantiated written product, which follows the scientific rules. The earlier stages may be chaotic and iterative ones, and not so clearly detached from one another as it might seem in the final report. Research is an activity – not only writing but also speaking, discussions, participation of seminars and conferences, it means reading, using interviews, using computer programs, accessing libraries, and using virtual means.

The process of empirical research has its own dynamics. However the legitimization of the research process is needed. Being usually empirical, the data needs to be gathered through academic principles, it has to be applied to the prior knowledge, and it needs to be able to stand even an ethical appraisal. Use of known and grounded research methods is a part of legitimate research process. In conclusions the researcher abstracts, simplifies, and outlines the findings with respect to the concepts and the findings of the prior studies. Every now and again the scientific research ends up with paradoxical findings, which question the prior knowledge in a manner, which may start a completely new school and a new way of approaching and understanding a phenomenon. A well known example of this is the born of a school called ‘Human Relations’ in the beginning of the 20th century. This approach was created in the situation, in which the Hawthorne experiment (Pugh 1997) was used for finding out which would be the optimal light in a precise laboratory work. The experiment was based on the ideas of a so-called the School of Scientific Business Management. Surprisingly enough, it was found out that lowering the amount of light did not lower the work performance until it was too dark to carry on working. The relation between the work performance and the social situation, in which

the workers were examined by researchers and struggled in the diminishing light, turned out to be the most interesting finding of the entire study.

In social sciences the researcher is a part of the studied reality. For example, when the researcher studies the relations between the salaries and motivation he has personal experiences on salaries and their affects on his own work motivation. In some cases one may also be a member of the studied community, which raises questions of the objectivity of the study and the significance of the subjectivity. These have to be reflected in order to get the legitimization. These are also epistemological questions that concern the content of the knowledge, its sources, results and methods. They are also needed in the evaluation of the reliability of the study.

Is thinking itself, or cognitive processes themselves independent from the thinking subject? Are they similar in every case? It is difficult to imagine anything that would not be present in time and space; that would not have a quantity, etc. One can however argue that there are frames for thinking, thought categories where elements of thinking are placed into. The inhabitants of the same culture realize the space in the same manner, since the concepts are based on the communal values and they have social/communal origins. The changes which concern the present day logics and rules controlling it, indicate that the rule patterns are not just personal mental structure but depend, at least partially, on the factors that are historical and therefore social (Durkheim 1980: 34 – 35). We cannot be sure of what they are exactly but it is assumed that they do exist. It is possible to outline two different kinds of approaches. Some think that categories cannot be drawn from the experience but that they are logically primary with respect to it and conditions for the experience itself. In this case the internal structure of a human mind includes these kinds of *a priori* categories, which the thinking is based on. On the other hand, the individual

constructs them herself/himself. Apriorists are rationalists who believe that the world, itself, has a logical aspect, which is reflected by the reason. Empiricists emphasise empirical data as well as the social origins of the categories.

As argued by Durkheim, human being is – as a researcher and a research object – a dual creature: on one hand an individual being, a biological organism, whose behaviour is thereby extremely limited, and on the other hand, a social being who, “in an intellectual and moral sense, represents a reality different from other nature” (Durkheim 1980: 37). Social reality, where also a man belongs to, is a part of a natural reality that can be distinguished from other reality only according to its more complex nature.

In social sciences the research situation can be outlined as a triangle from the researcher’s point of view: 1) A reality that needs to be understood, 2) a scientific community, for which the research results are interpreted, and 3) the researcher.

About Science and Dicipinarity

According to Niiniluoto (1999, 13), the term ‘science’ can, on one hand, refer to the systematic entity of the data concerning either nature, human being or society, which is based on the scientific research results, and on the other hand, it can refer to meaningful and systematic search of this kind of data. The science can be defined also as a collection of facts, theories and methods gathered in the scientific textbooks of today. Scientists can be seen as individuals who have tried to produce new elements into this collection, sometimes failing, sometimes succeeding (also Kuhn 1960)

How new knowledge is created, depends to some extent on the discipline. The in-built curiosity of the researcher producing science has always had significant roles. Emotional desires are beyond the study choices, sometimes more present, sometimes less present. For instance gender studies are often realized by women researchers. This might

reflect the fact they are underrepresented at the academia and this way they promote understanding about female roles and minority reasons in searching change. This is at least one grounded explanation. Men researchers who do not feel the blind spots do not bother as often. Feminist study field has strong inside social science dynamics. This is sometimes seen as a weakness. Female researchers are sometimes blamed to be tentative and political, promoting self-interest and being too “aggressive”. This turns the attention from the most crucial point of this research field itself.

Fields of science have developed from and inside philosophy. As shown, the theological research on religion indicates that the man's first idea-systems of the world and himself, elementary kind of scientific categories, in fact have a religious origin (Durkheim 1980: 31). Knowledge is created in the complex processes through the environment and one's personal relationship with it. In the origins of religions it is shown by Durkheim, that alongside the pondering of the deity, there have always been a search of the elementary structure of the universe, in fact, philosophy and later multiple areas of science originated from religion, since at first it was religion that reserved the place of sciences and philosophy. At the 20th century, the disciplinary sciences, especially social sciences, developed independently from philosophy. Their ontological and epistemological characteristics are left from this connection to philosophy.

The Orientations Beyond Scientific Research

Newness of any study result also has to do with its basic orientation. There are many classifications about science. Science is classically divided into three categories: 1) Basic research, which consists of original search for new scientific knowledge without primary objectives for practical applications, 2) Applied research, which aims at a specific practical application and is often based on

the results of the basic research, and 3) Development, the objective of which is to produce new or improved products via research (e.g. Niiniluoto 1999: 13 – 16). For example, technology is based on the results of basic research of physics and chemistry, it often produces applications, together with the instances using the developed applications the research institutes organise development projects, etc.

It is often difficult to draw the lines between basic and applied research, and there are shortcomings in this categorisation. The limits can be considered to be too strict, e.g. for the simple reason that refuting the prior scientific researches is an essential part of science, and on the other hand, they can be seen as too loose, since it is possible to distinguish science from so-called *pseudo-science* (systematic, intellectual apparent science, which appears to be rational but in fact is inadequate by its foundation). Consequently, one can ask what makes knowledge after all, the objectives of financiers, or perhaps the personal motives of the researcher himself. Both of these can be included in the practical research; the client may determine the research objectives, present a research schedule, and monitor the quality of the study. On the other hand, the quality and the result of the study are the researcher's responsibility, as is the case with following the ethical guidelines.

We can find at least three different kinds of research strategies. An experimental research measures the influence of one conceptual variable on the other variable. This research approach consists of testing hypotheses and the premeditated systematic variation of variable in different conditions. Survey study gathers data from a set of people in a standardised form usually by using questionnaires or standardised interviews. The data is used for describing, comparing and explaining the phenomenon at hand. Case study, on the other hand, refers to a precise and intensive examination of an individual case. The object of case study can be either an individual, a group or a community. The interest is often

targeted towards processes, and the phenomena are described.

There are scientific philosophical questions behind the research strategies. The scientific philosophical theory includes the conceptions on what are the targets, sources, results and methods of the scientific knowledge. Ontology consists of the conceptions on the object of knowledge, and asks questions about the nature of reality. What is the nature of the studied phenomenon? What is real? Epistemology includes a general theory concerning the source of knowledge, the results and the methods. What kind of relationship is there between the researcher and the research object? What kind of status do the values have in understanding the phenomenon? The more concrete conceptions about data gathering and the target phenomenon can be placed under the term 'methodology'. In addition to these, there are also human descriptive factors, as well as conceptions about the relation between knowledge and action, in other words about the application of knowledge into which the values are connected in several different manners (Kakkuri-Knuuttila 1998: 388). The paradigms of science consist of the conceptions about the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the object of knowledge, and the orientation of the study can be evaluated according to the paradigms. Newness and originality become such in the paradigmatic context.

The Paradigms Behind the Novelty

Burrell and Morgan (1989) emphasise that researchers should be aware of their background assumptions and the limitations they bring. It is important to bring forward the background assumptions, i.e. the paradigms, of the study. Paradigms and the philosophy of science are part of every doctoral student's training.

Kuhn in 1960's placed the concept of paradigm in a central position in the history and the development of science. He proposed that the development of science had followed the following route: a pre-paradigmatic phase, normal science phase, and crisis phase (Lämsä 1998: 16 – 17). During the pre-paradigmatic phase researchers have not reached a consensus about the basic assumptions of the scientific activity. A normal science is practised inside a paradigm, and it leans on the generally accepted basic assumptions. By normal science Kuhn (1960) refers to a research, which is based strictly on one or more earlier scientific achievements, and the achievement of which the scientific community will see as a foundation for its progressing. Scientific journals and more thorough textbooks are written by interpreting the accepted theories. The assumptions are not questioned (Haaparanta & Niiniluoto 1995: 78). Crisis science is created when normal science faces difficulties due to the repetitious conflicts between basic assumptions, theory and observations. In this situation the generally accepted basic assumptions are shaken, and the researchers has to start pondering the basis of the prevailing scientific worldview. Criticism enables the birth of a new paradigm.

The modern era has emphasised the nature of the great stories. Development and progress label it and science is seen as going on step by step. Rationality and objectivity play an essential role in it. Whereas the post-modernism is able to see the critical situation of the modernism and proves that the world is a chaos or a skein, which is difficult to explain credibly and fundamentally, even though modernism tries to convince otherwise. Knowledge and the knowledge-based world or reality are perspective ones. The significance of language as a constructor of a reality is emphasised in post-modernism. The objectivity and the subjectivity are mingled together (Berger & Luckman 1966). Post-modernism argues that research proceeds according to a non-modernistic pattern, and it brings forward an explicated reality, which is told by "someone" and by somebody, always, and is political that way (Barthes 1994), something that is not innocent and naked. Deconstruction can be

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used in demonstrating how the reality is constructed through language.

Burrell and Morgan (1989) have explicitly placed forward the paradigms of social sciences. They distinguish four separate main paradigms in the field of research trends. These paradigms are functionalism, interpretative paradigm, paradigm of radical humanism, and paradigm of radical structuralism. These four can be distinguished from one another according to the fact whether the paradigm considers the research object as an objective or a subjective one, and whether it wishes to reach a radical change or the state of balance and harmony. For example, the woman research based on the radical humanistic paradigm includes an emancipatory knowledge interest, and Marxist research can be seen as a research tradition, which has its origins in the radical structural structure and which aims at revealing and changing the structures of society. In the field of women research this would mean the hidden influence of the social and organisational structures on women's status in the society, as well as bringing this kind of subordination into light by the means of research. The functionalistic research aims at rational explanation and emphasises realism and determinism as background assumptions, and positivistic-oriented research is characteristic of it. The functionalistic research strategy in the field of women research could, for example, aim at increasing the number of female directors, whereas the interpretative paradigm could e.g. aim at understanding and interpreting the hidden discriminating mechanisms in an organisation. Being very easy to teach the paradigms have earned a lot of foot-space in academic thinking, nevertheless there is a lot of critique about them being too categoric and not easy to apply as such. According to Burrell & Morgan, most of the business managerial research is functionalistic by nature. Interpretative studies are not easy to realize even if many studies argue to represent that issue. The human perspective

of research was seldom used at the 1990's, at least in management studies.

However, is related to the research paradigms and the principles of research in several different ways. Nevertheless, the questions, such as what kind of perspective of human being is the research based on and what kind of perspective does it promote, are still important especially in social sciences, which concentrates on human objects.

Explaining and Understanding in Originality Production

Explaining is the aim of positivistically orientated studies. Human arts along with the social sciences are seen as something that has been constructed step by step and that moves towards the final knowledge, struggling towards cumulating and more specified knowledge. Science is seen as a pyramid-like structure, in which new knowledge is seamlessly articulated with the old one, and in which it is extremely important to propose hypotheses from the old knowledge and to test their validity. This kind of knowledge is hypothetical-deductive by nature. It is clear with this approach that when deriving hypotheses from a prior theory the researcher has to face it as an external knowledge, the validity of which he is evaluating. The prior theory is seen as an existing entity, which needs to be known, for example, in order to avoid doing the same research all over again. According to this approach, one's own study has to be able to construct the existing pyramid upwards. Originality comes from the piece of knowledge that fits well with the whole picture.

Understanding and interpreting are essential concepts in hermeneutic research approach. In fact, these two have always had a strong status in the research process of a humanistic research. Interpretation and understanding refer to reaching the essential features of a phenomenon by trying to see the phenomenon from inside and by adopting its core issues. A researcher aims at understanding the studied phenomenon from its own perspective and seeing it as close as possible in order to find the characteristic features of the phenomenon

(Wittgenstein 1958). The objective is to find such complicated structural similarities that seem to be impossible to see from a distance. The researcher's overall conception and the rising details interact with one another all through the interpretation process. During the study the picture of the studied phenomenon becomes more and more accurate. Research is a learning process, in which the researcher uses his consciousness in order to be able to see beyond the specific details of the phenomenon and manages to reach the overall conception. Inductivism is typical of the research strategy that is based on this kind of conception of knowledge (Kakkuri-Knuuttila 1998; 393). Originality becomes tested by the researchers themselves in first hand.

Preliminary understanding is not only natural, subjective and psychological understanding of a researcher but it is also an important tool at the early stages of the hermeneutic understanding process. Subjectivity has a different kind of nature in a hermeneutic research approach as it does in the positivistic approach described above. According to Habermas (1992), discarding the subjective opinions from the scientific thinking is misleading, since at the same time the possibility for objectivity is lost, which receives its strength from subjectivity (Rauhala 1999; 86 – 91). According to a phenomenological tradition, it is believed that a man reaches objectivity in his thoughts and interpretation once the scientific reduction approaches a phenomenon as it is, '*an sich*' (Juntunen & Mehtonen 1977). Hermeneutics emphasises the study of the reality, which people themselves consider as reality, without trying to analyse the right or the wrong nature of the conceptions. The objective is to interpret and describe the reality from the research subjects' own perspectives. The nature of the theoretical frame of reference is different from the one in a positivistic approach. The purpose of the study is to join the prior knowledge concerning the studied phenomenon, however, not in a pyramid-like manner but

into the discourses inside the knowledge. The objectives of the study include conceptualisation, abstracting and the understanding of the phenomenon reached through these two, and not so much the generalisation of the research results into the quantitatively defined basic set. Newness of any study is so dependent on how it fits with the understanding of the research community. Any part of the research process might be interesting – theory and methods in addition to results.

The paradigmatic nature of science can be examined also with the axis "naive objectivism" and "radical relativism". The starting point of the naive objectivism is that there is no methodological difference between natural sciences and social sciences. This approach does not see any questions in the nature of reality and its relationship with knowledge. The reality occurs as it is, the facts are gathered, explained, and prognoses may be done (Sayer 1984; 51 – 52). However, the principles of the naive objectivism can be criticised by maintaining that all the observation is theoretically emphasised. Especially in social sciences, in which the researcher and the research object live in the same concept world, the significance of the presuppositions is great in observation. The presuppositions, prior theories, and everyday experiences form our way of seeing facts. The better we are aware of the presuppositions, the better they can be distinguished from our personal observations, which helps us to get more sensitive and 'correct' conceptions on the studied phenomenon.

On the contrary to the naive objectivism, the radical relativism sees all the research knowledge as relativistic and theory-related. Popper (Sayer 1984; 53) is one of the best-known representatives of this approach. Knowledge is always limited and bounded with a paradigm as well as with the presuppositions. Even though the social sciences deal with non-material facts, it is possible to find relations between facts, and even if knowledge is always fallible, not all the knowledge is as fallible. Relativists claim that the concept of truth can, in

fact, be replaced with the practical significance. Knowledge does not have hierarchy but it can be classified. A knowledge type can be adequate for a researcher but inadequate for the entrepreneur who is the object of the study, etc. The power-related nature of the research, as well as the seeming innocence of the viewpoints, is also interesting in the relativistic way of thinking. The way the study succeeds in showing the power structures might be the original result of the study. The researcher self is quite a lot at the background, the voice of him/her is culturally bound itself.

Naive inductivism, on the other hand, is based on the thought according to which the researcher does not need to consider before making observation what kinds of observations one should be doing. It is not necessary for the researcher to formulate a research problem or substantiate the selected observations. According to this approach, the research does not consist of any choices at all. As Kakkuri-Knuuttila (1998: 393) states this is an impossible ideal for research. The justified definition of the observations is a core of every respectable empirical research. Induction does not give reliable results, and in reality there seldom are any universal generalisations. In the more developed version of induction the observational data is selected through the limited research problem. The research problem can be substantiated with the shortcomings, gaps or conflicts of the prior knowledge. Therefore, it is worth forming the problem already in the beginning of the study, although the research problem is not finally outlined and formed until later on in the research process. In naïve inductivism the researcher self and production of newness is not asked at all.

The scientific philosophical research paradigms may appear to be rather opposite and mutually exclusive. In the research practice, however, their differences are often smaller than imagined. Naturally, they do have influence on the way the research is

conducted, as well as on the structure of the research report and the way of writing. However, knowing the paradigms and the principles of scientific philosophical discourse is important for everyone conducting a research.

The philosopher applies scientific methods based on understanding what makes the work scientific. For the social science researcher it is possible to create a personal conception on science, paradigms beyond and the possibility and ways of acquiring new knowledge once he decides to start his own research project. In the worst case the special scientist may find the philosophy of science as an oasis, since it is always possible to question the choices made during the study from the standpoint of strict scientific philosophical thinking. At its best the philosophy of science and the personal conception on the nature of the research and the research process will help the researcher in creating a solid foundation, on which he can build his own research process for acquiring new knowledge. The starting point of the study consists of a conceptualising, analysing, evaluating, synthesising, and communicating researcher self behind any scientific text. The researcher self is sometimes fully present in the methodology used. Like in the study by Katila and Meriläinen (2002) they studied the researchers selves at the academia, and the empowering possibilities of them at the scientific community where they both acted as female researchers. An action study makes the researcher selves sometimes very visible.

Research Process in Promotion of Originality

Choosing the research topic is an important part of the research process. It determines the frames for the study that might last even for several years. The topic needs to be interesting on the personal level, it has to be researchable, and it has to go together with the researcher's personal competence or it has to serve his personal willingness to develop. For example, one of the ideas of a final thesis done in

university is that a student applies the knowledge he has obtained so far in a comprehensive manner. The research topic needs to be also defined so accurately that prevents the study from becoming a lifelong project. The research constructs an interesting theme into a firm research topic, which can be approached methodologically, and which is liable to sensitive examination and conclusions.

Proving the findings of one's own study in the finishing state of the research report is often more difficult than one would think. It shows, however, the originality at best. The critical examination of the results, evaluation of the limitations of one's own work, as well as the pointing out the possibilities for further studies is important. It is crucial that the researcher is behind her/his own study, the substantiations and the solutions. The external evaluation is also a part of the scientific research process. The feedback received from the researcher community is an essential part of the legitimate research process.

Doing research can be examined also through the levels of thinking, expression and occurrence (Näsi 1980; 5). On the level of thinking there is analysing, summarising, pondering, consideration, realisations, etc. The tools for thinking include meanings, conceptions on symbols and terms. On the level of expression the research can be done orally, in written or by using gestures, and its tools include words, pictures, numbers, etc. On the level of occurrence the reality is studied in the light of paradigms, and its tools consist of commutation, data gathering, communication, participatory observation, and other forms of data gathering.

The Meaning of Theory in the Research Process

Novelty and insightfulness label any true scientific contribution. New knowledge is new with respect to the old knowledge. It is important to prove this connection, even if the connections are manifold by nature. Theory

relies on the set of assumptions, which forms a foundation for the statements that are logically connected to each other. These assumptions are paradigmatic by nature. A theory itself is an explanation, or an attempt to explain the experienced piece of world. A theory explains the studied phenomenon. For example, in the organisation theoretical research the studied phenomenon is an organisation. The organisation, on the other hand, can be defined in several different manners, such as a social structure or technology (Hatch 1997; 9 – 10). A theory is comprised of a set of concepts and relations, which bind them together when explaining the object phenomenon. A theory can also be understood as a set of laws that systemise the regularities concerning a phenomenon area (Niiniluoto 1980; 193). The concepts are used in categorising, organising and storing experiences, which are formed by abstracting the observations.

Pieces of knowledge get their meaning only as they are seen in the context of similar ideas, concepts and categories of knowledge. The development of theory is often considered to be the most important objective of the scientific research. In the beginning of the study a frame of reference is formulated, in which the researcher's own research problem is anchored to the prior research. Originally 'theory' meant watching or examining. According to Hempel (1966: 70), theories are taken in use once the earlier research has revealed a set of regularities in a phenomenon entity. Theories aim at explaining these regularities, and usually giving more accurate understanding about the phenomenon at hand. A theory offers an opportunity to communicate, organises ideas, brings forward new ideas, creates explanations and prognoses, and may point out the connection between the seemingly separate problems. In research reports the theoretical background makes it possible to understand what kind of theoretical background does the study possess, as well as its relations with sets of concepts.

Conclusions take the researcher back to his theoretical frame of reference and makes him ask what has he learned, and how is this related

to the prior knowledge concerning the same issue. At its best the research turns out to be an entity, which theoretical frame of reference, empirical examination and the conclusions all are articulated with one another, and do not remain as separate particles.

Novelty of the Research Methods

Adopting the tool kind of understanding of research methods would lead seeing their use as ending to right or wrong solutions. Their use is a more complicated question, if we study them as integral part of the research process itself. Different stages of a research can be seen chronologically. In a research report they appear often as clearly identified stages, although the research process is more an iterative and back-and-forth kind of a process. Often the research problems do not receive their final form until at the very end of the analysis when the main idea is more clearly articulated with the research report. The objectives of the research have an essential role in the problem formation. "The crucial test of the researcher's expertise is in his ability to change the more or less general research theme into detailed sub-problems of the study" (Niiniluoto 1999; 27).

Research methods belong to the study entity, and are not separate from it. Without understanding the principles of the philosophy of science they may be seen as a book of recipes or a toolbox, which they are not. Methods articulate with the entity of the research, they should be examined in the methodological perspective of the study and inside the framework of the special nature of the research object. Ultimately, the objectives of the study and the research problems determine what kinds of methods need to be used in the study and how they should be used.

No method can be used without the researcher's personal interpretation; this concerns both the qualitative and the quantitative research. Methods are not ready-

made and tested tool clusters that work similarly in every study. A factor analysis gathers together information about the studied data into factors, but it is the researcher's task to name them and to understand the summarised research data. Especially in qualitative research the researcher has to gather together and use several different ways of observation, interviews, participatory observation, and historical source material depending on his or her own research object. The objective of understanding the studied phenomenon directs the use of methods. There is no one best method or approach for the study. In addition, the methods and approaches are archaeological – they concern the past and its interpretation. The data is gathered, it is analysed and interpreted afterwards.

Varto (1995) argues that own new method is always created for every new study. A method is successful when it takes over the area it studies. In research this taking over is done every time separately. A method is on an abstract viewpoint, which is merely transferred into a concrete context (Varto 1995: 95 refers to Ladriere 1959: 600). A method is an essential part of the process of creating new knowledge, and every research renews and individualises the method itself. Methodical creativity and uniqueness belong to the special nature of science, which distinguishes it from plain reporting, data gathering and mechanical reporting.

Bogdan and Taylor (1975: 1) point out that the most discussions on methods concern their assumptions and objectives, theory and perspective, instead of the technical details. For example, in the qualitative research, which is commonly used in social sciences, methods form 'an umbrella', under which several different interpretative techniques can be placed. These techniques aim to describe, translate or discharge the meanings, not frequencies, from a social phenomenon, which is an object for the study (Van Maanen 1979; 520). Computer programmes help the researcher both in a qualitative and in a quantitative research, often by outlining and simplifying the research data.

However, it is the researcher who draws the conclusions, does abstracting and puts the pieces of information into a new knowledge. The novelty of research comes from using creative ways the methods, methodological knowledge and prior theory.

The possibility for getting feedback from the research community, especially the tutor of the work, supports in the legitimate process. Colleagues, seminar presentations and opponents, as well as the possible feedback from the research objects are also important. A good research practice consists of separate feedback mechanisms, such as pre-examiners and opponent(s) of the doctoral thesis. A creative research process includes also the researcher's own active role in getting feedback for his work. Receiving feedback, and learning from it belong to the researcher's competence.

Writing the research report

A common question in writing a research report is e.g. how to refer to the reference material. Technical guidelines can be found in good textbooks. Several schools and their publication series have their own guidelines about the reference technique. The main principle is that in the text it has to indicated, which is the researcher's own thinking and which is received from someone else. The references should be specified and not, for example, merely a list of books at the end of the chapter. When referring to the other writer's text, the original author or authors are always the primary object of reference, the possible editors of the book being only the secondary one.

Questions concerning the research methods come up already at the stage of choosing the research topic. The ultimate question for the most researchers is "qualitative or quantitative research approach". However, the research problems determine the method, and therefore the methods can be chosen in the beginning only in the case, in

which the researcher is especially interested in some particular method. Very often quantitative data, such as data about the development of the number of personnel in the studied company, is used as a support for the study relying on a qualitative methodology. Correspondingly, a work based on a quantitative methodology can enrich its conclusions by interpreting few interviews done in addition to questionnaire study, or the open questions in the questionnaire. Neither the research methods nor research paradigms are completely exclusive. Methods cannot replace the researcher's interpretation, whether we are dealing with a qualitative or a quantitative research methodology.

The quantity of data gathered about the research object is an important practical question. Two of the most frequently asked questions are: 'How many questionnaires has to be mailed, or how many interviewees are needed for a rich data and its interpretation'. Even though the method guidebooks offer answers to the both questions, although they are related to the objectives and the problems of the study, the actual answers depend on the case at hand. In principle, the research data is gathered when the increase in the number of informants does no longer give any new information for the researcher. In a case study methodology the number of cases has been clearly limited, and the research process moves on one case at a time, while every individual case brings new knowledge about the studied subject (Glaser, Strauss 1967). Once the research problem begins to be outlined and the research topic begins to focus, the methods and the needs they bring along into the research process usually become clearer.

The adequate use of multiple sources of literature, reference work, belongs to good research practice. There are many choices between using unethically colloquial work, like using citations without correct reference. Reference work is based on sensitive understanding about what is the place of the written text in the theory context. In reference work the researcher finds the place for her findings in the outer theory universe and, in fact,

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shows the novelty of the study text in comparison with other knowledge. A frequently asked question asked by the pioneer researcher (like in master thesis) is whether it is possible to write one's own thoughts in the research report. The only answer that can be given is that as a matter of fact, the research report should be based on the writer's own thoughts, and not merely on repetition and mechanical reporting of the prior knowledge. The source data consists usually of primary and secondary sources, some of which are seen as 'corner stones' of the study from the viewpoint of the development of thought, and some of which are secondary by nature, i.e. important but which do not play the leading role (on references see Eco 1989, 1985). The researcher's role is to compile the work, and even though he uses other people's studies as the source of data, the starting point for the study is to synthesise and use his own words in writing about the phenomenon and the research results, and ending to final research texts.

Writing the research reports is political by nature. While citation index makes researchers powerful, in gaining decisions whom to refer the colleagues make political choices that are bound to some political contexts they live and career. Building a theoretical frame is not a pure and objectivistic thing but many ways a path of choices that build the research field. Behind is a lot of social capital of the academia and at the same time the text shows and even builds it.

Concluding Remarks

In the times when new paradigms of science are emerging and the sciences have become more and more fragmentary also the idea about what is new in science is changing. In the, positivistic and monolithic era of social science, let us say before Kuhn and year 1966, methodologies and methods interpreting newness were simpler. In this

paper it is argued the newness is more and more in the text itself, and that the dynamics of texts comes from interrelations between the subject of the text (the researcher self) and the object of it (the research audience). Scientific knowledge becomes new when it is substantiated and connected to the prior one. It brings insight and novelty by contributing to its own field of knowledge. New can mean pointing out new kinds of relations between matters and states, it can mean conceptualising a phenomenon in a new manner, or it can mean bringing a totally new phenomenon into the light. New can refer also to the refutation of a prior knowledge. It is less and less evident that the data itself contributes to the newness. Finally, it is the readers of the report and the experts who ultimately determine the nature and the position of the new knowledge inside the field.

Writing the research reports is political by nature but so is also its reading. While citation index makes researchers powerful, in gaining decisions whom to refer the colleagues make political choices that are bound to some political contexts they live and career. Building a theoretical frame is not a pure and objectivistic thing but many ways a path of choices that build the research field. Behind is a lot of social capital of the academia and at the same time the text shows and even builds it. Again, it is less and less the empiricity itself that contributes to newness, but the ways to conceptualize and contextualize empirically based knowledge.

The personal impact of the researcher on the produced text has at the same time diminished and grown. Because of the collectivism in writing the style and personality of one researcher does not show out as much as in a case of single writing. Research groups combine texts, and computer working cuts, adds and rewrites texts in a way that loses single writers.

Like in the times before Kuhn, personal impact and desire can even be seen not only natural background of writing but as a harmful and subjectivity raising issue. For instance the

relation between women researchers doing feministic research and their research area that is around gender and feministic issues is often explained to be originated from seeking of benefit and career. No better makes the thing that mostly the authors are women (see Lämsä et al.), and those men who enter the field might get the extra gloria of unselfishness as researchers (they study women even if they would not need that because of their career being not in the "minority", or, even that they wish to help the less powerful women), whereas "being the woman" and making women research does not give the expert gloria anyway.

In the times when subjectivity is grown into science and pure empiricity does not work in the same way it used to be, becoming a researcher with the right to access science text publishing is not only professional but more and more narrative by nature. The credibility and trust is of a lot of worth at the society of today, not least in academia. Personality, biography and social context of a researcher are perhaps becoming more important than it used to be and that makes the issue that the impact of the researcher on has grown. Gatekeepers of science and administrative processes that they guide form criteria according to which researchers are selected and promoted further. That way individual background issues like gender and ethnicity may either grow or diminish the credibility of the individual researcher and have a lot of impact on the fact on who passes the gate of becoming a knowledge holder in the future.

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Ethical Reflexivity and Epistemological Weakness

Charalambos Tsekeris and Nicos Katrivesis

ABSTRACT

It is customary to promiscuously interconnect the well-established methodological conception of sociological reflexivity to multi-level metatheoretical analyses, representational tactics and strategies, self-conscious knowledge-production processes and, in general, epistemological questions and answers. However, Western reflexive thinking about culture, rationality, and scientific knowledge often tends to (somehow) reproduce the self-assured “one epistemological size fits all” standpoint of Eurocentrism, to arrogantly exclude alternative post-colonial theorizations and to implicitly ignore the irreducibility of the “ethical dimension”. The “reinvention” of this crucial dimension, within contemporary sociology and critical organizational research, entails the substantial incorporation of the “weak” performative circular reasoning as well as a new reflexive ethos and aesthetic of scientific modesty. The issue here is indeed the fruitful pluralist maximization of both ethical and cognitive possibilities. In this respect, the innovative “it could be otherwise” clause of radical intellectual inquiry remains central to our inter-disciplinary world- and self-accounts.

Key words: Reflexivity, Science, Epistemology, Ethics, Social Theory

Reflexivity and Ethics

Methodological reflexivity as a systematic means to better understand the complex “knowledge-making enterprise, including a consideration of the subjective, institutional, social, and political processes whereby research is conducted and knowledge is produced” (Alvesson, 2007), has been rendered one of the most attractive sociological buzzwords of our time. In particular, the reflexive awareness of the *mutual dependency* of sociological categories (e.g. risk, citizenship, space, time, modernity, morality) and social practice has been increasingly brought right at the forefront of various hot epistemological debates.

In the contemporary academic context, it is almost customary to describe sociological theories as both constitutive *of* and constitutive *for* practice, but also to tactically use “reflexivity” in order to criticize or polemize

others: “As the charge was once made of being a positivist, to be called an unreflexive practitioner seems to signify someone who is inadequate, incomplete and worst of all, outdated” (May, 1999: par. 1.1). In consequence, reflexivity is paradoxically transformed into an unethical egoistic project of simply becoming the “certified deconstructors” (Jackson, 1992) of other people’s discourse and a “dead end rather than a route to more thoughtful and interesting social studies” (Alvesson, 2007). This leads us to further elaborate on the agonistic notion of “reflexive sociology” or, more precisely, on the antagonistic relationship between reflexive sociology and the sociology of reflexivity (Kenway and McLeod, 2004), between truly “reflexive accounts” and mere “accounts of reflexivity” (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003). In fact, reflexivity is a contingent chance rather than a “sacred cow”, a fixed or “black-boxed” model providing strong and irrefutable

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methodological guarantees (see Garratt, 2003).

Then, following a consistent “humble” line of *conceptual pragmatism* (Charles S. Pierce), a new set of self-critical (meta-reflexive) questions may possibly emerge. For instance, what does the acute reflexive critique of the (male, dispassionate) knowing subject exactly involve? What does it really mean for our daily scientific practice? And, what are its ultimate ethical implications for the overall discourse of sociology? In the same spirit, Wanda Pillow, fruitfully prioritizes reflexivity as a topic of sociological study in its own right, which is regularly used by most researchers “without defining how they are using it, as if it is something we all commonly understand and accept as standard methodological practice for critical qualitative research” (Pillow, 2003: 176).

Focusing on this sharp meta-theoretical strand of inquiry, it is practically demonstrable that the ethical dimension of reflexivity is rarely stressed (or even recognized and acknowledged) in an explicit manner: “Although reflexivity is a familiar concept in the qualitative tradition ... it has not previously been seen as an *ethical* notion ... Reflexivity is not usually seen as connected with ethics at all” (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004: 262, 274-275). In other words, the *irreducibility of ethics* renders epistemological reflexivity as largely inadequate or incomplete.

Hence, reflexivity should be no more regarded as a mere “conceptual” tool or weapon for a pragmatic, self-referential understanding of social theory and research – that is, social theory and research as a cluster of categories that are productive in an analysis of a given object under investigation, rather than as an overarching explanatory model of the social world. Following Marcel Mauss, it should be also regarded as an ambivalent and potentially helpful guide for *a new ethic of academic life*, as well as a highly contested “process and a way of thinking that will actually lead to ethical research practice” (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004: 273). Epistemological and

ethical aspects of reflexivity are of equal importance. These aspects should energetically and demiurgically *complement and reinforce each other*, mutually contributing to “good science” and “good life” (*eu zein*).

In this respect, reflexivity as an “ethico-epistemological” project, or as individual *and* collective ethical reflection *and* action, is not easily compatible with a “strong” conception of social/organizational science, as expressed by the rationalist idea that “knowledge, in order to be interesting or creatively new, must be relatively context-free, must be able to rise above and transgress its primary situatedness” (Pels, 2000a: 163). However, the “traditional” or “received” conceptions of a “strong” social theory and an ascetic, interest-free pursuit of truth and epistemological perfectionism have not ceased to attract all the conflicting “paradigms” (Thomas Kuhn) within the highly ant-agonistic sociological “field” (*champ*).

The persistent formulation of (Western) “strong hand” metaphors and the obsessive drive for clear-cut, compulsory and inescapable definitions continue to copiously proliferate in (post)modern scientific vocabularies. In Dick Pels’s words, “evidence still needs to be hard, theory ‘grounded’, facts solid, results robust, methods rigorous, proofs decisive, arguments compelling, conclusions inescapably powerful, propositions firmly anchored in nature or reality” (Pels, 2003: 218).

So, although the well-established theoretical and methodological concept of “reflexivity”, largely associated with the “natural proximity of facts and values” (Pels, 2002), is now central in the contemporary analyses of knowledge, science and society, the performative, hermeneutic “circle of representation” (Pierre Bourdieu) always tends to somehow disappear in either a transcendental objectivity (*materialism*) or a transcendental subjectivity (*idealism*) (Pels, 2000b). Through a careful, critical review of theoretical exhibitionist shows of intellectual power, from Conversation Analysis and ethnomethodology to feminism and the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge (SSK), as

Dick Pels intriguingly concludes, it is almost clear to see that the various forms of reflexivity are paradoxically attracted to the old Cartesian ideals of mentalism, authoritarian individualism, elitism and context-transcendent knowledge: "What these bitter adversaries continue to share is a fascination for the pursuit of hardness and strength" (Pels, 2003: 219). The implicit pursuit of these purist eurocentric ideals regularly tends to:

- (1) the systematic reinforcement of the hegemonic "grand conception of sociology's role" (Hammersley, 1999) and
- (2) the methodical concealment of the essential "epistemological circularity" of sociological accounts (see Potter, 1996). *Hardly anyone in everyday performative practice actually sees knowledge as inherently circular!* (see Pels, 2002b; Woolgar, 1988).

This seriously alienates or distantiates us from the epistemologically healthy ethics/aesthetics of "imperfection" and "scientific modesty" (Umberto Eco). For "weak social theory" to say that an argument carries ultimate force, or that it stands up in a definitely unproblematic way, is to "find it distasteful or even slightly obscene. To say: 'that is a very vulnerable argument', is to pay a compliment to it" (Pels, 2003: 220). In this peculiar sense, we must be proud of our (constitutive) weakness and reflexively embrace our own anti-universalistic politics of knowledge, or "politics of the mind" (Alvin Gouldner), primarily pointing our epistemic guns at *ourselves*, rather than at everyone else in order to forcibly achieve maximum diffusion and global consensus¹. Thus, our knowledge's own (unavoidable) circularity is openly acknowledged and celebrated, toward a critical direction.

¹ So, our present contribution is just a "humble" starting point for an ethical reflexive project and an invitation to significant others to join and enrich that project, to share the burden of its further elaboration and expansion.

Reflexivity and Relationality

Yet, this kind of "politics" is not disastrous or self-refuting, since it non-opportunistically offers itself as a (weak) criterion of truth by displaying the dialectical "projective relationship between the spokesperson and that which is spoken for" (Pels, 2000b: 17), waiving all claims for "independent" realities, "transcendental" truths and "obligatory" epistemological foundations (Pels, 1995: 1036). As the radical skeptical ethics of circular reflexive reasoning is being brought right at the heart of current critical sociological debates, we do maximize our chances to "relationally" see ourselves "through the eyes of the other" (Heinz von Foerster) and discover a wholly new intellectual life conduct (or *Umgangswissen*): "Less egotism, both individual and collective, and more awareness of how we all constitute each other: this could be a path toward lowering intellectual acrimony in the future" (Collins, 2002: 70). In such terms, "caring for the other" (Maturana) signifies an essential prerequisite for both social and scientific living (Tsivacou, 2005: 520-522).

Furthermore, encouraging the enabling practice of a relational, radically reflexive (*anastochastic*) and self-consciously performative² "knowledge politics" (in a Foucauldian sense), we openly promote an Aristotelian negation (*apophasis*) of the will to intellectual power and, eventually, the development of more "apophatic", and less "promethean", modes of sociological thinking and inter-acting. This implies a kind of *apophatic methodological voluntarism*, where different levels of radical uncertainty are

² By this, we arguably imply a "performativist" or "enactivist" conception of social order, according to which social structures, relations, patterns, connections and identities are imaginary quantities that exist only partially, because they are continuously "at stake" in attempts to render them a little bigger or a little smaller. We are all in the permanent business of re-negotiating, re-constructing and acting performatively upon them. Therefore, we all contribute to the "reality status" of what is described and explained (see Pels, 2002).

incorporated in the self-confrontation of science, as well as in the co-emerging relationship between science and society (including politics and religion). Following Nicos Mouzelis (1999), the “spiritualization” of socio-logical reflexivity does not entail exegetic anaemia, nihilism or political paralysis, and does not necessarily abstract from the venerable Enlightenment adage of knowing thyself/knowing better, posing itself as a potentially effective antidote against both scientific and everyday essentialism.

A less rational-cognitive, and “more contemplative, more easy-going” (Mouzelis, 1999: 85), alternative form of reflexivity inevitably turns our analytic attention not only to post-Western ways of conceiving ourselves, sociology and society (at both micro and macro levels), but also to a post-Western, yet critical, approach to culture and cultural studies, opening the “space of possibility” (Martin Heidegger) for a more enriched, multilogical and participative “cosmopolitan public sphere” (Koegler, 2005). In contrast to the strong ethnomethodological opposition to a version of reflexivity that “implies no antonym, confers no definite methodological advantage, and elevates no particular theory of knowledge, cultural location, or political standpoint above any other” (Lynch, 2000: 47), the qualitative betterment of social and organizational science might indeed “help promote a more democratic society in the future” (Brown, 2001: 171). Thus, there is the vital normative need for a post-colonial, knowledge-political discourse of a *europic* (wide-eyed) reflexivity, advancing “*intellectual humility and tolerance*” (Rosenau, 1992: 22) as parts of a new ethical project, facilitating scientific communication and focusing on wider contexts and interests, in direct contrast to the myopic (short-sighted), narrow and immunizing (eurocentric) reflexivities which still dominate the various sociological fields³.

³ Europic reflexivity therefore calls for an escape from narrow analytic frameworks and the short-sighted academization of knowledge. In particular, a critical broadening of contemporary science and technology studies might be alternatively set forth

Strong theory is obviously reluctant to see ethics as an *irreducible* aspect of reflexivity. But, as stressed above, the self-conscious researcher should be alert not only to “issues related to knowledge creation but also ethical issues in research. This alertness might include conscious consideration of a range of formal ethical positions and adoption of a particular ethical stance” (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004: 275). In this context, we actively promote a genuine, anti-hegemonic stance of epistemological weakness connecting reflexivity, as a rather community level concern, with the “microethics” (Komesaroff) of social (and organizational) research and theory.

Hence, we arguably accomplish a provocative dialogical expansion of the very project of reflexive sociology, which is indeed integral to good (serious, accountable) cultural production. In this line, as Shiv Visvanathan comprehensively points out, a new, post-Western, “pluralist world of cognitive possibilities” is increasingly open to us (Visvanathan, 2006). Such a “relational” world presupposes a strong sense of ethical reflexivity, which insistently pushes “towards the uncomfortable” (Pillow, 2003: 192) and, of course, does not entail a “stronger objectivity” (Bourdieu, Harding, Longino), but rather a modest notion of “reflexive objectivity” (Alvin Gouldner), associated with the “importance of

beyond the limiting question of “public participation and engagement”. What is really needed here is to always keep a sharp reflexive eye to the wide financial and political context of science and technology, so that we can possibly apply new emancipative policies and move out from today’s dominant debilitating discourses, in a largely uncaring world risk society. For example, the risks and potentialities of the rapid developments on artificial life, genetics, nanotechnology and biotechnology cannot be fully grasped without thinking more globally, in the crucial direction of new areas of study and forms of radical egalitarian action. Hence, more sociological emphasis should be carefully put on the *global implications* of science and technology, as well as on the new emerging alliances between technoscience, the public and the state, towards an alternative *Wissenpolitik* (Nico Stehr).

personal presence and sentimental commitment in all sociological accounts of the world” (Pels, 2000a: 220), against eurocentric Methodological Dualism.

Epilogue: Against epistemological arrogance and unlimited knowledge

No doubt, reflexivity as the committed self-inclusion of the observer in the object observed has been a persistent source of epistemological inspiration and sociological imagination (at least) during the last 40 years. But epistemological reflexivity is not enough; epistemological reflexivity, ethical reflexivity and post-colonial reflexivity/post-Western are simultaneously introduced here. We therefore tend to arguably favour an alternative, non-ascetic (weak) approach which self-confidently stands against all purist, macho aspirations to (Platonic) perfectionism, recognizes ensuing hybridities, celebrates “limited knowledge” (Cilliers, 2005)⁴ and ultimately champions a creative, on-going interplay between the ontological, the epistemological and the ethical, according to Karl Mannheim’s famous “magic triangle” (Pels, 2003).

The anti-objectivist/anti-realist epistemological principle of “performative” or “circular” reality-making inevitably includes a radical ethic/aesthetic of “fair play”, according to which the sociological spokesperson continuously displays herself/himself as a *morally responsible performer* of her/his contingent, non-compulsory realities (see Pels, 2000b; Maturana and Varela, 1984). But this is not the end point which has to be discursively negotiated. Rather, ethico-epistemological reflexivity is a real point of departure, struggle and critique, in order to dialogically contest the constitution of any form of essentialism and

reification on the very ground of everyday life. Of course, this carefully comprises an incisive post-colonialist reconstruction of sociological worldviews, lifestyles and lifeworlds, towards an egalitarian, sincerely humanitarian, radically democratic and culturally pluralist science (Visvanathan, 1997).

Besides, science, as a historically relevant, relational human activity, can only exist in our social togetherness (Kenneth Gergen). From this viewpoint, it is actually freed from its overwhelming governmental power speech that severely impedes the fragile, contested process of generating mutual understanding and forecloses further critical investigation. In the last instance, as Steve Woolgar comprehensively concludes, a healthy dose of ethical reflexivity is indeed the best way to avoid the (Western) arrogance of certainty and self-sufficient/self-immunizing knowledge or, in general, the eurocentric “dangers of complacency” (Rachel, 1996).

We thus move beyond the Enlightenment need for grand intellectual heroes, or compassionate social engineers (designing unflawed systems), and the utopian/narcissistic modernist dreams (delusions) of unlimited wisdom⁵ and epistemological perfection, without devaluing science or eschewing issues of value, justice, politics and accountability. By “turning the other cheek” (Dick Pels), we just allow for an ethical weakening of our theorizing, which is firmly anchored in the very “flesh of the world” (Maurice Merleau-Ponty). The social researcher, always keeping in mind “both how little the single scientist knows in relation to the total community of inquirers, and a respect for the complexity of reality” (Kalleberg, 2007: 141), does not need to be (or feel) strong any more!

⁴ For Paul Cilliers, however, self-reflexive modest claims “are not relativistic and, therefore, weak ... We can make strong claims, but since these claims are limited, we have to be modest about them” (Cilliers, 2005: 260, 263).

⁵ Of course, the antithetical (weak) Aristotelian conception of “phronesis” (practical, limited wisdom), as a sign of epistemic humility and honesty, is quite relevant here (see Flyvbjerg, 2001).

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SINGULARITY OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: FROM COLLECTING INFORMATION TO PRODUCING RESULTS

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SUMMARY

It is generally accepted that the choice between a qualitative and a quantitative approach appears to be dictated by the criteria of effectiveness regarding the orientation of the research (to create or to test). The main objective of qualitative research is to create a methodology for approaching, understanding, analysing and explaining management phenomena at a social or company level. The objective of this contribution is to present a reflection aiming at understanding qualitative research according to the dual perspectives of final aims and means used.

Key words: qualitative research, validity, reliability, triangulation, case study

It is generally accepted that the choice between a qualitative and a quantitative approach appears to be dictated by the criteria of effectiveness regarding the orientation of the research (to create or to test). The main objective of qualitative research is to create a methodology for approaching, understanding, analysing and explaining management phenomena at a social or company level. The objective of this contribution is to present a reflection aiming at understanding qualitative research according to the dual perspectives of final aims and means used.

For Usunier et al (1993), valid research is that of a thesis, undertaken successfully, accompanied by the publication of articles in reviews with reading panels and the publication of research reports. For Thiétart (1999), good research emerges from the quality of the dialectical changes and the relevance and coherence between the object, the method and the analysis. For David (2000) research can be qualified as 'valid' when the researcher is not only reconstructing in a neutral way the elements of simple knowledge formulated from the elements of observation, but also assuming the responsibility for his interpretations of the

functioning and the possible evolutions of the organised system that he is studying. Finally, for Martinet (1990) the question "Should research explain the world or change it?", is at the heart of the problem when defining valid research.

Taking these different questions and different ways of looking at management science as a basis, our objective will be to show how a qualitative approach can be classified in the category of a scientific process. Or, more precisely, by citing the epistemological and methodological debates which stimulate research and enable a 'positioning', our intention will be to formulate criteria which will make it possible to justify the valid and reliable character of research using qualitative approach.

In order to achieve this, we propose to explain the conceptual context of our reflections. We consider, in a similar way to Ladrière (1992), that epistemology characterises at least one means of critical knowledge, regulating our own approaches, explaining our validation criteria and creating methods which enable the field of knowledge to be enlarged. Evoking the concept of a methodology in research, we will consider that it refers to producing knowledge and includes not only the means of collecting data

but also its processing. Finally, as far as your research approach is concerned, we think that it should not only lead to a better understanding of management situations and types of management, but should also help the actors in firms to understand how they can progress carrying out their activities by defining methods and useful tools. Therefore in our opinion, management science research has simultaneously two types of knowledge objectives: the understanding of current practices of the social actors within companies and the creation of concepts, methods and tools which enable this practical state to evolve. In this way we agree with the socio-economic conception of research (Savall 1984).

Thus a triple dimension [analysing,-explaining-prescribing] is at the centre of our research problematic.

I –Relevance of qualitative research: what criteria?

All management science research can be defined by three factors with which most researchers are in agreement. (Wacheux, 1996) : the process can only succeed if it is concerned by limited objective, defined by state of knowledge and social need; the research is constructed around the definition of a precise question, representing a desire for proof which contributes, by answers and/or questions, to all the types of problematic in the field of envisaged research; the research necessitates the presence of a relevant methodology which makes it possible to gain access to, to register and to analyse situations through representations and observations.

This methodology enabling access to data, recordings and analyses is, in the cases that we will explain more beforehand, based on a solely qualitative approach. To present the criteria which are relevant to qualitative research, we propose to evoke their principal limits, as they are traditionally presented. The first is the lack of objectivity in the results obtained since, as Thiétart (1999), points out, one of the characteristics of qualitative

approaches is to take the researcher's subjectivity into account as well as that of the subjects studied. A second limit is connected with the validity of the results. Although qualitative approaches make it possible to obtain an internal validation of the results, researchers often limit themselves to the study of a particular case, which therefore brings their external validity into question. Thus the qualitative researcher is generally faced with the following critiques: objectivity, methods of analysis, interaction in the field and lack of representativeness with regard to generalization.

We will try, in our article, to shed light on these limitations, by pointing out that in our opinion, research must study, understand and even transform the behaviour of the actors within organisations.

11 – Characteristics of qualitative research

Three premises form the basis of the use of qualitative methods (Wacheux, 1996): the first is that, to understand a phenomenon, all the characteristics, the significances and the values of the entire social fact need to be taken into consideration.; the second is that when realizing a project, the researcher is faced with a double duality (between the object and the actors); finally the aim continues to be that of producing an emergent theory.

One of the objectives of research using a qualitative approach is the 'in depth' study of social phenomena (Wacheux, 1996).One of the main characteristics of qualitative approaches is their ability to describe, to understand, and to explain the complexity of the organisations and the actors who work in them, (Marshall and Rossman, 1989).

Qualitative researches are often qualified as comprehensive, that is to say, they try to understand the sense(s) of management situations and phenomena, rather than validating a few hypotheses with a small number of variables. In comparison with purely quantitative methods, qualitative methods therefore centre their attention on more deeply

exploring the type and the origin of opinions or positions. They also make it possible to understand the reasons why companies choose certain criteria to evaluate their performance rather than others, as well as the consequences of these choices (Usunier, 1993). Qualitative approaches therefore produce abstractions to provide explanations, unlike quantitative approaches which examine generalization for validity. Constructed around interactions, through exploration or actions, they make it possible to contextualise by taking the management situation as unity for analysis (Wacheux, 2005).

The qualitative approach leaves the researcher with a large degree of liberty when realizing his project. The theoretical framework is not finalised before the field study as research questions may arise through the interaction between theorisation and empirical realism (Wacheux, 1996). According to Stake (1995), the research question can even be modified during the research according to the results obtained in the field. Finally Thiétart (1999) also considers that qualitative approaches make it possible to obtain a greater fluidity and flexibility when collecting data.

12 – The condition of validity and reliability in qualitative research

Our conception of research is one of co-production of knowledge in the field, according to explicit hypotheses which have a specialized status. In our view, research involves the researcher. (It is concerned with constructing a procedure, which cannot avoid critical questioning, and a reflecting attitude on the part of the researcher). We will look at management situations such as those defined by Girin (1989, 1990, “ situations where the participants are reunited and have to accomplish, in a specific time period, a collective action leading to a result subjected to an external judgement”.

Managing the interaction between the researcher and the field includes two

aspects, the first one concerns access to the field, the second the management of these trips back and forth for extracting material. Girin (1989) talks about methodical opportunism to qualify the construction of a research device, which, for us, corresponds to an architecture of alternative internal-external means of access to the field, that is to say, to negotiation devices for these means, and immersion and distance management on the part of the researcher with regard to the field.

121 – Validity and reliability of qualitative research

In management science, as in all the other disciplines, the question must be asked with regard to the type of approach chosen by the researcher and the kind of knowledge produced. This question is concerned with the validity and the scientific quality of the research.

The global validity of the research seems to necessitate the implementation of different types of validity; the validity of the methodology, the validity of the measuring instrument, the internal validity of the results and the external validity (Drucker-Godard et al., 1999). According to the authors, to test the validity of the construction in qualitative research consists of ensuring that the variables used to make the concepts studied operational are the good ones and to evaluate to what extent the research methodology makes it possible to answer the questions that were initially asked and which constitute the aim of the research. The internal validity of the research consists of ensuring the relevance and the internal coherence of the results obtained in the study. However, the external validity in a research concerns the possibility of applying the results obtained in the sample to other elements (generalization) in different time and place situations.

In qualitative research, reliability can, amongst other things, be estimated through the coding of the original data. The evaluation of the reliability of the research (reliability of research results) thus consists in ensuring and verifying that the different coding operations will be able to be repeated with the same results obtained by different researchers. This reliability seems to us to be guaranteed by the structured method of

the codification and the classification of the data, at the same time experimental and bibliographic, as in the three case studies that we will present in the second part. This technique, using construction and a tree structure of themes, sub-themes and key ideas has in fact enabled us, not only to simply retain the real essence of each piece of data by taking it out of its context, but also to situate it in this tree structure in a very precise manner.

The setting up of a methodological device for accessing the field and capitalizing on the data is the first aspect but does not however guarantee the 'objectivity' of the field data. When the researcher goes out into the field, this constitutes a second way of reducing potential biases. To explain this phenomenon of making the material 'objective', Savall and Zardet (1996) developed the principle of 'cognitive interactivity' which they define as an 'interactive process (between the researcher and the actors within the company) for producing knowledge through successive iterations, carried through with the permanent desire to increase the significance value of the information dealt with in the scientific work. The knowledge is not totally created by one or the other of the actors; it is obtained in the immaterial interval which connects the two actors. Thus, in the same way that Corcuff (1995, shows that the interest for the sociologists is one of " the implementation of a sociological reflexiveness on the part of the researcher, as he must integrate into his construction of the object," a 'field' researcher must at the same time integrate reflexiveness in the construction of his object, but also in his research. This reflexiveness therefore goes beyond mere dialogue situation and lies at the very heart of the research process.

122 – Criteria for valid qualitative research.

According to Thiétart (1999), the type of knowledge that the researcher wishes to obtain depends on the kind of reality that he wishes to study, the type of relationship between the subject/object and the vision of

the social world that the researcher has. Qualitative research necessitates integrating into the process of investigation, a conception and an explanation of the means he intends to use. The position that the researcher takes up in the research process must not be removed from the objectives that he fixes for his research and the means at his disposal. (J. C Moisdon, 1984, G. Marion, 1995). According to Grabet (1998), it is standard behaviour to link exploration with a qualitative approach and that of verification with a quantitative approach. It is therefore accepted that qualitative approaches generally follow an inductive reasoning. According to Thiétart (1999), inductive logic "makes it possible to go from individual observations to general terms", whereas "deductive reasoning goes from general to particular"

David (2000) highlights the advantages of management research based on a recursive approach alternating between abduction-deduction- induction in order to go beyond the classic situation of an inductive approach as opposed to a hypothetical-deductive one. The aim for every researcher would therefore be to find the means of combining these approaches into a single project providing knowledge of the contingent phenomena. Because of his interaction with the field during his experimentation, a researcher using a qualitative approach, such as we have described above, links together and alternates the clinical research in organisations and that of the laboratory work using an iterative formulation of the hypotheses based on the analysis of the facts observed. The alternation between conceptualisation and experimentation signifies that certain stages in the field work consist of testing the hypotheses, the concepts or the tools, then evaluating the results of this experimentation in order to refine the modelling, the concepts, even to propose new concepts which result from the knowledge obtained through the experimentation. Thus the researcher alternates between the hypothetical-deductive phases and the logical-deductive phases, which are in all part of a heuristic iterative process. These well-connected phases are therefore complementary.

It therefore appears that each research problem that is considered merits reflection on the choice of methods, techniques and tools that are the best adapted to tackle it. What is more, it would be advisable for the researchers to try to jointly use inductive, deductive and abductive approaches when dealing with a new question. At the different stages of a research programme, it is possible to use different methodological approaches. (Roussel and Wacheux, 2005).

Our research is based on these precepts and concerns that can conveniently be called a 'triangulation of the field data' defined as the usage of multiple and independent approaches for collecting and measuring the data (Usunier, 1993). As Wacheux (2005) specifies and in view of the elements that we have just presented, it appears necessary that qualitative researchers better explain the manner in which they collect, analyse and interpret the data and the epistemological postulates which their approach is based on. This would be to include their projects in a research programme and legitimise their presence vis-à-vis the actors.

If the analysis tools could be standardised, (interviews, observations, analyses of the contents...), a controlled research process would constitute a supplementary guarantee of validity. It is not in fact the results which are scientific, but the approach used to produce them and this methodology has to be applied to the results. Thus, the theorisation would not be an end but a means (Wacheux, 2005).

II – The variety of research strategies and requirements when producing knowledge for scientific purposes : example case

The three example cases that we present illustrate how, based on researches all using qualitative approaches, the results can be considered as reliable and valid. These cases are all different with regard to their field, their objective and their research strategy. Their common factor was the rigour in the methodological process and the

research protocol used, and finally that of the research-actor interaction as a means of producing knowledge.

These three cases studied management situations such as they are to be found when researchers first arrive in an organisation, then the phenomena observed based on the changes made to the objects studied.

2.1 Typology of invariants in a homogenous organisational population : exploiting the data originating from qualitative and quantitative data research methods.

In the example that we will present below, (Rymeyko, 2002), we will try to explain and justify our choice, that was to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to try to obtain 'reliable knowledge,' (Wacheux, 1996), of the organisational behaviour in solicitors' offices.

If the complementary nature of quantitative and qualitative approaches is today recognised, another method was highlighted by Thiétart (1999) , which involves respecting the chronology when using each of these methods. In fact, a qualitative approach seems to be 'an indispensable prerequisite' for all quantitative studies in order to define the research question, to become familiar with this question or with the opportunities and the empirical constraints, to clarify the theoretical concepts or to explain the research hypotheses" (Lambin, 1990).

The first stage in our research involved exploratory research regarding the main management problems in solicitors' offices. It consisted of an 'empirical exploration' phase (Thiétart, 1999), that is to say, a field study of these management problems without taking into account our prior knowledge of the subject. For this, we had individual and collective interviews with 63 solicitors and 213 collaborators in 58 solicitors' offices. These 'semi-directive' interviews enabled us to collect the views of the people. These collected phrases corresponded to the views of the participants and made it possible to make more exact and more detailed

analyses than through the answers obtained using the questionnaire. The diagnostic phase was completed by the analysis of documents and the method called direct observation.

The second stage in our research consisted of validating the results obtained during the interviews carried out in the exploratory phase. For this, a 'less detailed' complementary diagnosis phase was set up in 132 solicitors' offices. Unlike the interviews in the first stage, those carried out in the second stage, were undertaken in a directive manner using precise interview guidelines in the form of a questionnaire. The aim was to validate the results of the exploratory phase and for these to be broader by increasing the size of the sample. In the second stage, 242 solicitors and 817 collaborators were interviewed.

The following diagram recapitulates the stages in our research process, firstly including a qualitative approach corresponding to an exploratory phase, then a quantitative approach in order to discover the similarities within the homogenous groups (Wacheux, 1996) and to validate the results of our research.

Thiéart (1999), points out that it is impossible to carry out statistical analyses with non-numerical variables. This is why we tried to use the qualitative data in the form of quantitative data. For this, we firstly used nominal variables represented by the phrased cited by the participants in the exploratory phase.

Secondly, the choice was made to just retain the key ideas when making the diagnoses in the 132 solicitors' offices. For this, 60 key ideas, frequently cited in the exploratory phase by the solicitors and the collaborators were used to prepare the questionnaire and these were divided up into different themes concerning management problems.

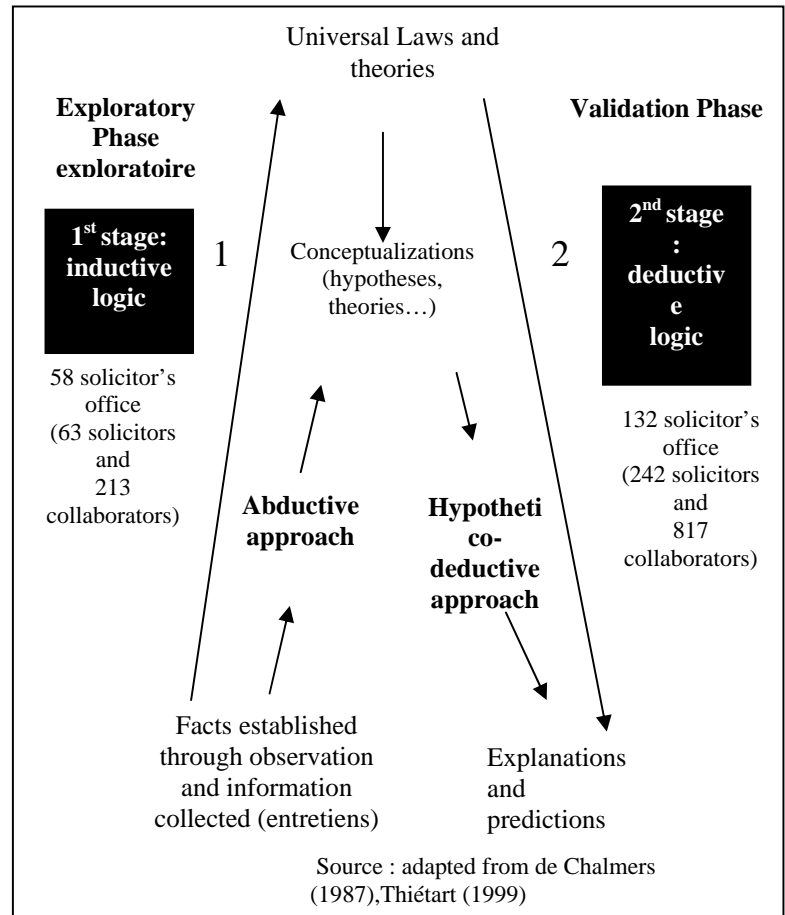


Figure no 1: The different stages in the research

The tree structure of the different key ideas used for exploiting and presenting our research results constitutes in our opinion, a way of representing a complex situation such as the management problems in solicitors' offices. (Savall and Zardet, 1996 ; 2004). The key ideas enabled us to transform the "natural language" of the actors within organisations into "modellised language"(Savall et Zardet, 1996). These will therefore constitute the qualitative and quantitative analysis in our research.

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Collection of nominal data	Collection of nominal data	Creation of numerical data
Phrases expressed by the actors	Key ideas	Quantifying of the number of key ideas Per organisation studied
It is very difficult for us, as four associates, just to meet and to take decisions since we do not share enough information	Lack of communication between the associates	

Figure n°2 : The process for exploiting qualitative and quantitative data

calculation of three management problematic indexes, one for each of the three themes previously defined in our research: the ‘strategic practices theme’, ‘the activities management’ theme, and the personnel management theme. The management problematic index was calculated from the key ideas in each theme. For each management problematic encountered in a solicitors office, one point was added to the management problematic index. After having established the key ideas for the 132 solicitors’ offices, we therefore obtained a management problematic index for each of the solicitors’ offices. We carried out this exploitation task for each of the three themes. Adding together the three management problematic indexes enabled us to obtain the social performance level for each of the solicitors’ offices. The results presented below represent the calculations for the management problematic indexes using a number of key ideas expressed by the solicitors and the collaborators in the diagnostic phase.

Finally, in order to obtain more in-depth analyses, we transformed this nominal data into numerical data. For this, we counted the number of key ideas, from each of the solicitors’ offices, which the solicitors and collaborators had spoken positively about. This number ranged from 0 to 60

As we already had quantitative data, we therefore proceeded to make some statistical analyses. In particular, we made in-depth analyses using the software SPSS⁶ in order to ascertain the social performance level in the studies and to obtain a typology of the strategic behaviour in solicitors’ offices. By making a typographical analysis, we wished to classify and constitute groups of solicitors’ offices according to their organisational problematic. (Durrieu and Valette-Florence, 2005).

To obtain this typology, we used a classification technique based on the

Management problematic indexes	132 solicitors’ offices	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
‘strategic practices’	3,7	6	1,66	3	4
‘Activities management’	12,72	14,52	11,91	11,81	11,88
‘Personnel management’	11,92	14,26	10,41	10,81	11,6

Figure n°3: Typology of dysfunctioning practices

In our research, we wished to take into account advantages and limitations in qualitative and quantitative analyses by reconciling the two approaches. In fact, the first exploratory phase carried out through a more detailed diagnosis, observations in the field and the study of documents, enabled us to make an ‘in-depth’

6 Statistical software

study. (Wacheux, 1996), the strategic and organisational context of the solicitors' offices thus enabled us to obtain an internal validity for our results.

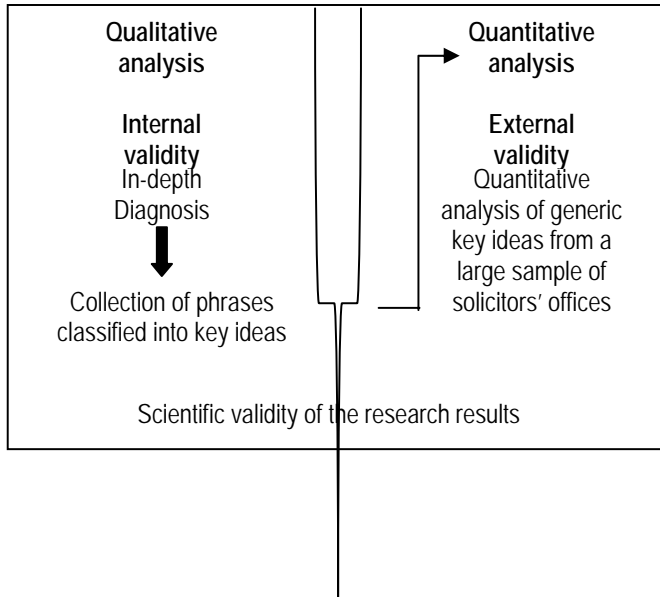


Figure n°4 Quantitative exploitation of the qualitative data

Moreover, the external validity of our results seem to be ensured thanks to the validation of the results obtained through qualitative approaches carried out in a large number of solicitors' offices and which consisted, at the beginning of our research, in targeting the problematic and establishing the research hypotheses. The aim of these quantitative results was to try to obtain generic knowledge and to conceptualise in order to produce abstractions with an intermediate significance, (Wacheux, 2005), even if this data remains simplistic for explaining and understanding the problematic in solicitors' offices. As Wacheux (2005), points out, "no tool, no method can be substituted for the researcher's comprehensive and 'interpreting intelligence'".

2.2 Typology of the invariables in the internal collaboration mechanisms of the actors: research into a negotiated management structure for visualising

interactions on an individual level and a collective one (spectral analysis)

This development is based on the results of research-intervention carried out in five public or private profit-making or non-profit making organisations (Delattre, 1998). The aim of the research was to highlight the incidence of collaboration between the actors with regard to the global management of an organisation. We carried out a comparative study that we qualified as spectral. Spectral analysis was developed in the social sciences, boosted by the structuralist movement, (Durkheim, 1895 ; De Saussure, 1931 ; Dumezil, 1949 ; Levi-Strauss, 1958 ; Duby, 1971, and also by the interest shown in the notion of a systematic approach. (Piaget, 1968, Le Moigne, 1977). The contributions of Foucault (1966), Goldman (1977) and Bourdieu (1980) limit the universalism of the approach (Lallement, 1990). Savall (1984). (Lallement, 1990). Savall (1984) used the term of spectral analysis in the context of an epistemological reflection with regard to research methodology and the quality of the scientific information in management science. In his opinion, 'spectral analysis' designates bringing to the forefront and studying phenomena concerned with an interaction situation. He insists, in the context of a research process, on the status of the field studies, the dialectics of the visible and the hidden concerning the phenomena, the research material and the extraction of this latter.

Spectral analysis is based on a global analysis of the scientific structure that it intends to develop. Spectral analysis is relative; its aim is not to tend towards universality in an interpretation but rather to follow a process of searching for invariants: the juxtaposition of scientific construction and that of reality. The analysis is comprehensive as there is no single key, it is necessary to be able to judge the value of the details in comparison with the whole (Keyserling, 1928). All attempts to objectively understand something of the human elements must firstly encounter a situation where the experience is reduced to one of a system of correlative markers Granger (1967). The question therefore concerns the hypotheses on

which the selection and the structure of these latter are based. An analysis of the extractive essence with that of the visible-hidden dialectics: producing a sense is an active and voluntary process. (Keyserling, 1928). It is not so much the ability to capture the images which is important as the construction of the interpretation of the image itself. Science is only what is hidden. (Bachelard, 1970, 1981). Producing a sense implies an active process to capture the images in order to go beyond the phenomenal appearance to the underlying construction of the interpretation of the image. The scientific information produced in the context of visible-hidden dialectics is founded on the qualitative development of information, as much in the field as for the researcher. The spectral analysis includes an instrumental dimension: extraction and action tools. Objectivity is achieved and developed through successive decentring of the subject in respect of a delimited field of research in which it is possible for spirits to agree, (Mouchot, 1990). The researcher's neutrality is an illusion, because of the apprenticeship ability of the actors who are the subject of the observation.

Spectral analysis in sciences corresponds to an attempt to go beyond appearances, it stems from the searcher's questioning of the realities that he encounters. The epistemological positioning achieved is the starting point of exploratory research on an experimental basis of five organisations.

The organisations are presented in a synoptic manner. A global and comparative vision was preferred as an objective rather than just presenting monographs. The organisation [O1]: a group of bookshops employing 161 people. The research-intervention problematic was to contribute to improving the immediate results and the company's profitability by developing the quality of the service for clients and mobilising the human potential within the organisation. The organisation [O2] : a company producing equipment in metal for kitchens and employing 230 people. The activity concerned the constructions of metallic installations (self-service, fish counters etc) and kitchen equipment for collective installations. The task of the research-intervention was to prepare the certification (ISO 9002) by mobilising the human potential. The organisation [O3]: a large telecommunications company employing 389 people. The task of the intervention was to strengthen the supervisory role in order face difficulties connected with transfers due to a partial privatisation. Organisation [O4]: a technical and testing establishment employing 1100 people attached to the Directorate General for Armament. The task of the research-intervention was to prepare the establishment to carry out its mission with a reduction in its operational budget by using the potential of available human resources. Finally, the organisation [O5], a company providing sports services of an associative type [1901 law] attached to the French football federation. 130 volunteers assisting four salaried employees managing 26,000 licences in one head office and 266 affiliated clubs. The task of the research-intervention was to improve the management in the association by developing the quality of the client service (licence holders).

Sectors	Profit-making	Non-profit making
Private	[O1] [O2]	[O5]
Public	[O3]	[O4]

Figure n°5 : The positioning of the five organisations according to the criteria of the sector to which they belong and the status of production

Several one-dimensional interpretations can be made of the internal collaboration mechanisms of actors concerning the overall management of an organisation.

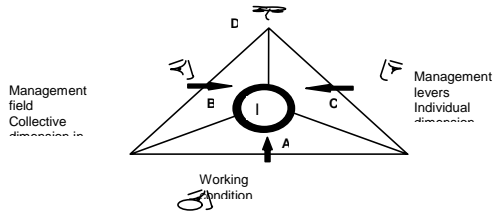


Figure n°6: The differential point of view in spectral analysis.

Zone A represents an interpretation of the organisation from the point of view of the working conditions for the actors within the organisation (socio-economic interpretation grid) Zone B presents an interpretation of the organisation according to the fields of management (collective dimension) and the quality of the collective operating mode as experienced by the actors. Zone C presents an interpretation of the operating mode based on the perturbations experienced by each of the actors. (individual dimension). The viewpoint D shows a two-dimensional interpretation (spectral construction). The visible-hidden dialectics are based on the structure of the collective and individual dimensions within the organisation.

The management problematic cited concerning the working conditions within the organisation, and connected to a key idea, was studied using a logic of double coordinates. The reprocessing of material can be read in the following figure in lines for the fields (collective dimension) and in columns for the management levers (individual dimension) as is presented in the following figure.

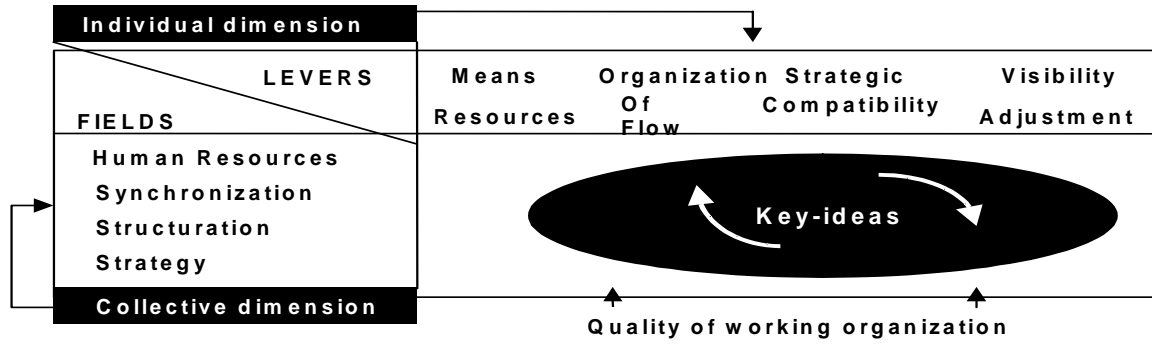
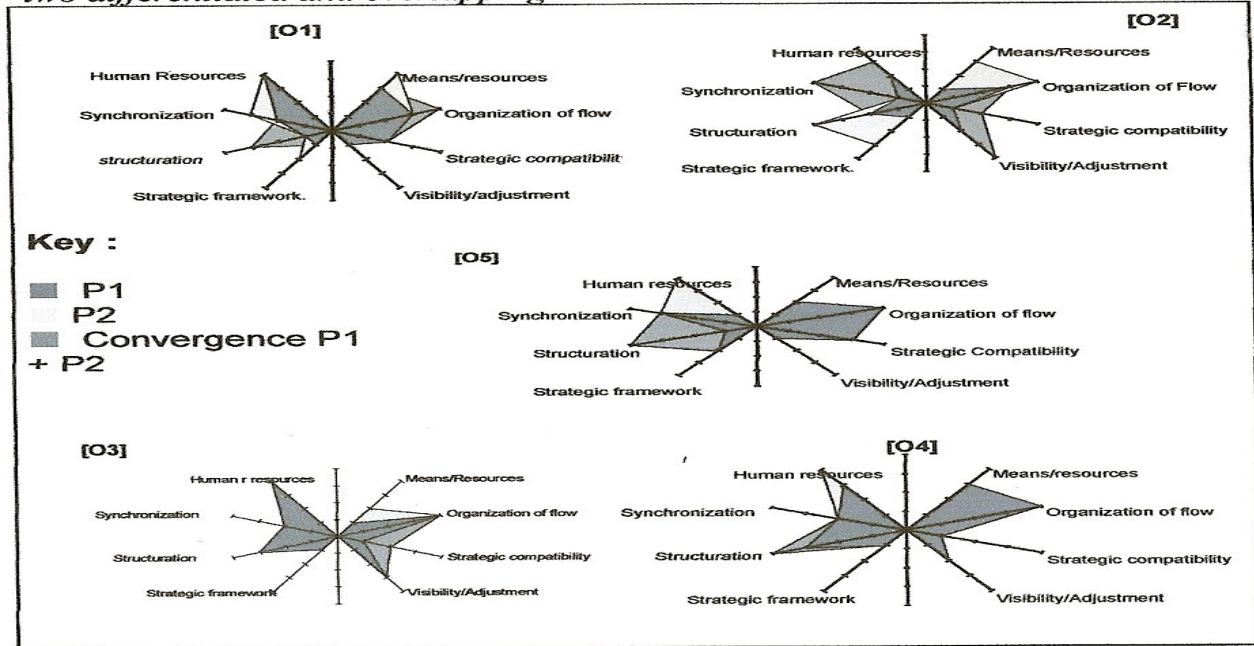


Figure n°7 : The basis of experimental material

At the centre of the figure, we have positioned our basic experimental material, key ideas; the generic and representative expression of the management problematic as viewed by the actors. A basic framework was obtained for a spectral analysis using the same group of key ideas which were

reprocessed. The following figure shows the spectral images produced after the reprocessing of the key ideas enabling us to dissociate the collective dimensions(on the left) and the individual ones (on the right) but also to distinguish between the views of the executives (P1) and the non-executives (P2) in the actors' space.

Figure n°8 : A spectral representation of the organisation : two differentiated and overlapping levels



The visualisation of the spectral image for management includes a degree of contrast marked by a 3 coordinate definition:

two specific zones for each sub-population:: P1 P2 = {∅} and a convergence zone: {P1 U P2}.

The contrast produced improves the overall perception of the views of the individuals in the organisation with regard to the curbs they encounter that prevent them from taking actions. Three overlap limits can be noted for each dimension of the spectre. The cohesion overlap (): there is a total convergence zone between the two sub-populations. It is characterised by a general withdrawal on the part of the actors, a collective renouncing in order to invent, create and undertake actions to overcome a context of activity which seems to have been imposed on them. This withdrawal corresponds to the feeling of extraneousness highlighted by Seeman (1959) in his works on alienation in the workplace. Three organisations have this type of overlap [O3] in the collective

dimension, [O4] and [O5] in the individual dimension. The two other overlaps illustrate the differential perceptions. The shared overlap (): the convergence zone is completed in the margin by a differential positioning of the two sub-populations. The differential overlap (): the convergence zone is the basis of two marked types of differential positioning. These two overlaps indicate the tension zones and the differentials of perception in the way of deciphering a situation and/or to carrying out a task or an activity. They illustrate a shared distribution of skills negotiated within the context of the inter-relations between the actors. The spectral image produced defines in an instant « t » the individual and collective negotiations between the actors.

2.3 Typology of the invariants in a trans-organisational problematic situation: research into an approach methodology which solves then improves a management situation.

The aim of this third example of qualitative research is, in the field of companies, organisations, employees in illiteracy situations (Moulette, 2002).The theme is, which is characterised by a broader

formulation, associating the field and the research objective: finding a solution to illiteracy situations in companies

The companies in our experimental database are principally companies in the private industrial sector. This experimental database is made up of different sources: case studies, monographs, contacts with the 'world' of company illiteracy or even reports concerning actions to combat illiteracy in companies. All the experimental material therefore emanates from different sources corresponding to different types of data collection. Some material originates from the reprocessing of research-intervention data; other material had only been used for processing work in the laboratory; finally, certain material originated from research contracts with the Ministry for Employment or from direct participating observations during national or regional events on the theme of illiteracy.

Different techniques for collecting data were therefore used in the context of this qualitative research:

- Semi-directive interviews with the aim of at gathering qualitative data on the proven or presumed causes and the examples of illiteracy in companies. The choice of this method for collecting data can be explained by the desire to collect primary data that was as reliable as possible concerning the situations experienced by the actors within the organisation.
- - directive interviews with the aim of collecting quantitative data for evaluating the costs of actions for solving these illiteracy situations detected during the first interviews;
- The study of company documents in the experimental database such as the organisational charts, memoranda, activity reports, activity sheets and management indicators. These documents provide a better understanding of certain expressions used by the actors in the organisation during the interviews;
- Delegated observation. It consists of asking an actor in an organisation to measure and

verify the qualitative, quantitative or financial indicators in order to obtain current information on the consequence of illiteracy situations.

- Floating observation as viewed by Evrard (1993). It concerns both the researcher's data collection of the non-verbal indicators observed during the interviews (gestures, spatial relationships, tone etc) and the collection of verbal and/or non-verbal indicators during visits to the company and when present in the field.
- Finally the sixth technique for collecting data is participating observation. It occurs during participation in meetings of management groups, when aiding a company to undertake a project or during each appointment or meeting with at least one of the members of the organisation

These last two techniques were rigorously formalised by recording the phenomena and the behaviour observed in writing in order to remember them and make them exploitable. These two types of observations, floating and participant, made it possible, as Wacheux (1996), pointed out, to study both the visible and the latent characteristics of management situations.

The data processing was achieved using several types of recording tools. For the data originating from the qualitative interviews, detailed notes were taken and 'witness' phrases were chosen (in an illiteracy situation) and were filed in 'drawers'. The analysis of the interviews was schematized in the form of a tree structure.

The results of the data exploited were presented to all the actors questioned. The presentation was in three phases. The grouping together of the principle phrases emanating from the interviews, a summary of these phrases and the researcher's opinion of the idea expressed or not expressed by the actors. This stage of grouping together the results is one of the means of judging the quality of the information obtained in the investigation field since it is an ideal place for observing the impressions of those

interviewed on the significance and the relevance of the information gathered.

Other means were implemented to ensure the quality of the field information: obtaining a minimum of two informants on the same theme, diversifying the type of informants by associating different hierarchical levels, having the information collected systematically validated and verifying its reliability.

To be able to satisfy our validity objectives, such as those mentioned in the first section, we particularly relied on the advice given by Usunier et al. (1993) to ensure the scientific nature of the research based on a qualitative approach.:

-the first piece of advice is to inform the subjects of the study of the research conclusions to enable them to verify that their remarks have been accurately noted and to compare their interpretations. The presentation of the results of the exploited data to the people interviewed answers this objective;

-the second piece of advice is to explain in detail the types of relationship and the situations with which the observations and the discussions were concerned. *The third piece of advice* is to ensure that the honesty and the respect of the values common to researchers had been well respected during the whole of the research process. These two pieces of advice were particularly heeded in the context of this research through the intermediary of a systematic formulation supplemented by terms of reference between the researcher and those researched. As Girin (1990) specified, entering the field to study a management situation must be something that is negotiated so that there is a compromise between the interests of the researcher and those of the people who have the power to open or close doors as far as observation is concerned. Our terms of reference therefore stipulated the conditions for access to the field. Our position and the consequences on actions of the research were explicitly taken into account, not with the viewpoint of 'biases' that needed to be limited, but on the contrary, as the real principles for producing scientific knowledge, such as is

stipulated by David (2000). These negotiated terms of reference specified in particular:

- -For the technical aspects: the means of collecting data, the means of using and processing the data as well as the means of collating the results obtained from the exploited data for the company concerned.
- For the diplomatic aspects: the devices for communication-coordination-comparison (management groups, project groups, working groups, face to face etc) which define a part of the space authorised for collecting data and the material to which we could have access;
- Finally, the *fourth* piece of advice is to very clearly explain the point of view adopted, the initial postulates and the context in which we would be concerned with.

Two characteristics are to be found in our research. It alternated between periods of work in a library, a laboratory and in the company and combines the creation of descriptive, explanatory and prescriptive hypotheses

Our library work consisted of reviewing the literature of the works of the principal authors who had written on themes similar to those that we used in our development of the subject. The laboratory work mainly consisted of analysing and structuring the primary and secondary data that we collected in the companies for our experimental database as well as the bibliographical data. Finally, our presence in the companies was justified by our desire to collect the primary data in the field. It is therefore difficult for us to say where this research process began. Firstly, in fact, we constructed hypotheses that could be tested in the field. and/or in the literature with the data collected, through our own reflections on such and such an aspect of our research objective and through an analysis of the literature. Our reasoning was deductive. Secondly, through field operations, formulated from the hypothesis to

be tested .either in the literature or in multiple professional contexts to discover the regular features. Here we were concerned with both induction and abduction.

Our hypotheses have therefore several origins and were formed and/or validated, during the whole of our research, by successive periods alternating between laboratory, library and company research.

This alternation between conceptualising and experimenting signifies that certain stages in the field work consisted in testing, in the sense of experimenting, the concepts and the tools in a situation of observable management, then evaluating the results of this experimentation to refine the modelling, the concepts or even to propose new concepts which resulted from the knowledge obtained from the experimentation.

We therefore reasoned in an iterative manner and even an interactive one by using either deduction, or induction or abduction. This logic was therefore used in the context of formulating our descriptive, explanatory and prescriptive hypotheses. For example, we formulated an explanatory hypothesis through abduction, and then we tested the possible consequences of this hypothesis through deduction. From this point, induction enabled us to update the rules that we had used and, in the case where the rules were invalidated, we then reformulated, through induction, the new explanatory hypotheses to be tested.

To summarize, as the diagram illustrates, abduction leads to deduction, which leads to induction which itself leads to abduction. Deduction enabled us to produce the consequences, induction, to establish the general rules and abduction to construct the hypotheses. Therefore these forms of logic, each in their own way, played a role in the construction of our hypotheses and therefore of our knowledge. Thus the permanence of this cycle registers our results in a form of reasoning which combines induction, deduction and abduction that David (2000) calls a recursive curve.

Conclusion

In management science, the researcher finds himself confronted with a large range of methodologies and approaches in order to carry out his research in the best possible way. The choice of a research methodology will depend on the objective that the researcher has previously fixed, the type of knowledge that he wishes to produce and the relations he has with the actors in the field. By presenting the three examples of qualitative research, we have tried to show how the researcher adapts his research process according to his research strategy, particularly by using different techniques for processing and analysing the data. These techniques have all the elements, if one talks of the scientific nature of the research, the advantages and inconveniences that need to be known and explained, whilst at the same time being aware that social sciences are, by essence, approximate in order to be realistic (Wacheux, 2005). In this sense, we agree with the following view “ be as imprecise as possible and as precise as necessary” Arkhipoff (1984).

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Engaging in Reflexive Acts

- Sharing experiences on reflexivity in empirical qualitative research *

Heidi Keso & Hanna Lehtimäki & Tarja Pietiläinen

ABSTRACT

In this article, we present an experiential narrative of reflexivity in qualitative empirical research. Through a dialog of three researchers on their research processes we highlight the issues of reflexivity in empirical research and show the ways by which a researcher's ontological and epistemological presumptions inform decision making throughout the research process. Generalizing from our own research experience, we call for academic discussion on the experiential knowledge researchers have on reflexivity. Sharing the experiences researchers have on reflecting the ontological and epistemological manifestations in empirical research would shorten the gap between the theoretical discussion on reflexivity and the day to day decisions an empirical researcher faces.

1. INTRODUCTION

In this article, we reflexively explore issues of knowledge production in an empirical research process. Using our own Ph.D. research processes as examples, we explore how reflexivity unfolds as a continuous decision making process involving epistemological and ontological assumptions. In examining our own research processes, we draw on the work of Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln (1994) on different research paradigms and the issues of practical conduct of inquiry that are, depending on the underlying research paradigm, addressed differently in each research process. In this way, we extend work on reflexivity in business research to provide a narrative of real life experiences of reflexivity in empirical qualitative research.

Using our own research processes as examples, we discuss four metatheoretical approaches in qualitative research: social constructionism, constructivism, critical theory and scientific realism. Our examination focuses on six issues of knowledge production: purpose of the research,

definition of knowledge, interaction between the researcher and the material, role of values in research and evaluation criteria for a qualitative research. We join in the discussion on reflexivity following those who argue that reflexivity addresses similar issues of knowledge production but brings forth different explanations depending on the chosen research paradigm with particular ontological and epistemological presumptions (Calás & Smirchich, 1992; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000).

In thirty years, work on reflexivity has become well developed in organisation and management research methodology. Marta Calás and Linda Smirchich (1999) date the interest in "knowing about knowing" in organisation and management research back to late 1970s and early 80s when multiple research strategies and paradigms inspired debate within the community (see e.g. Morgan, 1983). Gibson Burrell and Gareth Morgan's 1979 study on the role of metatheoretical assumptions in organizational analysis soon turned into a classic methodological textbook emphasising the importance of researchers' sensitivity towards practices of knowledge production.

Over the years reflexivity has taken on several meanings. An early contribution to clarifying the varieties of reflexivity was made by Steven Woolgar, a sociologist of scientific knowledge. He (1988a) presents a continuum where reflexivity ranges from 'benign introspection' to 'constitutive reflexivity'. 'Benign introspection' refers to the researcher's reflection on the use of qualitative methods. Such reflexivity aims at improving the quality of analysis by strengthening the connection between the empirical objects and statements made of those objects. 'Constitutive reflexivity', in turn, promotes critical self-awareness throughout the research process. Through such reflexivity, the researcher seeks to fully understand and follow the commitments of paradigmatic knowledge production in order to detect new ways of interpreting the reality.

In a recent contribution, Michael Lynch, also a sociologist of scientific knowledge, (2000) lists six conceptions of reflexivity: mechanical, substantive, methodological, metatheoretical, interpretative, and ethnomethodological reflexivity. Mechanical reflexivity refers to circular processes and feedback loops. Substantive reflexivity rests on the idea that humans are inherently self-reflective. Methodological reflexivity serves as a quality control in the same vein as Woolgar's 'benign introspection'. Metatheoretical reflexivity requires a researcher to take a detached position from which to critically examine social reality. Interpretative reflexivity involves interpretation which aims at producing non-obvious alternatives to taken-for-granted ways of thinking and acting; Woolgar's 'constitutive reflexivity' concurs with this conception.

While Woolgar distinguishes between the reflexive and the unreflexive inquiry and promotes constitutive reflexivity as true reflexivity, Lynch is after another

version of reflexivity. He argues for reflexivity that does not privilege any theoretical or methodological standpoint but enhances empirical investigation into reflexive organisation of practical actions.

Of the six above mentioned conception, Lynch favours ethnomethodological reflexivity, because it "does not set itself off against an unreflexive counterpart" (ibid., 42). Instead, reflexivity comes to mean the reflexive relationship between the accounts and the accountable state of affairs, which turn investigation into how facts become accomplished in local interaction. Lynch argues that the other versions treat reflexivity either as cognitive state (mechanical and substantive reflexivity), discrete methodological act (methodological reflexivity), or self-conscious existential condition (metatheoretical and interpretative reflexivity).

In organisation and management studies, Calás and Smirchich (1992, 240) speak of "a reflexivity that constantly assesses the relationship between knowledge and ways of doing knowledge". Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldberg (2000, 5) state that "reflexivity draws attention to the complex relationship between processes of knowledge production and the involvement of the knowledge producer". In the same vein, Phil Johnson and Joanne Duperley (2003) argue in line with Lynch against a privileged version of reflexivity. They maintain that a researcher cannot step back from his or her, often tacit, metatheoretical commitments, and reflect on them because the task of reflection depends upon the very commitments.

Johnson and Duperley combine different sets of assumptions about epistemology and ontology and suggest three approaches to reflexivity: methodological, epistemic and deconstruction/hyper reflexivity. Methodological reflexivity is a tool for a researcher to evaluate and

critique how accurately the chosen methodology has been deployed. Epistemic reflexivity calls a researcher to examine his or her internalized metatheoretical presumption and to allow self-knowledge envision alternative accounts of phenomena. Finally, deconstruction enables a researcher to reveal the ways by which knowledge claims are produced and to question the legitimacy of these knowledge productions by bringing in alternative accounts of reality.

Drawing on an understanding of reflexivity as a relationship between knowledge and ways of producing knowledge, we show that, to conduct a high quality research, a researcher cannot choose between reflexivity and unreflexivity. Instead, she must understand the situations of decision making in the empirical research process as acts of reflexivity. Reflexivity challenges a researcher to understand the ways by which her ontological and epistemological presumptions guide decision making and the choices she makes through the whole research process.

Our interest, therefore, is in showing how a researcher faces reflexivity in an empirical research process. Our presentation makes a number of contributions. First, drawing on the classification of issues of reflexivity by Guba and Lincoln (1994) we present a dialog of three researchers to present experiences on reflexivity in empirical qualitative research. The discussion on reflexivity is often abstract and theoretical, which makes it difficult, particularly for a beginner, to understand what the issues of reflexivity mean in one's own research. Second, this approach enables us to highlight the ways by which a researcher's epistemological, ontological and methodological assumptions inform the practicalities of empirical qualitative

inquiry. The dialog shows how the presumptions are woven together in the process of knowledge development, during which empirical material is constructed, interpreted and written.

Third, by understanding the ways by which the key issues of reflexivity unfold in the practice of qualitative inquiry, we are better equipped to produce high quality interpretative research in the field of management and organisation studies. An understanding of the relationship between the ontological and epistemological assumptions and the outcomes of decision making in different points of research allows for an insightful discussion on the validity, reliability and generalisability of interpretative research. Fourth, based on our exploration of our own work, we show how, in practice, reflexivity comes from awareness of one's own ontological and epistemological preunderstandings and critical self-exploration of one's own interpretation of empirical material (see Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000).

This article is organised as follows. We first present the framework of metatheoretical approaches in research by Guba and Lincoln (1994). We then address the metatheoretical questions that we as constructionist business researchers have faced when working on empirical research. Next, we address reflexivity by discussing our own experiences of doing empirical constructionist research. This is presented as a dialogue between the three authors to describe how elusive and undetermined encounters with metatheory are in empirical qualitative research.

Each of the members of dialog talks about their Ph.D. work. Heidi Keso (1999) conducted a research on knowledge management. She studied the hegemonic discourses of knowledge construction in a case company, Valmet Aircraft Industry. Her research traces changes in the discourses that took place in a time period of 70 years. As a result, she identified how

discourses enable and hinder the organisation to take new and innovative action.

Hanna Lehtimäki's (2000) research examines strategy documents and a strategy process of the City of Tampere. Her research questions the taken-for-granted presumptions of strategy making and analyses the language practices of strategy narrative. As a result, she shows how language constructs actor-positions to those affected by strategy processes, and proposes a new multi-voiced approach to strategy making.

Tarja Pietiläinen (2002) examined female entrepreneurship in emerging ICT-industry. Through analysis of city strategy documents, interviews of female entrepreneurs, and media articles about a female-owned new media company she shows how a gendering process of female entrepreneurship evolves in an ongoing meaning production. As the main contribution, her research emphasises the need to understand the ways by which gendering is produced rather than examining gender differences per se when female entrepreneurship is discussed.

decide on in a research process: purpose of the research, definition of knowledge, researcher-material interaction, role of values in research, evaluation criteria for research, and finally, the role of the researcher as knowledge producer. 'Purpose of the research' merges the categories of 'Inquiry aim' and 'Knowledge accumulation' by Guba and Lincoln (ibid.,112). Their category 'Nature of knowledge' we have renamed 'Definition of knowledge' to highlight that also scientific knowledge is about beliefs. 'Researcher-material interaction' is developed by us. With this category we want to emphasise the importance of reflection on the relationship between the researcher and the material in the processes of data collection and analysis. 'Role of values in research' corresponds that of 'Values' in Guba and Lincoln, as well as 'Evaluation criteria for research' that of 'Goodness or quality criteria'. Decision concerning these issues guide the research process and call for reflection. Each topic will be further elaborated in the dialog in chapter three.

2. The role of the researcher in different metatheoretical approaches

2.1 Four metatheoretical approaches

Our understanding of what constitutes reflexivity in qualitative research processes with different metatheoretical commitments is illustrated by Table 1. The framework of table is adopted with some changes (see below) from Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln (1994). Through evaluating her own assumptions informing decision making the researcher can pursue that avenue of reflexivity which offers greatest support to being accountable for knowledge production.

In the rows of the table, we present six issues which the researcher needs to

TABLE 1. Reflexivity in Qualitative Research Process.

<i>Paradigm</i>	<i>Social Constructionism</i>	<i>Constructivism</i>	<i>Critical Theory & Other Ideology Oriented Theories</i>	<i>Scientific Realism</i>
<i>Issues for decision making</i>				
<i>Purpose of Research</i>	Deconstructing taken for granted, making visible relations of power/knowledge	enriching and descriptions	Change, giving voice to margins, emancipation	Producing generalisable knowledge, accumulation of knowledge
<i>Definition of Knowledge</i>	Situational, temporal, and legitimised accounts	Shared understandings of world	Institutionalised structures and processes of marginalisation	Facts, patterns, categorisations, models
<i>Researcher-Material Interaction</i>	Scientific discourses construct both the researcher and the material	The material enables the researcher to gain access to the actors' reality	Critique produces and maintains a distance between the researcher and the material	Methods intermediate between the researcher in scientific reality and the material in the researched reality
<i>Role of Values in Research</i>	Under constant power/knowledge negotiation	Presence of subjective values recognised, accepted and worked with	Values inseparable from the concepts used	The effects of a researcher's subjective values should be minimised
<i>Evaluation Criteria for Research</i>	Novelty of interpretations and argumentation, questioning researcher's own standpoint	Richness of interpretations, authenticity in empirical description	Accurateness of historical analysis, erosion of ignorance, proposals for empowerment of underprivileged	Internal and external validity, reliability, analytical objectivity
<i>Role of the Researcher</i>	'Empowerer'	'Enthusiastic Participant'	'Intellectual Change Agent'	'Analytical Expert'

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In the columns, we present four research paradigms from the point of view of the constructionist research. This categorisation organises metatheoretical assumptions underlying each paradigm. It is within this categorisation that a researcher makes decisions on her methodological choices. Every research aims at making a difference in the body of scientific business knowledge within a particular metatheoretical understanding. Each methodological approach incorporates understandings of what is an interesting and significant focus of investigation. Accordingly, each approach calls a researcher to evaluate her position as a knowledge producer and the quality of new knowledge that the research generates.

We have named researcher positions in each research paradigm according to what we see as the role of the researcher in knowledge production. The names we have given to each researcher are inspired by “the voices” Guba and Lincoln (ibid.) present. We discuss the table by comparing each methodological approach to the constructionist approach to highlight the differences between each approach. First, we call *the constructionist researcher an ‘empowerer’*. She explores the taken-for-granted, questions the self-evident, and examines herself as the participant in knowledge production process. The term social constructionism embraces many variations in theoretical perspective, interests, and methods. According to Hosking (2000), the common concern in constructionist research is the interest in the processes through which knowledge is constructed in everyday activities. As such, the processes of knowing are shifted from a knowing mind to coordinated actions, and thus, knowing and doing are joined. Accordingly, ‘doing science’ and scientific claims to knowledge can be considered as everyday activity.

Second, we call *the constructivist researcher an ‘enthusiastic participant’* (see also Guba & Lincoln, 1994) who brings forth alternative interpretations of reality, legitimises different schemas and allows for parallel understandings of reality. According to constructivists, organisations have neither nature nor essence; they are what people perceive them to be (Czarniawska, 1992). The purpose of the research is to provide rich empirical descriptions of a given event, case-company or situation. As a result, the aim is to gain a deepened understanding, more refined and enlightened understanding of the lived realities. An insider’s view of the phenomenon and authentic accounts are valued in this metatheoretical approach.

To a constructionist researcher, a challenge in constructivist research is how to avoid downplaying the questions of power intertwined with different individual interpretations. In the constructivist research, the power tends not to be articulated as closely connected to actor positions. Consequently, different interpretations of reality are treated as equal, but having different areas of validity. A constructionist researcher would argue that interpretations are more often competing versions of reality than ‘pieces of the same puzzle’.

Third, we call *the researcher following the critical theory an ‘intellectual change agent’* (see also Guba & Lincoln, 1994), who is an active speaker for the marginalized. Proponents of critical theory and other ideology oriented theories aim at change through critique, giving voice to margins, and emancipation (Alvesson & Willmot, 1995). The purpose of research based on critical theory is similar to constructionist research in that research aims at empowerment and emancipation.

From the constructionist perspective the question arises, however, whose empowerment and emancipation is in question. That is whose reality is taken as

an interesting research topic. Both critical theory and constructionist researchers often choose the perspective of the under-privileged or those in non-power positions. In organisational research this could, for instance, be the employees.

The difference between these two metatheoretical approaches is that the critical theory researchers assume that, due to experiences of marginality and suppression, the under-privileged have knowledge that is less affected by power. To a critical theory researcher, it is this knowledge that has the greatest potential to improve theorising. A constructionist researcher, in turn, argues that power and knowledge are inseparable, and therefore, both the powerful and the under-privileged use and abuse power. Consequently, the results of using knowledge-power are different, because 'being in power' or 'being suppressed' are different discursive actor positions with their differing rights, obligations and expectations on how to think and act. An interesting point to a constructionist research would be to examine the knowledge-power relations that construct the positions of those in power and those suppressed and how people themselves participate in producing the positions.

Finally, we propose that a *scientific realist researcher could be called an 'analytical expert'* (see also Guba & Lincoln, 1994), who describes and explains how things factually are, and produces a wholesome research based view of a phenomenon. In business studies perhaps the most used qualitative research approach is case study. Often, case study methodology builds on the premises of scientific realism. The role of the researcher is to generate better understanding of the phenomenon and to add new explanations to the existing pool of knowledge (Marshall & Rosmann, 1989).

The most significant difference between realist research and constructionist research is in the ways by which they treat the relationship between the researcher and empirical reality. Realist researchers value distance to empirical phenomenon under investigation because they maintain that the patterns of behaviour or thinking will arise from the data. This is assured by minimizing the affects of the researcher and maximizing the rigour in following the chosen method. A constructionist research would argue that facts are not found but constructed through interpretation. To a constructionist researcher a position of pure objective knowing does not exist.

2.2 Experiences on metatheoretical approaches

Hanna: What I find challenging in the constructionist approach is that it calls for questioning much of the currently taken-for-granted. This easily leads to a feeling that we are promoting revolution or bringing forth revolutionary ideas. Empowering, in turn, I find the feeling that with my research I can provide alternative vistas to see how things might be without telling how things factually are. Besides deconstruction I also wish to provide alternative solutions to current constructions. The aim in my research on strategy language was to recognise the discursive power relations and to act as a provider of arguments to understand meaning making processes in strategy making practices.

Heidi: I am inclined to think like the constructivists that enriched understandings, i.e. bringing forward different possible interpretations of a given situation, enlarge our possibilities to act in ways unfamiliar before. I want the world to understand what are all the places where innovative ideas can come from, ideas for developing their activities. In my Ph.D. work I, however, took a constructionist turn. I wanted to join the argument that bringing forth innovative ideas requires that defining what is valuable knowledge, or considered as knowledge, has to be understood in a

new way – with a new way I mean that knowledge is discursive.

Tarja: My research on female entrepreneurship combined passions from both the critical theory perspective and the constructionist research approach. Critical theory is present in my research through the idea of feminist emancipation. I believe that the knowledge I produce has impacts on women entrepreneurs' space of action. This means that I aim changing business practices in ways that enhance women entrepreneurs' and business women's possibilities to enact their business desires in ways they find suitable or attractive for themselves. This is really important to me. I want to make female entrepreneurs' business practices as valued as male entrepreneurs' practices. I argue that currently, female entrepreneurship is naturally considered as hobby like activity, not as business activity to be taken seriously. I want to contribute to an understanding that female entrepreneurs' businesses are real businesses without a connotation of less valued, not so important. I want to change the world so that female entrepreneurs do not have to defend their business choices.

Heidi: Sometimes it seems that doing research as a scientific realist researcher would be really straightforward and the easiest way of doing research. It seems that as a realist researcher I would not have to constantly reflect my metatheoretical assumptions and choices or continuously question my position as an analytical knowledge producer. Instead, I could rely on the well-established qualitative research methods and, as long as I took care to follow them meticulously and analytically, I could be an expert in describing and explaining how things factually are. As a scientific realist researcher, I would take care in presenting the research results as facts - I mean, even though I would report the limits of the study I would not question the premises of my

knowledge production. I would not rock my own boat, so to speak, and avoid inviting others to discuss my premises. As a constructionist researcher, in turn, I feel, that inviting others to discuss the ontological and epistemological premises is exactly what I am expected to do.

3. Metatheoretical issues in qualitative research

3.1 Purpose of research evolves with data

Heidi: When I think of how we as business researchers produce business knowledge, I first pay attention to the ongoing choices the researcher makes during the research process. One of the choices to be made in a very early stage, when doing qualitative research, concerns the data. The researcher is often encouraged to start the research process by collecting data in order to get the dialog going between the researcher's theoretical assumptions and her observations of the business world. I think it is often difficult to decide where to start from or what data would be interesting, when the process of defining the purpose of the study is still going on. Also, based on my experience, it is not unusual that the purpose of the study changes as the data collection proceeds and when the researcher becomes more and more deeply involved with her research material.

Hanna: That is definitely true at least in our research processes – we all have kept refining the purpose the research all along our research processes. I started my research project by data collection. I was interested in how does a new business field or community become formed in a local setting. I had previously done research on social networks in an international organisation (Lehtimäki, 1996), and from the network perspective the formation of the local ICT-business community in my hometown seemed very interesting. With this fairly vague interest in mind I started data collection. The purpose was to collect and analyse rich empirical material from

different local actors within the field to better understand how each actor interprets the development of the field and their own position within the field. My aim was to provide a thick empirical description of the phenomena thorough presenting the perspectives of various actors. I also wanted to get an enriched understanding of how these actors actually perceive themselves and the business field (Eriksson, Fowler, Whipp, & Räsänen, 1996).

Tarja: I also got interested in the local ICT-business field, but from a somewhat different angle. There was a lot of private and public action going on around the development of the Finnish information society, and I wanted to find out how female entrepreneurship was doing among all this motion. I was afraid that the course of action would repeat the well-known pattern where women entrepreneurs will be marginalised early on and thus, will not benefit from the intensive investments on the development of a significant new business field. Following ideas from industrial district research, which considers a municipality a significant actor within the local business environment (e.g. Sengenberger & Pyke, 1992), I started data collection from the city. This idea was supported by the Nordic gender equality thinking according to which public institutions should actively enhance women's issues, including matters important to women entrepreneurs (e.g. Nilsson, 1997; Alh, 2002). Thus, it was natural to me to collect data on the city Information society policy.

Hanna: The early steps in our research processes have been very similar. Also I started reading city strategies, following the idea that as a large institutional actor, a city has a significant impact on forming the field. However, at that time, I became familiar with constructionist thinking. From that perspective the strategy

documents seemed interesting, not so much what the content of the documents tells about the city and its decision makers, but how the ICT-field became constructed in the documents. As a result, I re-focused the purpose of my research, and ended up studying how does strategy discourse construct a city through production of actor positions, norms of action and desired future visions (cf. Dachler & Hosking, 1995; Knights & Morgan, 1991). The new purpose of my research was to deconstruct the understanding or a story that a strategy discourse tells as natural or self-evident about the city. I approached the current strategy making practices as an ontological narrative or a discourse in which the city and its actors become what they are understood to be (cf. Barry & Elmes, 1997; Boje, 1999). Besides deconstructing, I also wanted to provide ideas on how the current practices of strategy making could be altered, so that new practices could be adapted to generate new understandings of the city. Now, when looking back, you could say that I started my research on constructivist premises, and later on followed a social constructionist understanding of the world.

Tarja: Indeed, reflecting one's research experiences brings out premises you were not aware of before. One of the most important tacit assumptions I had was intertwined with my idea of emancipation. When I analysed female entrepreneurship in city strategies it was not visible to me that I was actually ascribing to Marxist feminist thinking: I was deeply engaged in finding out in what ways women entrepreneurs are disadvantaged. My concern was to give voice to the underprivileged and bring out more 'correct' knowledge (Calás & Smircich, 1992). After a while, I realised that presupposing dominance and discrimination inhibited me from analysing, how gendering practices are situationally constructed and how, in effect, space for female entrepreneurship emerges. I became interested in the dynamics of gender, and its effects on

female entrepreneurship. Deconstructing meaning making of gender in the data and constructing discourses of female entrepreneurship made me understand, that instead of aiming at 'freeing' women entrepreneurs my research could make a difference by contributing to an ideational space where the Underprivileged Woman Entrepreneur would give away to multifaceted experiences of being a woman and an entrepreneur.

Heidi: It seems that in both of your research processes the purpose of the study has been refocused according to the methodological shift you have made. I mean you revised your understandings on the object of study. At the same time a change in epistemological position occurred. I also share this experience. When I started my research project on knowledge management, the purpose was to write a processual case study (cf. Pettigrew 1990). The aim was to describe and explain, what is organisational knowledge based on and how has it developed and changed over time (Eisenhardt, 1989). In retrospect, I would say that on the premises of scientific realism, I believed to get a universal picture of what is organisational knowledge-base. By presenting a profound empirical qualitative analysis of one case, I hoped to be able to apply the findings to other similar settings (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

3.2 Definition of knowledge makes a difference

Tarja: It is often so that, when you look back to your research process, you can see the changes that you have gone through during the learning process. In retrospect, it is also easy to analyse how you have produced knowledge and what observations do you base your knowledge production upon. Sometimes the changes can be very radical. Along the learning process, it becomes

important to question what, in fact, becomes constructed as knowledge in a research process.

Hanna: After my constructionist turn, I started to understand that various metatheoretical approaches produce different views on how to define knowledge. To a scientific realist researcher a pressing question is what kind of material can be considered as factual while a critical theorist researcher would ponder what the ideology behind the facts is in the research material. A constructivist researcher, in turn, would prefer naturally occurring material that would bring her close to the reality of actors. And finally, a social constructionist researcher would seek to find material where to study social processes of meaning making.

Tarja: And all this has an impact on what a researcher considers as interesting and worth of studying in a particular company.

Heidi: Yes, that is true. I will tell you one example. The company I studied, Valmet Aircraft, has a 70-year history in designing and constructing aircrafts, and it has been an important player in the Finnish industrial history. First, the company was part of Finnish military industry, but since the 50s it became a profit-based business. The company did not, however, succeed to make profit and considerable public funding was needed over the years to keep the company running. Despite of this, the managers of the company spoke enthusiastically about technologically advanced knowledge base and unique core competences of Valmet Aircraft. The company was also famous for its progressive management training programs, where the latest managerial isms were introduced. When I spoke to the managers of the company in 1994, I found it amazing how it is possible that a company that claims to excel in high-technology and innovative thinking can continuously be unprofitable. As a business researcher, I was puzzled by this. And to

solve the puzzle, I started to examine what becomes defined as capability within the organisation and through what kind of processes.

Hanna: What kind of data did you collect to study the capability of a company?

Heidi: I started to collect data scrupulously following the rules of triangulation. I worked on the realist premises where triangulation of data is considered important to ensure a holistic and factual picture of the phenomenon instead of relying on the researchers individual interpretations (cf. Yin 1989, Stake 1995). I wanted to gather information as much as possible of the company. So, I collected company histories, annual reports from 1975 – 1995, personnel magazines dating back to 70's. Also, I interviewed the managers several times and transcribed these two-hour interviews. All together the data consisted of 1121 pages, and a lot of background material.

Tarja: So, you tried to be 'good' realist doing a case study comprising different kinds of data?

Heidi: Yes, it was important to make sure to collect both primary and secondary material. The documents I collected occurred naturally without any interference by the researcher. They were, of course, more valuable, than the secondary data meaning interviews, because I had participated in producing them. My aim was to produce a fine-grained description of the facts of the components of capabilities in the company, and thereby, to gain a holistic view of the competence. I believed that I could draw a picture of the true nature of capability from the facts in my data. The questions I posed to the data were what core competence consisted of in the company, and how it had changed over time. As you can see, I started my research from the premises of the

scientific realism. I wanted to prescribe what competence is and what it should be in other similar companies as well. I also wanted to show how the existing capabilities contribute to the success of a company.

Tarja: Your reflections on studying a company over such a long period, 70 years, illuminate well how the metatheoretical approach a researcher follows incorporate ideas and rules on how to define knowledge and what counts as accurate research material. We have now been talking about a realist approach to knowledge. What are your experiences in defining knowledge from a constructionist viewpoint? You had already collected extensive data, how did your relation to the data change after taking a constructionist turn?

Hanna: How did you treat your research material?

Heidi: My original purpose was to do content analysis and I did experiments with the analysis software called NUDIST. There are also other analytical coding programs such as ATLAS/ti and The Ethnograph but I did not use any of these programs in my final analysis. The analysis software paved the way to studying discourses and meaning making; after the first experiments with the analysis software, I started to pay attention to words that people spoke, and to the descriptions different people used when explaining what is competence and what is not. At that point, I realised that different people seemed to have very different views of the same phenomena, which in my study were capability and core competence. This understanding leads me to worry, how to combine these different views to put together a holistic view of the company's capabilities.

Hanna: It almost sounds as if you were struggling with the premises of constructivism. In constructivist viewpoint, an individual actor does not find the facts of

reality, but instead, joins in constructing them (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992; Boyce, 1995). Accordingly, in the interviews you were interested in how each manager talked about the company and its core competence. You were aiming at discovering the knowledge creation processes shared by the individuals at the company, i.e. their experiences and perceptions of reality.

Heidi: Yes that is correct. It was only later in the research process when I realised that the whole data represented managers' insights of the company. It never occurred to me to collect material on the perceptions of other actors involved with the company, for instance, the employees. On the other hand, by the time I realised this, I was happy to work with any kinds of research material in my quest to interpret meaning making processes. The distinction between primary and secondary data implies a hierarchy of knowledge with some knowledge being more authentic than other, and as a constructionist researcher I could not tell any more whose voice is more or less authentic.

Tarja: From a critical theory perspective your study could be criticised for promoting dominating managerial ideology also because you do not problematise the hierarchical power structure. As such, it could be argued that your study acts for the elite.

Heidi: It could be argued that the conclusions of my study are biased. Certainly, I studied the personnel magazines or company histories, but even they carry the official voice of the company. This is the very basis on which the critical theory builds its arguments against the prevailing business research literature. The critical theorists could criticise my research for ignoring the marginalised voices of the company (Kunda, 1992). I have presented the views of those in power as factual truths

and not paid any attention to the views of the people with less formal authority. Of course, in an old company like Valmet Aircraft, many well established procedures, day-to-day practices and ways of thinking support certain versions of capabilities. However, they require constant recycling across time and place by the actors to maintain their unquestionable position. What becomes defined as knowledge involves always both power and context. A social constructionist researcher, in turn, I did not think that interviewing only the managers and analysing publicly available documents about the company would bias research findings, and thereby, enhance the interest of the dominating groups. Instead, within the social constructionism, the assumption is that both managers and employees are actor positions, which are constructed by continuous power/knowledge negotiations (Knights, 1992).

3.3 Interaction between researcher and material produces research results

Hanna: Compared to the vast amount of data that Heidi collected, the material I collected for my doctorate research sounds very small in size. I was interested in how the strategy discourse constructs the city and studied strategy making in my hometown, the City of Tampere. The material comprises the written strategy document of the Tampere region 'Tampere Region Success Strategy 2000+ (1996) and the strategy document of the City of Tampere 'Information is the Key to the Future – Guidelines of City Policies for Year 2000 and Beyond' (1997). That totals to 16 pages of text. Also, 11 interviews of city officials, who had been involved in strategy making, were analysed as a part of the study.

Tarja: Interestingly, the small amount of empirical material in your work has raised questions repeatedly. People have been puzzled by whether it is at all possible to make a rich description of a strategy

process with such a small data. I think the questions show how, at least in the Finnish business research context, we are primarily used to case studies with large data. Certainly, 100 pages of data would not easily make a solid ground for a rich description if triangulation were an important guideline for data collection.

Hanna: That is absolutely so. But when analysing discourses, the question asked is how meanings are produced in the data (Burr, 1995). For such an analysis small data can be argued to be even more adequate than large data, because detailed analysis is very time consuming. That is because, when studying meaning making practices, a researcher does a close reading of the material and questions every sentence, choice of words and deconstructs the taken-for-granted meanings of the text. From this perspective, even a small amount of data presents itself as loaded with meanings.

Similar to the above discussion on rules for suitable data within the realist world there is debate going on within the constructionist school on what data should be used. Some discourse analysts have come to prefer naturally occurring data (e.g. official documents, media texts) as the most suitable data for studying meaning making (Jokinen, Juhila, & Suoninen, 1999). Also, it has been suggested that observational data is preferable for studying subtleties of fragmented every-day meaning making in organisations (cf. Czarniawska, 1999). These views point out how different ontologies and epistemologies are used to develop methodological argumentation in constructionist research.

Heidi: Had you followed a scientific realist approach you should have gathered other research material also. That would include, for instance, by observation, collecting organisational documentations of the strategy process

and perhaps even longitudinal interview data. As Steve Woolgar (1988b, 72) says, in 'true' triangulation, it is important not only to use a variety of reporting and recording strategies but also to bring forth a variety of representations. It is important that the researcher makes effort to gather material, which reflects the reality as completely as possible to enable her to make a truthful description of the researched phenomenon.

Tarja: Yes, that is because within scientific realism, the researcher is asked to carefully distance oneself from the data. I, in turn, have found it difficult to distance myself from this image of impartial knower. It is so attempting. The principals of triangulation give the researcher concrete instructions on how she can interact with the data in an impartial, objective manner. Consequently, the researcher should be cautious to detect any indications, which point, for instance, to lying, sectional interests or strong emotional commitments. For her own part, the researcher is expected not present her own subjective opinions and attitudes in order to prevent partial judgements.

Hanna: The interaction between the researcher and the material is quite a different question to a constructionist researcher compared to a scientific realist researcher. The focus shifts from the quantitative criteria of empirical material to the dialogue between the researcher and the researched. When I studied strategy making I focused my attention not only on the meaning making practices in the documents and the interviews but also on how I, as a business strategy researcher and a member of the Finnish society, factualised my interpretations of the data. What I mean is that as a researcher I was aware that as I was analysing the phenomenon in the material I simultaneously produced knowledge claims of it. When doing research, a researcher brings theory and empirical material into a dialogue between each other. In this dialogue, a researcher uses empirical data to question her theoretical assumptions, on

the one hand, and she uses her theoretical understandings to interpret her data, on the other. Thus, one could say that a constructionist researcher builds the road while walking it.

Heidi: That shows the difference between the constructivist and constructionist approaches. Similarly to a constructionist researcher, a constructivist researcher considers empirical material as not presenting the reality but as containing the reality. However, in your research on city strategies, a constructivist researcher would have been interested in the accounts of the managers who have participated in the strategy process. Any data providing personal narratives of the strategy process and/or participation in it would be interesting to a constructivist researcher. In the interaction between the researcher and the data, the data is given a high status as accounts where actors' versions of reality are represented.

Tarja: I see parallel concerns between social constructionism and critical theory, because they both advocate an ongoing reflection of research process and demand avoiding the reproduction of dominant ideas (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000; Hosking, Dachler, & Gergen, 1995). When I studied how strategy discourse genders entrepreneurship, I was concerned on how the dominant ideas or ideologies, i.e. competitive masculinities, were embedded in the empirical material. My aim was to create interpretations that make such power relations visible that exclude female entrepreneurship from the future of ICT business. The approach I adopted, when analysing the city strategy documents, enabled me to relate myself to the material as an independent critical researcher, who is able to see behind the ideologies working in the 'surface' of the material. I learned that it is actually the idea of critique, which I have to

reflect on continuously. Critique allows the researcher to challenge and question the legitimacy of the dominant, taken-for-granted ideas, but at the same time it easily positions the researcher outside her empirical material. Paying attention to how we work with the empirical material reveals that the interaction with the data tells as much about the researcher as it does about the researched phenomena.

3.4 Metatheoretical approaches offer different roles to values

Heidi: One important thing that calls our attention is how the powerful position of the knower is easily available to the researcher in scientific inquiry. According to Foucault (1989), one should not neglect the insight that scientific discourse in itself constructs a researcher as a knower and the phenomenon as a research object, the known. In the four different approaches we examine in this paper, the role of values is argued differently in knowledge production. When we argue for paying attention to a dialogue between the researcher and the material we should also stay alert of the actor positions the interaction calls us to take. I think that Tarja's research process would help us to elaborate on this issue.

Tarja: In my research on gender and entrepreneurship in the ICT sector, one of the big challenges I faced was connected to my commitment to feminism. I found myself conducting research, which aimed at striking a balance between furthering women's issues and producing scientific knowledge. I stand behind the 'true' spirit of Nordic equality discourse according to which women and men should have equal opportunities to venturing. I felt good about finding a digital services company owned by two women to study. This company was special: it operated in a trendy industry, it was one of very few owned women, the company had innovative service development, and the entrepreneurs had ambition to grow the company. Surely, it was one of the firms the Finnish media

named exceptional (cf. Niskanen, 2000). Nevertheless, I did feel sometimes a bit insecure among other entrepreneurship researchers, because many thought that a woman and a feminist must be biased to study female entrepreneurship.

Hanna: It seems obvious that your emancipatory interests affect your research setting and your conclusions. A constructionist researcher would not consider it problematic, but definitely an issue to be brought up as a part of reporting the research process. The question of bias is relevant particularly from the scientific realist point of view. The concept of 'bias' in itself calls us to understand that the difference between non-biased and, thus, right knowledge, and biased, and thus, wrong or non-adequate knowledge can be universally defined. In the scientific realist approach, the production of objective knowledge should be separate from subjective values, or at least, effort should be taken to minimize their effects.

Tarja: Sure I find it natural that my commitments are incorporated in what I consider worth studying, what theoretical tradition I draw on, or what aspects I emphasise. This belief led me to study female entrepreneurship in Information Society context, which proved to be a business environment rich with masculinities. But still, I almost had identity crises when I realised that I needed to analyse also masculinities to get a fuller picture of the femininities intertwined with entrepreneurship in ICTs (Pietiläinen, 1999). First, I felt that I was not loyal to feminist agenda. I sympathise with the idea of empowerment, which is a particularly well developed agenda in critical feminist studies (Campioni & Grosz, 1991; Calás & Smicich, 1996). I thought that bringing in analysis of masculinities would mean a step towards making the already hidden masculinities of entrepreneurship even stronger. As feminist I felt biased -

was I promoting the analysis of masculinities, because this line of inquiry would make me a more competent and trendy gender researcher?

Heidi: The question of bias is interesting. Critical theorists argue that marginalized views are hidden by the dominant discourses, and therefore, the researcher needs to search for theoretical insights that allow her to uncover the dynamics of domination (Alvesson & Skjöldberg, 2000). To critical theorists your concern about on whose side you are acting is a relevant one. As such, commitment to feminist ideology is not a problem, because it is the very key to analysing subjective values embedded in all knowledge. Critical theory research aims at revealing how subjective values are inherent in the 'objective' concepts and theories used. Your commitments should keep you on the side of the underprivileged, because it is they who need empowerment.

Tarja: My experience tells that it is not at all clear, how gender works in research. Gender is a lived, ontological category; it is such a hegemonic and invisible process that there is no doubt that it pervades scientific action. My solution was to analyse femininities and masculinities in the data and then consider how they construct entrepreneurship. However, I was not successful in reflecting practices of gender in my own knowledge production.

Hanna: A constructivist researcher would share your desire to be sensitive to different viewpoints and argumentations that construct the multiplicity of female entrepreneurship. From a constructivist position one could argue that we have common lifeworlds, which are constructed in social interaction and thereby, shared. A constructivist researcher would follow this idea by holding that there is always a myriad of individual rationalities, which become shared in the interactions between individuals (Czarniawska, 1992).

Tarja: Yes, and a constructionist focuses attention to the commonly circulated discourses, which construct gender in contextually rational ways. In my research this meant that I was interested in how discourses of entrepreneurship call upon bodied women entrepreneurs to act according to discourse specific responsibilities and rights of an entrepreneur.

Heidi: In our research team we are all female and that, I believe, is present in the ways we do research. I think that one way of doing gender is to pay attention to processes promoting gender-neutrality. For example, reference practices construct the position of knower. Whom do we want to grant this position? Historically, women's knowledges have had difficulties in surviving over generations (Spender, 1982). What can we do about it?

3.5 Evaluation criteria for qualitative research depend on the metatheoretical approach

Hanna: There is one more point that I would like us to discuss, and that is the evaluation criteria for qualitative research. Evaluating what counts as scientific knowledge is not very straightforward, and depending on the metatheoretical orientation, criteria for evaluating the research vary somewhat.

Heidi: I think this topic is important, as the field of qualitative inquiry is getting wider. We see more and more research, which is not reported in a familiar or conventional way. We encounter novel research settings, new research questions, unconventional methods and unexpected results. The concrete research reports have dispositions, which do not resemble other reports. What I find interesting is that due to these changes the well-established criteria for evaluating qualitative research on scientific realist premises do not apply

well anymore. The criteria seem not to grasp the depth of the novel research practices, and consequently, do not seem to provide proficient tools for evaluation.

Tarja: The format of the research report in itself is one way of validating the research. By that I mean that when presenting the findings and the process of the research in conventional established ways, research becomes scientific knowledge. In constructionist research, the format becomes ever more important as it is deeply understood that the research report in itself reproduces research discourse. It has been discussed for several years in business studies that even the case research following the realist premises does not fit well with the traditional research reporting format. The issue becomes even more pressing when talking about new interpretative methods.

Hanna: In my research on strategy discourse, I followed the guidelines according to which writing convincing research and providing a sound argumentation require using the 'right' referring practices, formal language with plenty of theoretical concepts and writing practices that efficiently factualise the findings. Following these guidelines, and wanting to convince everyone that I am competent in using theoretical concepts, I ended up producing a very single voiced report. Funny enough, the key point in my research was to deconstruct the single voiced practices in strategy making and to argue for multivoice strategy practices. In the future, I would like to enhance work on providing guidelines and ideas on novel ways of scientific writing and unconventional ways of reporting research findings.

Heidi: One way I tried to tackle this issue in my Ph.d. thesis was to start my research report with a personal story which talked about my own experiences on knowledge production. In the story I tell how I have dealt with feelings of being incompetent

when building a play-house with my brother when I was young. I ponder why I was not claimed to be the knower. With this story I set the stage for thinking what is defined as the right way of knowing and how it is decided, who has the right knowledge. However, not all fellow researchers accepted this as an essential part of a scientific work.

Tarja: My solution was to position the study carefully among the traditions of female entrepreneurship research as well as entrepreneurship research. I also described quite a bit my research process. I tried to make arguments which make sense within the constructionist realm of feminist research. Particularly I paid attention not to engage in what I call border war argumentation when making space for my study. This means I avoided arguments which build on paradigmatic differences. Well, I am quite happy with the line of argumentation. The down side of it is that readers who are not so familiar with constructionist or feminist theoretical argumentation have trouble following my work. I remember a comment of a good colleague: "Don't you know how to use subheadings. Give me common words. I need some air!" Qualitative, and constructive business research in particular, would benefit from making power/knowledge claims visible in more intelligible ways.

4. Conclusions

The above dialog on our own experiences in conducting empirical research shows that during the process of qualitative inquiry, it is often overwhelming to pay close attention to the terms of knowledge production and reflect one's own metatheoretical commitments inherent in one's own daily research decisions. This leads us to consider four important issues on academic discussion on reflexivity.

First, in practice, reflexivity manifests itself in a continuous debate that the researcher carries out with oneself. In that debate, the conventions, rules and practices common to different metatheoretical approaches, are strongly present. A process of reflexivity calls a researcher to question and re-question her choices over and over again. Such a process is filled with feelings of frustration and anxiety, and also, with feelings of clarity and inspiration. The theoretical discussion on reflexivity would benefit from researchers sharing their own experiences on the encounter with fuzzyness of methodological decisions in empirical qualitative research.

Second, reflection guides a researcher to understanding the ways by which metatheory informs the practicalities of empirical qualitative inquiry. The practical decisions always incorporate metatheoretical decisions. A researcher makes epistemological and ontological decisions when defining the purpose of research, choosing and collecting empirical material, analysing the material, making conclusions and evaluating the research. Typically, a beginner researcher starts the research process by seeking to define his or her own metatheoretical approach. Writings on metatheoretical approaches do not, however, provide guidelines for collecting and analysing research material and reporting the research results. A researcher feels very much alone in the interaction with the research material where she tries to construct 'no-nonsense' accounts of the world and the phenomenon under study. Therefore, it is important to guide those learning to become researchers to reflexivity, because it is through reflexivity that a researcher can understand the ways by which the practicalities of empirical inquiry are informed by metatheory.

Third, reflexivity is necessary in producing high quality results in qualitative research. Reflexivity leads a researcher to produce

legitimate and significant research results. Reflexivity is observable in the coherence of line of argumentation. Identifying the paradigmatic discourses present in the day-to-day research decisions empowers a researcher to generate a competent argumentation for her choices and decisions. Research results that have been produced through reflexivity provide a strong contribution for future research and also allow for identifying solid practical implications.

Theoretical discussion on reflexivity has established its importance in organisation and management research. Next, we call for presentations on researchers' experiences of reflexivity in qualitative research. Particularly, we welcome ideas on how to bring forth the researchers' learning processes. Ours has been very much a collegial one. Cynthia Hardy, Nelson Phillips and Stewart Clegg's (2001) as well as Dick Pels's (2000) idea of reflexivity which involves other researchers and the community in large corresponds to our experiences on learning through reflection. There are limits to an individual researcher's ability to identify her own blind spots. Others with other interests are often better equipped to point out critical connections, and thus, collegial processes create a valuable resource for reflexivity.

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**“Is Becoming a Researcher Some Kind of Role-playing” -
Roles of the Researcher in the Process of Forming the Identity**

Annukka Tapani

ABSTRACT

The first seminar as a PhD student: it was the first impression for me of the way to become a researcher. The roles taken during the research process formed my identity in many ways: sometimes I was like a tourist, sometimes a spy, a missionary or a prisoner. All the roles taken during the research process formed the identity in one way or another. Some roles are of more a social origin, some are more individualistic. In this article it is revealed how the roles can form the identity growth process while conducting a study.

The research question in this article is: how do the different roles taken during the research process reflect on the researcher's identity growth? The data consists of textual material on the research process. The content analysis is used as an analysis method. This article aims to contribute to the discussion about whether the formation of identity is of a social or of an individual origin.

Key words: Identity, Roles, Content Analysis

Introduction

The process started in the year 2002 when I was getting ready for my first seminar as a PhD student. My colleague asked me to be prepared for questions about the philosophical basis of my research. I read a lot and prepared myself for scientific discussion: the gate to the scientific world had opened and I was ready to take the challenge. This was my first step on the road to becoming a researcher. Being very enthusiastic about this possibility, I was very disappointed after the first seminar: no questions about the core points. I only got questions of whether we had some problems in our polytechnic. My research was about the formation of collective identity in the polytechnic.

Once I had the door opened, I had to go on. I wanted to know the core points of how to do science. I was happy to find a good “home” for my research in the phenomenological way of thinking. I was to study the concept of collectivity using critical incidents in our work

community (Patton 1990, 182-183). Phenomenology seemed to be the answer for my questions: in the phenomenological point of view a phenomenon can be seen in a pure way, the way it is. The individual experience is essential for understanding the core of the phenomenon. (Gorner 2001, 546; Priest 2002.) In my licentiate thesis I used the phenomenological way to see the core point of the phenomenon “we”; in this article I want to continue by using phenomenological way combined with content analysis to analyze the identity formation process during the steps of the research process.

The research question in this article is: how do the different roles taken during the research process reflect on the researcher's identity growth? As described above, I was very eager to be a part of the scientific community but as a novice I knew nothing about what it was like. So I had my dreams and in this article I will describe how the research process and the different roles taken during the process formed my identity as a researcher, and maybe as a person as well. The aim of this article is to take

part in the discussion of the identity forming process: is the formation of an identity of a social or of an individual origin. That question has interested the researchers in the field of social sciences for years (see e.g. Burr 2004).

The framework for the research process is the search for the truth: all the time I have been interested in finding the core point of the phenomenon "we-ness" and finding its true meaning. In thinking about the truth and its existence I got to know the realistic theory of truth (Puolimatka 2002). I began to think that it is absurd to study a phenomenon if I already think that it does not exist at all. It is absurd to do research on something that one can maybe never find or is always changing or re-constructed. In these early years I was so sure that the phenomenon of collective identity, "we-ness", must be "somewhere out there" and its existence does not depend on if we see it or not (e.g. Kalli 2005, 10). It was a fascinating thought that the "we-ness" is and stays forever no matter what changes happen. In the end of this article I will comment also on this claim.

In this article the methodology is understood in its wide way. The starting point is to understand the possibilities and restrictions of one study and its relation to the real world and other "real worlds". (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002, 11.) I am using here as an empiric setting. I am revealing my roles in the research process. The data analysis is done by using the content analysis method. Next I will take an overview of the theoretical framework. Then I will explain the methodology used. After that I will discuss the results of this study and its evaluation.

The Identity as a Concept

The identity of a person is something that is shaped during time in unconscious processes and its unity always includes some imagination. It always remains incomplete, is always in a process and develops all the time. Thus, we should not talk about the

identity but study identifications and see them as on-going processes. Identity has its origin in the deficiency of its unity in us: it is realized by the habits outside of us through which we think the others see us. According to Hall (1999, 39), we react to the expectations of our environment and try to develop our being according to them.

There is also some learning involved in the identity forming processes: the identities are produced and we have to learn that there are also other kinds of identities. Hall says that, for example, the "black identity" is not found ready and waiting but it is produced and delineated. To be a "black" is an identity that has to be learned. It has to do with the logic of separation: to be a "black" requires the understanding that there are also "whites" and "browns". (Hall 1999, 12-13.)

Identities must be learned and found but in several cases they overlap. Rummens (2003) suggests that identity is easily defined by sex, age, professional status, nationality or language. Identity is some kind of a stamp but identification has to do with categorising action. I, you and us, which is formed from these two possibilities, are a part of the basic understanding of the person's identity and its salience to the individualistic conception of self. Individual and social identification help a person and also groups to find their places in the wider social framework.

Sometimes is it up to the person to decide whether the group identity is needed. There are some special cases when a person must consider if he / she can cope with the situation by him / herself or with the group. A person considers his / her abilities to cope with the situation and compares the chances to the abilities of the group. This kind of a consideration is called self-efficacy (Bandura 1997). Sometimes there is also a need for joining the group in order to achieve changes in the society. This kind of an identity is called a project identity (Castells 2000).

The identity forming process can originally be driven from individualistic needs but sometimes there is a need for finding a common identity.

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There are some researchers, such as Eskola (1984), who assume that the community where a person lives, as well as the person's position and function in it, play a big role in forming the identity; the rest is a result of coincidences and various kinds of occurrences. Next I will take an overview of the concept of the social identity.

2.1 The Social Identity

To be a member of a group is said to be an origin for the identity but it can also be a ground for a separation: sometimes a group wants to separate itself from other groups and sometimes it may even dehumanize the members of the outgroup. (Helkama, Myllyniemi, Liebkind 1998, 291). This is said to be in direct relation to self-respect although there are some contradictory studies about that. Anyway, one of the essential tools for separation is language: the language is a forceful tool for creating the identity but also for separating the outgroup. Not all groups have the same power and status and the social identity is not always forming self-respect positively. The members of a group do not have the same power even in the forming of the identity of the group. (Ahlman 1967; Kaunismaa 1997; Helkama, Myllyniemi, Liebkind 1998, 311-312.)

In Harre's concept of social identity project a person tries to achieve an esteemed status in his / her community. To succeed in this he / she must have internalized the social heritage of his / her community. After that he / she must have the other members convinced about his / her values. Through this project the person constructs his / her privacy and uniqueness inside the social identity. He / she does not only adopt the social elements but tries to distinguish him/herself from the others as a personal self. Harrè says that in this kind of an individually based society it is expected that the individuals bring out their identity and personality. In addition to that, some individualistic ways to construct the

personality can be taken as parts of the social heritage of a community. (Ylijoki 2001, 241.)

A new way to behave can be taken as a new way to act by the whole group. All the members do not have the same power in changing the behaviour: the main point is, according to Ahlman (1967, 170), the degree of knowing the central values of collectiveness: some persons are considered more, some less members of the group and these can also vary during time. Also Kaunismaa (1997) says that there are some persons who create the identity, some assume it and some sustain what has been created. However, there still remains the question from Rummens (2003): what identities are predominant in what situations, why, and who is in charge of that. One answer to this kind of a question is offered by Brown (2000, 746-747): there is a difference between interpersonal situations and group situations: when individuals are co-operating the control in forming the identity is based on personal traits but in group situations the identity is formed via the membership of the group. As we see, Brown distinguishes the situations where people are "just" interacting from the situations where the group rules count. This also has to do with the conceptual thinking. It is interesting to think what differs a social group from a collective one. Next I will discuss this theme.

2.2 The Collective Identity

The social identity is easily defined by some kind of inherent features like sex, nationality or race. A person moves between the social identity groups along his lifespan; for example, different age groups or professional groups that may be the resources for identity have a different role in different times of life and a person moves from a group to another during his / her life. Some groups are defining the identity more than the others. Some groups, as well as some individuals, are more powerful in forming the identity. This was the question Rummens (2003) raised. One answer to that question may be found in distinguishing between the social and collective identities.

The collective identity is simply defined as an identity of a collective. A collective is defined as a loose group and an example of that might be a working society: a collective identity can be understood as a we-identity of a two-person collective or as a collective identity of a nationality consisting of millions of members. All we-identities between these extremes are named as collectives, too. The collective has or it forms for itself a special way to act. This common way to act is based on the common history. (van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, Monden, de Lima 2002; Helkama, Myllyniemi, Liebkind 1998; Kaunismaa 1997, 220-221.)

There is always something mythical in this kind of an identity. In many cases the collective identity is a part of the social establishment of the group. It is based partly on myths, but also on history and past. The identity is always constructed and it is based on the person's ability to see in the symbolic and linguistic expressions something that concerns him / herself. (Aarnio 1999, 12; Kaunismaa 1997, 222-223, 228-229.)

According to Mead (1962), identity constructs in human minds and in everyday action. The construction differs depending on the situation and who you are dealing with. The forming of the collective identity requires that a person reflects his / her thoughts and experiences to the attitude of the Generalized Other, gets feedback and modifies his / her behaviour according to that. To be a whole Self needs relationships to other Selves (Kuusela 2001, 69). At the same time each person modifies the attitude of the group because his / her behaviour gives a stimulus to others who then again change their behaviour according to that. The Generalized Other is made by the action of "I" and "Me" when we take the others' attitudes in our behaviour, especially those who are the significant others. These significant others can be real persons or they can be mental reflections of other persons in one's mind. (Blumer 1969, 65,68; Mead 1962, 154.)

As was discussed in the beginning of this article, there are several views to the origin of the identity. Some researchers have a more individualistic starting point to see how the identity is created, while the others stress more the collective or social points of view. In Table 1 I will present one possible way to see the identity forming process through different kinds of theoretical viewpoints.

Table 1. The identity forming process

Viewpoint		
Individualistic	Social	Collective
The need for completing the identity (Hall)	Social identity project (Harrè)	"I", "Me" and "the Self" processes (Mead)
Self-efficiency (Bandura) project identity (Castells)	Collectiveness (Ahlman)	Collective identity as a concept (Kaunismaa, Aarnio)

The Roles in Forming the Identity

Before thinking about the roles in this special process some clarification about the concept of role is needed. According to Castells (2000,7), roles arrange activities but identities are stronger sources for meaning. Mead (1962, 254) uses the concept of role in the interaction process: through taking the role of the other a person is able to come back on himself and thus direct her own process of communication. According to Goffman, it is important to make a difference between the real person and the role: acting in a special role does not mean that a person is really like the role. Goffman remarks that the real person taken off the role is as much a presentation like the original role was. (Peräkylä 2005, 361.)

As the role framework I use here Tranquist's (2005) and Eriksson's (1982) role describing terms spy, missionary, tourist and prisoner. Tranquist and Eriksson used them in the name

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of action research. They have studied scenarios that the interactive researcher may face. Tranquist has also studied some of the judgements, tensions and dilemmas that may occur in the immediacy of practice. Tranquist's starting point is a tale told by Eriksson and he elaborates Eriksson's metaphorical characters in terms of interactive research. (Tranquist 2005.)

The main roles in Eriksson's tale are the tourist, the spy, the missionary and the prisoner. The tourist signifies the production of knowledge and the spy illustrates the conflicts of loyalty. The missionary deals with the issues of what the researcher can and cannot affect, while the prisoner on social training addresses the fact that the researcher still remains a captive, only now under someone else's constraint. (Eriksson 1982; Tranquist 2005.) I will next carry out a short overview of these different types.

Tourism is what we call people's activities when they travel and reside in places out of their ordinary setting. Some tourists travel to sunny locations, others travel out of interest for unknown cultures. One group of tourists travel simply to be able to say that they were there. Tranquist (2005) points out that within interactive research one can probably find representatives from all these categories.

The suspicious spy can be seen as a threat to the present order. The researcher has to do a lot to convince the members of the organization of her personal and professional credibility. Reciprocal trust must be established and it is important that the spy has the allegiance of the staff or that of the administration. (Tranquist 2005).

The missionary is often perceived as a character spreading justified beliefs to others less enlightened and the word prisoner includes the meaning that one is deprived of freedom of expression or action or that someone is serving a prison sentence (Tranquist 2005).

Next I will move on to the content analysis and discuss what kinds of meanings the roles have for the researcher's work. I will also take an overview on the connection of each role with the identity forming process.

Content Analysis: the Roles in Forming the Researcher's Identity

In this article I am using the theory-bound way of content analysis. Here content analysis means the aspiration to describe the content of documents by words. I am here testing the framework of the theory in a new context. There are some theoretical connections and the units of analysis are taken from the theory: the content is formed by the data but it is surrounded by the theoretical framework. (see e.g. Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002, 98-99, 107.) In this case there are some elements of the data-bound analysis, too: I try to "see" the implications in the data and I am working like Laine (2001) suggests: the data is described, analysed and the implications are interpreted by these means, and after this the synthesis is done. In the US tradition of content analysis there is no advice for doing it in a theory-bound way but the principle is that the analysis follows the principles of the data-bound content analysis. The difference lies in connecting the theoretical concepts and the data: in theory-bound content analysis the concepts are taken from the theory (see e.g. Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002, 116).

The main steps are, according to Miles and Huberman (1984), the reduction of the data, grouping of the data and creation of the theoretical concepts. In this study the theoretical concepts are taken from the theory and the main ones are the roles and the identity. I will next describe the process verbally: first I will connect the described roles with the action of the researcher and also describe the role in forming the identity. The theoretical analysis is presented in Table 2. In the next chapter I will describe the research process and the roles taken during that process. The key words are bolded in the text. The reduction is grouped in Table 3.

The tourist is somehow seen to be either curious about new places and things, or just wanting to rest and have fun. In the role of a researcher, these points offer us different kinds of views: does the researcher want to set herself in an unknown situation and maybe even take personal risks or does she want to use the methods that she is used to and familiar with. In an unknown place and situation the tourist, as well as the researcher, may face communicative problems (see Tranquist 2005): confusion of language, discursive patterns, but also cultural differences: the tourist as well as the researcher has to adjust to unfamiliar locations.

While setting herself in new settings and unknown situations, the researcher learns also about herself and, as we can later notice, also becomes more like herself. It is typical of the tourist that even though it is nice to be abroad it is also nice to come back home. No matter how well integrated the tourist gets in the new setting, there will always be the feeling of not being completely at home. It might be compared to the feeling of a researcher who uses a method that is not completely suitable for her research style. The study goes on well but somewhere there is a feeling of not "being at home" with it. (Tranquist 2005.)

Regarding the tourist-researcher from the viewpoint of the identity forming process it can be noticed that that to be a tourist has a very social origin as far as identity is concerned: the tourist wants to see new places and learn from them but also learn something of him / herself. And last but not least: it is nice to be abroad but it is always nice to come back home. This resembles a lot Harrè's description of personal identity project: a person wants to learn from the surroundings, from other people and try to complete his / her identity. (see e.g. Ylijoki 2001) Anyway, it is important that a person herself knows what elements are needed to complete the identity. It is like a tourist: he / she sees new places and attractions but not all of them are remembered. Only the best

parts are kept along, no matter whether it is a tourist abroad or a researcher forming his / her identity in the tourist way.

Harrè's identity theory is quite like Mead's theory of the Self (Mead 1962): other persons are needed in order to become the whole Self. Mead's theory does not fit so well to the tourist way of acting because the tourist always sees new places; in forming the Self the significant others play such a role that these others cannot be just anyone but they must be significant: they must have some kind of a place in the individual's mind already. Maybe after once being abroad a tourist could use the forming of the Self theory, too: maybe he / she has found some significant others who later form his / her identity and the Self. The tourist's role in forming the identity is, anyway, very social: to be curious, brave and a little bit risk-taker are the core points in the action of the tourist but also in the forming of the identity in a social way.

To be a spy creates an imaginary picture of a person who tries to find out things without herself being recognized. The role of the spy demands a lot of trust-building and also trust-keeping. If the trust is broken the results can be very hurtful and even disastrous or chaotic. To be a spy and a researcher entails a thought that something is done is secretly, or for someone's needs. Sometimes it can be a good way to reveal the real thoughts but this kind of action in doing research would raise a lot of ethical questions.

Because of the secret way to act it can be thought that the spy role in identity building is of an individualistic origin: a spy must act alone and trust only him / herself. But if the spy is not spying for only his own fun he needs somebody who gives the orders. Then the role in identity forming becomes more complicated. The role can be seen from the ingroup - outgroup position (Helkama et al. 1998): if the spy wants to be a member of some group he / she might spy for them in order to get a membership as a reward. But even then the starting point can be very individualistic: it is his / her own need to become a member of a group and fulfil his / her

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identity this way. Then it could also be seen as a project identity (Castells 2000): a person wants some change, in this case in his / her own life, and he / she wants to become a member of some group. To spy for them is his / her personal project in order to get a member of the group make the changes he / she wishes.

As a researcher's role the missionary could be at first very impressive: the researcher comes and tells people how things should work. It has to do with authority, as one person is easy to listen to and believe while the others are not so powerful. In a long term, the missionary role can be a burden: the researcher has to know the right answers to the questions and solutions for the problems that have arisen. It can also irritate some members of the staff: if the researcher is the only one whose opinions count some may feel that their knowledge and skills are nonsense, although they may have years of experience in doing their work.

A missionary way of forming identity is very much like Harré's identity project and its part of trying to make one's own personal traits as parts of the ways to act in the group. Like Harré says, it is possible that some individualistic ways to construct personality can be taken as parts of the community heritage. If a missionary is powerful enough that can happen. But, as was described, the missionary way to act can also irritate the others. Anyway, the missionary in identity forming process is very sure that his / her values are the same as the collective has and he may be quite sure to have power in the group. The weakness in this kind of identity project is that there may be some resistance in the group if the missionary starts to irritate them: the missionary may be alienated from the ingroup.

Tranquist (2005) compares the role of the researcher to a prisoner when the researcher is strictly held inside academia. Tiller (2004) points out that as soon as the researcher meets the empirical settings and the people who work there she may realize that what

she thought to be the core issues are nothing but peripheral ponderings.

The prisoner likes to think in the identity forming way: if someone is held inside how could he / she form the identity? Just like the prisoner may have dreams of freedom, the prisoner in identity forming process may have dreams of becoming "a better person". While being a prisoner, this is possible via imagination and by using pictures of imagined persons. At the first look the prisoner seems very individualistic in forming his / her identity: if someone is just alone in the cell the impact of others is non-existent. But, as was said before, there may be dreams of a better future and being a better "me"; so the prisoner way in identity building is not so hopeless as it looks from the first sight. Mead's (1962) theory on the Generalised Other would fit well with the prisoner way in creating "the Self": in Mead's theory it is many times said that the significant others do not have to be really present but they can form one's identity as well by being mentally present.

In Table 2 the roles and their impact on the identity forming process are concluded. By connecting the roles with the identity forming processes I will next go on to the empiric setting: I will describe shortly the research process and then figure out what kinds of roles where present in this research process and what impact they had on the identity forming process empirically.

Table 2 The roles and their impact on identity formation

Roles	Tourist	Spy	Missionary	Prisoner
Theoretical connection to the identity forming process	Social origin: Harre's identity theory, also some elements of Mead's theory	Individual-istic: has to do with the ingroup - outgroup – setting (e.g. Helkama et al.)	Individual-istic inside the social: By this the person constructs his / her privacy and uniqueness inside the social identity (Harré).	Social identity: e.g. the Generalised Other (Mead)

Description of the Research Process: The Roles of the Researcher in this Study

In my licentiate thesis (Tapani 2007) I studied the collective identity in the Satakunta Polytechnic, which is nowadays called the Satakunta University of Applied Sciences. I use here the term "polytechnic" because it was the right term in those days I conducted the study there.

The polytechnics are new actors in the educational field in Finland. They have been a part of the Finnish education for about 10 years. The background for creating this new educational institution was the fact that the colleges were found to be too separated from each other. The challenge for the polytechnics is how to find a collective identity. The community of teachers is very pluralistic. (Liljander 2002a, Liljander 2002b.)

The polytechnics were meant to be an answer for the on-going changes in the Finnish working life. By this modernization the quality of the education was to get better and attention was paid to the changes in the Finnish society. The purpose of the polytechnics was to provide professional growth for the students and also to support the working life and its development. They were also to serve local regions and this was one of the things that separated them from the universities. This also made the universities notice their regional effects and possibilities. Nowadays, according to the law, the polytechnics and universities are the two parts of the Finnish higher education system. (Rask 2002, <http://finlex1.edita.fi>.)

The context for the licentiate study was the Satakunta Polytechnic. It is an institution of professional higher education operating around the region of Satakunta in western Finland. The Satakunta Polytechnic has ten educational units located in Harjavalta, Huittinen, Kankaanpää, Pori and Rauma. In addition, the polytechnic has two separate research and development units, O'Sata - Centre for Research and Development, and CACE - Centre for Adult and Continuing

Education, which operate in all five towns. The polytechnic operates under the administration of the city of Pori. The total number of students is 6417. The total number of staff members is 530, of which there are 310 full-time workers. The Satakunta Polytechnic offers education in five fields of study: Business, Fine Art and Media Studies and Tourism; Social Services and Health Care; Technology and Maritime Management. The institution was established in 1997. All of its units have not been in the polytechnic for the same time. (www.samk.fi)

Understanding the "we-ness" in the organisational context is important for many reasons. Kyrö (2005, 23) names organisational entrepreneurship as one form of entrepreneurship. Work is nowadays done mostly in teams and teams are responsible for their results (see e.g. Juuti 1998). To take responsibility of one's work has also to do with the concept of empowerment (see e.g. Ruohotie 2001). The feeling of being a part of a team is important because then everyone feels that the work done alone and together is meaningful.

The research process itself started in the first seminar I described in the beginning. I got a possibility to have a **presentation** there. It was very exciting. It was the first **sign for me of being a member** of the scientific community. The **instructor** told me that I should read more and more; in Tranquist's (2005) terms I felt to be a tourist in a foreign country where all the other people seemed to be familiar with each other and language used but they seemed to be curious about me and they were also friendly and helpful.

After reading and taking part in other seminars I started to **feel more like home** in the scientific community but because of the **difference of the studied themes** it was hard to find a real dialogue and the feeling of the tourist was still present. My instructor asked me to acquire some test answers to get to know my subject better. Because of the **instructor's main role** in this phase the feeling of the prisoner was there too: I felt I had to do as the instructor told me. It was due to my insufficient knowledge, as I

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see it now. I had no possibility to scientifically argue with her.

I **emailed** the test questions to chosen people in our polytechnic. At the same time I **worked** as a project manager in the central administration. Although I tried to send a happy and very positive email to my colleagues I could not help feeling like a spy while getting to know their secret feelings and thoughts. I could not act like a tourist because I had worked there for three years and it was impossible for me to take the role of the outsider. I knew that the answers were written in an honest way; I could not have had that thought if I were in a tourist role. Somehow my role was also a prisoner and a missionary; **as an officer** in the central administration my letter could be read in a “we ought to do this” way. Missionary is the one who preaches for the thing he/she thinks is the right one. Some of the respondents may have read my letter in the “prisoner” style: they may have thought that I am a prisoner of the power of the central administration.

The analysis process was done according to five steps: The research data was collected by a qualitative email interview sent to a sample of 60 members of the personnel, a sample chosen by using the critical incident strategy (Patton 1990). I received 39 answers. The chosen members represented all of the personnel. The data analysis had five steps:

1. In the first step argument analysis was used. The data was studied by searching for the arguments, what lies behind them and what the bases for the arguments are.
2. The second step was rhetoric analysis: psychological and linguistic approaches were taken along. The arguments were completed as narrative stories.
3. Then, the researcher herself wrote down her thoughts on the stories: how convincing the stories were; to whom they were written; what kinds of means were used in trying to be convincing; how successful these means were in reaching the intended audience; what

was the writers` s own position; and what else did the stories make the reader think.

4. After that, eight other people were asked to member-check the analysis - the stories by using the terms of rhetoric analysis.

5. The researcher coded the data at the same time by using the NVivo qualitative analysis program. The logos, ethos and pathos were searched from the data in the NVivo coding.

All the time during the analysis process I tried to act as an **outsider** and study the data as it was, not mixing my feelings with it. I tried to be very phenomenological. The roles, according to Tranquist (2005), were like the tourist and the spy. The tourist role carries with it the respect of the foreign country which here is the data that the researcher tries to understand and get to know. While writing the stories the role of the spy was present: the researcher-spy had tried to find what the answers have in common and take the clues and combine them with one another.

In the beginning of the process all new things were very fascinating and formulated my identity a lot. The identity forming process was of a very social origin: I wanted **to get into the community** of the researchers. The first seminar was a good starting point for that because, as a tourist, I took the chance to step to a foreign country as soon as it was offered to me. It carried along a lot of risk-taking and trying to speak the official language but, anyway, it also gave me such possibilities that formed my identity for a long time. Also **meeting the original inhabitants**, meaning the more experienced researchers gave me possibilities to form my identity and check the way I wanted it to be formed. In the identity process this meant again the wish to be taken **seriously as a member** of the scientific community. In this phase some **realistic** points came alongside my enthusiasm: the researchers were still human beings and also some negative voices could be heard. Anyway, I continued to form my identity in a social identity way: I listened to others, studied a lot and had a very much personal identity project going on. There were also some Mead points of views because I wanted to become a researcher, whatever it meant: the

concept of being a researcher had formed in my mind by the significant others who were more or less **imaginary persons**.

The spy role formed my identity as well: I was working in the central unit and somehow I hoped that doing this research **would help me** in getting a permanent job: this theme is very important for the managers and leaders in all kinds of organizations. This way the spy role made me live according to the expected hopes of the leaders.

The role of missionary was present in writing the report. I as a researcher wanted to write in a way that could **convince the readers**. I got a lot of feedback about that: I was told that I am trying to be very convincing although my arguments are not scientifically valid. I tried to convince my readers and also my listeners in seminars. That was a surprise for me. I was very surprised of these comments by my instructor: I was said to be a **proclaimer** in writing and in speaking. Anyway, in those times I **made friends** with the other students and the collegial support was very remarkable.

In writing the report I was really like a missionary and that had an impact on my identity process, too. There were neither time nor place where I did not want to tell people about my research. It really made me wonder that noone inside the organization was interested: in the previous phase I had a strong belief that **this is important** and could help all the employees to feel better in the job and to let all know about the results could also help the leaders to be better in their work. Maybe I was too **enthusiastic** about my study and the fact that I was too **noisy** irritated the others. This might be the reason for people not taking me seriously inside the polytechnic. But this missionary identity process still helped me to get some presentations in seminars and thus this individual **identity fulfilment** served the social identity process as a whole.

Comments on the report from an outside evaluator really gave me a "kick-off" to grow as a researcher. I had tried to read the answers as they were and tried to find their core meanings. I thought that I could find the truth as it appears to these respondents. When using the phenomenological way of thinking it is important that the researcher clears his / her pre-thoughts. It is important to get right in to the subject, have no pre-thoughts and be open to findings. (see e.g. Järvinen and Järvinen 2000, 206-207; Varto 1996, 85-89).

In trying to **be convincing** in researching my own colleagues I decided to use the word "researcher" in my report when describing what I had done. I tried to be **objective** to my data also in this rhetoric way. I was very much a prisoner for what I had studied about objectivity and tried to act as is suitable for that role. It was very important for me that my own feelings or thoughts cannot be read in my report, remembering the feedback of my instructor. Using the word "researcher" for all what I had done made me feel to be on a safer ground and made me feel that the results are done not by me but by the respondents.

This all has to do with my search for the truth. But it also includes some theoretical thoughts. To write using the word "researcher" while writing about myself has also to do with my theoretical framework, George Herbert Mead's symbolic interactionism. In this theory the Self develops through the interaction between "I" and "Me". "I" is the active part of the Self, and it acts in the present time. "Me" is the part of the Self that we can evaluate and criticize. (Mead 1962, 173-174; Kuusela 2001, 69). If I had written my report using the word "I" it would need a lot of explaining if I meant to be "I", "Me" or maybe the "Self".

It was interesting to see how I really was a **prisoner of my thoughts** and beliefs. It was great that an **outsider person** read my study and seriously commented on it. It had a positive effect also on the identity process: it really gave me **self-respect** and vision of someday being a member of the community of the researchers. Although I was a prisoner of my theory and my

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philosophical points of view I had this kind of an imaginary community to which I now had a loose connection.

Anyway, this was the main stage where I had to start to think about **who I really was** in doing the research. I got feedback from my report and had a long discussion on the “researcher” – “I” theme. Afterwards I noticed that it also has to do with self-consciousness. Earlier, when I was unsure about my research it was easier to write in a way that

seemed to be objective. I thought that objectiveness seemed to increase credibility. While the process went on I became more ready to take responsibility for what I had done and why. Then it became possible for me to be I. The research steps with the roles and identity process are summed up in Table 3.

Table 3. . The steps in the research process, their contents and the researcher`s role

The steps in the research process	Including	The researcher`s role	The identity process
First seminar	First presentation	Tourist: speaking with the strangers and using a new language in a new context	Need for getting in ingroup: Social identity process
Getting started and taking part in seminars	Reading, getting advice, reading more, presentations, listening to others presenting, communicating with others	Tourist: different themes, many kinds of discussions, the instructor in a leading role	Need for getting in ingroup: Social identity process
Data gathering	Data gathering in the polytechnic	Spy: spying what my colleagues really think	My personal interest in the data and getting a permanent job: Individualistic identity process
Data analysis	Argument and rhetoric analysis, member-check analysis, NVivo coding	Spy: interest in what the data is about, what they are speaking about – spying for the polytechnic (maybe?) Tourist: informing the	First my analysis as a spy: thinking that this will interest the managers in the polytechnic, after that the need for being accepted as a member in scientific community: From individualistic to social identity process

		results in the community of the researchers – am I now one of us, or still a tourist?	
Writing a report	Trying to make all parts to fit together in a congruent way	Missionary: need for proclaiming what the staff really thinks	I wanted to declare my results and get a membership, or a job: Individualistic process inside the social identity forming process
Feedback	Comments on my report from the evaluator	Prisoner: the search for the truth still goes on - feeling of depression if the truth of the “we-ness” cannot be found	I was keen on getting the study completed and getting the membership among the researchers (imaginary community): Social identity process
Post Scriptum: writing this article	My own evaluation of the research process	Spy: now spying the work done by myself Tourist: interest for new countries still goes on – possibilities to new presentations etc.	Interest for meta-evaluation of the process and interest in the membership in a community of researchers, need for taking part in seminars etc.: Social identity process

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As a result, in these seven phases of the research process I had the tourist role four times, spy role three times, and missionary and prisoner roles both once. The socially based identity process was present in four phases and the individualistic process in two phases. In one step there was a process proceeding from individually based identity project towards the socially based identity.

In Table 4 I connect the roles with their effect on the identity forming process.

Table 4. The roles and their theoretical and empirical impact on identity forming process

Roles	Tourist	Spy	Missionary	Prisoner
Theoretical connection to the identity forming process	Social origin: Harre`s identity theory, also some elements of Mead`s theory	Individualistic: has to do with the ingroup - outgroup – setting (e.g. Helkama et al.)	Individualistic inside the social: By the project the person constructs his / her privacy and uniqueness inside the social identity (Harré).	Social identity: e.g. the Generalised Other (Mead)
Empirical setting	Need for getting in ingroup	Personal interest but also a will to serve the leaders	Declarative but also a need for a membership	Need for a membership in an imaginary community

Conclusion: The Roles in Forming the Identity

The results show that the roles have a remarkable effect on the identity forming process. But it can also be seen that there is a need for the identity forming process: as a novice researcher, or novice in any area, all seems so interesting and sometimes very hard to understand. So the roles are also driven from the situation and the person`s need and will to develop and take new challenges.

The empirical data confirm the theoretical framework well. The restriction of this study is the lack of possibilities for the researcher to take some other roles in some phases of the research process: to be part of the community does not easily allow for taking the role of the tourist because the language

and terms used are familiar from the everyday life. The results of the roles and their effect on the identity growth might have been different if the researcher were an outsider in the working community. The need for the identity growth also depends on the person`s own need to develop his / her identity. Anyway, it is significant that identity growth is not controlled by the individual or the social community alone but both sides are needed. A person needs to decide whether he / she wants to develop the identity and, after that, reflection is also needed. It is important to reflect in an authentic and honest way on what have been the elements that have caused the changes in the identity forming process. It is also important to pay attention to the social communities that are not present but are still forming us to be what we are.

What did I then learn from this process? In the beginning of the process I thought that I am a

realist: as I confessed, I was searching for the truth. During the process I learned to understand the critical interest of knowledge (see e.g. Kyrö 2004, 63). At this point I confess to be a neorealist: according to that we believe that there can be a reality somewhere outside the human consciousness but reality can also be something else than that. It can be constructed in human minds or it can be social. When thinking this way, constructivism is not the opposite of realism. Constructivism and realism can be combined in different ways in individual thinking. In some cases, a constructivist can be a realist and vice versa. This can be called realistic constructivism or neorealism. (Tynjälä, Heikkinen and Huttunen 2005, 21, 23.)

I thought that I am hooked on phenomenology in a too one-eyed way. I had a feeling that I am too close to my research interest and I tried to do all I could to outsource myself. By studying the roles I took during the research process my eyes opened to metaconceptual awareness (Tynjälä, Heikkinen and Huttunen 2005, 25). Although it is said that the researcher's work is a lonely work other persons are also needed, in Mead's terms significant others.

One question in social sciences has been the relation between the individual and the social. According to Burr (2004, 13, 18), a human being is a morally oriented free thinker who has his unique thoughts, beliefs and values. An individual is defined through his internal psychological state and is apart from the material reality and from the other individuals. In psychology a human being is described as an individual whose nature is not dependent on the social environment around. Lukes (1973) writes that there exists an abstract human being and every human being has her own special characteristics that are there in spite of the society she lives in.

To become the owner of the research process has to do with the criticism of Mead's theory. The criticism is related to its behaviorism: does a person change his / her

behaviour according to outside stimulus and react against it? In my professional growth story it went like that as long as I tried to make my research according to only my instructor's information and advice. Anyway, that part of the learning process was like reacting against stimuli but I was not in charge of my process then. The learning happened according to social behaviorism. It is important to listen to others in the group but also every single member has an impact on the others in the group. The members are not only reflecting the stimuli they get from others but also changing their behaviour according to the stimuli. The behaviour they reflect back is always individually changed. It is not enough to just react but in order to learn and change it is also important to recognize the situation, the significant others and modify one's behaviour to be suitable for them.

In my learning process the outside stimuli have played a big role but they have needed internal interpretation: it has been important to see oneself through the others' eyes, using the significant other as the Generalized Other. It has not been an easy way and the process is still going on. It has been an empowering experience to get feedback and advice but still have the feeling that the final decisions are made by me.

According to Mead (1962, 162), the Self can be a whole self only if one is part of some group, reflecting his/her thoughts and acting in a context, getting feedback. A human being is said to be totally social and to grow as a whole "Self" is only possible through social processes (Kuusela 2001, 68). First, the human beings have to manifest themselves and be aware of each other (Ahlman 1967, 159). To be a whole Self one's Self has to manifest itself and the others and after that one has to be a part of some group. Through manifesting, confessing what has been done and reflecting the process also the researcher can become I, the owner of the process and her life.

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THE FALSE COIN OF REFLECTION?

Contributions, Reflection and
the Economic Logics of Academia

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ABSTRACT:

Reflection is often viewed as a specific intrapersonal process of epistemological questioning, but this is by necessity only part of the phenomenon. I will here argue for a critique of reflection and vanity in the social sciences by way of an inquiry into the academic economy. By recasting this as a hybrid phenomena, and then showing how such a reading can be used to reflect on the nature of reflection in academic work, I try to outline a project of developing a post-moralizing social science.

Keywords: economy, gifts, career, value, reflection in organization studies

A PRELUDE

Almost five thousand years ago, there were pilgrims walking to the Celestial City, as these two honest persons are: and Beelzebub, Apollyon, and Legion, with their companions, perceiving by the path that the pilgrims made, that their way to the city lay through this town of Vanity, they contrived here to set up a fair; a fair wherein, should be sold all sorts of vanity, and that it should last all the year long: therefore at this fair are all such merchandise sold, as houses, lands, trades, places, honours, preferments, titles, countries, kingdoms, lusts, pleasures, and delights of all sorts, as whores, bawds, wives, husbands, children, masters, servants, lives, blood, bodies, souls, silver, gold, pearls, precious stones, and what not.

And, moreover, at this fair there is at all times to be seen juggling cheats, games, plays, fools, apes,

knaves, and rogues, and that of every kind.

— John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*

What is reflected in reflection? In the gaze of vanity, which is the gaze of the one reflecting, what is seen? Reflection in social studies, as it is usually discussed, has peculiarly enough always meant one of two things; methodology or auto-biography. In the former case, reflection has become something of a meta-methodology, an invocation of doubt that has often taken on an almost ritualistic air – a whirlpool of continuous exhortations to think everything through just one more time, closely attending to the possibility that someone, somewhere, has not yet had their subjectivity properly mulled. In the latter, reflection has become a byword for evermore excessive exhibitions of academics wallowing in their own self-importance, in which people in the name of reflection can engage in seemingly endless diatribes regarding their own lives – something you'd think interests only themselves, if that. Not unsurprisingly, when

academics brandish the word “reflection”, many shudder and shy away.

In the following, I will attempt to do something slightly different, whilst still keeping to the notion of reflection. Often, this very word is taken altogether too literally, so that the reflection of which we speak is understood as that of a mirror. Such a device of, yes, reflecting surfaces, obviously does something that pleases the average researcher, namely portrays him or her anew, and thus gives the researcher the possibility to bask in his or her own glory once more. Reflection is through this closely related to vanity, and we can here see a connection to the way in which Slavoj Žižek (1993, 2000) has discussed the ideological, as the performative aspects of ideology will always be, in part, an identity-project (see also the discussion on “interpassivity” (Žižek 1998)). Consequently, much of what is written in the name of reflection is written to glorify the writer: “See my faults, my manifold of ways, my whole delightful being!” Such blatant exhibitionism, sometimes elevated to works of an oddly shameless art (where the willing suspension of disbelief is abused inasmuch as we are expected to think that the personal life, not to mention the personal feelings of the academic would in any way be interesting to the reading public), does however distract us from the more important and thought-provoking aspect of it all.

To reflect, i.e. to re-engage with some mode of thinking or expression, is at the same time an act of re-framing. Just as a mirror uses available light to throw back an image of what’s in front of it, reflection casts new light on something, illuminates it from another angle. This, then, is the other aspect of reflection – the less vain one – and it depends more on finding new ways to talk about a subject than merely repeating the formulaic infinite regress of “reflective science” as an identity project. Basically, this kind of reflection depends on our ability to talk about a phenomenon within a novel framework, making the familiar unfamiliar,

and thus stimulate a new way to talk of the phenomenon. Such a perspective is close to the thinking of the late Richard Rorty, who argued for the necessity of keeping an “ironical” attitude towards the vocabularies we use to make sense of the world, and strove to break with both the metaphysical notion that activities have simplistic and essential natures, and the egoistical idea that the spirit of research is somehow to be found within the mental states of the researcher herself (see Rorty 1989).

A recasting of this kind would of course best be achieved if we could totally break with the accustomed principles of sense-making, and create a sort of vertiginous aporia that would force us to rethink the very foundation of the thing we are reflecting on, or the very possibility of such a foundation. However, this is seldom possible. Not only is the creation of such fractures fiendishly difficult, but the nature of this process is such that the better one crafts such a recasting, the less likely it is that it will be understood and comprehended. We are thus caught in a double blind – truly important reflections will not be seen as reflections, whereas comprehensible reflections will always, to a degree, be plagued by their triviality. Consequently, any attempt at reflexivity needs to reflect on the issues of vanity (*Vanitas vanitatum, et omnia vanitas...*) and triviality, realizing that these will always play a part in the act thereof.

This said, the following will be an attempt to reflect on (social science) research by recasting it. I will here discuss the economic nature of research, arguing that this admittedly simple recasting can still shed some light on the complexities of the research life. Now, by discussing research as an economical activity I do not wish to reduce it, even though there is an aspect of the self-evident to this, but rather want to point out some of the processes that exist in the background of even the most reflective research. Whereas most analyses of research look to the social and personal aspects thereof, it is quite astonishing to

realize that little attention has been paid to the economic nature of research, particularly if we by “economic” mean something more complex than simple analyses of transaction costs or similar hackneyed models from economics. Thus, the following analysis of the academic draws primarily on economic anthropology, and attempts to place research activity into a more social framework of exchanges. Starting from a discussion of research as a hybrid economy, the paper will cover issues such as the commodity-nature of contributions as well as gifts and sociality in research. The paper will conclude with some remarks regarding the economic nature of reflection in the social sciences, and the aporia created by the notion of academic life as defined by hybridity.

RESEARCH AS HYBRID ECONOMY

What I here wish to argue is that a central fact of research as a human activity is that it is driven by both a generosity and a brazen calculative rationality, in other words that it represents a hybrid economy where gift-giving and post-industrial capitalism are merged and intermingled. Now, the idea that research has an economic side is not new, and there exists a large literature of economic analysis of the research process. The putative field of “the economy of research” can be said to have been founded by Charles Sanders Peirce, who saw notions such as limited resources and efficiency in inquiry as paramount for the development of science. In this vein, we have throughout the 20th and 21st centuries had a constant production of cost/benefit-analyses and calculations regarding the economic benefits of research. Looking to the life of individual academics, this can for example be seen in the process of writing grant applications, where statements regarding the benefits of the proposed research is often given a prominent place, and a rhetorical analysis of such statements could probably generate highly interesting findings. However, none of this is pertinent

to the argument that I attempt here. This hinges instead on the fact that the economic behavior of the individual academic engaging with the science community cannot be reduced to one single economic system, but that we instead must conceptualize a hybrid economy to make sense of it.

Hybridity in the sphere of the economic is a concept that has been suggested by a number of authors. The most developed notion may be that suggested by J.K. Gibson-Graham (1996, see also Yang 2000), where hybridity is presented as an analytical alternative to the common assumption that capitalism represents a completely penetrative and all-encompassing imperialistic function. Rather, they argue that in order to understand economic systems we have to relinquish the idea of stable and total such, and instead study the fluid intermingling of various systems. For instance, in her study of economic behavior in Wenzhou, Mayfair Yang (2000) shows how people from a predominantly rural society engage in capitalist production with a gusto, only to use their accumulated wealth in a ritualistic economy where one for instance quite literally burns money (actual, material bills) at burials and in other ways squander and waste this surplus (cf. Bataille 1967/1991). Here, two economies with fundamentally different structures do not simply co-exist, but intermingle and reinforce each other – capitalist production enables and aids the function of the ritual economy, and this again drives people to greater engagement with capitalism. To state that this economy “in reality” is one or the other would be to miss the very point of how it has been established and how it is performed. Instead, Yang argues that this is an example of a *hybrid economy*, one that has to be understood not through reduction to one of its forms or by claiming that it exhibits some set fraction of a specific form. Rather, it is the very intermingling of different logics that defines this economic nexus, a kind of a third space (see Bhabha

1994) for the economic where the limited models thereof are shown to be untenable. Further, a hybrid is always already an impure monster (cf. Douglas 1966), as its internal logic is that of inherent contradiction and performing a paradox. This does not, however, invalidate it as an analytical category, as it is this very aporia that can be used to explain specific logical flows not reducible to efficiency or other mono-logical concepts.

The central claim of this paper, then, is that academic work can be understood as a hybrid economy. And whereas there is much discussion about the social and socio-psychological aspects of life within the ivory tower, there is little similar reflection on the economic aspects thereof. These aspects are, however, integral and central to academia, even though we often out of ideological reasons seem to marginalize them. To refer to economic aspects seems to be to debase the research life, and although one would think that organizational scholars would be the last people to assume that a reference to economic life by necessity means a reduction, this still seems to be the case. The reason for this is easily deduced. Although it is well known that the notion of the economic cannot be reduced to merely a caricature of bourgeois capitalism, there still exists an assumption that we by a reference to the economy are talking about one of its facets, namely that of the idealized market. At the same time, economic anthropology, among several other disciplines, has for (at the very least) the last 30 years (see e.g. Sahlins 1972, 1976) operated with the assumptions that the economic is a complex manifold, where several potentially conflicting logics work in concert to structure exchange. Thus the claim that recasting a phenomenon as an economy would here not refer to a reduction but rather to a contextually constituted system of exchanges that can be structured in a number of different and complexly aggregate ways.

Looking at academic life as an economy, we can state that this at the very least consists of three interlocking economic spheres: a *gift* economy, a *social* economy, and a *market* economy. Taken together, the irreducible complexity of these spheres intermingling constitutes academia as a hybrid economy. While it is not possible to delimit behaviors therein as purely being part of one or another, the three spheres do however help us to create at least a tentative order of economic behaviors. We shall therefore treat them in parts, even though this should be understood as merely a simplification and a kind of epistemological shortcut. After considering these three constitutive parts, we will return to the issue of hybridity.

Claims that academia is a *gift economy* are not unheard of, and in fact seem fairly prevalent (see e.g. Hyde 1979), particularly if more polemical statements are taken into account. The way in which scholars are prepared to engage with this concept could be understood in a number of ways – such as a strive to portray oneself as a moral being and as a political move used to position academic work outside of the demands of the market economy – but it also shows a critical aspect of how exchanges work within academia generally. The traditional definition of a gift economy (see e.g. Mauss 1924/1990, Berking 1999, Godelier 1999) describes this as an economic structure where gift-giving is seen as the most characteristic form of exchange, i.e. one where the gift rather than the priced commodity is seen as the default unit of economic action. In such a structure, we normally assume that economic behavior is chiefly ordered around three functions/requirements: the necessity of giving, the requirement to receive, and the need to reciprocate (see e.g. Mauss 1924/1990, Rehn 2002). In classic gift economies, such as the potlatch (or to use Chinook jargon, *patshatl*) and the *kula*, this meant that in order to be a member of society, one had to give specific ritual gifts, likewise accept gifts given, and that all gifts

had to be in some way reciprocated (see Derrida 1992 for a critique). This created a circulation of gifts and counter-gifts which defined the economic nexus for the societies engaged herein. When we refer to academia as a gift economy we are invoking something similar. Much of what is produced in a university is given away, so that e.g. important research findings are distributed through the academic journals without the scholar receiving any monetary compensation. In fact, we are so happy to give away our findings and/or opinions that we celebrate when we've managed to efficiently give away some by publishing it. Of course, when we do so we acknowledge (receive) similar gifts given by referencing important contributions and the likes, and our new publication can thus in a way be seen as a form of reciprocity. Keeping just to the process of academic publishing, we can read this as a kind of ongoing spiral of gift-giving, where every member of the community continuously both gives, receives, and reciprocates. The element of gifting in academia can be manifested through a number of channels, with publication being just one, but this is an illustrative example. Much of what goes under the label of academic work is arranged as a process of gifting (advice, results, references, findings, and so on), and this means that we at least in part can talk about academia as a gift economy.

This can be contrasted with another structure, one I'd like to call the *social economy*. Whereas the gift economy is structured by way of symbolic entities, a social economy is organized through relations. This distinction, which is very tenuous, should be understood merely as an orienting device, but it may enable us to discuss some of the more intangible aspects of organized economic behavior in academia. We can start by exemplifying. All active academics will at some point undertake some reviewing, and active senior researches will often be inundated with such engagements. This will entail everything from the relatively simple job of

refereeing articles or books, to the more arduous processes of assessing thesis manuscripts or, in a worst-case scenario of sorts, assessing the work of several prominent scholars who have applied for the same chair. This is of course hard work, and normally it is done either *pro bono* or for a nominal fee not in line with the work entailed. What is interesting here is that the smooth functioning of academia requires and presupposes that people will commit themselves to such work, even though it is clearly not in the immediate best interest of the individual. Clearly, there is an element of *quid pro quo* here, so that I will in part take on work due to the fact that I know I will need similar favors in the future (e.g. securing people to appraise doctoral students), but this does not fully describe this operative logic of favors. We could instead say that our continuing existence within the field of academia requires and builds on certain social processes that will form our behavior within it. The requirement to devote oneself to the craft and take part in certain jobs regardless of their pay-off is an integral part of academia, and thus in part constitutes what could be called its economy. The difference to the gift economy may seem tenuous, as favors of the kind discussed here could be understood as a form of gifts (cf. Ledeneva 1998), but I contend that within the structure we are discussing, there is a difference. Whereas gifting is tied to a productive logic, wanting to gain in standing, reputation, and honor, the social economy is built on more of a reactive mode, where we will be prepared to take on irksome and arduous tasks because not to do so would seem callous or shameful. The social economy thus refers to the ways in which social forces such as peer pressure or tacit demands can order activities in ways that cannot be reduced to the restricted understanding of the economic. A somewhat trivial point, perchance, but important when re-considered in the context of hybridity.

Referring to gifts and the social can however also work in a way that masks the existing market structures of universities. Whereas it is clear that there is an aspect of gift-giving and social relationships to scholarly work, we cannot be blind to the fact that there is also a very tangible market structure to academia. In a situation where an increasing amount of particularly junior academics and post-doctoral researchers get by on short-term financing, and where competition for grants, positions and tenure are fierce, it would be naïve to discount such a fact. Still we often fail to acknowledge how e.g. publications and academic activities in fact constitute a form of currency, and further something that can conceptually be treated as a scarce resource. As getting an article published in a prominent international journal can have a tangible and measurable effect on things such as career possibilities and even salary, the market economy of academic work cannot be discounted. In fact, it would be fairly easy to describe the activities of a scholar as direct utility maximization, if one was so inclined. Articles form commodities, traded on one market (the journals) for publication points, which can then be used in negotiations on another market (work opportunities). But as this seems a very harsh way to view e.g. scholarly publishing, we usually ignore these aspects. I will not here detail the market properties of university life, as I assume these are mostly well known, merely point to this third economic sphere and move onto the issue of hybridity.

My argument, as previously stated, is that economic activities within academia must be considered, but that they *cannot be reduced* to one single conceptualization of the economic. Instead, in order to form a reflective understanding of academic economy, we must deploy a complex set of understandings, which in their turn could build on the notion of academia as a hybrid economy. Within the structure that has developed over the ages, there co-exists a number of logics which cannot be

understood in isolation, and these logics can thus be interrogated only in part as solitary phenomena. Rather, they must be understood as fundamentally intertwined into each other, so that the gift-nature of an academic publication must be understood both through this specific nature and also, at the same time, through their place in the social structure and the market economy of the university system. This is the logic of the hybrid, that we can only understand phenomena in parts, and that we at all times must pay heed to the dialectical flow within which our understandings are constituted. By saying that academia is a hybrid economy I am stating that my understanding of its economic nature is one of irreducible complexity, and that we must be able to deploy several, inherently paradoxical logics to make sense of it. On one level, we are of course making sense of it simply by living it, and our embodied sense of academic life is well equipped to take care of these matters. But when we start to talk about reflecting on our academic practices, we cannot simply refer to such embodied understandings, but must instead deploy more overt explanations. Here hybridity can help, and I will in the following use the logics I've tried to outline in order to make sense of two things: the status of contributions and the economic logic of reflection.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND REFLECTION AS COMMODITIES

An issue often raised among social scientists is that of the "contribution". Sometimes this refers merely to a ritualistically repeated question in seminars, where words such as "contribution" or "epistemology" are bandied about simply to divert attention from the fact that no-one is actually talking about anything remotely sensible (you know who you are), but despite this the issue does have something of interest to it. When we contribute, we clearly do something more than simply write a text or suggest something. Etymologically,

the word comes from the Latin *contribuere*, which means to pay tribute together. A tribute, again, is an offering. Originally this meant something paid to a ruler or figure of power for protection (often from the power itself), but has later begun to be understood as any offering, even a most symbolic one of praise, so that we can pay tribute to a beloved colleague or to a rock band. Observing the communal nature of many such tributes, the social cohesion implied in the notion of con-tribution thus strengthens the aspect of sacrifice and the “common good”. A contribution is not merely something brought to the party, it is a question of partaking in a shared activity, a public function.

It would be easy to psychoanalyze the obsession with contributions in organization studies, as this clearly is a symptom of lack – lack of cohesion, lack of community and the ever-present desire for completion (cf. Žižek 2000). At the same time, as the preoccupation with this phenomenon is so clearly an aspect of the social order of academia, it seems that ascribing it merely to such a psycho-pathology would be too simple. Instead, we have to note how contributions are something beyond gifts, and how they stand as overdetermined signifiers of the academic condition. Whereas we in the iterative process of ongoing publication of research can find traces of a gift economy, the moral category of contribution can be said to represent a more deep-rooted sense of academia as a community, and the economic structure this imposes. The publication, read as a gift, carries the name of the author and thus brings honor to her. The contribution, however, is in part an offering, a necessary show of sacrifice that has to be understood as a form of ritual relinquishing of identity and immersion into the greater community. When we give, we stand as individuals taking part in a structural exchange, but when we exist as contributors we appear as parts of a defining whole – truly social.

The social nature of contributions determines their standing in the economy of academia, and they represent the fact that the social life-world of research is one which can never be complete – there can never be closure and thus never an end to the activities. This requires of the participants to in part abandon their own standing and accepting that the greater project supersedes the individual ones. In part, we can even state that the academic economy by necessity is socialist, as the individual works gain their standing by the way in which the further the aims of the community at large. Thus, references to the “contribution” of a specific text or specific researcher is a way to state that in order to gain exchange-value on the academic market (merit counted towards e.g. career advancement), one must first establish that it has use-value within the social economy. Obviously this can be perverted insofar as such a use-value may well be gained merely by bolstering the social standing of others (epigonic works, toadying, reinforcement of egos), but from a structural viewpoint this makes no difference.

Using the concept of hybridity, we can thus say that the contribution may start out as a gift, but in order to realize its economic potential it must also be accepted within the sphere of the social economy as something more (or, in a manner of speaking, less) than a gift. If this succeeds, the contribution can then be turned into something that can be treated as a commodity on a market. Obviously, this description suffers from the fact that it treats these processes as serialized, so that one leads to another in something akin to a chain reaction, when we should be saying that these three processes are simultaneous and enmeshed, but it will suffice for now. The hybrid nature of contributions further shows us something about reflection. Whereas reflection is often viewed as an intrapersonal process, the social nature of reflection as a contribution signifies the way in which reflection must in fact be socially accepted in order to be viewed as reflection. This again

problematizes the nature of academic reflection by casting (i.e. reflecting) this as partly an economic process. We will now turn to this last part, the commodification of reflection.

If we turn our reflective gaze not on research or researchers, but rather on reflection as a function in the aforementioned, we can note some things about it that might otherwise be obscured. Specifically I here want to note some things regarding the moral economy of the concept. Normally, the discourse of social studies posit reflection as an upstanding and honest activity, characterizing a good researcher. We could even say that there exists a form of “moral coinage” in research, so that the invocation of specific modes (reflection, critique, dialogue *et cetera*) are seen as the mark of a morally aware and upstanding researcher, *prima facie*. Reflection, in and of itself, is seen as a good thing. Speaking from a perspective of logic, this is of course highly irrational. On its own, reflection is meaningless, an empty ritual. It can only gain meaning by being contextualized, by existing in a relationship with something. Still, this does not mean that reflection cannot be engaged with as an object (indeed, I am increasingly thinking about academic reflection as a Lacanian *objet petit a*), i.e. as a *commodity*. Such a view would emphasize not reflection as a relation, but as a signifier deployed for economic reasons.

Referring back to my previous point about the market economy of the university, the use of reflection in the social sciences could succinctly put be understood as an restricted economic action, as e.g. an utterly logical move for *homo academicus œconomica*. In a situation where the deployment of reflection is seen as having the function of improving once chances to get published – and thus secure a job, get promoted and/or get a raise – it ceases to be a mode of thinking and turns into a commodity that can be peddled on the academic market. The moral coinage of

reflection is thus not unrelated to more mundane forms of coinage, and the seemingly humble confessional could be studied as the peddling of vanities (or in the case of editors, peddling indulgences). When we see to the increasing interest thereof, or more to the point, the increasing popularity of publishing texts on it, we may in fact be viewing a reaction to market demand – or a case of supply-side economics.

Such a perspective does not invalidate reflection in the social sciences, but it does problematize the moral stance we often take. By noting how reflection, or more to the point publishing texts ostensibly about reflection, does in fact have clear economic consequences, we might in fact keep a more reflective stance on it all. As it is apparent that there are scholars who have made their entire career by extolling reflection, publishing on reflection, and fostering whole cadres of similarly reflection-touting acolytes, to deny the market function at play here seems to be the fundamentally unreflective thing to do. In this way, a perspective on academic work which draws from economic understandings and a sensitivity towards the composite and hybrid nature of social being can be used to show otherwise ignored aspects of assumedly pure activities, reflection being one.

Thus I feel we can state that reflection, today, is not only an upstanding process of re-consideration of epistemological bias, but also contains things such as brazen careerism, avaricious motives, and even purely automatic and dogmatic calls towards a ritually constituted concept which may be incomprehensible outside of the social locality it is glorified in. Such an understanding will of course be viewed as callous cynicism, even in the technical sense (cf. Sloterdijk 1983), but I would insist that it is also a case of realism. Even if we can agree on the ethical impetus for reflection, to ignore these less wholesome aspects of it, ones we are in fact engaging

in, would be a dogmatism unworthy of a considered academic life. In order to think our thinking through, we must also pay heed to those frameworks which may make such considerations paradoxical and contradictory, and thus accept the conflict of thinking.

THE FALSE COIN OF REFLECTION

One of the important aspects of hybridity is that it by necessity constitutes conclusions as an aporia. There can be no clear conclusions in a state of hybridity, as the very nature of the monster is one of irreducible conflict. We cannot present a final word, as hybrids never can reach a final, total state. But this is true of all kinds of existence, and this is why an engagement with hybridity is necessary. Life can well be understood as a continuous internal contradiction, and the marvel of social life lies not in the few moments of consensus, but in the fact that this aporia does not condemn us to eternal doubt (cf. Sloterdijk 1983, Žižek 1993). Rather, we seem more than happy to live our lives with logical disjunction, and even revel in the paradox of social existence.

And reflection is a case of specifically such a contradiction. When we engage in reflection we seemingly turn inwards to understand the world, but this turning inward can only be comprehensible in the context of a social group of researchers who comprise the consumers of such an experiment in solipsism. We could further state that although the field of e.g. organization studies has been interested in reflection in organizing, it is oddly unaware of the organization of reflection. Even more peculiar is that the economic nature of academic work seems to be a blind spot, a lacuna, a case of the Žižekian Real. Whereas we as social scientists are quick to analyze economic agency in others, we often fail to acknowledge the same processes in our own behavior (Redde Caesari quae sunt Caesaris...). And this blinds us to many of the complexities of the

academic life. Rather than viewing our own behavior as fundamentally economic, we are more than happy to engage in the fantasy of pure reflection.

But the alternative to pure reflection (which is always a one-way affair) – reflected reflection – instead creates something more akin to a prismatic effect, one where the certainties of moral goods (*sic*) are cast in doubt. Such an approach does not work by casting light, but by paying heed to the numerous light-effects, the shadows, the changing patterns and interlaced effects. It delights in the moiré-patterns and odd optic effects of the non-continuous reflections created by natural light in unnatural circumstances. In the same way, a study of the economic that builds upon the notion of hybridity will not go looking for casual explanations or reducible models, but instead explore the *jouissance* of economic miscegenation and mutation, the marvels of mixes and fluid dynamics. By doing so, we can not only explore the intricacies of social life in a less reductionistic way, but also find a path towards a post-moralizing social science, one where the easy agreements have to give way to greater awareness of the ideological underpinnings of our actions, and the politicized nature of even that which on the surface seems morally uncomplicated. And then, possibly, reflection might be able to break with reflection, escape its current ethos of guarded self-control, and truly become emancipatory...

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Reflections from a Blind Eye

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"I need to *reflect* on this. I need to see if I can make sense of it."

Derrida's Memoires

In his book, *Truth in Painting*, Derrida has traced Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (1790) in order to pose questions about what art is, about how it can be apprehended and about how it can be evaluated. He concludes that every discourse on art presupposes a discourse on the frame: presupposes a distinction between what is intrinsic to the work of art and what is extrinsic. By identifying a frame which separates what is inside and what is outside, according to Derrida, Kant, by implication, defines not only the frame but also the framing of the frame. This is the *parergon* and over a third of *Truth in Painting* is given over to the examination of this term. Parergon is usually defined as a by-work, a complementary or parallel work, but which as used here might be understood to be a by-product. The parergon, therefore, is concerned with all that is associated with the work of art but not a part of it – just like the frame of a painting. The parergon is associated with the work but secondary to it. At the same time, its significance vacillates since it marks the boundary of the work, identifies the point of difference and draws attention to the limit of the work itself. Although secondary, the frame can cancel, erase the art, be ludicrous, inappropriate, lavish, ornate, minimal. Whatever. The point is that the frame stands in relation to the work. My point here is that, just as theorization holds the theorist in the *trap of insight*, so the frame distorts and sometimes cancels what it circumscribes. It is likewise a trap (Höpfl, 2006). In this context, I am mirroring [speculating] on how the frame functions in the process of reflection: on how reflection and theorization construct the parergon. How, in

turn, such framing removes the construction from its physical context and gives it a metaphysical identity, renders it abstract and gives it definition.

This notion of the parergon has far reaching implications for the nature of the frame, for definition and liminality, since it marks the point of *undecidability* between inside and outside, being both insignificant and secondary and, at the same time, liminal and defining. It defines and yet in defining cancels. This is because the frame, the parergon, restricts, limits and characterises what it contains. It annihilates by reflection. What it constructs around the thing in itself is at variance with the idea that thing can live independently of the frame. Rembrandt's study of the anatomy class shows a group of students framing the dead body which they will begin to dissect in order to understand the living. Yet the frame distorts the meaning of what it contains and may usurp that meaning to become the very definition of what it contains. In the anatomy class, the study of the dead defines the functions of the living. A student comes to see me. She is seriously ill. She is awaiting the results of tests. It is a matter of life and death. She asks me for an extension to complete her work – and I fill in a form. I enter words which seek to capture the context, to give meaning to her situation, to frame her medical condition. She sits before me contemplating her mortality and I get up and put my arms round her and say simply "*Look after yourself*". This is the relationship between reflection and annihilation. Here, even in the construction of the argument is the inescapable dynamic of power: the power to define and capture.

Resistance is in the touch, in the recovery of the physical.

The Abocular Hypothesis

In 1990 Derrida was invited to curate an exhibition of drawings and paintings for the Louvre. The exhibition, *Les Mémoires d'Aveugles (Memories of the Blind)* sought to explore the boundary between his writing and works of art where the images themselves were constructed as parergonal¹ to his writings. This exhibition presented a challenge to the conventional relationship between art and text where text is normally parergonal to the image, that is to say, text normally explains and locates the art itself. Here, the intention is to examine the relationship between the subject of reflection and its capture in text; between the subject as apprehended and its objectification via text (see Hopfl, 2006). *Mémoires d'aveugle* deals with blindness, memory and self portraiture. The subtitle for the exhibition was "The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins". In the text of the exhibition, Derrida proposes what he calls the "abocular hypothesis". This notion frames the work, and Derrida gives attention to this concept in *Mémoires's* introductory and concluding sections. The term itself, ab-ocular, carries with it the duality of meaning of *from*, out of the eye and, at the same time, *from*, separated from the eye. However, there is a further meaning at work here since the modern French term *aveugle* (blind) can be traced directly to the Latin *ab-oculis*: something *from the eye*, that is, the eye is less than and nothing from the eye, nothing can be seen. Derrida is talking about his own blindness: metaphorical and literal. Here, this is examined as the blinding effect of reflection, the reflection which dazzles and petrifies.

Ironically, for two weeks during the exhibition Derrida suffered from an eye affliction which left him unable to close his left eye: a physical contradiction to his theoretical excursion. A lot could be said about the meaning of the

abocular hypothesis but, in short, Derrida is arguing that the artist is blind, the object of attention always invisible. It can only be invoked by memory. The artist is blind to the present. He is also saying that drawing/art, like language, requires the play of absence and presence and that this too is invisible. Consequently, the artist always relies on a blindness which cannot be recognised, which is found in the blinding play of absence and presence. He, as artist, cannot see what memory makes him blind to and this blindness becomes the frame for his art. The parergonal image signifies the absence which leads to its presence as framing, as structure, as all that contextualizes and constructs meaning: the inescapable absence of what is "(in)sight [(sa)voir]", (Lacoue Labarthe, 1989: 117).

Some of these ideas are developed in Derrida's *Truth in Painting*. This is a complex book: tantalising and impenetrable. Indeed, Derrida said that its translation is impossible so why bother. Why seek to "capture" the elusive meaning which is always falling away from one's grasp: one's apprehension? However, Derrida is generous in his authorship and always provides the reader with the opportunity to "slip away" from the text. There is always a sense of the formidable intellect, formidable *and compassionate* intellect, which inhabits the text: a text always struggling with the rhetorical thrust of language and with its poetic subversion as an act of writing. There is both a desire for precision and a desire for imprecision, and an awareness of the blindness which produces such insufficiency, such misapprehension. On reading Derrida, every word dances with signification and dazzles and *blinds* like the mirrored shield Perseus holds up to the Gorgon. This is his [Derrida's] cancellation in which he captures the reader in "the trap of (in)sight [(sa)voir]", (Lacoue Labarthe, 1989: 117). What then is the residuum of reflection? What moves between subject and object, between subject and objectification: between animated and mortified?

¹ Outside the frame, outside the work.

Reflections

“Contemplation and the moral reflection of the past not only preserve it as living reality, but elevate it to a higher level of life. Similarly, *entoptic*² [italics added] phenomena do not fade from mirror to mirror, but are, by the very repetition, intensified” (Goethe, *vide* Lacoue-Labarthe, 1989: 165).

The Latin word for mirror is *speculum* and usually refers to polished metal which can be looked at [from *specio*³]. This is a term which is well known in contemporary uses in a variety of forms. From the surgical instrument, the *speculum*, used for gynaecological examination to the everyday use of words such as *speculator*, *spectator*, *spectacular* the mirror provides a *fascinating*⁴ focus for discussion. To speculate is to observe, to reflect upon, to contemplate, to theorize. Following Lacoue-Labarthe (1989: 209), it is argued here that the process of specularisation is founded on a model of the tragic in which the spectator can only speculate. To look full face into the horror is to be blinded to action, is to be paralyzed by an inability to apprehend the subject, to see too much and to be overwhelmed by vision. Just before 8 pm on Thursday March 27th 2008, an accident occurred on a level crossing near to the university at Hythe Station in Colchester. A young mother of two small children was killed when she was hit by a train.

A tabloid newspaper report of the tragedy said, “Prosecutor David Etherington QC said, “Darren Palmer [the defendant] crossed the

tracks and stood on the Clacton platform when the crossing barriers were down. He became frustrated that Kelly Mack didn’t join him and he lost his temper. As she had failed to come to him he went and grabbed her and dragged her across the tracks and into the path of the train”. Mr Etherington told a jury that moments before the fatal impact student Jonathan Freer-Smith, 18, had managed to free Kelly from the wooden slats. He said, “He went on to the crossing to help Kelly and told her to leave her boot. He got her physically to the London side of the tracks, the safe side, as the danger was coming on the Clacton side. Had things stayed as they were this would have taken her out of the path of the train all together. But the defendant took exception to this and walked back across the rails and snatched her from Mr Freer-Smith’s grasp. The court heard Kelly was three times the drink drive alcohol limit and was on a cocktail of methadone and four types of Valium drugs. Palmer who sat in the dock wearing a dark grey suit and lilac open necked shirt, denies a charge of manslaughter. The trial, which is expected to last two weeks, continues today” (*The Sun*, January 13th 2009).

When the student was interviewed on television on the day of the accident he was still in shock and his eyes widened and stared as he explained what had happened. It was clear that the horrific, appalling and terrifying scene he had witnessed was still being played out in front of his eyes. He told how the victim had curled herself up into a ball as the train sped towards her. The sight was clearly running cinematically before his eyes. This was sight before insight, sight before theorization. Raw and physical: not yet lessened by reflection, intensified by repetition.

Slain by Reflection

Lacoue-Labarthe (1989) argues that in the face of the tragic one can only “attempt to circumscribe it theoretically, to put it on stage and theatricalise it in order to try to catch it in the trap of (in)sight [(sa)voir]”, (1989: 117). This observation applies both to the subject matter of the paper, reflection as theorization

² OED, relating to the appearance of the different internal structures of the eye; hence **entoptics**

³ OED, [L. *speculum*, f. *specere* to look (at), observe. So F. *spéculum*, It. *speculo*, *specolo*, Sp. *espéculum*.]

⁴ OED, **1. trans.** To affect by witchcraft or magic; to bewitch, enchant, lay under a spell.

and to theorization as reflection –and operates in the “trap of (in) sight” where theorisation reveals that the “only remedy against representation, infinitely precarious, dangerous, and unstable (is) representation itself” (Lacoue-Labarthe, 1989: 117). Although this idea sounds complicated, it deals with the object viewed in the line of sight and the object viewed via specularisation, that is to say in this context, as the object of reflection. Lacoue-Labarthes is saying that when the object is elevated to the status of *subject of speculation*, it is mortified by *insight*. The observer is petrified by the sight of the monstrosity. Lacoue-Labarthes’ analysis suggests that the object of the speculation is mortified by that speculation: annihilated by reflection. As in the story of Medusa slain by her own reflection.

What this means, despite the labyrinthine language, is that theorization kills. The subject is destroyed via reflection. The subject is killed via the elevation of monstrosity into a mere mirage (from the French *mirer* meaning to be reflected, to look at oneself in a mirror), mere reflection and this reflection is fatal. All life is drained from the subject and yet the fruits of reflection are highly prized: the acquisition of abstraction. This move in theoretical terms functions in the same way. The mortification of the subject is a supreme achievement. This is what Lacoue Labarthes means by “the trap of insight”. In practice, what is mortified is alterity and, as Coates observes, frequently this is a feminine alterity which, as Kristeva says (is the) “other” without a name”, (Kristeva 1982: 58). By a tidy ordering of experience, by reduction to simple constructions and by a profound desire to annihilate *the other*, reflection detaches the person from the experience.

There are interesting implications to be carried forward from these ideas. When Derrida’s argument regarding the blindness of the artist is carried over to the analysis of reflection and speculation developed earlier, it is possible to develop a proposition *regarding* the work of the theorist to that of Derrida’s artist. In other

words, to be caught in the *trap of insight* whereby this essay, as theorization, becomes trapped in its own aboculism; reflecting mirror to mirror like an endless play of light and insight. However, this is not simply a matter of comparing the theorist to the artist, or saying that speculation and reflection work with a similar dynamic. Rather, it is to point to the same blindness. Neither theorist nor artist can see their subject matter at the time they come to address it. Both share an ab-ocular vision. The construction of the work, of the representation, of the theory, is what permits the disposal of the flesh. The flesh as the disordered other is what petrifies. Better than the formulation, the imago, the appeal of the metaphysical. Unless they are regarded fully, and I mean this in the literal sense of the term *regard*, that is *to look upon, gaze, observe*, the defining power of such constructions is not seen, a blind eye is turned to the subject, the power of alterity is annihilated.

Blinded

The idea of being blinded by reflection and the story of Medusa is developed elsewhere (vide Höpfl, 2008). However, it is useful *to reflect* on this particular framing. When Perseus hold up the mirror to the Medusa, when he holds up his shining shield, she is slain by her own reflection, blinded by reflection, cannot see. The mirror as the speculum which offers this reflection, forces back on the perpetrator and victim the images which appear in the reflection. When Perseus holds up a mirror to the Gorgon he confronts her with his “reality” and she is paralysed by that reflection. It is not surprising that by the sixteenth century the slaying of Medusa was held up as a motif of the conquest of the senses by reason. What Medusa reflects back to Perseus is his own construction, a monstrous power, and what she reflects back to herself is mortification. If, in more general terms, this blindness permits the person who must gaze into the speculum to be converted to the logos, then they will be able to demonstrate their conversion to order, to the power of the frame. The order of the framing will prevail over the disorder of the content. Sanity as the logic and order of what

is clean, clear, classified, well structured becomes synonymous with the absence of ambivalence. The frame blinds as a “misleading pretext” (Hoad, 1986: 43) by its trajectory and closure. It jealously guards its blinding: la jalousie. To be blind is to be caught “in the trap of (in)sight [(sa)voir]” Lacoue-Labarthe (1989: 117). Seen in this way, the therapeutic quest of the organisation is concerned with framing but the consequences of this are the paralysing effects of blindness, a loss of sight, loss of sa-voir. The organization believes in its sightlessness that it is all-seeing. The pantopticon is paradoxically a product of blindness. The problem is, of course, that is impossible to know how to begin to *reflect* on these issues (*vide* Irigaray, 1985). In privileging constructions over physicality, the organisation comes to reproduce itself in theoretical articulations – as paradigms and matrices - and to understand itself in metaphysical terms as the product of its own reproduction. Within this logic, the organisation seeks to reassure itself of its power over monstrosity, over alterity.

Drawing the Blind

Well, of course, the notion of Drawing the Blind follows on from Derrida’s notion of abocular vision but there are other theorists who have given attention to blindness, reflection and other matters related to sight and insight; to visibility and invisibility. Notable amongst these is perhaps Walter Benjamin who has also explored the story of Perseus and the Gorgon albeit with a different intent. Merleau Ponty, Paul de Man, Paul Virilio and, of course, Derrida have all had a fascination with sight and blindness. It seems that there is something about the blinding radiance of insight which appears to function as a pharmakon to cure disorder through theorisation and to create frames and structures which destroy through representation. Such theorisation creates distance, the distance between subject and objectification, and chasms into which, blinded by definition and clarity, it is possible to fall, afflicted by blindness, to fall into separation.

Into the loss of physicality – abstract and eyeless. So what of the notion of drawing? Well, there is the obvious association with drafting or drawing, sketching. Derrida’s *Memoires of the Blind* is a text which accompanies his exhibition at the Louvre of photographs of blind people. In the book, he *draws out* the meaning of “to draw” and considers the relationship between subject and objectification. But there is also present the meaning of the Latin verb *trahere* meaning to draw or to drag. This is a complex word which goes deep into the structures of language, *trahere* for example, becomes *tract* as in *tract* of land, *contract*, *trade*, *tread*, but also *drag*, *tragen*, *traction*, *contraction*, *attraction*, *protraction*, *retraction*, *detraction* and so on. It relates to a movement across a space and is characterised by the markings it leaves behind. An extraction is something drawn out by force, dragged from one place to another. Consequently, to *draw the blind* beyond its obvious associations has a range of meanings which are about movement across a space and more particularly about a forced movement. Likewise, the blind refers to those who cannot see, who can no longer see, who are blinded by reflection, startled – at the point before therapeutic theorisation begins. The vertigo which is produced by seeing that which is unbearable (*unerträglich*) will destroy. It will destroy *me* and I can’t look, I can’t look. I am like Lot’s wife warned by the angel not to look back on the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah but tempted to look back to see.

Derrida draws the blind and it is simultaneously an act of concealment, which draws attention to seclusion to a withdrawal from the analytical gaze of the other and at the same time a revelation of the condition of blindness – physical and metaphysical. For Derrida, the artist is blind, the object of attention always invisible, can only be invoked by memory: the artist cannot see what memory makes him/her blind to. Derrida is dealing with the elision between revelation and concealment, between believing and seeing; between believing one sees and catching a glimpse of, of seeing between (the blinds) and, of course, the self portrait too as an act of

revelation and concealment which becomes something of the relationship between autobiography and parody, between self presentation and representation. Put simply, we come to believe in the construction of ourselves as an externality with occasional revelations about an internality over which we draw a blind, as we lose sight of ourselves, as we become a mere mirage produced by reflection, become caught up in a process of reflection which renders the concept more attractive than the person.

Reflections

It is not possible in this short essay to do more than outline some of the relationships between *Blindness and Insight* (de Man, 1971), between blindness and reflection (Lutz, 1999), between blindness and memory (Derrida, 1990), between reflection and annihilation, (Lacoue Larbarthe, 1989) although clearly all play a part in this theorisation; this construction. The trap of insight applies to the essay itself which succumbs to its own vertiginous fall. It too, redolent with reflection, is blind to its own construction and cannot see what it has lost to memory, to the body, to flesh. It is after all, mere abstraction: a mirage of meaning parading its loss. It is therapeutic writing which seeks struggle with this loss. In the end, it is a comment on the valorisation of reflection and a caveat about the defining power of illumination and insight.

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The Arts of Michael Moore and American Soft Power

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Executive Summary

Michael Moore is one of the most disputed authors and filmmakers in the United States. The purpose with this article is to try to shed some new insights and understandings of Moore's political views as they are represented in his book "Dude, Where's My Country?" and film "Fahrenheit 911". By applying insights from international relations theory, we are trying to get a better understanding of Moore's political views by putting his views within the framework of "soft power". According to the soft power concept, the US' mightiest power resource as of today is not its hard power (such as military and economic strength), but its soft power such as the attractiveness of its culture, political ideals, and policies. By applying the soft power concept, the article explains how Michael Moore is advocating a new foreign policy of the United States. This is a United States, which safeguards an international system made up by norms, institutions and a collective international order. Furthermore, the article underlines that Michael Moore's popularity cannot be explained by rising anti-Americanism on a global scale, but quite the opposite. Instead, Michael Moore's films and books could be regarded as a symptom of US soft power where he represents what people around the world regards as the attractiveness of the United States.

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Michael Moore is known to the public as an author, commentator and not least, a reward winning filmmaker who became known to the world audience with his two films "Bowling for Columbine" (2002) and "Fahrenheit 911" (2004). In "Bowling for Columbine" he criticizes the American gun culture and the National Rifle Association (NRA). This film won the Anniversary Prize at the Cannes Film Festival and France's Cesar Award for the best foreign film. In the United States, it won the Academy Award for Documentary Feature. In "Fahrenheit 911" Moore examines the political life in the United States in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers and Pentagon on September 11, 2001. Furthermore, he seeks to uncover the family ties between the Bush family and the Bin Laden family. For the film, he was rewarded

with the Palm d'Or, the top honour at the Cannes Film Festival. It was the first documentary to win such a prize since 1956.

Prior to these two films, his filmmaking includes "Roger & Me" (1989) which was his first film. "Roger and Me" was a critical commentary about what happened to his native town Flint, Michigan, after General Motors closed its factories and opened new ones in Mexico, where the workers were paid much less. "Canadian Bacon" (1995) is Michael Moore's only fictional film, which featured a US president played by Alan Alda who started a fake war with Canada to boost his own popularity. In his film "The Big One" (1997) he criticizes the great multinational corporations for their hunger for even more profits and their propensities to mass layoffs despite record corporate profits. His latest film "Sicko" (2007) is a documentary where he

investigates the American health care system where his focus is the American health insurance system and the great influence of the pharmaceutical industry. One of the main arguments in this film is that almost fifty million Americans are uninsured and that those who are covered are often victims of insurance company fraud and red tape.

His books have also sold in millions. In his book, "Downsize This!" (1996) he analyzed politics and corporate crime in the United States. In "Stupid White Men" (2001) he scrutinized US domestic and foreign policies and in "Dude, Where's My Country?" (2003) he examined the Bush family's relationships with the Saudi royalty, the Bin Laden family and the energy industry, as well as the US response to international terrorism. The book was furthermore a call-for-action for a Democratic victory at the 2004 US presidential election. Prior to the 2008 Presidential election, he also issued an election guide where his main arguments were as follows: "After a disastrous war, the failure to catch bin Laden, millions of families who have lost their homes, the Katrina debacle, soaring gas prices feeding record oil company profits, and the largest national debt caused by the biggest spending and borrowing administration in American history, the country has had it with conservatives, right-wingers and Republicans".¹

The purpose with this essay is two-fold. Firstly, we will explain that in reality, what Michael Moore is aiming at via his books and films, is that the US should pursue what Joseph Nye Jr. has called a more soft power oriented foreign policy. According to Nye, the US' mightiest power resource as of today is not its hard power

(as military and economic strength), but its soft power such as the attractiveness of its culture, political ideals, and policies. Secondly, we will state that Michael Moore's popularity and great influence on world opinion cannot be explained by rising anti-Americanism on a global scale, but quite the opposite. To illustrate that point we would like to quote from Joseph Nye's book "Soft Power – The Means to Success in World Politics" (2004). Here he is referring to the Czech filmmaker Milos Forman who recounts that when the Communist government let in the American film "Twelve Angry Men" because of its harsh portrait of American institutions, Czech intellectuals responded by thinking, "If that country can make this kind of thing, films about itself, oh, that country must have a pride and must have an inner strength, and must be strong enough and must be free" (quoted in Nye 2004: 17).

This essay is organized as follows. The next chapter will give an overarching description of the American empire at the start of the 21st century. Based upon novel political science research on the character of empire in the post-modern world, we will try to show that the United States is a different empire as compared with other empires in world history. Nevertheless, we will also try to illustrate how the new trends in American foreign policy have changed other countries' perception of the United States. The central question then seems to be how different the United States is from other empires in world history. We will then turn our attention to the works of Michael Moore, but most focus will be put on his film "Fahrenheit 911" and his book "Dude, Where's My Country?". Both of them were produced and written after the terrorist attacks and therefore cover what this essay is seeking to explain, namely Moore's view upon what role the US should play in the world. After that, we will compare the views of Michael Moore with the views presented in Joseph Nye's book on American soft power. In the last part of the essay, we will seek additional explanations. By building upon insights from social constructivist theory, we can also state that

The authors would like to thank the editor and the two referees for their constructive comments on an earlier draft of this article. An earlier draft has also been presented at the "Third Art of Management Conference" in Krakow, Poland in September 2006.

¹ See <http://www.michaelmoore.com/books-films/index.php>

Michael Moore's film, "Fahrenheit 911" and book "Dude, Where's My Country?", raise some interesting arguments about how the representation of something as a threat to the United States can be used to justify measures that would otherwise not be seen as legitimate.

The character of the American empire

The United States – A Different Empire?

Ever since the United States became a great power and later on a superpower in the second half of the twentieth century, it has mostly pursued a foreign policy orientation based upon multilateralism. A multilateral oriented foreign policy is characterized by emphasis on international institutions and on a high degree of international legitimacy for the realization of its interests. It could even more be stated that it was the United States that took the necessary initiatives to establish several of the multilateral institutions as we know them today (the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), The World Bank, etc.).

G. John Ikenberry has described a system based upon a grand bargain between the United States and several of its closest allies (Ikenberry 2001). He explains that on the one hand, the United States exported security and opened up its markets for foreign investors. On the other hand, these allies functioned as military and political supporters of the US leadership in the world. Additionally, the leading role of the United States in the international system was accepted by the other actors as long as the United States abided by international norms and pursued an institutionalized foreign policy. As the Norwegian historian Geir Lundestad has written on several occasions, the United States was an empire by invitation (Lundestad 2003). During the Cold War, but also in the 1990's, the United States enjoyed a very high degree of legitimacy and was regarded by others as a "primus inter pares". The allies of the United

States felt that they had a high degree of influence upon the foreign policy of the country (Melby 2002: 13). In the sense that the United States was an empire, it was a benevolent empire with a liberal ideology.

In the 1980s, the debate on whether or not hegemony or an empire in the international system is necessary, dominated the international political economy (IPE) discourse with the so-called hegemonic stability theory. This theory was presented by Charles Kindleberger who stated in his book "The World in Depression 1929 – 1939" that there must be a hegemon for an international system of trade and finance to function smoothly (Kindleberger 1986). This is because there is a collective action problem in international politics where the regulation and institutionalization of trade and finance is a public good, that is, it benefits the community. To solve the collective action problem, a hegemon takes the lead and is motivated to do so because of the benefit it gains; for example, the US dollar benefited greatly as the reserve currency under the Bretton Woods system.

What seemed to be characteristic of the American empire was that it was a very different empire who behaved differently from other empires in world history. It was a liberal and benevolent hegemony, which pursued a multilateral oriented foreign policy. Additionally, the story of the United States is also a story of a country that pursues ideal norms in its foreign policy based upon an exceptional ideology. Central to this exceptional approach is that the political system of the United States represents something very special and that the United States for this reason has a special responsibility in world politics. It is within such a context we must understand President George H. W. Bush's statement at his so-called State of the Union address in 1991. Here he underlined that "We are a nation of rock-solid realism and clear-eyed idealism". This statement also shows one of the most central tensions in American foreign policy, that between realism and idealism. While realism in accordance with the realist school in international relations

(IR) theory deals with questions connected to power relationships, balance of power issues and the impact of the international anarchy upon the different states, idealism deals with questions connected to how the United States can contribute to make the world a better place to be. Hence, as John Adams, the second president of the United States emphasized: "The United States will last forever, govern the globe and introduce the perfection of man" (quoted in Melby 1995: 21). Therefore, President George W. Bush's statement from 2005 that "America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one" is standing in a rather long tradition that illustrates the exceptional ideology that underpins the US state construct.²

Therefore, the United States' sense of itself is that it is quite different from other countries in world politics. As the former US Secretary of State Dean Rusk underlined, "While other countries have different interests, the United States have responsibilities" (ibid.). Hence, and according to the exceptional ideology, the United States has superior ideal motives for its actions, and therefore must impose upon itself another idealistic standard in the conduct of its foreign- and security policy. Therefore, Americans have tended to reject the idea that their high-minded republic might be imperial (much less imperialist). Empire has traditionally been identified with conscious military expansion. Washington may have organized an alliance, but it did not seek to conquer territory nor, supposedly, to dominate other societies (Maier 2002). The United States has therefore been what Michael Cox has called an empire by denial (Cox 2004; Cox 2005). Therefore, Americans don't do empire; they do "leadership" instead, or as underlined by the conservative British historian Niall Ferguson, they do "hegemony" (Ferguson 2003).

² See John F. Harris (2005): "An Ambitious President Advances His Idealism", *Washington Post*, 21 Januar 2005. See <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A24961-2005Jan20.html>

By underlining these aspects, we also reach a deeper understanding of the character of the American form of empire. It therefore seems relevant to argue that the American empire traditionally has worked in a Gramscian way. The American empire has in many corners of the world, and the case is especially evident in Europe, worked through consensual domination and invisible power relations. The empire we are analyzing here is an empire, which has formed political, military, cultural and economical discourses. This we can see by tracing how the formation of meaning has been organized over time, how meaning has frozen in certain formations and ways of understanding "reality" (representations), and why exactly in these formations and not in others (Neumann 2001 quoted in Græger 2005: 86).

While other empire's influence has stopped at its borders, the American empire has turned global through its attractiveness of its culture, way of life, or at least the way of life represented in media through its film industry but also through its economical as well as military strength. We must therefore understand the character of the American empire as of today, by seeing it through the prisms of globalization. The globalization process is driven forward in large part due to technological innovations and neo-liberal ideology. However, this form of empire has also been institutionalized, for example via NATO and other institutions where the United States has been and still is dominant.

Therefore, it is important to underline, as Niall Ferguson so cleverly underlines, that empire has never exclusively meant direct rule over foreign territories (Ferguson 2003). Instead, it is important to distinguish between "direct" and "indirect" rule. In such a sense the United States could be regarded as an empire – albeit one that has, until recently, generally preferred indirect and informal rule. Whether its recent invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq presage a transition to more direct and formal imperial structures remains to be seen (ibid.). As a

conservative British historian Niall Ferguson is of the opinion that the US has been a reluctant empire and that the demise of the US Empire (and indeed the Iraq response may exemplify decline) is a net loss to the world.

Enter George W. Bush

The terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001 had tremendous effects upon the American society. It seems even fair to argue that it seems to be very difficult to overestimate these effects upon American society as well as politics. With George W. Bush in the White House, we will argue that during recent years and especially in connection with the Iraq war in 2003, the United States developed a foreign policy characterized by idealistic inspired exceptionalism. We will argue that idealistic inspired exceptionalism is a central part of the neo-conservative ideology, which has inspired large parts of the Bush administration. We are, however, also aware of the fact that the neo-conservative approach has contributed to "a renewed relevance of classical Realists such as Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau. Niebuhr's and Morgenthau's approach not only addressed themes at the heart of contemporary neo-conservatism, but who also provided prescient warnings of the dangerous directions in which neo-conservative understandings of the national interest could lead" (Williams 2005: 307). Central to such a neo-conservative ideology is the use of force, including military force, conducted if necessary in a pre-emptive and unilateral manner, to replace authoritarian regimes with democratic ones. The Iraq war in spring 2003 was in our view the peak point in the neo-conservative influence upon American foreign policy.

Because of neo-conservative influence, the multilateral track in the United States foreign policy has, additionally, been left and replaced with a unilateral one. The last issue is firstly due to the character of the international system that still is unipolar nearly 20 years after the end of the Cold

War. Secondly, the United States has largely militarized its foreign policy, which has alienated its closest friends and allies, especially in Europe, but also in other parts of the world. Several European governments have therefore stated that the United States has broken with the most central norm in transatlantic relations since the creation of NATO in 1949, namely mutual adaptations to each other's security needs within a multilateral framework (Sæter 2005: 45). The most critical voices in Europe have come from the governments in France and Germany as well as from several other middle sized and small European powers. Hence, the transatlantic relationship has weakened considerably. In the research discourse on the transatlantic relationship it is even debated whether the security community in the North Atlantic Area still exists (see e.g. Knutsen 2007).

This "Bush revolution" in American foreign policy is based upon the premise that the unipolar system will last and that the American empire is sustainable (Melby 2002: 17-20). Hence, the Washington foreign policy elite tends to see itself as "masters of a universe in which the United States has a very special part to play by virtue of its unique history, its huge capabilities and its accumulated experience of running the world for the last 50 years" (Cox 2005: 26).

In the IR debate on American foreign policy, on questions related to unipolarity and empire, it has during recent years been a debate on why the American empire has not been counter-balanced by other powers. Some of the answers to this question have been that the American empire is a different one and therefore has a higher legitimacy. Others have argued that it is only a matter of time before other powers will rise. Most researchers and political analysts argue that China might become a global peer competitor to the United States. Charles A. Kupchan does not buy this argument. According to him, it is not China but the emerging and integrating Europe that might become a competitor to the United States on the global arena (Kupchan 2002). He is

therefore in line with the political realist Christopher Layne who in a much-cited article in "International Security" has written on the unipolar illusion and why other powers will rise (Layne 1993).

In the IR debate we have also witnessed a turn in the debate towards arguments on whether the United States in reality is behaving differently from other empires in world history. The turning point in the debate was of course the terrorist attacks on September 11. These terrorist attacks implied that the United States declared a war on terrorism and hence went to war two times within a time-span of two years (Afghanistan and Iraq). Additionally, in the aftermaths of the terrorist attacks and in connection with the Bush administration's war on terror, we have also witnessed a huge expansion of United States' interests to places not previously known to be traditional spheres of American interests. These spheres are first of all Caucasus and Central-Asia including countries like Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Hence, the United States seems to behave as other empires have done. However, as the British historian Arnold Toynbee once pointed out, there are two problems that empires seem to meet: the threat of decay from within and the present danger of overextension abroad (Cox 2004: 586).

Toynbee's point seems to be relevant as of today when we relate it to the American presence in Iraq. More than 4 200 American men and women have been killed so far. Approximately 31 000 have been wounded. According to the website Iraqbodycount.org, about 90 000 Iraqi civilians have been killed by the military intervention.³ Even more, the war was initiated on false and/or misinterpreted intelligence data and on neo-conservative desk-analysis. As it turned out, the links between Saddam Hussein and the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington were

non-existent and, furthermore, not a single gram of weapons of mass destruction has been found. Instead, the United States finds itself in a quagmire, in an Iraq characterized by civil war and where it seems nearly impossible to withdraw with honour. Additionally, Iraq is splitting up in three different parts based upon ethnic and religious cleavages. Paradoxically, the United States is not, despite being the most powerful military nation on earth, able to control the situation on the ground.

Characteristic for American defence planning in recent year has been its emphasis on high-tech warfare, the so-called Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) and not on nation building, which would have demanded more boots on the ground. As the British General Sir Michael Rose articulated in an article in International Herald Tribune in August 2004: "Instead of using overwhelming military force as the principle weapon in this war, a longer term, more indirect strategy, employing all instruments of government – economic, political social and military – needs to be adopted. This will inevitably entail a new doctrine and a different balance of force. Above all, increased manpower will be needed in the future of nation-building" (Rose 2004).

As a consequence, and according to Charles Grant of the London-based Centre for European Reform (CER): rarely in history had one nation mobilized so much hard power in such a short space of time; and never had it lost so much soft power in the process (quoted in Cox 2005: 28). An American commentator also emphasized that never had the country gone into battle with so few allies actually prepared to back it enthusiastically: "In fact never had such a war, even before it began, generated so much global opposition, the overwhelming bulk of it caused less by any sympathy that people might have had towards America's intended target than by what many regarded as the dangerously aggressive policies of an overpowered state led by a president with little concern for global opinion" (ibid.: 27).

³ At the website www.iraqbodycount.org, between 88 951 and 97 092 Iraqi civilians have, as of 16 November 2008, been killed due to the military intervention so far.

Such a concern corresponds perfectly with the arguments made by Joseph Nye in his criticism of the foreign policies of the Bush administration. In this connection, he is referring to a speech on the concept of soft power he gave at a conference organised by the US Army in Washington DC. One of the other speakers was Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld. According to a press account, "The top military brass listened sympathetically" to Joseph Nye's views, but when someone in the audience later asked Rumsfeld for his opinion on soft power, he replied, "I don't know what it means" (Nye 2004: ix).

Michael Moore's perspectives on the United States' role in the world

It is not an exaggeration to argue that Michael Moore's book "Dude, Where's My Country?" and film "Fahrenheit 911" represents a frontal attack on George W. Bush and his presidency. In an academic term, it is an attack on the Bush-administration's securitization of the threat from terrorism and how the United States is applying the terror threat as a strategy to dominate the world in an imperial manner.⁴ What the Bush administration has done, according to Moore, is to create a discourse at home as well as abroad in which terrorism is presented as an existential threat to the American and international society. By applying some key concepts from social constructivist approaches to IR, we could argue that this attempt to securitize terrorism has initiated a process of securitizing moves (Buzan & Wæver 2003: 70-76). In this connection, terrorism is only securitized, when this move is accepted or forced to be accepted, by the

American and the broader international society as well. It is not an overstatement to argue that this attempt to create such a securitizing move has succeeded. The US attempt to make a securitizing move to gain support for the Iraq war was, however, not that successful.

With this theoretical approach in mind, we can reach a deeper understanding of the seven questions he asks George W. Bush (or George of Arabia as Moore is calling him) in the beginning of the book (Moore 2003: 1-40). Several of the same questions are also posed in the film. By posing questions connected to the business affiliations between the bin Laden family and the Bush family, by questioning the so-called "special relationship" between the Bushes and the Saudi royalty, on why a Saudi jet was allowed to fly around in the US to pick up family members of Osama bin Laden in the days right after the terrorist attacks, why representatives from Taliban travelled around in Texas before the terrorist attacks to meet George W. Bush's oil and gas company friends etc., Moore is attempting to create an enemy image of the US president. More than that, he is in fact trying to make the presidency of George W. Bush "The Other". By "othering" the Bushes, Moore was (unsuccessfully) trying to create a like-minded front of liberals to replace Bush with John Kerry in the 2004 presidential election.

Moore's way of making his arguments is therefore an example of the ever-increasing polarization of US politics (see e.g. Nivola 2005). On the one hand, it could therefore be argued that President George W. Bush is, through the securitization of terrorism, via the creation of different forms for securitizing moves (e.g. Afghanistan and Iraq), trying to lay the foundation for a lasting American empire. This time not an empire by denial, but an explicit American empire based upon the so-called Bush doctrine. This Bush doctrine could be labelled "the promotion of democracy through American leadership, if necessary, with the help of American military force". On the other hand, Michael

⁴ The analytical term "securitization" has dominated the IR discourse in recent years and is central to the so-called Copenhagen school of IR. See e.g. Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver (2003): *Regions and Powers – The Structure of International Security*; Cambridge Studies in International Relations. Cambridge University Press.

Moore, we would argue, could be regarded as the personified “Other” to the President. He considers himself a person who stands up to fight the President’s domestic as well as international crusade.⁵ Even more than that, when the United States President states in an interview with MSNBC in February 2004 that: “I’m a war president. I make decisions here in the Oval Office in foreign-policy matters with war on my mind”;⁶ Bush is, according to Moore, not only trying to create an American empire abroad, but he is also undermining American civil rights at home.

By passing the so-called Patriot Act and by creating a Department for Homeland Security, the US is in practice, challenging, according to Moore, the so-called fourth amendment of the US Constitution. This amendment states that each human being has the right to privacy. With the Patriot Act (which is, according to Moore not patriotic at all), the fundamental human rights are challenged: “[T]hat once you allow your rulers to snoop into your life and violate your “space”, the notion of living in a free society is out the window” (ibid.: 107). According to the Patriot Act, the US government may now “trap and trace” all those countless e-mails you thought were private. Moore states further that if this continues, you might as well delete the word “confidential” from your spellchecker: “Also up for inspection: banking records, school records, the list of library books you or your nine-year old checked out this year (or even how often you have logged onto the Internet at the library), and your customer purchases. Think I’m exaggerating? Next time you are

⁵ The concept “crusade” was applied by the US President in the days right after the terrorist attacks as a label on the US fight against terrorism. See e.g. Peter Fords article in Christian Science Monitor: “Europe cringes at Bush ‘crusade’ against terrorists”, 19 September 2001. The article could be found on: <http://www.csmonitor.com/2001/0919/p12s2-woeu.html>

⁶ This statement was made by the US president in an interview with Tim Russert at MSNBC on 8 February 2004. The transcript of the interview can be found on <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4179618/>

sitting in your doctor’s waiting room or waiting in line at the bank, read their new privacy statements. Buried in the legalese you will find new warnings that your privacy protections do not cover the Big Brother provisions of our new Patriot Act” (ibid.: 106).

What these efforts by the Bush administration have done, is to make it look like the US is at war abroad as well as domestically. The Patriot Act, the creation of the Department for Homeland Security, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq must therefore be seen in connection with each other since their origin is the same: The fear of future terrorist attacks and the different securitization moves which have been put forward so as to secure the national security of the United States. According to the neo-conservative approach, the best way to secure the US from a future terrorist attack, is that the US should pursue a foreign- and security policy, which upholds the unipolar international system. Therefore, Michael Moore attempts not only to attack the Bush-administration, but also the neo-conservative ideology, which has formed American foreign policy since 2001 when George W. Bush illegally, according to Moore, became president.⁷

Central to the neo-conservative ideology is e.g. the think tanks like the Project of the New American Century (PNAC) which states that: “American leadership is good both for America and for

⁷ There has been some debate within the IR community on the influence by the neo-conservatives upon US foreign- and security policy. In an article in “International Politics” Steven Hurst of the Manchester Metropolitan University argues that neo-conservatism has had very little impact upon the framing of the Bush administration’s foreign- and security policy (Hurst 2005). According to him, the Bush administration’s foreign policy is framed more along the lines of nationalist impulses. We are, however, in this essay sticking to the widely held opinion that the neo-conservative impulse has been quite large. This impulse has, in our view, decreased significantly during recent years due to the tremendous difficulties the US and other members of the “Coalition of the willing” are facing in Iraq.

the world; and that such leadership requires military strength, diplomatic energy and commitment to moral principle [PNAC] intends (...) to explain what American world leadership entails. It will also strive to rally support for a vigorous and principled policy of American international involvement and to stimulate useful public debate on foreign and defence policy and America's role in the world". Within PNAC we will find influential personalities, who have contributed significantly to the turn in American foreign policy in recent years (the so-called "Bush-revolution") as well as persons who have shaped the IR debate on e.g. transatlantic relations. Here we will find personalities like Lawrence F. Kaplan, William Kristol, Robert Kagan and Paul Wolfowitz who until recently was the head of the World Bank. Robert Kagan became influential in the IR debate when he argued that Europe was from Venus and the United States from Mars, and hence, Europe was weak and the United States strong (Kagan 2002).

What the Bush administration is aiming at, according to Moore, is a "feverish desire to rule the world, first by controlling us, and then, in turn, getting us to support their efforts to dominate the world" (Moore 2003: 101). Therefore, September 11 was the Bush administration's moment – a moment handed to them by fate, via the terrorists – to seize the "reins and ram the USA down the throats of any people in the world who dare question who is number one. Who is number one? **I SAID, WHO IS NUMBER ONE?** That's right. Say it loud! Say it, for George and Dick and Johnny and Condi: **WE ARE NUMBER ONE! USA! USA! USA!**" (ibid.). As we can understand, irony and exaggerations are parts and parcel of Michael Moore's method of communicating with his audience.

By applying fear via the securitization of terrorism, by creating a link between the September 11 attacks and Saddam's Iraq and with the National Security Strategy decided upon in September 2002 as a foundation, Moore is telling us his story of how the Iraq war was started and how the administration created

a "coalition of the willing" to oust Saddam from power. Furthermore, the National Security Strategy defined the concept of pre-emptive attacks, or preventive war as critics would have said, which entails a premise that deterrence against terrorist actors will not work, and that the United States must strike pre-emptively (or preventively) before the terrorists attack the United States.⁸ In this connection, Moore emphasizes that: "George W. Bush laid the groundwork for scaring us silly early on. In his speech to the United Nations in September 2002, Bush said with a straight face that "Saddam Hussein has defied all these efforts and continues to develop weapons of mass destruction. The first time we may be completely certain he has a nuclear weapons [sic] is when, God forbids, he uses one" (ibid. : 43). Soon after, on October 7, Bush, according to Moore, told an audience in Cincinnati: "If the Iraqi regime is able to produce, buy or steal an amount of highly enriched uranium a little larger than a single softball, it could have a nuclear weapon in less than a year.... Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof – the smoking gun – that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud" (ibid.).

As we all know today, these statements made by the US President and all other Heads of State and Governments who supported the Iraq war (the Coalition of the willing), were false. Up to present day, no weapon of mass destruction has been found. The so-called links between al-Qaida and the Saddam Hussein regime were spurious at best. In fact, Osama bin Laden considered Saddam Hussein to be an infidel. Hussein committed the sin of creating a secular Iraq instead of a Muslim state run by Muslim clerics.

Additionally, Michael Moore is referring to a US poll which found that half of those questioned, incorrectly, thought that one or more of the September 11

⁸ The National Security Strategy of the United States can be found on <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html>

hijackers held Iraqi citizenship: "The Bush administration had succeeded in perpetrating one of the biggest lies of all time, confusing Saddam with Osama in the minds of the American public" (ibid.). The Bush administration was therefore successful when they managed to convince the American public about the links between the September 11 attacks and Iraq. The truth is that 15 out of the 19 hijackers held Saudi citizenship. This fact makes Michael Moore speculate whether the hijackers were Saudi military pilots, and not aviation amateurs (ibid.: 15-19). Furthermore, he is also questioning Osama bin Laden's health situation when he is referring to his kidney problems and therefore questions this man's ability to plan the most horrendous terrorist attacks in world history (ibid.).

As a consequence - and history has on this point proved Michael Moore correct - the Iraqi regime did not pose any global threat. It did not pose any regional threat either. It did pose, however, a threat to its own population as we can see from its history of using poison gas against its Kurdish population. Iraq also applied poison gas in the war against Iran, which lasted from 1980 until 1988. However, in this connection, Moore makes no secret out of the fact that in the 1980's, Iraq under Saddam Hussein, was a close ally with the United States. It was during this time that Iraq fought a bloody war with the US' archenemy Iran, in which the US provided the Iraqi regime with information on Iranian troop movements etc. In fact, during the 1980's the US government and US companies supplied the Iraqi regime with several "dual use"⁹ technologies, including high-powered computers, lasers, and other items instrumental to the making of nuclear weapons and their components (ibid.: 50).

Therefore, Moore is stating, the US has a long tradition of supporting dictatorships. In fact, he underlines, the US likes dictators (ibid.: 58). The list of dictatorships the US has supported during

history is therefore quite long. These days, China, "the world's biggest Saddam-o-rama, is our favourite dictatorship" (ibid.: 59). In China, the government imposes severe limits on media outlets, the Internet, worker's rights, religious freedom, and any attempts to independent thinking. According to Moore, these elements "combined with a judicial system that totally ignores any rule of law and is festering with corruption, China is a perfect place for American companies to do business" (ibid.).

Therefore, the prescription Moore is proposing to prevent future terrorist attacks is quite different from those proposed and implemented by the present US administration. In his ironic and exaggerating approach, he is, in chapter 5 of the book, telling us how the US should pursue a policy which in the IR debate could be labelled liberal as well as multilateral. It is liberal in the sense that it is possible to transcend "power politics" and govern relations between peoples and states on the basis of legal norms, moral principles and according to what is "right" and "just" (Steans & Pettiford 2005: 30). It is furthermore multilateral in the sense that it assumes that international institutions and regimes might change state behaviour through learning and that states behave differently in information-rich environments as compared with information-poor environments (Keohane 1984).

Careful reading of Michael Moore's suggestions implies that he, in accordance with the liberal school in IR, takes a broad approach to security challenges and threats. He suggests that the level and scope of terrorism might be reduced by combating poverty and promoting the spread of democracy based upon multilateral cooperation. On the other hand, he is emphasising that such a strategy will not eradicate terrorism: "There *will* be future terrorist attacks... Bush's program for homeland security is providing us with no security at all" (Moore 2003: 119). On the other hand, he is arguing that the "only true security comes from ensuring that all people, here and around the globe, are able

⁹ Dual use technologies refer to technologies, which can have civilian as well as more military purposes.

to meet their basic needs and dream of a better life. At the very last, we have to make damn sure we are not the ones robbing them of that dream" (ibid.: 128).

His suggestions when it comes to security and defence issues are that the US security strategy should be revised with the abolition of the strategy of pre-emptive strikes. Furthermore, Michael Moore's proposal for getting rid of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) is to start getting rid of them self. Hence, what he is proposing is unilateral disarmament (ibid.: 125). When conferring Moore's view with the IR-debate on the future status of the non-proliferation treaty (NPT), very few people indeed, including security and defence experts, fully understand the real dynamics which underpin the NPT. In the treaty, the non-nuclear signatories are obliged not to procure, possess, and produce nuclear weapons. The NPT treaty acknowledges, however, that there are five countries that are in possession of such weapons – China, France, Great Britain, Russia and the United States. The utility of the NPT is therefore conditioned upon a dual dynamics in which the non-nuclear countries renounce any nuclear programme, while the nuclear powers are obliged to pursue a policy of nuclear disarmament. It is this dual dynamics of nuclear abstention and disarmament which is the driving force behind the treaty. Hence, a policy by one or more of the nuclear powers to improve their own nuclear capabilities may therefore tempt some of the non-nuclear countries to start doing research and establish themselves as future nuclear powers. Furthermore, it is nearly commonly agreed in the IR community that a proliferation of nuclear weapons may imply increased international instability.¹⁰ Therefore,

¹⁰ The agreement has, however, not been unanimous. Some neo-realists, like Kenneth N. Waltz and John Mearsheimer underlines that a controlled nuclear proliferation to countries like Germany and Ukraine, may enhance European and Euro-Atlantic security. See e.g. John Mearsheimer's much disputed article "Back to the Future – Instability in Europe After the Cold War" which was published in the highly

according to Moore, global nuclear disarmament may enhance international stability and reduce the scope of international terrorism.

Michael Moore's views as they are presented in his latest book and film (Fahrenheit 911) are therefore liberal, not only in a political sense, but in a IR perspective as well. Therefore, the next chapter will focus upon in which way the views presented by Moore can be represented within the context of soft-power, a concept elaborated by one of the most influential IR scholars of our time – Joseph S. Nye Jr.

Joseph Nye and the concept of soft power in American foreign policy

The soft power concept, elaborated by Joseph Nye in several books and articles of his, has been one of the most discussed phenomena in the IR-literature in recent years. The soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority). Therefore, soft power refers to the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies. When you can get others to admire your ideals and to want what you want, you do not have to spend as much on sticks and carrots to move them in your direction. Therefore, a country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries – admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness – want to follow it. The success of soft power heavily depends on the country's reputation within the international community, as well as the flow of information between actors. Thus, soft power is often associated with

acclaimed IR-journal "International Security" (Vol. 15, No. 1) in 1990.

the rise of globalization and liberal IR theory, even though it is much too simple to equate globalization with Americanization. Other cultures contribute mightily to global connections as well. Popular culture and media is regularly identified as a source of soft power, as is the spread of a national language, or a particular set of normative structures; a nation with a large amount of soft power and the good will which inspires others to acculturate, avoiding the need for expensive hard power expenditures.

Nevertheless, Nye also emphasises that attraction can turn into repulsion if the US acts in an arrogant manner and destroys the real message of the US' deeper values. According to Nye, the four-week war in Iraq in the spring of 2003 was a dazzling display of America's hard military power that removed a tyrant, but it did not resolve the US' vulnerability to terrorism. It was also costly in terms of the US' soft power – the ability to attract others and thereby sidelining with the US in the so-called "Coalition of the willing". In the words of the *Financial Times*: "To win the peace, therefore, the US will have to show as much skill in exercising soft power as it has in using hard power to win the war" (quoted in Nye 2004: xi). Therefore, domestic or foreign policies that appear to be hypocritical, arrogant, indifferent to the opinion of others, or based upon a narrow approach to national interests can undermine soft power (ibid.: 14).

This is especially the case in times when the security threats become asymmetrical and originate from non-state actors. Nye agrees with the Bush administration's focus upon threats from terrorism as well as from weapons of mass destruction (WMD), but he disagrees with the Bush administration's exaggerated focus upon the US ability to exercise hard power, and according to Nye, it is through soft power that terrorists gain general support as well as new recruits (ibid.: 24).

Soft power and Michael Moore's approach to American foreign policy

Michael Moore's views as they are represented in his latest book ("Dude, Where's My Country?") as well as film ("Fahrenheit 911") suits well within the framework of a soft power approach to US foreign- and security policy. Therefore, what Moore clearly is advocating is a foreign- and security policy orientation which is more soft power-oriented. In his book and film, Moore clearly rejects the US Administration's and the neo-conservative's overarching aim of upholding the US-dominated unipolar international system. Moore disavows any form of American imperialism and the notion of an American empire. Even more than that, Moore's views clearly correspond with the European approach to international politics, namely effective multilateralism.¹¹ He even states that France is one of the US' closest allies: "They've brought us the Enlightenment, and The Enlightenment paved the way for the widespread acceptance of all the ideas and principles that America was founded on.... In fact, France has always been the best friend to the United States" (Moore 2004: 68-69). In this perspective, the then French minister of foreign affairs and also former Prime Minister, Dominique de Villepin, could be regarded as a spokesperson for a soft power approach to international relations. Moore is referring to him and his speech at the United Nations as the war in Iraq began:

"Make no mistake about it: the choice is indeed between two

¹¹ The concept "effective multilateralism" was so to say "invented" by the European Union (EU) in its security strategy (ESS) from 2003 which is labeled "A Secure Europe in a Better World". The ESS states e.g. that: "In a world of global threats, global markets and global media, our security and prosperity increasingly depend on an effective multilateral system. The development of a stronger international society, well functioning international institutions and a rule-based international order is our objective." This multilateral approach to the security risks, threats and challenges now facing us runs contrary to the US National Security Strategy with its emphasis on pre-emptive strikes and unilateralism in foreign affairs questions.

visions of the world. Those who choose to use force and think they can resolve the world's complexity through swift and preventive action, we offer in contrast determined action over time. For today, to ensure our security, all the dimensions of the problem must be taken into account: both the manifold crisis and their many facets, including cultural and religious. Nothing lasting in international relations can be built therefore without dialogue and respect for the other, without exigency and abiding by principles, especially for the democracies that must set the example. To ignore this is to run the risk of misunderstanding, radicalization and spiralling violence. This is even more true in the Middle East, an area of fractures and ancient conflicts where stability must be a major objective for us" (quoted in Moore 2004: 64).

Hence, a foreign policy orientation that is multilaterally oriented which ensures an international system based upon collective arrangements, is central to a soft power oriented foreign policy. Joseph Nye underlines that the US has been more successful in the domain of hard power, when the US has invested more, trained more, and has a clearer idea of what the US is doing. The US has been less successful in the area of soft power, where the US public diplomacy has been woefully inadequate and where the neglect of allies and institutions has created a sense of illegitimacy that has squandered the attractiveness of the United States (Nye 2004: 147). The same goes for a policy based on a securitisation of all the challenges now facing the US where such a securitisation is leading towards a policy that justifies measures that would otherwise not be seen as legitimate.

As an example, in his film "Fahrenheit 911" Moore interviews a group of elderly peace activists who have

assembled to write newspaper articles and arrange meetings in which their aim is to protest against the war in Iraq. However, their existence did not go unnoticed by the Bush administration. After some time a new person joined this group. It later turned out that this was a FBI informant. By contrasting several of the statements made by this group with several statements made by the President, Moore manages to present President Bush as somewhat paranoid; seeing terrorists on "every corner". In fact, the whole Bush administration is ridiculed in this way. Why is the FBI using resources on sending a clandestine informant to infiltrate this group of people whose only "felony" has been to discuss books on peace, writing letters to newspapers and talking to fellow citizens on the streets and at the local "speakers corner"? That portrayal is of course Moore's intention. The statements made by the President are meant for a national or international audience, showing that the United States is responding strongly against any threat to the national security. When mixed into a very local – almost private – context, these statements by the President are easily conceived as being out of place, with little relevance to the groups activities. Furthermore, Moore is telling us in his way how the US authorities are applying measures which in more "normal times" would have been regarded as inappropriate. In this way Moore is also telling us his view on the Bush administration's willingness to securitize domestic affairs. Hence, instead of regarding the fight against terrorism as a "war", the US should, according to Moore, instead regard terrorism as a serious crime. By defining terrorism as a crime, the US citizens could have avoided the most serious consequences of the securitization moves made by the US government. It could also have avoided the serious tensions that have risen between the US and several of its traditional closest friends and allies (France included). In fact, there is a debate within the IR community now where it is argued that those who see the fight against terrorism as "war" regard the international system through the prisms of

the Westphalian system, while those who regard terrorism as crime regard the international system through the prisms of an international society approach (Frederking, Artime & Pagano 2005). This dispute perpetuates two dominant post-cold war trends: attempts by many in the international community to construct global collective security rules, and resistance to that project from a hegemonic United States. A United States which safeguards an international system made up by norms, institutions and a collective international order, corresponds with a soft power-oriented USA.

The critics of Michael Moore

However, Michael Moore is one of the most disputed authors and filmmakers in the United States. A much held view among Moore's critics is that he is a powerful anti-government and anti-war protester, a domestic enemy, a liar and a cheat, who uses information and interviews selectively to pursue certain political goals as for instance make American politicians look useless, corrupt and stupid (Acher 2004). He is also by some regarded as an opportunist who has made millions of dollars by spreading conspiracy theories and attacking capitalism or that he is undermining the American effort to spread democracy and defeat terrorism, or even as Marxist propaganda (Koch 2004). However, as Michael Moore stated in an interview in *Vanity Fair* in 2004: "I must do something right, to get so much venom from the wrong people".

Careful reading of Michael Moore's book and similarly careful look at his film shows that he in no way could be regarded as an anti-American. On the contrary, he could also be regarded as an American patriot, an archetype of a "good old" American working-class hero and a man of the people. In other words, he is trying to behave as a down to earth ordinary Joe fighting corporate America, multinationals and Republicans. He furthermore claims that his aim is to educate and enlighten the

American people about the Bush administration and its politics and multinational corporations. He applies humour by behaving as an easygoing person asking serious questions or comments to men in power. He often uses the "one lonely man against the rich and powerful" image. This has made him a world hero and the British newspaper *The Mirror* made him "The greatest living American" in 2005.

His work can furthermore be regarded as a continuation of traditional leftwing critics in the political tradition of Noam Chomsky. However, Michael Moore is more; he is also an entertainer, a filmmaker and a journalist. He is down to earth and not an academic. He dropped out of college at the age of 22, and this can in some groups of the population make him even more trustworthy. Moreover, he has proved to be right in many cases, like the Iraq war. However, Moore's movies, books and television programs are not clear on what he wants to accomplish. He does not articulate it, other than his goal to enlighten the American people, but the message is clear: The war must stop and President George W. Bush has to get out of office. Nevertheless, we cannot find a clear-cut alternative of what he really wants instead. He has been rather reluctant on that matter, other than his support for John F. Kerry during the presidential election campaign in 2004 and of course Barack Obama in 2008. We have no reason not to believe his agenda, but there is a danger in making politics or politicians look like greedy or funny morons. It could of course lead to better politicians, who take his points seriously and change the course of American politics to soft power again, but it could also lead to a further decline in American voting participation and more distrust towards politics in general.

The rise of anti-Americanism on the world stage

The evidence is clear: There has been a markedly increase in anti-Americanism on

the world stage since the “war” against terror was initiated in 2001. As underlined by Nye, this could have serious consequences. It is true that the United States has recovered from unpopular policies in the past, but that was against the backdrop of the Cold War, in which other countries still feared the Soviet Union as the greatest evil (Nye 2004: 129). As an example, by July 2003, according to a Reuters poll, one-third of Germans under the age of 30 said that they thought the American government might even have staged the original September 11 attacks (ibid.: 130). Furthermore, the United States is also considered by many to be a greater danger to world peace and stability, than both Iran and North Korea’s nuclear programme.

According to a research project conducted by Pew Research Center in Washington DC in the spring of 2006 among 17 000 respondents from 15 countries it is evident that anti-Americanism is still on the rise more than three years after the major hostilities in Iraq ended. As an example, the share of the respondents with a positive image of the United States has fallen from 71 % to 56 % in India, from 43 % to 23 % in Spain and from 23 % to 12 % in Turkey. The majority of the respondents are also of the opinion that the US war against terrorism has contributed to increased international instability. 60 % of the British respondents are of the opinion that the war in Iraq has made the world a more dangerous place. 30 % thinks the opposite - that the world has become a safer place.¹²

However, Michael Moore’s influence and popularity cannot be regarded as part of this rising anti-Americanism. On the contrary, Michael Moore’s popularity must be seen within the framework of American

soft power. In our view, the key to understand Michael Moore’s influence on world opinion is to be found in such intangible power resources as the attractiveness of the American society to others, including its universalistic culture and its national cohesion. Hence, what Michael Moore is representing, is the image of the United States that other people around the world find attracting with the American society. American soft power is therefore still a factor to reckon with. Furthermore, Milos Foreman is correct when he stated that the US must have an “inner strength”, it must be “strong” and “free” when Hollywood could produce such films as “Twelve Angry Men” back in the 1950’s (Nye 2004: 17). Therefore, the United States is the only country in Joseph Nye’s overview of countries and regions, which scores “strong” on all power resources, tangible and intangible power resources likewise (Nye 1990: 174). The tangible power resources are basic resources (e.g. natural resources as coal-, oil- and steel production), military strength, economic development and scientific and technological progress. Intangible power resources are national cohesion, universalistic culture and international institutions. This fact also illustrates that popular culture, including media and English as the world’s *lingua franca*, have created new and formative normative structures which frames peoples mindsets and creates new identities. These elements must therefore be taken into consideration when one assesses the influence of Michael Moore’s books and films.

At the same time, we would also argue that the neo-realists are correct when they argue that absolute power does not attract – it repels (see e.g. Mearsheimer 1990: 11-21). Therefore, the present American administration’s policy of creating a formal American “empire” by upholding the present unipolar system, is what other people (and also states to an increasing extent) around the world find repulsive. As such, anti-Americanism is also due to the unattractiveness of the present Bush

¹² The results from the Pew Research Center were published in the Norwegian daily *Dagsavisen*, 14 June 2006. For a more thorough description of the investigation, see <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=252>

administration. But we must also in our analysis take into consideration that a policy by the US which underscores its hard power, in the longer run, also risks losing its soft power resources. Hence, anti-Americanism could not only be regarded as resistance towards what the Americans are doing, but also resistance towards who they are. In such a perspective, the films and books by Michael Moore could be regarded as a warning sign to the US authorities about what will happen to the United States if the arrogant and unilateral course of the Bush Administration continues.

Additional Explanations

The Promise of Social Constructivism

The social constructivist approach to IR is interested in the interplay of interests and ideas, as well as in the impact of norms, culture and institutions of international politics (Steans & Pettiford 2005: 181). According to Emanuel Adler, social constructivists share two understandings: what Stefano Guzzini summarized as the social construction of knowledge and the construction of social reality (Adler 2001: 95). These are, according to Adler, social constructivism's common ground, the view that the material world does not come classified, and that, therefore, the objects of our knowledge are not independent of our interpretations and our language (ibid.). Therefore, social constructivism sees the world as a project under construction, as becoming rather than being. According to Adler: "Unlike idealism and post-structuralism and postmodernism, which take the world *only* as it can be imagined or talked about, constructivism accepts that not all statements have the same epistemic value and that there is consequently some foundation for knowledge" (ibid.).

As already pointed out in the previous chapter, social constructivism can also be applied as an approach to achieve a better understanding of Michael Moore's book and films which treats the US after the terrorist attacks in 2001. Both Moore's book

and film raises some interesting arguments about how the representation of something as a threat to a particular community can be used to justify measures that would otherwise not be seen as legitimate. In Jill Steans and Lloyd Pettiford's book "Introduction to International Relations – Perspectives & Themes" they apply a social constructivist approach to get a deeper understanding of "Fahrenheit 911". Their point is that the US foreign policy is not guided by rational calculations of threats to the national interests, based on sound intelligence (as realists and neo-realists suggest it is, or at least should be), but instead the notion of a "threat" which is discursively constructed, first of all by the Bush administration (Steans & Pettiford 2005: 199): "The Bush administration and the mass media created a state of fear in the USA that led people not only to be suspicious of strangers, but to take steps to protect themselves from possible attack – even in the local, neighbourhood Wal-Mart in middle America" (ibid.). Even more, as already underlined in the previous chapter, there was no credible intelligence to suggest that Saddam Hussein was supporting or harbouring al-Qaida terrorists, and those WMD's have not, and most probably never will be, discovered.

Jill Steans and Lloyd Pettiford also underline that social constructivism is similar to post-structuralism, although a poststructuralist would be likely to see the "threat" to the US mainland as constructed in the service of justifying and legitimising intervention in Iraq: "However, in so far as it is suggested by Moore that this intervention was to safeguard the interests of the US oil industry, which in turn had close links to George W. Bush and other key members of the administration, you might feel that this film resonates more with neo-Gramscian notions of hegemony, ideology and transnational class interests" (ibid.).

Steans and Pettiford's last point is important to take into consideration when one investigates Michael Moore's book and film. Hence, there are several ways to approach our research object. Social

constructivism can therefore be applied as a supplementary approach to our soft power understanding of how Michael Moore is communicating with his audience. The promise of social constructivism lies in the fact that it is showing us how even threats can be discursively constructed. Social constructivism's strength is that it gives us a better understanding of how the world is continuously reproduced in the interplay of structure and agency. Furthermore, for social constructivists, national interests is a category that needs to be explained, rather than being treated as an explanatory factor. Furthermore, social constructivists are interested in how interests and norms and institutions interact – for instance – in the “construction” of threats against the United States. Methodologically speaking, a social constructivist approach normally stresses historical processes, because it is otherwise unable to demonstrate the interplay of structure and agency. As suggested by Steans and Pettiford, also critical theories as well as Gramscian and neo-Gramscian approaches could have been applied.

Conclusions

Michael Moore is one of the most disputed authors and filmmakers in the United States. The purpose of this article has therefore been to try to shed some new insights on our understanding of Michael Moore's political views as they are represented in his latest book (“Dude, Where's My Country?”) and film (“Fahrenheit 911”). By applying the soft power concept, we have tried to illustrate how Moore is advocating a new foreign policy of the United States. This is a United States which safeguards an international system made up by norms, institutions and a collective international order. We have therefore tried to illustrate how these views correspond with a soft power-oriented USA.

It has furthermore been an aim with this article to try to put Michael Moore into the current IR debate on such important themes as American multilateralism versus unilateralism, the influence of the neo-

conservatives and the state of the American “empire”. By doing that, we have tried to reach a deeper understanding of the intellectual tradition Michael Moore is standing in. Furthermore, by applying an “IR-way”, we have tried to explain why Michael Moore has become one of the most influential Americans at the start of the 21st century.

It is our view that Michael Moore's influence on the international stage must be seen within the context of the tremendous changes which have taken place in the foreign policies of the United States in recent years. A United States which is at “war” against terrorism internationally as well as domestically, has changed the political life in the United States dramatically in recent years. By securitising terrorism, the US has applied measures which in more “normal times” would have been regarded as illegitimate. Michael Moore's recipe is more soft power as a way to meet the challenges from terrorism. It is however also important to underline that Moore is not dismissing hard power as a measure in the fight against terrorism either. But, as emphasised by Moore, the fight against terrorism is not a war that can be won. Terrorism is crime and must be treated in such a way.

Therefore, Michael Moore's critique of the foreign policy orientation of the current Bush Administration has gained him much critique and repulsiveness, but also admiration as well as respect. This is, in our view, also a sign of American soft power. We could therefore state that the views Moore represents is the culture and values that other people around the world find attractive with the United States. What is more, Moore is aiming to tell us that he represents an “another America” as compared with the foreign- and defence policy elite in Washington DC. As we have tried to illustrate, popular culture and media, as well as a particular set of normative values, is regularly identified as a source of soft power. Therefore, Michael Moore's views must not be regarded as part of the rising anti-Americanism in the world. On the

contrary, Michael Moore could be regarded as an American patriot, but also an American patriot who applies left-wing populist rhetoric as a way to communicate with his audience.

The rise of anti-Americanism must therefore in part be understood as a consequence of the present unipolar international system as well as the foreign policy orientation which characterise the Bush Administration. Furthermore, it must also be emphasised that anti-Americanism has long "intellectual roots" in e.g. European history. In fact we

can trace anti-Americanism back to the times when the American republic was created at the end of the 18th century. Anti-Americanism is therefore not a new phenomenon. A soft power oriented United States, however, which pursues a multilateral and hence institution based foreign policy with emphasis on collective arrangements as e.g. the United Nations (UN), could therefore, in a longer perspective, reduce the unfortunate results that anti-Americanism poses.

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By Any Means Necessary? Ethnographic Access, Ethics and the Critical Researcher

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyse the implications of negotiating ethnographic research access following research ethical codes and remain coherent with Critical Management Studies (CMS) principles. Through this reflective account, we seek to address the field of Organisation Studies (OS), where ethnographic research access has attracted little theoretical scholarly attention, and also to contribute to the renewed focus on ethical research practice within CMS literature. In addition, we also aim to contribute to broader debates about qualitative research practices by highlighting the ethical implications of establishing formal research access and to analyse the dilemmas that arise from the conflict between prescriptive ethical codes and researcher's own conscience when carrying out field research. Rather than calling for a new, revised code of ethics, we appeal for a more open and honest debate about the pragmatic realities of critical, organisational ethnographic research.

INTRODUCTION

Although discussions about research access have been present in qualitative research for some time (e.g. Brown et al, 1976; Gray, 1980; Feldman et al, 2002; Harrington, 2003; Crowley, 2007), in depth scholarly analysis on the negotiation of formal access¹ is barely present in many Organization Studies (OS) ethnographic accounts (Bruni, 2006b). Where present, it tends to be left 'behind the scenes' (Gellner & Hirsch, 2001), relegated to short appendices or prefaces (see Kunda, 1992). This is surprising as the process of negotiating formal access is known to be difficult, with famous anthropologists such as Boas and Malinowski having failed to get access at points during their careers (Morrill et al, 1999). Access is a concern in all types

of field research (Johnson, 1975) and can be surrounded by particular difficulties in research involving work organisations, where its negotiation can be very intricate due to the unwillingness of many institutions to open their doors and their "secrets" to outside scrutiny (Smith, 1997, 2000; Bryman, 1988; Buchanan et al, 1988; Gellner & Hirsch, 2001, Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Bruni, 2006b). Gatekeepers may be concerned that research reports could expose company practices to the wider public or be used in legal proceedings against the company (Smith, 2001: 226). At the same time they may not perceive any benefit in taking part in in-depth, long-term research, given the demands of such research on organisational time. Problems of access seem to be particularly difficult for researchers following a critical perspective – "why should corporate managers allow a valuable resource – time – to be used against their own and maybe the company's interest?" (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000: 193).

Furthermore, taking its lead from medicine and health sociology, social science has increasingly concerned itself with the ethical

¹ We use the term formal research access to refer to the possibility of entering a setting to carry out research. This is often negotiated with formal gatekeepers such as CEOs, directors and managers. Although some prefer the notion of entry to designate the same process and use the term access in relation to access to information (Harrington, 2003), the term formal access seems more appropriated to OS as most literature in this area use this term.

defensibility of its research methodology and methods, leading to the development in the last 40 years of prescriptive codes of ethics intended to protect the rights of human subjects in research (Beauchamp et al, 1982). These codes, enshrined in the guiding principles of institutional review boards (IRB) and independent ethical committees, have a major impact on the nature of research undertaken within universities and research institutes in the US (Wright, 2005; Rambo, 2007) and increasingly worldwide. The development and refinement of codes of ethics for social science has been welcomed by some as a sensible and helpful set of guidelines (e.g. Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Murphy & Dingwall, 2001; Bell & Bryman, 2006; Connolly & Reid, 2007). Elsewhere, concerns have been raised regarding the impact of the enforcement of such codes by IRBs (e.g. Nelson, 2004; Gunsalus et al, 2007; Koro-Ljungberg et al, 2007; Tierney and Corwin, 2007).

Our aim in this paper is to analyse the ethical complexity of negotiating access to carry out CMS-oriented ethnographic research in work organisations, in the light of emergent codes of ethics for social scientific research. We seek to contribute to the CMS literature which until very recently (Ferdinand et al, 2008) had under-analysed the ethical aspect of its research practices (Brewis and Wray-Bliss, 2008). More broadly, we aim to raise a challenge to mainstream OS where formal ethnographic research access has attracted very little theoretical scholarly attention (Bruni, 2006b). In addition, we also aim to contribute to broader debates about qualitative research practices by highlighting the ethical implications associated with the practice of establishing formal research access. In a broad sense, we analyse and make explicit tensions between prescriptive ethical codes and researcher's own conscience in relation to access to the field.

To introduce our account, we first highlight the key principles underlining ethical codes in social research and the increasing impact of research ethics upon social science and OS in particular. We then discuss the centrality of

ethics to CMS and the particular challenges of ethnographic research in this tradition, and consider the limitations in the traditional treatment of ethnographic access in light of this. Drawing on the experiences of one of the authors as ethnographer in a newspaper printing site in the UK, we then discuss the practical/ethical dimensions of the struggle to gain and maintain research access while maintaining a clear ethical direction in line with the ethnographer's critical commitments. We conclude with some reflections on the usefulness of codes of ethics in providing guidelines in critical organisational research and in social scientific research more broadly. Rather than calling for a new, revised code of ethics, we appeal for a more open and honest debate about the pragmatic realities of critical, organisational ethnographic research.

Research Ethics and the Social Sciences

In an attempt to deal with ethical concerns since the horrors of experiments conducted by Nazi doctors during World War 2, professional bodies, universities and sponsor agencies have developed codes of ethical conduct, building principally on the Nuremberg Code, the Declaration of Helsinki and in the United States on the Belmont Principles. The Nuremberg Code was established in 1947 as a direct response to the atrocities of Nazi doctors' and represented an attempt to formulate general and basic standards for human experimentation (see Childress, 2000). The Declaration of Helsinki, developed and adopted in 1964 by the World Medical Association, tried to establish a better balance between research subject's interest and the need for scientific investigation which was undermined by the Nuremberg Code (Bell & Bryman, 2006). The Belmont principles (i.e. respect for persons, beneficence and justice) provide the philosophical underpinning for US federal laws that govern research involving human subjects. It also has strong influence on IRB regulations in US universities (see Ilgen et al, 2003). The roots of ethical concerns in research can therefore be seen to originate in medical and health sciences and

were only more recently incorporated by social research².

While codes of ethics have had a presence in social sciences for some time, their application to OS in the US and Europe is an recent phenomenon (Bell & Bryman, 2006). Most ethical codes and debates in social research tend to focus on 3 broad principles: *informed consent*, *the right to privacy and confidentiality*, and *protection from harm* (see Van Maanen, 1983; Punch, 1986; Taylor, 1987; Cassell & Jacobs, 1987; Fontana & Frey, 1994).

The first of these, *informed consent*, was a key concern of the Nuremburg code, and requires research subjects to be accurately informed about the research so that they may make a clear and conscious choice about whether or not they wish to take part (Beauchamp et al, 1982; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Davies, 1999). It is usually argued that exceptions to that principle, such as in the case of covert research, may only be justified where the sensitive nature of the research focus (i.e. criminal or covert activities) would otherwise preclude effective investigation³ (Fine, 1993; Punch, 1994; Adler & Adler, 1994; Calvey, 2000). *The right to privacy and confidentiality*⁴ requires that people's identities and research settings must have their privacy protected during and after the study (Punch, 1994; Adler & Adler, 1994), and that confidentiality must be guaranteed to subjects, groups and/or organisations under scrutiny (Bell & Bryman, 2006; Fetterman, 1989). *Protection from harm* relates to any damage that a research subject or setting may suffer as a consequence of taking part on the research (Kelman, 1982; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Vanderstaay, 2005). Although physical harm is not a common consequence in

ethnographies, other forms of harm can occur once the research findings are published. Even when pseudonyms are used, personal and organisational reputations can be undermined (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, Punch, 1994).

In the US, where IRBs hold significant influence, but also increasingly in Europe and elsewhere, compliance with these three principles is frequently obligatory for the institutional approval of a research proposal. More generally, though, these principles, specially when deployed by IRBs, tend to assume that they are unproblematic, common-sense, and essentially 'good' rules, that must be accepted and followed by the vast majority of researchers as vital to guarantee respect towards research subjects, which can and should be implemented unproblematically by an effective and conscientious researcher, their application is depicted as straightforward (see Fetterman, 1989; Silverman, 1999; Gill & Johnson, 2002; Bell & Bryman, 2006, to name but a few) regardless of the epistemological position of the researcher, and where ethical dilemmas arise in the field, such principles are intended to offer an appropriate solution (see Taylor, 1987; Vanderstaay, 2005). Codes of conduct have thus been defended as desirable to all organisational researchers, including CMS inspired scholars (Bell & Bryman, 2006); a position we intend to interrogate in this paper. In this way, such research ethical principles are grounded on a rather essential universalistic and prescriptive view of moral and, as such, they are increasingly considered "as universal 'benchmarks' of ethical behaviour" (Cannella & Lincoln, 2007: 316). A consequence of this is that they may be hegemonically imposed on the researcher reducing her/his autonomy and responsibility (cf. Koro-Ljungberg et al, 2007).

While ethics, broadly defined, is likely to have some relevance to all fields of OS, it may be argued that certain epistemological traditions in OS are more concerned with ethical issues than others (see Parker, 1999; Adler, 2002a; Adler, Forbes & Willmott, 2007). In particular critical researchers in OS have developed an epistemological position that constitutes an essentially ethical endeavour, as we will discuss in the next section.

² For an overview on the origins of ethical concerns in qualitative research, see Beauchamp et al (1982) and Punch (1994).

³ This has fuelled debates around its validity as a research strategy. For an overview on those debates, see Punch (1994); Adler & Adler (1994); Hammersley & Atkinson (1995); Davies (1999).

⁴ Confidentiality, privacy and assurances of anonymity are overlapping issues (see Davies, 1999)

CMS, Ethics and Power

While ethical questions are implicitly of relevance to all branches of social science, some sense of moral challenge to the societal *status quo* is unquestionably central to the emergence of critical thought about organisations, ranging from anarchists (e.g. Mikhail Bakunin and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon), utopian socialists (e.g. Henry de Saint-Simon, Robert Owen) and communists (e.g. Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels). In the past 40 years, critical analysis in OS has developed as a distinct research tradition, first through mainly Marxist perspectives (e.g. Braverman, 1974; Marglin, 1974; Burawoy, 1979) and more recently incorporating post-modernist thought (e.g. Cooper & Burrell, 1988). In this context, Critical Management Studies has emerged over the last 15 years⁵ as a movement that attempts to encompass different critical traditions in OS. As a consequence, CMS research is far from a unified and coherent body of knowledge due to the diversity of epistemological traditions it draws upon, such as different forms of Marxism and post-Marxism (Thompson, 1989), Critical Theory (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996), critical realism (Fleetwood & Ackroyd, 2004), post-structuralism (Calás & Smircich, 1997), feminist perspectives (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004), post-colonialism (Prasad, 2003); environmentalism (Forbes & Jermier, 2002), and Foucauldian studies (McKinlay & Starkey, 1998), to mention but a few. As most of those traditions follow different epistemological stances it is no surprise that, in Adler's words, 'too few of us (in CMS) would ever be able to agree on anything much' (Adler, 2002, p. 388). As a consequence, internal debates have been taking place regarding the nature of critique in CMS (e.g. Boje et al, 2001; Calás & Smircich, 2002), whether CMS aims to produce more "humane" and ethical management practices or is opposed to the institution of management altogether (e.g.

Parker, 2002; Clegg et al, 2006; Willmott, 2006; Adler, Forbes & Willmott, 2007), the potential exclusion of other critical voices by CMS (see Bhom & Spoelstra, 2004; Ackroyd, 2004; Wray-Bliss, 2004) and structuralist and post-structuralist positions on issues of power in the workplace (see Parker, 1999; Willmott & Knights, 1989; Thompson & Ackroyd, 1995). Despite this ongoing debate, it has been argued that there are also unifying characteristics common to most or all CMS positions (Fournier & Grey, 2000; Adler, Forbes & Willmott, 2007). Parker (2002) argues that when someone claims to do critical work in OS, she/he is saying something about her/his political identity (that it is broadly left-wing/liberal) and is expressing distrust for conventional positivist methodology. Similarly, Fournier and Grey (2000) advocate that critical research in OS organises itself around three core propositions: *non-performativity* (being unconcerned with the development of knowledge aimed to increase organisational efficiency and not seeing management as a "desirable given"); the *de-naturalisation* of what is usually taken for granted (e.g. hierarchy, profit, efficiency) and *reflexivity*, the commitment to interrogate one's own research claims.

Fundamentally, then, CMS does not find mainstream management to be either "intellectually coherent and/or ethically defensible" (Willmott, 1995: 36). Its 'mission, therefore, is to challenge the oppressive character of management and organisation (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992; Adler, 2002); to maintain a critical stance towards instrumental reason (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996); to oppose dominant power, ideology, managerial privilege, and hierarchy; and to analyse relations between power and knowledge, especially showing how forms of knowledge that appear to be neutral reinforce asymmetrical relations of power (Adler, Forbes & Willmott, 2007; McKinlay & Starkey, 1998). In this sense, critical approaches to OS are strongly linked to some conception of ethics; not only because it is largely motivated from an ethical position but also because the possibility to name the behaviour of others as problematic (Collins & Wray-Bliss, 2005) is the main condition of

⁵ For an analysis of the development of CMS see Fournier & Grey, 2002; Grey & Willmott, 2005; Parker, 2002; Adler, Forbes & Willmott, 2007

possibility for critical research (Latour, 2005). As a result when critical research makes assertions about the oppressive or exploitative character of managerial or organisational practices, an implicit or explicit ethical judgment is made⁶.

Thus analysing issues of power tends to be a central topic in CMS-oriented research. Given the movement's epistemological diversity, power can be theorized in distinctive and sometimes conflicting ways within CMS research⁷. However, a dominant theme in recent CMS work draws on a Foucauldian notion of power to focus on how power relations are constituted in specific organisational settings (e.g.: Willmott & Knights, 1989; Townley, 1994; McKinlay & Starkey, 1998; Hodgson, 2002). Foucault (1975 and 2000) largely rejects the association of power with repression and constraint and instead describes power relations as polyvalent, capillary, strategic and productive, enabling certain possibilities while rendering others more difficult. In Foucault's own words, "the exercise of power is a 'conduct of conducts' and a management of possibilities" (Foucault, 2000: 341). This is the notion of power adopted in this paper, particularly when considering the researcher's location and her/his constitution within, through and in furtherance of particular relations of power.

As critical perspectives in OS typically rely on ethnography as a research strategy (see: Roy, 1952; Beynon, 1975; Burawoy, 1979; Kondo, 1990, Kunda, 1992), the next section will explore what may constitute a CMS inspired ethnography.

Ethnography and CMS

Ethnography can be defined in different ways: as a particular kind of fieldwork activity, as an intellectual paradigm or as a narrative

style (Bate, 1997). It "yields empirical data about the lives of people in a specific situation" (Spradley, 1979: 13) and involves "the ethnographer participating, overtly or covertly, in people's activities for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995:1). Pioneering ethnographic research in OS followed realist wisdom (Marcus & Cushman, 1982), based on the assumption that reality exists "out there" and that the role of the ethnographer is to preserve a non-intrusive presence in the field, acting as a neutral observer (Sanday, 1979; Marcus & Cushman, 1982; Van Maanen, 1988). Later, this work was supplemented but not supplanted by ethnography drawing on symbolic interactionism (Pondy et al, 1983; Gagliardi, 1990), in which the interpreter has a more explicitly active role, as an authorial voice in translating and transforming discourses into written texts, and it is argued typically privileging her/his experience over the native's. In such work, heterogeneous elements are usually suppressed given room to an integrated portrait of institutional foreground against a coherent cultural background (Jeffcutt, 1994; Linstead, 1993).

From the 1980s onwards, post-modern inspired critiques stormed ethnography, challenging the totalising gaze of the ethnographer, her/his ability to impose interpretation and thus how the "native" was represented in ethnographic accounts. Such critiques have undermined the researcher's ability and ethical 'right' to create textual order via the suppression of dissonant voices. In place of absolute and authoritative accounts, it is argued that knowledge generated via ethnography must be an enactment of multiple voices and realities (see Marcus & Cushman, 1982; Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Marcus & Fischer, 1986; Clifford, 1988; Marcus, 1994), and should draw attention to issues of text, language and authorship in ethnography (Van Maanen, 1995; Marcus, 1997; Atkinson et al, 2001). The post-modern challenges have influenced not only anthropology (see Marcus, 1997) and the concerns of critical ethnography (see Thomas, 1993; Marcus, 1999) but also OS (see Jeffcutt, 1994; Linstead, 1993; Watson,

⁶ This claim is itself is a contentious issue; see Clegg et al., 2006, Collins and Wray-Bliss, 2005.

⁷ For an overview on different possibilities of theorizing power following a critical stance, see Clegg (1989) and Clegg, Courpasson & Phillips (2006).

2000; Banerjee & Linstead, 2004; Bruni, 2005 among others).

Such tendencies have had major implications for critical perspectives in OS, given their traditional reliance upon reflexive, qualitative methodologies such as ethnography (e.g. Beynon, 1975; Burawoy, 1979; Leidner, 1983; Linstead, 1985; Kondo, 1990). Due to the epistemological diversity of CMS-inspired research, it is impossible to provide a clear cut and generic definition of what constitutes critical ethnography in OS. However, common characteristics one would associate with CMS-inspired ethnographic research may include exploring the ongoing performance of power relations, regimes of truth, domination and resistance; describing and analyzing hidden issues, agendas and assumptions; a scepticism towards "value free" facts; a concern with reflexivity; a sensitivity to the political concerns underpinning research; and a preoccupation with deprived and powerless groups; and, therefore, a focus on the possibility of social change (see Thomas, 1993; Jordan & Yeomas, 1995; Marcus, 1999; Foley, 2002; Forester, 2003).

Practicalities of the Trade: Ethnography and Fieldwork Access in Organisations

Ethnography has an important and distinct presence in Organisation Studies (OS), where it has been vital to developing a deeper understanding about the world of management, organisations and work (Van Maanen, 1979; Rosen, 1991; Bate, 1997; Smith, 2000). The uses of ethnography as a research strategy in OS have led to ongoing epistemological debates about representation, language and truth claims (Rosen, 1991; Jeffcutt, 1994; Linstead, 1993; Jones, 2000) and to an extent, concerns with ethical debates around ethnography. Less frequent, however, are academic debates associated with ethnographic research practice. Indeed, many writers have divided ethnography into different phases (Van Maanen, 1995; Denzin, 1997, Bryman, 2001), One consequence of this has been to

focus attention upon the reflexive ethnographic moments (such as analysing empirical material, or writing ethnographic accounts), where ontological, epistemological and ethical dilemmas arise and need to be properly addressed. This enhanced focus is largely to the detriment of the practical ethnographic moments, which are seen as theoretically unproblematic and technical, to be dealt with managerially and pragmatically (see Fetterman, 1989; Van Maanen, 1995; Bryman, 2001). For instance, although writing fieldnotes has attracted attention in ethnographic research, it tends to be treated as a practicality about which experienced scholars can advise novice researchers (see Emerson et al, 1995), and even post-modern inspired critiques have not challenged or questioned those practicalities (Van Maanen, 1995; Marcus, 1997). In such moments, by implication, it may be argued that following a clear ethical code is sufficient to deal with ethical dilemmas in the practical moments of ethnography, as ontological and epistemological issues are not at stake.

As an example of a practical step in ethnography, some research textbooks have tried to provide some insights into dealing with the access problem (Bryman, 1988) by offering advice on strategies intended to secure access. Examples of such strategies are: *forms of impression management* (Johnson, 1975; Agar, 1980; Fetterman, 1989; Silverman, 1999; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Feldman et al 2002), *obtaining bottom-up access* (Silverman, 1999), *being non-judgemental* (Silverman, 1999; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), *establishing a contract* (Silverman, 1999), *using researcher's personal and institutional networks* (Agar, 1980; Bryman, 1988; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Gill & Johnson, 2002); *minor forms of deception* (Johnson, 1975; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Alvesson & Deetz, 2000), *gaining access progressively* (Johnson, 1975), *developing and nurturing relationships with important actors* (Bryman, 1988; Fetterman, 1989; Feldman et al, 2002); *the effective management of gatekeepers* (Morrill et al, 1999); *eliciting the sponsorship of a senior scholar to get access*; *becoming a change agent* (Gummesson, 2000) and

undertaking covert research (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). Moreover, to have some sort of reciprocity from the researcher to the organisation studied (e.g. offering feedback sections, training, etc) is not only presented as an access strategy, but also as a good practice (Brown, et al, 1976; Bryman, 1988; Ram, 2000; Gill & Johnson, 2002; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Silverman, 1999) or even as a reciprocal ethical obligation (Bell & Bryman, 2006). Once access is granted, the problem is converted into an issue of 'managing' the fieldwork process and relations (Silverman, 1999; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Gill & Johnson, 2002; Feldman et al, 2002). Even an entrepreneurial approach has been advocated to address fieldwork contingencies (Ram, 2000). The pressures resulting from the perceived danger of losing formal access are rarely addressed explicitly. In this way, the consensus in general accounts about acquiring and keeping access is that the successful deployment of the correct set of strategies and management of certain aspects of the relationship by the researcher will eventually grant and maintain access. As a consequence, it is portrayed as a neutral and operational task, with little or no ethical consequence (beyond debates about the moral validity of employing covert research strategies e.g. Bulmer, 1982).

Portraying access in this manner reflects an assumption that the researcher has significant control over the field, attributing too much agency to the researcher and too little to the researched. This reinforces the idea of research subjects under the control of the researcher (with the right managerial qualities) a notion that has significant ethical consequences for critically-inspired research (Wray-Bliss, 2003). This also often implies that organisations remain stable during and after the negotiation of access, depicting organisations as singular entities with a unified will (i.e. to allow or deny access). As discussed below, the ethnographer tends to be swiftly disabused of this misconception faced with the realities of conducting research in any work organisation. Moreover,

this kind of guidance is implicitly underlined by an instrumental rationality which also poses dilemmas for critical researchers intent upon challenging and critiquing this form of instrumental reason and action.

The intention below is to address this tendency by underlining struggles and ethical challenges faced by one of the authors in his attempts to gain and hold onto access for ethnographic research, and at the same time to maintain a clear ethical stance derived from his critical perspective, given the pragmatic complexity of a typical research encounter.

The Struggle for Formal Access: A Confession

In February 2005, one of the authors of this paper⁸ started negotiations to get formal access to carry out fieldwork within the offices of a British newspaper. My main research aim was to conduct an extended critical ethnography looking at the impact of organisational change on individuals working in an industry in decline, the newspaper industry (Meyer, 2004). Attempts to get research access involved directly three distinct but interconnected organisations: RedPaper⁹, FailCo and OneCo. RedPaper is a regional newspaper that was moving production from one printing site (FailCo) to another (OneCo). Although I first gained agreement to conduct research at RedPaper, I eventually ended up conducting ethnography at OneCo eight months after I started negotiating access. I conducted this ethnography while 4 out of the 9 OneCo presses were being replaced at a cost of £45 million, a cost shared by OneCo and RedPaper (to the great relief of OneCo as they were at this time under threat of closure due to overcapacity in the industry). Throughout this period of negotiation, I took detailed fieldnotes after every relevant event (e.g. meeting, phone call conversation, informal chat, etc.). The account of access negotiation below is drawn from these fieldnotes.

My attempts to gain formal access to conduct fieldwork began with two meetings with the

⁸ In keeping with the traditions of the confessional ethnographic tale (Van Maanen, 1988), the researcher will henceforth be referred to in the first person.

⁹ The company names cannot be revealed.

editor of RedPaper in March, 2005. In these meetings, I explained my interest in conducting ethnography at RedPaper newsroom. The editor replied he saw no problem with this, asking that I should write a one page proposal for the approval of the RedPaper Managing Director (MD). Although I sent the requested proposal immediately, it was not until July 2005, after four months of almost daily (and increasingly desperate) telephone calls to the editor's Personal Assistant (PA), that I finally secured a meeting with the editor and the MD where access was granted. They also insisted that before I started, I should be given an overview of the various departments of RedPaper, and it was during this tour that I was taken by RedPaper's Production Director (PD) to visit the OneCo and FailCo printing sites.

In August 2005 I finally started my observation of activities in the RedPaper newsroom. However, after one week in the newsroom, I was asked to see the editor and the MD again. Although very friendly, they explained that there was a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at RedPaper who was proposing some deep changes in the organization that would create discomfort and they were not willing to have an outsider documenting this process¹⁰. To my deep disquiet, the editor stated his position;

“You can only do interviews. You will need to send all questions you will ask people in advance. I will select the questions you can ask and the people you can speak to. I will want to see all your interview transcripts. My lawyers will read your final report and you will need to sign a confidentiality agreement”

Extremely worried, I replied I could not accept this due to methodological and ethical constraints - these new conditions of access made my research aim impracticable and I had no viable alternative subject organisation in this industry. The MD asked if I had any

other ideas and I suggested that I might research the printing side of the business where other significant changes were taking place. They agreed to this and ended the meeting saying that the MD and I would meet on the next day to discuss details.

However, the next day never came. For another month, I kept in touch with the PD explaining and demonstrating my anxiety and visiting his department regularly under the pretext of making some initial observations. In this time I again phoned the MD's PA repeatedly without any reply from the MD himself. Finally, in September 2005, the RedPaper PD contacted me to say he had the 'all-clear' from the MD to provide research access at their contracted printing sites and that he was willing to help.

I then submitted a new proposal suggesting a 9-month research project analysing changes in the RedPaper hired printing facilities, covering FailCo and OneCo. The PD said he would arrange access, but made it clear that it would be very difficult at FailCo; as relations between RedPaper and FailCo were poor and “they might think you are spying for us”. Things now moved very quickly; the PD confirmed I could not research FailCo but arranged a meeting with the MD of OneCo and advised me on what to say at this meeting. I felt he was clearly driving the research towards OneCo where the new presses were being installed. He suggested that to increase my chances of access at OneCo, I should offer training in change management to OneCo managers. I was unhappy at the prospect of delivering training, but decided to do whatever was necessary to get access as by now I couldn't afford any more delays.

Finally, by late September 2005 I had a meeting with the RedPaper PD, the OneCo MD and the OneCo Senior Production Manager (SPM). It took no more than 15 minutes. After seeing my proposal, the MD assured I could stay there for as long as I wanted and that everything would be open to me because his company had “nothing to hide”. He asked me to make two presentations about my research before I could start, one to trade union representatives and another to OneCo managers, to address concerns about my presence, to underline my

¹⁰ Seven months after this meeting, one in each three journalists and more than 30 administrative personnel were made redundant at RedPaper. They also changed their editorial structure.

independence and to show that there was no hidden managerial agenda behind my daily observations. No mention was made about offering training to OneCo managers. Also, I would be allowed to use the data gathered for academic purposes, provided that I agreed to protect the anonymity of the company and of individuals and to give a feedback session presenting my research findings. I saw no ethical issues at this stage as was confident I had considered the necessary ethical safeguards while negotiating formal access. However, as I left the access meeting extremely happy, the RedPaper PD said "it will be very good to have you here...You will be my eyes and ears in this project - you will be our man on the ground". I was deeply unhappy about his remarks, but I decided at this point to keep quiet. My intention was to see how things would develop, in the belief that anything I said at this point could only endanger the precarious research access I had barely established, and with the intention of dealing with this situation as and when it arose.

One week later, I met the trade union representatives. During this meeting, the MD made it entirely clear that this was a process of communication rather than consultation, and that the research would take place regardless of the representatives' reaction. Once I finished explaining how I would work, the SPM said rather aggressively: "This is to shut you up and show that we are not afraid of having an outsider observing what we do. We have f**king nothing to hide". In the meeting with OneCo managers, the MD made it clear that helping my research was agreed between RedPaper and OneCo, that again this was a process of one-way communication and that all managers should provide whatever information I required. The SPM firmly emphasised that I had complete access. In both meetings I stressed very clearly that all information I gathered would be confidential, used solely for academic purposes and no names would be disclosed to anybody under any circumstances.

At this point, then, formal access may be seen to be secured, information provided and organisational consent gained, although

of course, as is widely recognised, this process continues throughout the research project. The next section will deal with the specific requirements of the three ethical principles cited above: *informed consent*, *privacy* and *confidentiality rights*, and *protection from harm*, in light of the ongoing process of access negotiation. A key focus is the close link between formal access and ethical concerns as well as the problems involved in following ethical guidance for social research.

Access and Ethics in Practice

The difficulties associated with informed consent in ethnographic research are well known (e.g. Punch, 1994; Fontana & Frey, 1994; Adler & Adler, 1994; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Davies, 1999), and the notion of consent proved very problematic in this research. I was introduced to OneCo by RedPaper whose investment was securing OneCo's future and which was also owner of two presses being commissioned at the printing site. Later, while in the field, OneCo senior managers confirmed to me that I was only allowed to stay there so as to keep OneCo's good relationship with RedPaper. Once formal access was granted by the OneCo MD, this left little leeway for other parts of OneCo to refuse consent, as shown above in the meetings with trade union representatives and OneCo managers - a command had been issued by the MD and had to be followed. I felt rather uncomfortable taking advantage of established hierarchical structures of control, the selfsame structures that my CMS-oriented research aimed to critique; overall, this seemed an inauspicious way to start the study.

With this in mind, I was very concerned to secure informed consent from individuals as the research progressed. In practice, this proved very difficult to achieve in any meaningful way; securing informed consent from 35 people on a construction site, or from 10 busy managers at the outset of each meeting, posed a range of difficulties. After few weeks in the field, a customary response to requests for consent was "F*ck off mate, you always ask this sh*t. Of course I agree, pal". When I attempted on one

occasion to ask the same question to everyone present in a meeting, I was politely told to shut up. Thus specific conditions, both in terms of how organisational access was initially granted and in terms of practical realities of the field, made informed consent a much less meaningful concept. It also highlights the tension between what personal judgements of appropriate behaviour and the ethical principles I am supposed to sponsor.

In terms of privacy and confidentiality rights the situation was no more straightforward. By assuring formal access with total openness, in theory the MD undermined any possibility of preserving individual privacy from the researcher's scrutiny, at least on work-related issues. When I asked questions about particular situations or individuals, people had total discretion on what to say, but in practice they very rarely chose not to answer. The extent to which this was in any sense a free choice is clearly debatable. Similarly, confidentiality was complex given the role of the RedPaper PD as gatekeeper. Given his comments about my role as "his eyes and ears, his man on the ground", he clearly assumed that by granting me access, I would provide him with insider information about OneCo issues. On the one hand, I strongly felt that by doing so I may be breaching OneCo confidentiality by releasing any OneCo information to a third party (indeed, one of their key customers and investors, RedPaper). However, the PD position was not a clear one; although not employed by OneCo, he had an office within OneCo and sat on the OneCo executive board responsible for the installation of the new machinery.

This situation was clearly very delicate, as the PD and I developed a level of trust in our personal relationship. On several occasions, he disclosed very sensitive information about RedPaper and continued as my supportive sponsor for securing wider access within the organisation. As a consequence, I felt that I owed him something. While I was conducting my fieldwork we had two meetings at RedPaper's headquarters where he asked for what I considered private information about

OneCo. On each occasion, I underlined my commitments to confidentiality and the need to follow strict research ethical guidelines. His response was; "Come on, mate. Life is about trade-offs. Your research has to be good for all of us". At the time of the first meeting, I had seen nothing that could be considered any kind of threat to RedPaper's interests. However, as my research progressed, numerous issues emerged; for example, it became clear that some OneCo managers were deliberately allocating some expenses to the installation project budget that were not part of the installation itself, with the consent of the OneCo MD. Following my conscience, I felt I could not disclose this to the newspaper PD – and at the same time, I felt very guilty *not* passing on this information to him, given his support.

Instead, during our meetings we talked about less sensitive OneCo issues, which could not occur without disclosing information I did not regard as confidential. So, although I made careful attempts to preserve OneCo's confidentiality, there is nonetheless the possibility that he elicited from me information he would not be able to get otherwise. I considered asking the OneCo MD what kind of issues I could discuss with the RedPaper PD. However, this I felt would reinforce the impression that I was set up as a spy for RedPaper and would endanger my access, not least as the MD may not be aware of my meetings with the PD. Moreover, I felt that the OneCo MD was not entirely happy with my presence in his factory and this would provide justification for him to end my access. At the same time, as both companies were partners in a major capital investment, it seemed to me more likely that such a discussion with the OneCo MD would undermine trust between OneCo and RedPaper and would again be hard to justify both ethically and practically.

In relation to the ethical commitment to protection from harm, the situation again was challenging. While in the field, I routinely witnessed instances of sabotage, bullying and racism. Some forms of sabotage are particularly dangerous when a press is running at 80mph, not only disrupting production (perhaps not of central concern to a critical scholar) but also

putting other individuals at risk. Racist comments were continuously addressed towards Asian workers and managers, and bullying was widely practiced. For example, I witnessed various acts of bullying from a manager who was at the time under investigation for bullying. I was asked in privacy by a senior manager and an HR officer if I had anything to mention regarding his case and I refused to make any comments on the grounds of the ethical guidelines underpinning my research – my standard response in similar situations. My rationale here was that reporting perpetrators of any problematic act would breach my confidentiality agreement (explicitly guaranteed to trade union representatives and managers in my first meetings) and could cause serious harm to the individuals concerned. I deliberated over this for some time, and despite the soundness of the action according to ethical research guidelines, I felt I was not doing the right thing. This was a paradoxical situation because to protect some people from harm I keep silent about people's attitudes and actions that were clearly harming others.

At the same time, it must be said that my concerns were not only ethical; there was also the instrumental need to keep the research going. I felt that suspicions that I may provide information to senior managers or to workers would undermine trust in me and destroy any possibility of gathering meaningful ethnographic data. For instance, revealing to workers instances when management manipulated internal selection processes, or lied to employees to encourage particular individuals to apply for voluntary redundancy would certainly put my access at risk. Despite feeling guilty for not exposing such practices, I choose to do whatever was necessary to keep the research going. Thus, ironically, recourse to ethical guidelines allowed me to keep the research relations intact despite personal misgivings. This use of an ethical code to avoid making difficult moral decisions was particularly problematic in light of my critical research commitments, and my intention of highlighting ethical

concerns with instrumental action in organisations.

While the section before has described my struggle to get formal access to carry out intensive fieldwork, this section has focused on the paradoxical situations encountered in attempting to apply ethical principles in the light of not-untypical organisational power relations associated with access. In the following section we will develop this discussion and reflect upon the space for ethical action and coherence for the critical researcher engaged in ethnography.

Discussions

Gaining formal access to carry out this ethnography was complex due to the political fluidity of the situation encountered; supposed gatekeepers had their influence curtailed when a new CEO was appointed, and other gatekeepers were compelled to allow access as pressure was brought to bear by RedPaper upon OneCo. Contrary to the view of the researcher dealing with a mere practical difficulty (to be overcome by the use of the correct strategies and managerial skills), I felt deeply powerless and forced to exploit all of the limited possibilities available during the process of negotiating research access, including persistence - phoning up to the point of annoyance at times was my only possible influence on events. In addition, it was clear that organisational gatekeepers actively shaped the nature of access according to their own interests and agendas, with major implications for my fieldwork. In this way, as research access moved from a newsroom to a printing site, the kind of knowledge which could be generated also changed; a set of interviews with pre-selected questions and people in a newsroom creates different knowledge and implies different methodological and epistemological assumptions compared to the ethnography conducted in the printing plant, even where the same research issues are pursued. Organisational power relations regarding formal access were continually shaping my research possibilities at the same time that the process of negotiating formal

access posed very important questions about the research aims and objectives, the approach that was being followed, how data would be collected, and threw up considerable ethical dilemmas.

The set of conditions and power relations within the field associated with access also impacted how I deployed what seem to be very neutral and straightforward ethical principles in practice. During fieldwork, situations were much more complex and fluid than any code or principle could predict. The confessional account above illustrates how prescribed ethical codes when faced with contentious issues in practice can raise serious tensions for the researcher. When facing such situations, I was constantly striving for some balance between my own conscience and the need of keeping the research going; codes of research ethics became a resource to be deployed tactically in this process. In some situations, following general principles of research ethics often did not run counter to my interests and or personal morality (e.g. when refusing to act as a spy). However, following generic ethical principles in other occasions collided with my personal moral convictions (e.g. when I did not blow the whistle when faced with acts of racism and bullying). Indeed, in many situations ethical guidelines provided an excuse to withhold information in order to keep good field relations and maintain my research access, and provided a rationale for disregarding both personal moral misgivings and critical research commitments. This suggests that by highlighting the benefit of ethical codes for critical management research, Bell & Bryman (2006) disregard those consequences of its application that can run counter to vital CMS commitments.

In light of CMS main principles discussed before, how can a critical inspired researcher remain silent after witnessing acts of bullying, harassment and racism, or where managers were clearly and deliberately misleading workers? It can be argued that the researcher is not silent because s/he will write academic papers (like this), give lectures, seminars, etc and by highlighting

such activities, they will reduce the likelihood of such acts recurring (Taylor, 1987). However, by doing this the researcher will typically be communicating to people who may be aware of such situations and who can do nothing in the setting under investigation. Silence to conform to ethical guidelines (and to maintain research access) serves in many cases to allow ethically-problematic events to persist; an outcome hard to tally with core critically-oriented research commitments. Moreover, given the observed lack of impact of CMS outside of academic circles (Parker, 2002; Clegg et al, 2006), it is very unlikely that such research will do anything to prevent similar abuses from happening again.

Furthermore, all negotiations to get formal access to carry out this ethnography took place first with powerful actors who used autocratic practices to make this research happen. If it is assumed that inequalities, power mechanisms, exploitation, etc are not *a priori* given in the order of things, but are constantly enacted by diverse sets of practices (Thrift, 2005; Latour, 2005) this research may be said to reinforce unequal power relations and exclusionary practices from the moment of access negotiation. In this case, the main gatekeeper/sponsor was the representative of RedPaper's investment at OneCo. This investment made more than 65 employees redundant and was being used as an excuse to tighten management control over working practices. In this sense, the research also took advantage of a technological change programme that had the potential of creating exclusion, inequality and exacerbating unequal power relations. Even trying to resist roles attributed to him by powerful gatekeepers, the researcher fulfilled some management expectations and agendas by being instrumental to managers' ambitions (e.g. by being a potential 'mule' for the RedPaper PD, or by showing with his presence that the company had 'nothing to hide') which pose extra concerns to a critical ethnographer.

Much of the literature advocates that the researcher could (or indeed should) provide feedback or help to solve particular organisational problems in return for research access. To gain access, I was asked to

feedback to senior managers my full research findings (which seemed almost attractive in comparison to the alternative of providing change management training). However, providing feedback to managers is often problematic to a critically-oriented scholar. On one hand, this practice is driven by a clear instrumental rationality assumption and is underlined by the idea of providing information primarily to improve company productivity. Moreover, such feedback sessions may create harm to people working for the company where problems relate to particular individuals, or where the feedback reveals gaps in management control regimes. Thus this process runs the risk of disclosing information that would not otherwise be available to senior managers and enabling them to tighten control and increase application of punishment mechanisms. On the other side, by hiding sensitive information from managers the researcher may not be making a true representation of research findings to managers, which is typically a condition of formal research access. It is also important to mention that feedback tends only to be provided to senior managers, securing their already privileged position and typically excluding other employees involved in the research.

Finally, it is possible to interrogate to what extent the application of common-sense social research ethical principles are in fact problematic, especially when associated with formal access to carry out critical ethnographic research. Clearly, I could have followed different paths by, for instances, making OneCo MD aware about my meetings with RedPaper PD, not offering feedback section solely to OneCo senior management (say, asking to have the trade union representatives included in such sessions) or attempting a more inclusive or democratic means of access. The application of ethical guidelines and ways of getting formal access are always however framed by specific events and circumstances when different concerns are at stake - different individuals would quite likely take different

actions under the same conditions. This means that ethical codes will always be open to individual interpretation, and their application will always be contingent. It is therefore very difficult to establish what are idiosyncratic practices, or to decide from an external position how the researcher should ideally have behaved, even in extreme cases (see Taylor, 1987; Punch, 1994; Vanderstaay, 2005). For this reason, the account given above is as frank as possible, so that such issues may be discussed openly.

Complicating this discussion, the ethics of the researcher in practice is strongly influenced by her/his own conscience, which can be in tension with ethical codes. As Taylor argues, "people who cannot deal with moral ambiguity probably should not do fieldwork because of the internal conflicts it imposes" (Taylor, 1987: 294). One could develop this critique further; some CMS-inspired research poses a challenge to essentialist and normative ethical views which underpin universal ethical codes (see Collins & Wray-Bliss, 2005; Willmott, 1998). One may further argue that, had current ethical codes associated with getting formal research access been enforced in the past, classical critical research (e.g. Roy, 1952; Dalton, 1979; Beynon, 1975) would never have been carried out. Here again, ethical guidance can have the perverse consequence of hiding ethically contentious issues, to not mention the real possibility that following or applying universalistic research ethical principles can actively have on undermining research freedom (Holland, 2007; Tierney & Corwin, 2007; Nelson, 2004), specially of critical nature (Lincoln & Tierney, 2004).

Conclusions

We have argued above that all ethnographic stages or 'moments' have epistemological and ethical relevance, and have underlined this by indicating the intertwined ethical and practical implications of getting and keeping formal access to do a CMS-oriented ethnography. Research access, far from being a technical issue or an 'hurdle' to be overcome at the outset (Brewis and Wray-Bliss, 2008), is constantly

negotiated and re-negotiated and often constitutes a constant struggle, determining the kind of knowledge that can be generated by ethnographic research as it is interwoven within power relations and, therefore, continuously sets up the research conditions of possibilities.

The case under analysis indicates the difficulty/impossibility of simply applying widely-accepted ethical principles, given the reality of power relations in the field and the pragmatic requirements of maintaining access and completing the research project. Where departures from prescribed ethical practice are described above, these we hope are largely explained by the realities of academic work and studentship within work organisations, and arguably many other locations. The inevitable implication of the (ethnographic) researcher within these power relations calls into question the implementation of generic and universal ethical guidelines, given the necessarily situated nature of action and/or inaction in the field. The paper also suggests that getting access in ethnographic research raises more fundamental questions about a researcher's identity and his/her relation to the circumstances, environment and the 'subjects' of enquiry.

Moreover, a theme that has underpinned this paper throughout is the constant tension between codes of research ethics and the researcher's conscience. This is a very delicate relation as any code of conduct will always need to be judged by who applies it in practice and is facing the situation *in situ*. The blind advocacy of ethical codes can have the consequence of undermining researchers' possibilities of exerting discretion and, as a consequence, undermine research freedom. For critical researchers, and arguably for all researchers, the manner in which access is negotiated and maintained reflects and forms the ethical aspect of the researcher in action, as s/he becomes implicated in the instrumental manipulation of research subjects and her/his conscience plays a very important role. To the extent that getting access and gathering data are

regarded as merely practical research stages, there is the clear danger of naturalising problematic research practices, and shifting the researcher's ethical responsibility to abstract ethical guidelines. Such guidelines tend to impose a particular view of what is ethical in a normative way (cf. Willmott, 1998) and relieve researchers from the burden of following their own conscience and making their own ethical choices.

Our intention in this paper is not to call for the total rejection of ethical guidelines *per se*, or to suggest that the ethnographer, or the critical researcher constitutes in any sense a general exception to such guidelines. Indeed, it could be argued that similar challenges and ethical quandaries face all sorts of social researchers in the field, whether 'critically-oriented' or not. However, we would argue that there is a fundamental discrepancy between the ethical guidelines and codes of conduct espoused by OS researchers and the pragmatic realities of implementing these guidelines in fieldwork which the field tends to suppress¹¹. There is, therefore, a pressing need to engage in a more open discussion of the ethical debates faced by the critically-inspired ethnographer, and social research more widely. This type of discussion may help on addressing the limitations of hegemonic discourses of research ethics and, as such, can help on thinking about alternative modes of engagement with research (cf. Koro-Ljunberg et al, 2007). In particular, this would demand that (critical) researchers constitute themselves through practices of resistance against the hegemonic stances of ethical codes and reflexively analyse their own actions. It would also require that researchers deliberately reflect on the type of moral and ethical research they desire to conduct (cf. Koro-Ljunberg et al, 2007: 1092).

An important move in this direction would be to sponsor a "situated view of research ethics" (cf. Ferdinand et al, 2008) where the value and validity of the researcher's own morality is recognised. A situated view of research ethics challenges normative and dogmatic views of

¹¹ With a few notable exceptions (in particular Van Maanen, 1983; Taylor, 1987 and Vanderstajay, 2005.)

ethics, and recognises, following Bauman (1993), that 'situated dilemmas' are "by their very nature neither reducible nor amenable to universal codified rules" (Ferdinand et al, 2008: 535). This approach therefore supports the development of research practices which are locally informed and where ethics is taken in its micro political dimension. Rejecting 'descriptive' and 'normative' ethics (Willmott, 1998), this approach has the advantage of not undermining the researcher's capacity to actively exercise his/her own conscience to deal with ethical issues, but instead taking conscience as a fundamental aspect in the research encounter. It is therefore an essentially reflexive approach, which remains suspicious of the normalising tendency within explicit and formalised ethical guidelines (Brewis and Wray-Bliss, 2008).

The development of a situated and engaged research ethic is essential if we are to protect an ethically-defensible form of (critical) organisational research which does not rely on universalistic ethical principles. This would not mean that ethical injunctions will cease to exist, but an avoidance of codified and explicit rules will help in the creation of research practices that are more coherent with diverse research frameworks (critical or otherwise). This approach would also open space for the pursuit of vital critical research, which sometimes requires transgressing the boundaries of imported and inflexible ethical codes. More importantly, such an approach may help to combat the alienation of the researcher, enabling her/his own conscience to be put in the foreground rather than being left behind the scenes, suppressed or dislocated from the practices s/he engages in when undertaking research in the field.

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Global trafficking networks and business studies¹

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ABSTRACT

This paper outlines the contours of the global network society and then searches for ‘the masters’ of this emerging environment. Judging from the management talk on flexible, decentralized and adaptable networked enterprises, these masters are found in the large global corporations, but closing in on practice, evidence rather points in the direction of illegal, or partly illegal, global networks. In the paper, we use global trafficking networks as the benchmark example, arguing that they are the real masters of the global network society and that they show us in which direction large global corporations might be heading. This raises several issues, of which the role and responsibilities of business researchers and business studies are discussed. We present three kinds of arguments to why we should study global trafficking networks – the ideologist, the scientific and the moral argument. The position advocated in the paper holds that the two first cannot be left to their own destinies; they need to be assessed on moral grounds.

Keywords: Business, globalization, trafficking.

Introduction

Sociologists such as Manuel Castells, Zygmunt Bauman, Richard Sennett and John Urry emphasize that we live in an emerging global network society and that this development is accompanied by radical changes and a demand for new forms of (social) management and organizing (Bauman, 1998b, 1999, 2000, 2002; Castells, 2000; Sennett, 1999, 2006; Urry, 2003). The global network society is also the ‘talk of the town’ in the business community and, accordingly, influential management researchers/consultants seek to develop and promote new forms of managing corporations, commonly phrased in terms of *flexibility*,

decentralization and *adaptability* (Hammer & Champy, 1993; Champy, 1995; Kotter, 1996; Peters, 1992, 2003; Hamel, 2007). Together, these three keywords could be seen as framing the challenge to, or attack on, the rigidity and inertia of large and bureaucratic corporate hierarchies; a challenge even turned into a plea by Tom Peters: “I beg each and every one of you to develop a passionate and public hatred of bureaucracy” (quoted in du Gay, 2000: 61).

In this paper, we describe the main characteristics of the emerging global network society and we link this description to the prescriptions of new forms of management and organizing deemed appropriate for corporations in the global network society. We

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argue that those prescriptions oftentimes echo the rhetoric of large global corporations, but that when taking into account these corporations' practices, even though they are among the top beneficiaries of the emerging global network society and partly responding to calls for flexibility, adaptability and decentralization, they do not walk the talk, yet.

Following this, we move to the question of where to find a better match to the ideal global corporation *in practice*; a search that takes us to places that we might not want to go. It takes us in the direction of illegal, or partly illegal, global networks. Such networks are basically living the management talk for how a modern global corporation ought to organize. More precisely our search leads us to the global trafficking network, which seems to have an ideal design for organizing in the global network society.

A consequence of this, we argue, is that business studies of trafficking networks are needed (and of other illicit organizations and networks as well for that matter). As an academic field, with its particular expertise, such studies would increase the understanding of the way in which global trafficking networks organize and therefore be of valuable assistance in actions taken to terminate these organizations and their ruthless exploitation of (mainly) women and children. According to figures from the UN.GIFT (see reference list) on human trafficking alone (there are also other, both living and dead, things that are trafficked on a global scale), about 1.2 million children are subjected to trafficking each year. Of all victims (estimates indicate that a stunning 4 millions could be subjected every year), 95% experience violence or sexual abuse when trafficked. About half of the victims of trafficking know the perpetrator and for every 800 people trafficked, only one person is convicted.

However, even though this paper hopefully will assist in persuading researchers in the field of business studies to explore these networks in order to combat trafficking, the main aim of this paper is different. The aim is rather to bring forth another reason for why business studies on global trafficking networks are needed. In short, we argue that such

studies might be indicative of which direction large global corporations are heading. Hence, such studies might teach us about some of the dark sides emerging when legitimate and legal corporate operations are trying to walk the talk, trying to succeed in exercising flexibility, adaptability and decentralization. That global corporations have not yet become globally networked organizations also means that there is still time to prevent some of the dark sides from emerging in the future.

In the last section of the paper, we present three arguments to why we – as researchers in the field of business studies – should study these networks. The arguments are labeled: the ideological, the scientific and the moral argument. In our discussion, we emphasize the moral argument and draw out some of the implications for business studies based on this.

The globally networked corporation

Manuel Castells argues that the need for new forms of organizing is driven by a new technological paradigm: “What is new in our age is a new set of information technologies” and since “information processing is at the source of life, and of social action, every domain of our eco-social system is thereby transformed” (2000: 10). For Castells, information technology is paramount on all aggregate levels – it is *the feature* of the global economy as well as of the networked economy, populated by so-called networked enterprises.

For Zygmunt Bauman, information technology, together with other current social transformational forces, such as individualization and consumerism, and liberalization and the dismantling of the social welfare, make up the rationale of what he terms a liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000, 2002, 2006). A key part of Bauman's analysis of the emerging global network society is that the “stuff of which a new hierarchy of power is built, the paramount stratifying factor” is the ability to be constantly on the move, never to get stuck, “while speed and acceleration are the principal strategies aimed at slanting that factor in ones' favour” (Bauman, 2002: 165).

On a business level, Castells claims (2000: 11) that this is made visible as “these networks connect among themselves on specific business projects, and switch to another network as soon as the project is finished”, shifting the focus from the formal organization (the corporation) to the temporary network (the project).

The network is thus a keyword in Castells’s analysis and he argues that the introduction of new information/communication technologies allows corporations to be continuously flexible, adaptable and decentralized, “thus asserting their evolutionary nature”. As a consequence “an unprecedented combination of flexibility and task implementation, of co-ordinated decision making, and decentralized execution, which provide a superior social morphology for all human action” (Castells, 2000: 15) can be observed. In the global networked corporation, flexible work, decentralized execution and adaptability of nodes, also become “the predominant form of working arrangements” (Castells, 2000: 11; see also Sennett, 1999, 2006; Bauman, 1998a, 2002).

Turning to influential advisors to top management of large global corporations (persons oftentimes with a chair in business studies as well), such as James Champy, Gary Hamel, Charles Handy, Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Manfred Kets de Vries, John Kotter and Tom Peters, they primarily target the stiff bureaucracies that do not value leadership and team-ship, flatter organizational structures, risk-taking, imagination, creativity, and continuous innovation. They call for more responsibility to employees and less internal interdependencies within the company. The effective corporation will, they predict, regularly scrutinize its relations to different nodes in the network and eliminate those that are not relevant any more. There is also a need to be aware of the fact that those nodes that do not pass such evaluations will have to face terrifying machines of competition (Kotter, 1996). These management gurus also make the claim that most people would enjoy working in these types of networked enterprises since people thereby can

contribute to, it is argued, something meaningful.

Focusing on the three keywords, flexibility, decentralization and adaptability, the management gurus herald flexibility as the tool for cutting loose workers in time and space so as to liberate them from, in the words of the information system professor Jannis Kallinikos, “the collective and largely impersonal employment contracts of the past towards the (re)individualization and temporalization of employment firms [to] enhance the capabilities of independent work and initiative taking” (Kallinikos, 2001: 151-152 and 153). Criticizing this view, however, flexibility is also a strategy for making members of the corporation insecure, so that they quickly can be cut loose, would they, for some reason (usually cost-benefit oriented reasons), no longer be of use (Bauman, 1998a; Sennett, 1999, 2006).

Decentralization belongs to the tradition of Human Resources and constitutes a flagship of modern Human Resource Management, equipped with labels such as Gary Hamel’s radical decentralization or Charles Handy’s federalist decentralization. It is heralded as a tool to purposely, or as Tom Peters would phrase it, tirelessly empower lower levels of the corporation so as to achieve increased autonomy, that is, self-organization vis-à-vis the higher levels of the corporation. Kotter (1996) also emphasizes ‘doing it now’ and the need for new information systems that honestly and rapidly report how a specific node in the network is performing. The single node usually gets too little information about how s/he (or it) is doing, performance-wise, that is. Criticizing this view, however, decentralization is also a strategy to minimize risk by dispersing mistakes, failures (lower levels are to blame for errors) and certain responsibilities (keeping costs under control while increasing the influence of the income side of the balance-sheet) (Sennett, 1999, 2006).

Adaptability is heralded as the ability of corporations to adjust to current circumstances, perhaps most notably to radical shifts in consumer demand (Peters, 2003). As Richard Sennett (1999: 53) writes, “[t]he most strongly flavored ingredient in this new productive process is the willingness to let the

shifting demands of the outside work determine the inside structure". Criticizing this view, however, adaptability is also a strategy for corporations to pass "on dips in the business cycle or product flops to its weaker partners [suppliers, customers, regions, countries], which are squeezed harder" (Sennett, 1999: 53). Successful corporations practice "concentration without centralization" in which "domination from the top is both strong and shapeless" (Sennett, 1999: 56-57).

Flexibility, decentralization and adaptability are called for since there are great business benefits to reap for those re-orienting their activities to better match the changing context. The reverse is also true, of course. There are fewer opportunities for those maintaining their faith in rigid control structures and bureaucracies that only with great pains can respond to the advance of the network society. Put bluntly, in this context, it is the global networked enterprises that are celebrated as 'the masters'. Although the global networked economy and its networked enterprises are not solely dominating the world today, "[the global networked economy] does exert a profound moral and normative force as a cutting-edge standard for how the larger economy should evolve" (Sennett, 2006: 10).

So, searching for descriptions of best practice in this economy, we find the shady contours of a continuously emerging informational network of nodes, as Castells and Himanen call them, which "increase their productivity, profits, and market value by organizing themselves (globally) as networks, by applying information technology, and by focusing more and more on information (symbol) operations" (2002: 21). These networked enterprises are coordinated by one or several elite groups of boundary-less and mobile managers and they are not only Rosabeth Moss Kanter's 'change masters' (1983), but masters of change with the ability, in Bauman's words, to be constantly on the move, never to get stuck, using speed and acceleration to slant factors in their favor.

Ideally, global networked corporations thus know of no geographical borders in their pursuit of satisfying ever-changing customer demands and in exploiting highly profitable

geographical territories (finding cheap labor, natural resources, 'relaxed' regulation etc.) in the exchange for the highest possible profit. Traditional borders, such as nation states, socio-economic conditions, culture, law and politics, present business opportunities rather than barriers to trade in this emerging global network society. In its ideal version, the networked enterprise does not risk being sedimented in any long-term formal agreements that might hinder rapid responses to changing circumstances and preferences.

However, acknowledging the critical aspects of flexibility, decentralization and adaptability, the general advice on how to develop a cutting-edge organization moves the corporation towards doing more with less and towards socializing the remaining workers to accept that their employment last 'until further notice' (Bauman, 1998a). It also means letting go of risks and responsibilities by dumping it to lower levels while simultaneously investing heavily in digital surveillance systems so that in case of any mistakes, there is nowhere to hide in the network (Sennett, 1999). It would also mean a move towards developing a fit to the disruptive environment through post-Panoptical power relations, in which the "prime technique of power is [---] escape, slippage, elision and avoidance" (Bauman, 2000: 11).

Zooming in on practice, however, it is only with great difficulty that the flexible, decentralized and adaptable networked enterprise (or 'informational enterprise', 'terrifying machine of competition', 'network structured organization' etc.) is matched by any large global corporation, regardless of industry or niche. The primary example of the global network enterprise repeatedly used by Sennett (1999, 2006) and Bauman (1998b, 1999, 2002), operates within the global financial system and its centers (London, New York, Hong Kong etc.), but even enterprises within this global system face problems that need to be overcome if it is to match the prescribed criteria set out (see Sassen, 2007; Urry, 2003).

One reading of our story so far would then be that movements along Castells and others' lines are under construction, in process. On the other hand, another reading

would reveal that a responding re-bureaucratization of corporations is also occurring (du Gay, 2000; Jensen & Nylén, 2006; Kallinikos, 2004). Thus, even though we might experience more flexibility, adaptability and decentralization, bureaucratic processes in large global corporations still provide some obstacles. This demands, however, that we acknowledge that bureaucracy comes in many disguises and is “put into circulation by different regimes” (Kallinikos, 1996: 66; Jensen, 2008). Quality management systems, mobile work, project management systems, information management systems, environmental management systems, codes of ethics etc., can all be considered as modern examples of bureaucracy that through digital monitoring stretch themselves far out in the organization and its network. Consequently, contemporary bureaucracy does not so much discipline through concrete, physical surveillance as through:

detached observations and manipulation of screen data. Contemporary contexts of work become textualized as electronic writing increasingly reclaims the organization and coordination of human effort [---]. Bureaucracy, it would seem, is entering the age of *spectation*. (Kallinikos, 1996: 84)

An important observation is that the re-bureaucratization process in many aspects might prove just as fluid as the network and in some aspects even share epistemic traits with it, thus actually strengthening the movement towards networked corporations (du Gay, 2000; Jensen, 2008; Sennett, 1999), but that it might also prove that these new patterns of bureaucracy potentially will eat away at, or retract, what the network society has set loose. Put differently, a loss of control is regained by increased control through new control instruments (Bauman, 2000; Kallinikos, 2001; Sennett, 1999). New forms of bureaucracy might prove just as rigid as any older version of bureaucracy, thus, making things worse, holding back attempts to achieve the

necessary traits and skills of the prescribed global networked enterprise.

The point here, however, is that a loss of control to the forces of the global network society and efforts to regain this control do not render the emergence of a global network society less real. What it says is that re-bureaucratization and new forms of control could be viewed both as resistance and as a strategy to move closer towards the global network society. As far as we understand it, there is a lack of studies addressing this tension, but, for example, the process of dispersing risks to lower levels and to the outskirts of networks is evident, even though new forms of bureaucracy enter this process as a double-edged sword. New forms assist decentralization and the dispersing of risks by further blurring the connection between “intention and practical accomplishments, with the space between the two packed with a multitude of minute acts and inconsequential actors” (Bauman, 1989: 24-25). New forms resist decentralization because information technology sometimes makes events more transparent and thus weakens the credibility of top management’s attempts at blaming lower levels. In the information age, the ‘we did not know’ “type of excuse *adds to the guilt* rather than brings absolution from sin” (Bauman, 2002: 204). This, however, has in turn caused a shift towards the excuse that ‘there was nothing we could do’.

Re-bureaucratization is one example of large global corporations not being as networked as the networked economy and prescriptions of the network enterprise would have it. They for sure have the power to dominate, but power is restricted in the sense that the regime of domination, that is, the different strategies to exercise power, are firmly anchored to territories, to solid ground, and have limited capabilities to use speed and acceleration (Sassen, 2007). As a consequence, large global corporations are not yet capable of realizing extraterritorial business operations that run according to the ideal state of the “permanently temporary location” (Bauman, 2002: 113). Even though those corporations breed on, and are fed by, the “symbolic end to the era of space” and “the

emergence of the ‘era of speed’ marked by the devaluation of space” (Bauman, 2002: 87 and 102-103), they get stuck when they, according to the prescriptions, are supposed to move on.

A conclusion here is that large global corporations in certain aspects may be best-in-class in the year-book of the contemporary network society, but being in front does not mean that all the requirements are fulfilled. Castells also indicates that these global players may not be fully networked, not yet, but that they will probably be so in the future. A core assumption in Castells’s analysis is basically evolutionary in that we should expect more developments in the direction of a global network society: “Once introduced, and powered by information technology, information networks, through competition, gradually eliminate other organizational forms, rooted in a different social logic” (Castells, 2000: 16). Castells has a firm belief in the rise of the global network society, arguing that as time unfolds, our achievements move us closer to this society. Maybe time will prove Castells and other advocates of the global network society and the networked enterprise right, but it is nevertheless strange that these intellectuals seem to neglect certain (dark) sides of this development. This becomes evident when focusing on the real masters of change, the ones empirically providing us with examples of how to organize in this environment.

Masters of change – in practice

Where, in practice, might we find the networks making the most use of the emerging global network society? Large global corporations lean on the rhetoric of the network enterprise, but one global player that is not using the talk, while still flourishing in the emerging environment, is the global trafficking network. Trafficking is of course not a new phenomenon, but “the dynamics of globalization are fueling its growth” (Jones et al., 2007: 118) and “in its own raw and sordid way, illicit trade shows us some of the places globalization is going” (Naím, 2007: 36).

Financially, trafficking networks are also no small players. They represent a significant

part of the global economy. Given the nature of these networks, correct figures are of course difficult to find, but estimates from different governmental agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations on activities, such as money laundering and the amount of money sent home by prostitutes working abroad, amount to several percentages of many nations’ GDP. Figures from the UN estimate that the annual profits from human trafficking range between 7 and 10 billion dollars. For forced labor (slavery), the figures are between 22 and 44 billion dollars in annual profits. Estimates also have it that animal trafficking has about 8 billion dollars in turnover every year. Illegal trade with guns is bigger than trade with humans and animals, and drugs are by far the largest in both turnover and profits (UNODC, 2006).

This means that we cannot fend these networks off as insignificant for the global economy, or side-step them as ‘within the limit of miscalculation’, or as small and unintended side effects. We can also not fend them off as a few, big rotten apples, since trafficking is a multifaceted activity, moving in and between legal and illegal practices.

These networks are also not the mob, or the mafia, as in the days of Totò Riina, Tommaso Buscetta, Lucky Luciano and Al Capone, even though this image still seems to be strong among the public and among those fighting illicit trade (see Marine, 2006). The mafia is per definition a local and geographically anchored organization. It is about controlling a specific physical territory. The La Cosa Nostra, for example, both in Italy and in the US, consists of “organized crime groups called ‘families,’ with each family controlling organized crime activities in a particular region” (Marine, 2006: 216; also see Dickie, 2004). Their geographical base is usually accompanied by a cultural one: “A person must be of Italian descent to be a ‘made member’ of any of the LCN organized crime families” (Marine, 2006: 216). Even though many mafia groups have gone increasingly global during the last decades (and thereby less like mafia and more like global organized crime networks; see, for instance, Roberto Saviano’s vivid story on the

Italian *Camorra*; Saviano, 2006), these traits are not strengths in the emerging global network society. Global trafficking networks do not limit their actions or discriminate actors in such ways.

Moses Naím (2007: 32) compares the global trafficking network with the corporation and argues that corporations are still rigid hierarchies with a centralized authority and that: “The more organized crime groups resemble corporations, the more their hierarchies and their routines prevent them from optimizing their activities.” Naím then echoes the rhetoric of management gurus when claiming that the emerging global network society “gives an advantage to organizations capable of responding and adapting rapidly to new opportunities and able to constantly shift locations, tactics, and ways and means to make the most money possible” (2007: 32). A consequence of this, he argues, is that organized crime is becoming “more decentralized” (Naím, 2007: 32).

These networks seem to follow the outline and predictions of Castells and others, but they also seem, as is common with change-masters (Kanter, 1983), to be at least one step ahead of the competition. They have, in practice (we do not know if these networks care about theory or ever listen to over-paid management consultants), shifted their focus from commodities to skills: “Their work”, Naím argues, “has grown easier to initiate, organize, and dissimulate, and they have adapted to take maximum advantage of these new possibilities” (2007: 36). “They are flexible, responsive, and rapid”, he continues, and “no itinerary is too complex, no supply deadline too urgent” (Naím, 2007: 36). This means that they can move “from product to product and market to market” and “arrange the procurement, transport, and payment of whatever ‘merchandise’ needs moving at any given time” (Naím, 2007: 182).

When describing how one of these trafficking networks operates, Naím (2007: 100) tells us that:

Even a sophisticated mass-consumer, multinational corporation would have a hard time

successfully pulling off such a dizzying array of coordinated activities in the fields of manufacturing, international trade, transportation logistics, inventory control, human resource management, distribution, product fulfillment, and financial control – not to mention security and secrecy. The existence of organizations with such fantastic managerial capabilities points to a business model capable of not only attracting talented managers but also generating huge profits.

This means that what the global network society has become for the traffickers is “a rather special kind of world map”; for these networks “it is a map of incentives to trade, where the greyer the area, often the greater the opportunity for profit” (Naím, 2007: 185).

These networks make efficient use of the global network society (see UNODC, 2006). Focusing on the prescriptions of the global networked enterprise, they might, unfortunately, even be considered as role models for organizing for the 21st century. The global trafficking network operates in a global, fluid, informational, risky and, not the least, highly profitable way. Or put differently, the global trafficking networks are excellently flexible, decentralized and highly adaptable.

Following Naím’s (2007) account, the trafficking networks are capable of quickly cutting off parts that endanger the network as a whole as they have large reserves of individuals and organizations that are prepared to immediately fill the gaps, and everybody is enrolled ‘until further notice’. These networks have the capability to respond immediately by creating new ‘nodes’ in the network, to quickly seize business opportunities. They also manage to keep interdependencies high between nodes, at the same time as knowledge and recognition of other parts of the network are low, implying that central nodes of the network are not jeopardized since a domino-effect is not possible (in a more theoretical language, the network has a loosely coupled organizational design). Decision-

making in these networks is dispersed and decentralized and every part of the network has a high degree of autonomy, even though every part is still conforming to some central nodes, what Sennett (1999) refers to as concentration of power without centralization of power. Finally, even if the central nodes of the network, its vital organs so to speak, are terminated, these are quickly replaced; management is soon up and running again.

Traffickers' capacity to use this emerging context has also made them difficult to separate from 'legitimate' businesses. There is a clear risk that some of our money (in funds, accounts, wallet) and some of the products we regularly buy to some extent have either been part of a laundering exercise, handled by nodes in a trafficking network that are slightly more licit, or produced by illegal workers (Marine, 2006). Naím's (2007: 36) experience is that the licit and the illicit "are coming together – ever harder to distinguish, both conceptually and in practice" and that the global network society here adds fuel to the complexity of the dilemma:

After all, illicit trade by definition takes place outside the rules. But herein lies a complicating problem: whose rules? [---] in practice what may be 'illicit' in one country may not be in another. Often, the laws have to catch up with the evolution of illicit trade, creating new concepts and definitions such as 'cyber crime' or 'digital piracy' in order to draw lines between innovative practices that are considered positive for society and ones that are viewed as harmful. (Naím, 2007: 184-185)

One way of emphasizing the pro-activity of these networks, their capacity to read and deal with the global network society, is to look at how crime fighters are responding to the threats posed by these trafficking networks. A simple answer is: with more bureaucracy (especially in attempts to fight crime through international co-operation between different institutions). The fighting of these trafficking

networks seems to reinforce the pro-activeness in how trafficking networks make use of the emerging network society. The crime fighters do not seem to be able to brake free from the structures of the 'old' modernity. Naím tells a story:

One senior customs veteran told me: 'I used to lose sleep wondering what new trick the smugglers and crooks and – since September 11 – the terrorists would pull on us, but now I found myself awake worrying sick because I knew that our own internal strife was making life far easier for all of them at a time when we needed to be at our most effective. I knew how quick, creative, and dangerous the bad guys are. And here we were spending all the time in meetings and watching PowerPoint presentations by lawyers and politicians.' (2007: 177)

One issue here is bureaucracy and Naím argues that "bureaucracies tend to be organized in rigid hierarchical fashion, making them less nimble in sharing information or coordinating efforts with others outside their vertical lines of command" (2007: 182). Marine (2006), however, working for the U.S. department of justice on these issues, shows how this is not only a problem of bureaucracy when he, despite acknowledging these 'non-traditional organized crime groups' (the global trafficking networks), categorizes them into "Chinese criminal enterprises", "Vietnamese criminal groups", "Russian organized crime activities" and "Albanian-based groups". Jones et al. also talk about the Yakuza in Japan and the transnational crime networks developed after the collapse of the Soviet Union (2007: 114). These groups, it is said, make it to the U.S., where they pollute legitimate businesses. These groups, that often set up what Marine calls quasi-businesses or "pseudo-legitimate companies", "cannot be true participants in the free market, where success is determined by which company best (most efficiently and cost-

effectively) meets supply and demand” (Marine, 2006: 228).

Following Naím, though, it is difficult to separate one from the other when they are not just Chinese or Albanian, or when they are not just legitimate or illegitimate. According to Saviano (2006), the Camorra, making use of the global network society when growing into a globally networked organization (and predominantly a criminal one), owns and manages legitimate stores on main shopping streets in Amsterdam, Berlin, Brussels, London, Madrid, New York, Ontario, Paris, Vienna, and so on. Simple forms of categorization do not capture the complexity of these networks. Not surprisingly, as shown by Jones et al. (2007: 111), this has led to a “lack of a common, accepted definition”, which “has resulted in much confusion on how governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) ought to respond”. Somehow, this all seems to play into the hands of the global trafficking networks.

Implications

The discussion of who, or what, performs as masters of the emerging global network society, raises several issues, such as the dark sides of emerging globally networked enterprises and the role and responsibilities of business studies in dealing with these sides. We have chosen to focus on the latter in our discussion on implications and below we present three arguments for why business studies and business researchers should be more attentive to global trafficking networks. These are the ideological argument, the scientific argument and the moral argument.

The ideological argument

As business researchers, we represent a discipline with a traditionally strong empirical connectedness and with no real own theory of our own (economics, psychology and sociology tend to be heavily ‘translated’ by business researchers). This means that business studies, according to most proponents, has a responsibility to contribute to business practice, to help develop more

effective business practices (see Rehn, 2006, 2008). Taking this task seriously, one implication of this paper is that we ought to study these trafficking networks, to bring their networked ways of organizing under scrutiny, and go tell our stories not only to the scientific journals, but also to business managers. The need for a new, empirically driven research program on what we can learn from global trafficking networks on the issue of effective organizing in the global network society is thus highlighted.

From this ideological, pro-business viewpoint, global trafficking networks represent innovative players from which those saluting the image of global corporations on global markets can learn. It is obvious that these global trafficking networks are flexible, decentralized and are adapting well, and they have proven some degree of mastery of the global network society. This means that they have stories to tell and lessons to learn to those who are curious about better conquering the emerging network society.

The implication for proponents of the ideological argument is therefore that these trafficking networks deserve more attention from business researchers in order to help businesses in becoming more effective, more successful, and in better understanding the dynamics and consequences of the global network society.

The scientific argument

From the scientific viewpoint, these networks should be studied since they are a part of ‘what is’ in contemporary business life. A scientific discipline cannot limit itself to arbitrary decisions on what is legitimate to study and what is illegitimate to study *within* its field. A scientific discipline should study what is, what is done, who does it, how and why, within its field. This means that business studies is about what businesses do and as these global trafficking networks boil down to business and business operations – many times run and upheld through legitimate corporations – business researchers should study them.

One objection might be that: *as business researchers we do not study actors or organizations that include criminal elements.* But this is not a particularly fruitful position. Arguing that illicit networked enterprises should not be studied first of all neglects a significant part of what is and second of all, it makes the position of the discourse of business studies even more problematic: what is then really licit, or really illicit?

There is a strong tendency to categorize 'nodes' involved here as criminal or non-criminal, illegitimate or legitimate (Marine, 2006; Jones, et al., 2007). Rehn (2006) writes about the orthodox business studies, about how to do business well, in which the management of a construction firm by default is included, while the creation and marketing of pornography by default is left out. Pornography in this case, however, happens to be both legal and a very big and profitable industry, whatever we think of it. Furthermore, pornographic producers such as Private and Playboy have extended their brands into other segments on the market. Playboy works with products such as chocolate, clothes, coffee mugs and guitars. Still, according to Rehn (2006), pornography is basically left untouched by business researchers. The same, Rehn continues, goes with criminal activities (which he refers to as prime example of entrepreneurship; see also Rehn and Taalas, 2004) and the toy industry (which are referred to as an industry celebrating creativity and innovation). Behind these choices of what to study we sense arbitrary assumptions about what is appropriate to study and what is not.

Rehn's main point, which we adhere to, is that if business studies are limited to special parts and needs of the business community, which is argued for in the ideological argument, then business studies cannot be a science. Science should serve humanity and truth, not some chosen parts of it; parts that are arbitrarily deemed as 'appropriate'. This argument in a nutshell holds that the scientific discipline of business studies should allow and encourage the study of the global trafficking networks since they make up a significant part of 'what is'.

The moral argument

The scientific argument expands the ideological argument of why trafficking should be studied. We cannot exclude significant parts of the economy. It does not matter the nature of 'what is'. However, this expansion is based on a view of science as value free, objective and neutral. That is to say that we, as business researchers and as parts of the collective of business studies, should only observe what 'is' out there, but never put forth why we 'ought' to study trafficking and what we 'ought' to do with the findings generated from doing so.

Turning to the moral viewpoint we have in mind here, it could be argued that if we *sense* or *feel* that trafficking is destructive for people, animals and nature, we, as business researchers, are *obliged* to act and try to do something about it. The scientific community of business studies and its researchers ought to take responsibility by not only critically studying everything 'that is', but also trying to prevent bad things from happening as well as promoting good things in society (such as coming up with visions for a good society). The scientific realm of 'is' (truth, objectivity, neutrality etc.), however, excludes trying to do good for its own sake and the moral obligation in trying to do so, but from the moral perspective drawn upon here, there is simply no rift between 'is' and 'ought' (see Jonas, 1984). This does not, however, leave out reason as a fundamental basis for morality. It just points to that the moral obligation to act cannot entirely rely on knowledge beyond scientific doubt and on distinct categorizations. Thus, from 'we sense that people, animals and nature are harmed' follows 'we are obliged to try to do something about it'. This is the case with trafficking networks, the front-line actors in the emerging global network society.

Withholding the rift between 'is' and 'ought' is a commonly held position among the ideologists (stretching from mainstream to more critical researchers). But when the scientist enters the field to observe 'what is', the ideologist stays put, not only because business studies are limited to special parts and needs of the business community, but also

because of the positioning of him- or herself, the research community to which he or she belongs to, and to what 'is' going on out-there as *morally neutral*. The position held, as we see it, then essentially becomes an amoral position (Bonnedahl, Jensen & Sandström, 2007).

As a consequence of this amoral position, trafficking networks are excluded, but so are also so-called derivative stakeholders (Philips et al., 2003), i.e. groups or individuals who can do direct harm to businesses, but that are not part of the corporation's moral obligation since they do not contribute to the corporation's value creating process. Excluded here are usually poor people, the natural environment, activists, competitors, NGOs, media, consumer organizations, governmental bodies etc. Such stakeholders could indirectly be considered as moral subjects and objects if a normative stakeholder, to which the corporation has moral obligation (Philips et al., 2003), demands this. On the other hand, this amoral position of business researchers and the business community makes it perfectly legitimate to partake in the study of global corporations that are active in areas such as chemistry, food, cars, mining, oil, weapons, including their so-called normative stakeholders, such as financiers, managers, employees, customers, suppliers and owners, with the purpose of finding out the unique competitive advantages that make these practices profitable.

The position we take holds that by studying trafficking networks or other masters of change untouched by business researchers, we have the opportunity to learn about the global network society *in action*, which in turn could also prove to be where (some of) the large global corporations are heading. There are also good reasons to think that this is the direction that those with strong positions of power, such as the managers and owners of large global corporations, actually will strive towards. Consequently, the dominant interests will certainly attempt to speed-up rather than hinder the overall diffusion of the global network society. Of course, this does *not* imply that global corporations strive towards becoming traffickers, but that the route for

achievement, prescribed by management gurus (and others), do share the capabilities and skills that trafficking networks have acquired in order to successfully organize themselves in the emerging global network society.

We also have the possibility to map out pros and cons of the network society. As we have seen, this is a valid scientific argument and it might also prove to be a valid ideological argument. However, matters of good and evil must also be allowed into the analysis. For as Naím (2007) argues, the effects of illicit trade are raw and sordid, and the rise of the network society and networked enterprises certainly contains moral dilemmas as well as concrete moral problems of such a magnitude that it cannot be up to ideology and science to decide upon. The question of what could be deemed as good and evil is here left out and the crucial point is that the ideological and the scientific argument lack a moral compass. Put differently, the effects of the emergent global network society cannot be reduced to the dimensions of 'excellent organizing and economic efficiency' or 'is' or 'truth'.

To summarize the moral argument, we suggest two questions for researchers in critical organization inquiry to continue working with:

- If large global corporations learn the rules of the emerging global network society and follow their own rhetoric, based on management prescriptions of flexibility, decentralization and adaptability, striving to organize the way the traffickers have been presented in this paper, corporate predation will most likely increase. What consequences will that have on derivative stakeholders, normative stakeholders, democracy, human rights, equality, justice, solidarity etc.?
- On what moral grounds could the *modus vivendi* of trafficking be condemned as something bad and how could the 'bads' be translated into practice by business researchers so as to actively help prevent the 'bads' from happening?

Conclusions

In this paper, we have raised the issue of who, or what, performs as a master of the emerging global network society. We have concluded that, on paper, it should be the large global corporations, but they do not seem to meet all criteria (flexibility, decentralization, adaptability). Instead, a forerunner in action in terms of organizing in this society is the global trafficking network. This raises several issues for several areas (business studies, political science, sociology, gender studies, business practice, management consulting etc.), of which we have pursued the area of business studies. Three arguments to why we, as business researchers, should study global trafficking networks have been presented (the ideological, the scientific, the moral). Each of these arguments leads to the study of trafficking, but the position advocated in this paper, through an emphasis on the moral dimension, is that the two first cannot be left to their own destinies.

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Excess of Rationality?; about Rationality, Emotion and Creativity. A Contribution to the Philosophy of Management and Organization

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ABSTRACT

Organizations are sometimes said to be overly rational, and it is argued that more attention should be given to the soft side, including feelings and emotions. In the same vein it is said that creativity and rationality do not match. On the other hand however, one can trace the idea of organizations being less rational than supposed. This paper explores the view that 'excess of ...' can only be evaluated on the basis of a nuanced view of rationality and an adequate insight into the relationship of rationality, emotions/feeling and creativity. A philosophical perspective is helpful in this. It will be argued that various forms of rationality are to be distinguished.

Keywords: rationality, emotion/feeling, emotional labor, creativity, power, philosophy.

1. Introduction

Browsing the Internet recently, I came across an article for sale, *Successful Business Strategies: Creativity and Intuition Rather Than Rationality* (<http://www.universitip.com>; visited 12-2-08). According to the title, it is saying that organizations are often too rational, a particular kind of organizational excess, putting creativity under pressure. As a general evaluation, this presupposes a particular meaning of both concepts. However, thinking it too pricy for an 8 page text (\$ 79,60) – exercising economic rationality - , I did not buy it and will therefore remain uncertain about this meaning.

The text just mentioned is about business. Besides, the concept of rationality functions in various contexts (see for instance Etzioni 1988), such as philosophy, psychology, general economics, organization and management (M&O) studies, as well as in daily life.

In philosophy, the concept of rationality is part of, among others, logic, epistemology,

metaphysics and anthropology. It has been involved in articulating human self-images, and related philosophies of education, some thinkers arguing that a 'rationalist' interpretation of the meaning of rationality has detrimental consequences for both (see for example Dewey 1916, 1929). In all this, views of rationality influence those of other human phenomena such as feeling and emotion.

As far as M&O is concerned, the concept of rationality is used, for instance, in order to understand, explain, management action and organizational matters, such as structure. At the same time we see authors saying that rationality has a limited scope, contrasting it, for instance, with 'intuition' and 'emotion', giving a kind of empirical critique of the scope of application of the concept. Designing organizations and thinking about the tasks of management often refers positively to the concept of rationality. If so, then rationality gets a normative emphasis - explaining being a more descriptive task - and it is related to other normative notions, such as 'efficiency'. However, giving evaluations can also be more negative, as presumably is the case with the article mentioned at the beginning.

It can be said that the concept of bounded rationality, developed by Simon (1983) especially tries to do justice to empirical facts concerning human decision making and nothing else. Also a normative use comes into focus: it is advisable to look for the most satisfying one amongst the few available alternative courses of action. Another example is Henry Mintzberg, using the, at first sight contradictory, expression “irrational form of “rationality”” (Mintzberg, 1990 p. 342). These words indicate that there are rational and irrational forms of rationality. At the same time it is suggested that a damaging excess will result if ‘irrational rationality’ is enthroned. On the other hand, however, it also suggests that a, preferable, ‘rational form’ of rationality is possible. Brunsson (2000) distinguishes “decision” and “action” rationality, and the latter can be irrational from the perspective of the former¹. Collins&Porras speak of the “Tyranny of the Or” – the rational view that cannot easily accept paradox” (Collins&Porras 1997, p. 43), making a rather strong normative statement.

The normative becomes rather heavy when a plea for or deep criticism of rational management and rational organization is at issue. Critical positions often refer to processes of ‘rationalization’, i.e. control of the wider social and organization reality through rationality. This process, being blamed for causing ‘excess of rationality’, is said to involve effects like: abuse of power, inhuman manipulation of emotions and feelings, suppressing work enjoyment, de-skilling, alienation, oppressing creativity, authenticity², authentic emotional commitment, etc.. During the 80-ties developments took place which Martin

Albrow called the “de-rationalization of the organization” (Albrow 1992, p. 323).

This paper is intended as a contribution to the Philosophy of Management and Organization (PMO). As such it does not result from empirical studies, although these can be highly relevant for doing PMO. A crucial issue is what a sound, defensible view of rationality would be. In what comes next, I will first pursue this question, seeking an answer in terms of a nuanced approach (chapter 2). Next, emotion and feeling and their connection with rationality will be taken into account (chapter 3). After this, attention will be given to creativity (chapter 4) and the relationship between rationality and creativity (chapter 5), followed by a summarizing conclusion referring to organizational excess.

2. Rationality

Human beings have been thinking about rationality, sometimes also the term ‘reason’ is being used, for quite some time, trying to grasp and explicating it, criticizing it, etc. and this until the present day.

In a broad sense, rationality (reason) can be considered as “wisely” (Etzioni 1988, p. 138) and “intelligent” (Rescher 1988, p. 2) accounting for thinking and acting, finding good warrants for both, “[promoting] the art of life” (Whitehead 1958, p. 4). The ‘accounting for’ has two aspects, i) the first concerning an agent’s own deliberations, ii) the second his or her giving account to others. Both can be done pro-active or after the fact. Of course, the latter might open the door to un-sincere ‘rationalizations’. If so, then the ‘accounting for’ is *pseudo*, not real and straight, not serving the art of life.

Now, in order to get a nuanced and more elaborate understanding, I think it suitable to distinguish various options of being rational. Doing so, several ideal type *models* and *modes* of rationality come into view. In actual situations they can all be present to different degrees. A

¹ Weber distinguishes, among others, “Zweckrationalität” (instrumental rationality) and “Wertrationalität” (value rationality), the latter being irrational from the perspective of the former (Schipper 1996)

² Chapter 9 of Arlie Hochschild (1983) book on emotional labor is about authenticity. Authenticity is also a concept used and thought about in philosophy, see Taylor (1991).

'model of rationality' underlines the way matters are ordered and decisions are being made³. I speak of a 'mode of rationality' when the focus lies on types of content (Schipper 1996). This cannot be the whole story, however. In order to prevent models and modes staying unrelated and static, they *will have to be* embedded in, what can be called, 'reflective rationality', which covers ways of ordering and content as well (Schipper 2001, 2003). In what comes next 'models', 'modes' and 'reflection', taken altogether, will be designated as 'forms' of rationality. It is by these forms that the intelligent and wise accounting for comes nearer; it is through them that the art of life might be cultivated. It should be clear, however, that saying this is indeed expressing a normative view.

2.1. Models of rationality

It does make sense to distinguish two models, i.e. 'algorithmic' and 'judgmental' rationality.

- *Algorithmic rationality (AR)* depends on strict rules (logic, formal procedures, protocols, decision trees, etc.). Many different examples could be given: mathematical algorithms, logic of propositions, decision trees used in order to decide whether somebody need to pay tax, judicial rules and procedures, promotion rules, systems of artificial intelligence, etc. In specific cases, the particular rules in use constitute the concrete 'content' AR has. It is required that rules are strict and consistent. If so, then a sort of 'internal' rationality is created. As such, AR is objective, in the sense that it is indifferent who is involved in using the rules, general in its workings, the same input resulting in the same output. Input data may vary, though, which is a rather limited way of accounting for the uniqueness of a situation. The rules in use often only know a limited kind and number of variables. Dependent on the input, these rules mostly fully determine the outcome. In

this sense, AR makes tight control possible. Because of these qualities it has been considered as an ideal (see the philosophers' dream of a universal calculus). However, although rules create their own, 'internal', rationality, from an external point of view they might be considered as useless, inadequate, flawed, or even as irrational. An example would be rules for ranking schools, based on quantified performance indicators. When serious doubts about the validity of the indicators arise, the AR involved might become useless or considered as 'irrational'. In philosophy, especially in phenomenology, it is sometimes argued that quantification, and rules involved, might get you to know something while, at the same time, inducing a 'forgetting' about other matters. The organizational paradigm of AR is rule based bureaucracy.

- *Judgmental rationality (JR)* depends on the availability of general maxims, criteria (Brown 1990; Vickers 1983). Of these maxims many examples can be given, depending of the professional practice/field involved (empirical adequacy, beauty, elegance, (mathematical) simplicity, independence, justice, the right person in the right place, fairness, loyalty, honesty, etc.). As such, these maxims only co-determine the results of decision making and evaluation. Contrary to AR, the exercise of JR is always personal (not subjective). People can, for instance, come to somewhat different decisions with good reasons. JR also allows more focusing on unique situations compared to AR. These are all positive qualities. Like AR, JR has an internal rationality, constituted by the maxims, which, considered from a wider perspective, need not be that rational at all. This might, for example, be the case when the contextual suitability of current maxims, and their interpretation, is doubtful. Take the maxim of being 'loyal to the organization' in case of whistle blowers. Often, it is used deciding in favor of punitive measures aimed at disciplining the person involved. So-called Professional Service Firms are examples of organizations in which JR will likely be prominent.

³ If done after the fact, it will be a kind of reconstruction

2.2. Modes of rationality

The modes I like to distinguish are *means-end rationality* and *relational rationality*.

- *Means-end rationality (MER)* is often considered as the only real rationality available (Simon 1983). **MER** focuses on choosing means for attaining particular ends. **MER** is also known as *instrumental rationality*, especially in philosophy this expression is often used. Strictly speaking, **MER** depends on the following conditions: the ends are exogenous; they must be clear and precise enough to make informed decisions about the means. The informed decisions require knowledge of causal relationships, of potential side effects. The ends being exogenous, means that choosing goals is beyond **MER**. However, this does not exclude a particular end functioning as a means for attaining a higher order goal. The criteria involved by **MER** are *effectiveness*, pointing to causal relationships, and *efficiency*. Most definitions of 'efficiency' are rather formal (e.g. "maximum output with minimum input"). The 'input' can also be considered as what is to be sacrificed in order to have the realized output, which brings in the notion of 'costs'. However, the actual use of 'efficiency' is always based on some, often implicit, ideas about which kind of costs are reckoned with. Although (cultural) habits often are involved, from a wider, philosophical, it is arguable that every application of the concept of efficiency requires a non-instrumental decision concerning the kinds of costs which one is willing to recognize for being efficient (Schipper 1998). It is, for example, interesting to see that already more than 20 years ago, Arlie Hochschild was asking attention for the "personal costs" of emotional labor (Hochschild 1983. p, 12, 17, 197). So, while actual use of **MER** is limited to the conditions mentioned above, it is also not self-sufficient in another sense.

- *Relational rationality (RR)* is thinking and acting in terms of relations which involve

values. Relations can be of two kinds, functional ones, $y=f(x)$, and normative ones, involving particular values (f.e. friendship, care, customer relation, audit relation, teaching relation (education), relation with the environment, etc.)⁴. In these, the relata can be of many kinds: people, organizations, the environment, etc. Among other things, **RR** can be helpful in deciding non-instrumentally about goals, answering the question what would be worthwhile doing in a particular situation, thereby partly overcoming the insufficiency of **MER**. **RR** can also play a role in deciding about the kinds of costs. Hybrid cars, for example, can, while being more energy efficient than usual ones, said to contribute to a 'harmonious relationship' with the environment. Looking at the values involved, we will have to recognize, however, that they produce less noise, which (especially) in cities creates a safety risk (with possible human costs), that also has to be taken into account. So, 'harmony with the environment', should also urge us to look at this. Germs of **RR** are present in Vickers (1983) and Parker Follett (1940). So-called 'communicative rationality' (Habermas) is one of the many possible manifestations of **RR**, in this case concerning a normative relationship between partners in communication. The criteria of **RR** are based on values involved in the relationship at issue. By definition, exercising **RR**, therefore, requires an understanding, interpretation of these values, often including an explication of them in terms of norms. However, it is always possible that a particular understanding and explication are not really proper, adequate, while being one-sided, too narrow/wide or even flawed. Not so long ago, for example, it became en vogue to look at patients as customers. The reason for this was the intention to de-paternalize the relationship between doctors and their patients, and perhaps rightly so. At the same time however, the question can be raised whether the relationship of physician and patient is indeed identical with the one of customer and supplier (Schipper 1999). Nowadays, it is customary to talk about organizations and their stakeholders. Although part of their relationship is functional,

⁴ Knowledge of functional relations is crucial for **MER**

values are involved too. If so, then **RR** is present. Meanings given to the values are, among other things, dependent on ideas of stakeholderhood as such (Vanderkerckhove 2007).

2.3. Reflective rationality (RER)

The philosopher John Locke once said that in reflection the mind “turns its view inward upon itself [...] [observing] its own actions” (Locke 1976, p. 107). Reflection is indeed a kind of ‘bending back’. It is a meta-activity in which human beings regard their own actions, conceptualizations, ideas, etc. In organizational learning theory references to reflection are also present, for example, Argyris&Schön’s double loop learning (Argyris&Schön 1978, 1996), Weick’s view of sense-making (Weick 1979) and Peter Senge’s fifth discipline (Senge 1990). Argyris&Schön focus on cognitive matters, reflection being involved in preparing new organizational learning theories. Weick considers reflection in connection with retrospective sense-making of experiences and with a plea for richer languages for doing this. In Senge’s approach, applications of a particular systems theory will have to be the outcome of reflective learning. In my view, they all seem to limit reflection too much.

Four modes of reflection, i.e. the empirical, the wondering, the critical and the systematising one, can be distinguished, each having its own focus on the subject matter at issue. In *empirical* reflection one is looking which ideas, views or opinions, values are really in use, what actually is done, personally, as a professional, or at the level of organizations⁵. *Wondering* reflection ‘asks’ what is left out of consideration, not really seen or reckoned with, while being absolved in action/thought coloured by the

actual, values, norms, etc. Such reflection, therefore, requires distancing and openness. Wondering reflection also has a creative potential. Reflection becomes *critical*, when, for example, questions are being asked like: “is it good that so-and-so is indeed left out of consideration?”; “is it acceptable that the actual purpose of the organization we are working for is indeed ‘so-and-so’?” It should be noticed, however, that critical reflection as such does not require a preliminary wondering one. It just depends on behalf of ‘*what*’ one is critical. Finally, reflection is *systematising* when existing ideas are being improved, better ordered, or when ideas, norms, values, etc., tentatively embraced as a result of a particular wondering and critical reflection, are further elaborated. I think that this more differentiated view of reflection can be helpful for a better understanding and balancing of what we are doing when we reflect. **RER** requires open-mindedness and attention for, what I like to call, *borderline experiences* (Schipper 2003). A borderline experience involves acquaintance with limitations of particular thought and action (practice)⁶. In some situations **RER** can include **AR**, i.e. logical reasoning. Also **JR** can be present, for example, when a borderline experience is considered as being crucial.

Distinctions made thus far imply that all possibilities of rationality are important, not any one of them should be left out. As far as modes of rationality are concerned, recognizing only **MER** (Simon 1983) or emphasizing **AR**, as is done in some philosophies, is detrimental to the practice of rationality.

As argued, preventing models and modes of rationality staying unrelated is important. For example, the rules constituting **AR** do not come out of the blue and designing them requires, among other things, **JR**. Balancing the exercise

⁵ The well known distinction between ‘espoused theory’ and ‘theory in use’ is relevant here. One could also think of the view of Karl Weick who distinguishes between what humans intend to do and what they actually are doing. Empirical studies can be relevant here too.

⁶ Sometimes, these borderline experiences are very intense as was the case with child labor. Sometimes, thought and imagination are mainly involved. Moreover, sociological and psychological studies of organizational reality can offer material which is relevant. Kathryn Waddington (2005, p. 42), considers the experience with the dark side of gossip in nursing as a trigger for reflection.

of models and modes or rationality, taking their strengths and weaknesses into account, is relevant. Being conscious of the potential flaws/limitations of actual **AR**, **JR**, **MER** and **RR** is essential; several of these have been mentioned earlier. This means that, eventually, the exercise of whatever rationality requires embeddedness in reflection. That is why **RER** is basic. When **RER** is lacking, the people and their organization can be said to be not rational enough; a normative statement, indeed. **RER** becomes active, for example, when looking at the actual rules or maxims of resp. **AR** and **JR**. Cost-definitions, basic for **MER** (Schipper 1998), and particular value-explications in use in **RR** can be also a subject matter of **RER**.

The reader might ask whether **RER** itself also faces potential limitations, pitfalls, flaws etc. This is not an easy question. A potential risk is that, for instance, one kind of reflection, say, the empirical or the critical one sketched above, is taken to make up the whole of it. If so, then actual reflection may miss the real issues. It is also possible that reflection is floating away, un-necessarily creating confusion (“analysis, paralysis”; “reflection, perplexion”).

Earlier I mentioned Brunson’s idea of action rationality. It requires commitment to a particular organizational, what he calls, and “objective ideology” (Brunsson 2000, p. 28), and this fits in with Collins & Porras’ idea of “core ideology”. The latter consists of core values + core purpose, in which people working for an organization (company) have to be “molded”, “indoctrinated” (Collins & Porras 1997, p. 51, 73, 122, 131, 138). Core ideologies, they say, “need no rational or external justification” (*op. cit.*, p. 75). Now this implies that any **RER** exercised in finding one is irrelevant. One of the examples the authors are mentioning is Nike. Its core purpose is “to experience the emotion of competition, winning and crushing competitors” (*op. cit.*, p. 225). During the 90-ties Nike came into trouble, however, because of the involvement in sweatshops. Activist’ protests, student

boycotts of Nike products, law suits, etc. constituted a borderline experience, eventually making Nike coming with a new vision on their business and the whole apparel industry (Schipper & Boje 2008). Without reflection, seeking a justification of their business, this would not have been possible at all.

In the introduction, certain matters (abuse of power, manipulation of emotions and feelings, suppressing work enjoyment, alienation) have been mentioned, sometimes ascribed to an ‘over-rationalization’ of reality, including the organizational one. Having the above arguments concerning a nuanced view of rationality in mind, it can, for instance, be asked whether this boils down to, say, **AR** and **MER** taking the lead at the cost of other forms of rationality.

3. Rationality, feeling and emotion.

Blaise Pascal’s often quoted saying, that the “heart has its reasons which reason does not know”, seems⁷ to fit in with a long tradition of seeing rationality and feeling/emotion as uneasy bedfellows. In the context of management, its influence is illustrated by the fact that an author like Henri Mintzberg, despite his criticism of analytical rationality, uses phrases like the “bias [...] of emotion” (Mintzberg 1990, p. 70). Other lines of thought sketching a more nuanced view can also be noticed, however (Solomon 1998).

3.1. Rationality vs. emotion and feeling

As said above, there is an approach considering rationality and feeling-emotion as an unhappy combination. In works of diverse thinkers such as John Stuart Mill and Georg Wilhelm Friederich Hegel illustrative statements can be found: “let feeling no more encroach the province of reason, than reason upon the province of feeling” (Mill 1825/1988, p. 306); “when somebody says: ‘I feel it’, then he has secluded himself” (Hegel 1830/1955, p. 44; my

⁷ Whether this really is the case with Pascal will not be discussed in this paper.

translation)⁸. However, also explicit critical comments can be noticed. For example, John Dewey denouncing the “current opposition [...] between the intellect and the emotions” for which “the intellect is a pure light; the emotions are a disturbing heat” (Dewey 1916, p. 345). More recently, Etzioni mentions efforts to connect rationality with the affective, in which the latter functions in regard of preferences and constraints. Also the idea of “emotional costs” is referred to by him (Etzioni 1988, p.158). These ideas fit in with the growing interest in the meaning of feelings and emotions and their relationship with rationality which took place in the later part the 20-th century (De Sousa 1987). Dimasio (1999, p. 41) says that emotion probably assist reason, especially when it comes to “personal and social matters involving risk and conflict”. Nowadays widely used notion of “emotional intelligence” (Fineman 2006) and expressions like “affective computing” are indications that this development is still going on.

3.2. Meaning of feeling and emotion

Feelings and emotions are many: concern, surprise, joy, remorse, pain, shame, fear, anger, sorrow, embarrassment, disgust, (un-)integrity feelings, compassion, happiness, etc. Mostly they do not appear out of the blue. In terms of causal mechanisms one can, for instance, try to relate them to neuron-physiological processes. From a more cognitive perspective, however, it is also possible to consider them as a kind of ‘judgment’ triggered by a situation⁹. In connection with the latter, looking at rationality, three aspects are relevant:

- a relation to (a presupposed) reality¹⁰
- an evaluation of something
- an anticipation or urgency to act

Emotions often imply an urgency to act; feelings involve more an anticipation of potential action. Sometimes it is even said that without emotions and feelings human beings would not act at all. Feelings and emotions refer to something in regard of which they arise, a situation, an act of somebody else, etc. So, the quotation from Hegel just seems to miss a crucial point. The evaluative aspect is central too. Fear, for example, is letting us ‘know’ that danger is involved and that quick action is unavoidable. The feeling of surprise implies that what it is about might really be important; further notice, action, can result from this. Many other examples could be given.

3.3. Two-sided relation with rationality

The view of rationality presented in this paper does not exclude emotions and feelings having a role to play. Looking in terms of rationality, feelings and emotions can, as indicated above, be viewed as implicit ‘judgments’. Considering rationality’s relation to emotion and feeling in terms of some kind of exclusion is, therefore, not very acceptable. Take a scientist confronted with two theories, both of which fit the empirical data equally well, might, for instance, judging in favor of one of them because of the aesthetic feeling of beauty induced by it, which is not unreasonable (McAllister 1996).

The connection of emotion/feeling and rationality is rather subtle and cannot be reduced to simple prescriptions. The various possibilities of rationality will make this clear.

In **AR** emotions and feelings are (and should be) absent, otherwise it would not be **AR**.

⁸ It is not argued that these statements contain the whole of resp. Mill and Hegel. The latter, for example, defended also the view that nothing great can be done without passion (Solomon 1998, p. 285).

⁹ In actual cases both perspectives can be taken, and which one will be most adequate just depends on the specific circumstances.

¹⁰ Later on I will call this the reality presupposition (**RP**). Jon Elster states something similar, pointing out that emotions are “directed towards an intentional object” (Elster 2000, p. 27). See also Solomon (1998) and De Sousa (1987). The latter is saying that emotions provide us with information about ourselves and the world (*op. cit.*, p. 107).

Hence, if **AR** is considered as paradigmatic of rationality, then, by implication, emotion and feeling belong to another province indeed.

JR is different, however. As such, feelings and emotions can co-determine or give content to **JR**. The scientist, mentioned above, judges theories looking at empirical adequacy and elegance, and the feeling of beauty especially evaluates them referring to the latter. However, and this is the second side, feelings and emotions can be the subject matter of judgment too. For instance, if asked whether the presupposed reality is indeed actually present.

In the exercise of **MER** as such, except perhaps as constraints in terms of emotional costs, there is no role for them. There is another side, however. In some situations, feelings and emotions function as material to be taken into account seeking effective means; they can also be part of the end to be achieved, for example, inducing happy feelings in workers. Besides this kind of control, also emotional labor, i.e. smiling at customers and having accompanying feelings, is to be mentioned here (Hochschild 1983; Fineman 2006).

Worth noticing too, is that **AR** and **MER** can arouse certain (unintended) emotions and feelings (f.e. sorrow, un-easiness, guilt, shame, or anger) concerning rules, use of means or ends involved. As such, these feelings and emotions may induce **RR** in combination with, at a more abstract level, even **RER**. An example would be the guilt a manager is feeling in case of down-sizing because of 'efficiency reasons'.

Granting that most emotions and feelings involve a reality presupposition (**RP**), the following, indeed reflective, questions can be relevant:

- "is **RP** fulfilled?";
- "what does **RP** say about the view of reality involved by a particular use of

AR, JR, MER and **RR**, if such a view exists?".

- concerning the evaluative aspect of a feeling it might be asked: "is adequate, suitable? For instance, "*schadenfreude*" can hardly be considered as an appropriate feeling (Waddington 2005).
- is the emotion perhaps an overreaction in the light of the maxims (**JR**) and values (**RR**) in use?"¹¹. Is the emotion, including **RP**, due to stress factors on the side of the emoter? (see note 8).

As suggested above, emotions and feelings can indeed relate negatively to **AR**, maxims in use (**JR**), or the actual content given to values (**RR**). In his interesting approach, Naud van der Ven (2006) gives an interpretation of shame, management sometimes has over its own exercise of rationality¹², in terms of the philosophy of Levinas. Emotions can, at a meta-level, also concern actual feeling rules (see note 11) involved in **JR** and **RR**, thereby giving a strong inducement towards **RER**. However, saying that especially authorities are keeping feeling rules, noticing that such rules are applied differently to men and women (Hochschild 1983, p. 75, 173), can be a general invitation to **RER** without reference to particular meta-emotions.

In summary, a nuanced view of rationality implies a subtle relationship with emotions and feelings. We saw that especially **JR**, **RR** and **RER** have twofold link with them. They can function either as i) a stimulating heuristic in the exercise of these forms of rationality, even giving content to them, or ii) become their subject matter, having their **RP**, adequacy and suitability to be evaluated. As far as **MER** is concerned, feelings

¹¹ In connection with the last questions, the notion of "*feeling rule*", a key in studies of emotional labour, is worth mentioning. These rules are "standards used [...] to determine what is rightly and owing in the currency of feeling", discriminating "what I do feel" and "what I should feel" (Hochschild 1983, p. 18, 57). These rules can, therefore, give content to actual **JR** and **RR**.

¹² He does so, though, without distinguishing different models and modes of rationality. In case of downsizing, for instance, protected managers can suffer from negative feelings (Fineman 2006, p. 683).

and emotions can function as material to be taken into account. On the other hand, however, a particular exercise can induce them at a meta-level, which then can be related to i) or ii). Especially i) has the potential for seeking change, and this brings me to the notion of creativity.

4. Creativity

During the last century 'creativity' became in use as a concept, grasping activities in fields like art, science, business, management and politics, resulting in things new and valuable. At the background of this attention were practical as well as of more philosophical reasons. The first relate, for instance, to the Cold War. It was believed that psychological research could result in ways enhancing creativity in a controlled way. Later on, there were impulses from developments in artificial intelligence. Also M&O, with a focus on entrepreneurship, learning organizations and innovation, made creativity a matter of practical concern. The philosophical, on the average older, reasons refer to matters of human self-image, the question of what kind of society is preferable (e.g. Dewey's creative democracy, Parker Follet's creative experience in governance), and metaphysical-ontological themes concerning creativity and reality.

4.1. Creativity and rationality

In connection with the theme of this paper it is interesting to notice that in M&O one comes across the idea that rationality and creativity do not match. The already quoted Collins&Porras, for example, speak of the "genius of the And" breaking the "'Tyranny of the Or" - the rational view that cannot easily accept paradox". The Tyranny of the 'Or' should be overcome, because creativity is essential for the process of setting the envisioned future (Collins & Porras 1997, pp 43, 217, 242, 247). A statement like "all progress does depend on the unreasonable man" (Handy 1998, p. 270) is in alignment with this. Something analogous is said, when creativity

is valued as a means for becoming "disorganized", opposing the rationalist view of business theory: "being reasonable does not win the day" (Clegg & Birch 1998, p. 7). So, it is proposed that being creative means leaving rationality behind. At the beginning of chapter 2 rationality was identified as wise and intelligent (accounting for) thinking and acting, promoting the art of life. When creativity requires that we forget about this, what would be the point?

4.2. Rationality and creativity

An important issue is the relationship between rationality and novelty. Looking at the models we see that with **AR** newness is confined to variations in the value of input data, the type of which is determined by the kind of rules. Compared to **AR**, **JR** has more room for newness. Besides variations within a certain type of data, it also admits new kinds of them. The only condition is that they fall within the scope of the general maxims constituting the very **JR** involved. Take financial auditing. This is ruled by maxims, such as independence, freedom from outside constraints on investigating and reporting, and objectivity. Guided by them, auditors used to look at financial data themselves, often - because of the costs involved - by random tests. Nowadays, they focus more on control systems used by the audited organizations. Hence, inspectors start searching for a *new kind* of data (EDP-auditing), still using the old maxims. **RR** can give content to **JR**, being tolerant to newness in so far as **JR** is. **MER** is also worth mentioning here. As such, it is indeed not intolerant for newness. **RER**, finally, is the most tolerant concerning novelty. When rules and maxims used thus far are examined reflectively, this can lead to different results, such as i) reconfirming/specifying, or ii) abandoning, going beyond them. An example of the first is the specification of the *Principle of the Economy of Thought* in terms of mathematical simplicity. An example of ii) the new football rule which permits a keeper to catch a return ball or touch it by hand only when it is headed to him. This rule was invented not for its own sake, but in order to increase the vivacity of the game.

So far, it is clear that only **AR** does exclude real newness. Therefore, when this type of rationality is preferred, creativity and rationality indeed seem to exclude each other.

4.3. *Types of creativity*

Creativity is studied from different perspectives. In psychology, for example, the following questions are being asked:

a) "do creative processes always involve major leaps?"; b) "is knowledge stimulating or hindering creativity?"; c) "show creative reasoning always a particular pattern?"; d) "does IQ indicate creativity?"; e) "are there environmental factors which facilitate creativity?". Answers be summarized as follows: a) no and yes; b) yes and no; c) no and yes; d) no; e) yes and no (Sternberg 1988).

The 'yes and no' answers are not accidental. As I see it, they depend on the fact that two ideal type kinds of creativity can be distinguished, i.e. the explorative and transcendentive one.

- *Explorative creativity*. Seeks new outcomes within an already existing framework, such as a particular esthetic 'mould', e.g. a sonnet or a symphony, a scientific paradigm, research tradition, a kind of product, e.g. a bicycle, a cultural practice, business model, etc. Improvisation mostly includes explorative creativity as is often the case with using a familiar metaphor. A well-known example from the field of M&O, which one can already find in the works of Henri Fayol, is the organization viewed as an organism. Seeking an interesting organizational analogue of DNA would, if successful, be an instance of explorative creativity.

- *transcendentive creativity*. With this, usual frameworks are left behind. A new concept or metaphor can both be instances of transcendentive creativity. The concept of an organization as a moral agent, allowing also notions like 'organizational integrity', can count, at the time of its introduction, as an example. The same obtains for introduction of

12-tone music almost hundred years ago by, among others, Arnold Schönberg. Nowadays, it is a *kind* of music which, having its own standards, can be creatively explored. New artifacts, such as the transistor, can also be mentioned here.

Let's consider some of the above questions. Take question a). The "no" answer is valid when we speak in terms of explorative creativity. The same applies to the "yes" concerning b) and c). The "yes" to a) and the "no" to b), especially depend on transcendentive creativity. The answer to c) can be "yes" when 'transcending' can be shown to be patterned. Mentioning patterns of reasoning, involved by creativity, refers to heuristics, i.e. non-algorithmic procedures, mostly in connection with problem solving. A particular heuristic reduces the, so-called, problem solving maze (Newell, Shaw & Simon 1962). As such, heuristics help explorative creativity. Transcendentive creativity is another story, while it requires novel problem setting, also constituting a new, different, problem solving maze.

5. Rationality and creativity

In what comes next two issues will be discussed, i.e. the question whether rationality excludes creativity and positive/negative contextual factors.

5.1. *Can rationality favor creativity?*

The strength of **AR** (objectivity, high control) is, when it comes to creativity, its major weakness, however. If indeed only **AR** is involved in a particular situation, then creativity is excluded. As argued, variations in values of input data are possible, but this will result in nothing but calculated 'newness'. This is also the reason why rule-based bureaucratic organizations are not creative.

JR and **RER** are different, however. Both have a role in explorative and transcendentive creativity. As argued earlier, **JR** allows new kinds of data, which can involve explorative creativity. However, making judgments can be rather routinely without losing their character of

judgments. Hence, **JR** allows explorative creativity without necessarily favoring it. In order to make explorative creativity more likely, **RER** may be helpful. Yet, assessing the value of what is new in light of the maxims remains basic. Tax solicitors, for example, are continuously searching the law and jurisprudence for possibilities to serve their clients, creatively exploring the 'law-space'. If they also keep an eye on major maxims like fairness and justice, then a particular **RR** would be involved too. As far as **MER** is concerned, it is clear that it serves creativity because, lead by theoretical-practical deliberations and skills, it contributes to producing anything at all. This mode of rationality being instrumental for exogenous ends, it is not by itself creatively seeking new goals. The latter might result from **RR** and **RER**, however.

Whereas explorative creativity may profit from **RER**, there is an intrinsic relation with transcendentive creativity. As such, **RER** goes beyond what is reflected upon. Hence, this kind of rationality indeed involves a transcending act. Although this act does not guarantee that something novel and valuable comes out, is essential for transcendentive creativity¹³. Hofstadter (1986, p. 531-533) mentions the role of self-watching. Self-watching, which is a kind of reflection, reveals actions to be patterned. According to Hofstadter this triggers creativity because people are supposed to be intolerant for patterned behavior.

Summarizing, the question formulated in the subtitle of this section can be answered in the positive. Indeed, rationality can foster creativity on the condition that **JR**, **RER**, **RR** and **MER** are active. Only **AR** has no creativity potential, and the same applies to **MER** to a certain extend. So, views defended in the context of M&O that creativity and rationality do not match make sense only in connection with both of these.

¹³ It might even be the case that criteria for what is of value are also novel, becoming constituted during the creative process.

5.2. Creativity and rationality in context

In this section I like to supplement the conceptual analysis given thus far, by commenting on a few factors influencing creativity. Next, some remarks will be made on the role of power.

5.2.1. Factors in creative processes

Among the many positive factors are: playfulness, the availability of visual images, tolerance for ambiguity, freedom, commitment and dedication, a will to change, knowledge, recognition by others, trust, consciousness of the relativity of conceptual representations and attentiveness. Starting with the role of visual images, I will say a few words regarding some of them.

Visual images can stimulate creativity, because they are beyond any particular, clear cut conceptualization (Kim 1990). Sometimes, they even 'tell' us more than 'thousand words'. As such, visual images challenge people to see clues in problem solving not considered before, looking at not yet conceptualized aspects of what is present, etc. Visual images have this potential because they present us with many different features of a situation at the same time. Conceptualizations focus attention. Wertheimer (1959) even claims that only structured wholes like visual images make real understanding possible; doing without them in problem solving will make us stumble and find solutions only accidentally. Visual images can also contribute to overcoming a blind use of recipes and algorithms.

Playfulness helps "with doing things for which [there is] no good reason" (March 1984, p. 233). It goes beyond **AR**, and even indeed **JR**, **RR**, and **MER** in so far as they only function routinely. It has the potential to evoke unsearched experiences, bringing new content. In this sense, it can stimulate explorative and transcendentive creativity. Playful people need an environment allowing them to behave this way, giving

recognition and offering a fostering atmosphere¹⁴.

Tolerance for ambiguity can exist in different degrees, endurance of un-clarity being a main issue. Ambiguity contrasts with the clarity offered by **AR** or the 'safety' of the framework involved by **JR**. Therefore, tolerance for ambiguity, i.e. being able to live with uncertainties and un-clarities, is especially favorable for transcendentive creativity. Ambiguities can exist in different kinds of fields. An example from physics is the wave-particle duality, which was really puzzling at the beginning of quantum mechanics. We must realize, however, that in creativity things are never straightforward and simple. This obtains also for tolerance of ambiguity. What I have in mind is that sometimes also distrust of ambiguity was helpful finding new ways. Einstein's discovery of special relativity could probably count as an example.

Attentiveness is an important creativity factor too (Brodbeck 1999). It can accompany everything a person does, thinks, feels, sees, hears, etc., supporting the other creativity factors, keeping focus or function as a 'searchlight'. In keeping focus, people concentrate on their goals, lead by their passions, feelings and emotions, concepts in use, etc. This kind of attentiveness can relate to explorative creativity, while keeping an eye on frameworks involved. The second function makes them attentive for new possibilities, ways of thinking and acting. Essential for this kind of attentiveness is the capability and willingness of people to see through their own regular conceptualizations, feelings, emotions, perceptions and realities involved. As such, it can foster transcendentive creativity. In both functions, however, attentiveness is the opposite of nonchalance; reflective rationality is also involved, be it in different ways.

¹⁴However, this does not seem always to be the case. Sometimes it is even said that un-pleasant stimuli are important for the awakening of creativity (Sternberg & Lubart 1995, p. 256). See also Fong (2006).

Many of the factors interrelate. Commitment, for example, is often welcomed because it prevents people doing unnecessary things, indeed an aspect of freedom. Yet, negative influences are equally possible: commitments binding people, making them narrow-minded, un-free to consider new ways, etc. Commitment and freedom stimulate creativity each in their own way. Transcendentive creativity, though, requires substantial freedom, its role being more basic than is the case with explorative creativity. As far as the latter is concerned, commitment to frameworks and maxims involved is important, pushing them to their limits and making the best out of it. At the same time, this kind of commitment limits possibilities of transcendentive creativity. Because of such interrelatedness, simplifications should be avoided in studying actual cases.

It is also worthwhile to connect what is just said with the affective side of human life. Tolerance for ambiguity, for instance, gives space to emotional ambivalence, the simultaneous experience of positive and negative emotions, which recent empirical research has found relevant for creativity (Fong 2006). Moreover, what has been argued in part 3 about types of rationality, in section 4.2 concerning their relationship with feeling and emotion, and in section 5.1 about rationality and creativity, can be combined to obtain insight into the potential connection of these affects and human creativity. Indeed, all feeling and emotion challenging **AR**, habitual **JR**, **MER** and **RR**, unfreezing them, undoing closure, can stimulate explorative creativity. Moreover, in so far as they trigger **RER** they can be favorable of transcendentive creativity too.

5.2.2. Creativity, Rationality and Power

I will close this section by making some comments on power and its relation to rationality and creativity.

Empirical studies show us that *real* rationality, i.e. the one active in actual practice, often involves myopic concerns, selfishness and the exercise of power (e.g. Flyvbjerg 1998). This is remarkable.

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During the Enlightenment period, rationality was considered to be the opposite of power; the light of reason evaporating dark privileges, uncontrolled political influences, unjustifiable knowledge and authority claims etc. In front of how things actually are, this philosophical view of rationality might seem rather utopian.

Having said this, how about kinds of rationality and types of creativity discussed thus far? In what way can they become linked with power? Take **AR** and **JR**. They are always relative to the respective rules and maxims/framework involved. So, the simple fact that these are in use, does not exclude them being effectuated by force¹⁵. The ways of power, in establishing particular mindsets, for instance, can have their own hidden subtleties. This means that mere judgmental rationality does not oppose power in general. Likewise, explorative creativity too might function within the context of an imposed system, without people even being conscious of the fact. The limited freedom required for explorative creativity is in alignment with this.

Full-sense reflective rationality and transcendentive creativity make another story, however. They do not really tolerate force from without. Yet, in a particular sense power is not absent. Think, for example, of the kind of power which enables creative people to liberate themselves from usual ways of acting and thinking, the power to cross borders, etc. Organizations, in which such authenticity is not really welcomed and all noses are supposed to point in the same direction, are not expected to show much transcendentive creativity. Only when some people, assisted by creativity factors as discussed above, are able to overcome what is (to be) held for sure, be it knowledge paradigms, power-full efficiencies, feeling rules, organizational procedures for dealing with customers, aesthetic moulds or whatever,

¹⁵ This gives the possibility to make a connection with empirical studies of human in organizational context, for example, those in which collective mental maps/shared meanings are studied in connection with power.

transcendentive creativity might follow. It says "might", because there are no guarantees. Taken altogether, we can, therefore, say that rationality, differentiated as it can be, and power, in the twofold sense of the power to impose and the power to resist and act, have a rather complex relationship with creativity.

6. Concluding Remarks

Doing philosophy is, among other things, making and evaluating distinctions that matter, exploring possibilities of thinking and acting that might be valuable. I did so concerning rationality, emotion, creativity and power, and the results can be used discussing the issue of 'rationality excess'. The approach presented in this paper makes it possible to say that on this occasion, a particular excess can go hand in hand with shortage at the same time. It just depends on which kind of rationality is at issue. In light of this, I want to argue that it would be wise to give all forms of rationality their due, respecting and allowing other aspects of human existence, such as emotions and feelings, to have their place in what is done and to be accounted for. Regarding all this, reflective rationality, at the personal level as well as within organizations, should never be absent. Even the decision to abstain from or postpone it for a particular period of time involves, at least, some reflective rationality.

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**IMMUTABLE ETHICS:
A Non-Theistic Treatise in Defense of the
Universality and Unchangeability of Right and Wrong**

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ABSTRACT

Modern popularist teaching presents ethics as situational and relativistic. Rather than using this current approach a more classical and reactionary methodology that calls for the reevaluation of some of the elder philosophies that regarded right and wrong in the context of absolutism is required. Confusion between the concepts of beliefs, values, morals, laws, and ethics has increased to the point where many people today consider these related ideas as synonymous. It is essential to discuss these related concepts outside of any single religious or ethnically based belief system. To do otherwise would inject individualistic religious or ethnic beliefs and values into the discussion, thereby negating the universality of the argument. Both modern and traditional approaches to ethics have attempted either to manage the effects of unethical behavior after it occurs, or to give specific guidance and examples in order to prevent future similar occurrences. Unfortunately, both of these popular approaches are reactive at best. The optimal strategy is to take a proactive approach that can discern the root causes of unethical behavior so that this knowledge could be used as a preventative countermeasure to the ever-increasing amounts of unethical behavior. Axiology, the study of ethics, is not a new field; but many modern authors and ethicists have avoided and continue to avoid the issue of ethical absolutism. Contrary to much modern thought, there is no reason to avoid the discussion of absolutism, as the concept of universal and immutable ethics can be reconciled fully with other contemporary schools of thought such as physical sciences, social sciences, and rationalism.

PROLOGUE

“In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” (Judges 21:25)

INTRODUCTION

This treatise has a three-fold purpose. The first purpose is to convince the reader of the immutability of ethical standards. Part I of this paper will define and discuss five related yet distinct concepts: beliefs, values, morals, laws, and ethics. These definitions are followed in Part II by a comparison of these defined concepts in order to demonstrate the inadequacy of beliefs, values, morals, and laws to be universal and immutable vis-à-vis ethics.

The second purpose of this paper is to discover, define, and discuss root causes of unethical behavior. Although there has been considerable discussion on the subject of how to recognize unethical behaviors, and sometimes even dialogue on how to avoid them; there appears to be a dearth of information concerning the discovery of the actual root causes of unethical behavior itself, and realistic remedy. Part III of this paper delves into this question of the root causes of unethical behavior, identifies them, and offers preventative measures.

The third purpose of this paper is to provide some example areas for further examination regarding the compatibility of ethics vis-à-vis different fields of scientific study. Included in Part IV are assessments of some thoughts regarding ethics from some

great philosophers and scientists that have *BELIEFS* come before us.

PART I – DEFINITIONS

INFORMATION and IDEAS

Morris Massey’s epic hypothesis, “What You Are is Where You Where When” posits that who one has become is based upon the unique synthesis of the distinctive cumulative stimuli of ideas and events that one has been subjected to throughout the course of his or her life. (Massey, 1976) Information incessantly bombards us and we continuously process it all. Some of this information we chose to reject and eliminate from our future use. Other information, we elect to keep. This retained information becomes each individual’s personalized idea base for future use.

Information is constantly being presented to us from many differing points. These methods of presentation include both formal and informal venues, with one of the earliest methods of acquiring information being from parental interaction. Even in today’s modern world of public education, parents still influence their children’s moral compass in those few years prior to surrendering their children to the state-run educational system. In addition to the state-run public education system, many children are also subject to the teachings of religious organizations. Even if not directly influenced by these religious or state run organizations, daily interaction with those individuals who are indirectly affects everyone in the society. Some societies that officially avoid or reject religious teachings either, 1) interject their own form of theism (often called atheism), or 2) these type of teachings are so entrenched that they have become an intrinsic part of the fabric of society. This constant bombardment of information then becomes the universal database (the whole-set) from which is extracted those ideas into the grouping (the subset) that will become the basis of our individualistic belief system.

From this subset of retained ideas, some of these ideas are found significant enough to become part of an individual’s belief system. Beliefs are those states or habits of the mind in which trust or confidence is placed. Furthermore, belief implies having a firm or unshakeable faith, accepting something as true and genuine while holding a firm conviction as to the goodness, worth, or value of that something. The word belief comes from twelfth-century English, where the word implied the meaning of dear and esteemed. The word belief originally had a religious significance implying a trust in God, but by the sixteenth-century the word had become limited in common usage to meaning simply the “mental acceptance of something as true.” (<http://www.etymonline.com>)

VALUES

Values are based upon the beliefs and ideas that are of special importance or significance to an individual. The definition of value is based on the etymology of the word value itself; i.e., from the thirteenth-century French word, *value*, meaning of worth or of value, to be of worth, from the Latin *valere*, to be strong, well, of value. Values, then, are those ideas that have a particularly significant meaning to an individual, and from which paradigm one will base his or her future decisions. Individual values when normalized within a selected group then become the basis for societal norms and laws. (<http://www.etymonline.com>)

MORALS

Morals are a system of beliefs and values, often codified, that emanate from an individual’s own value system. Morals (or moral codes) are also often associated with societal values as opposed to individual values. The word morals is all too often used as a synonym for ethics. While the two words, morals and ethics, can be very close in meaning, in this case it is essential to focus on their differences as opposed to their similarities. Often, a collective or a society can

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be defined as a group of individuals who collectively subscribe to a set of common morals. Cultural anthropologists and geographers often state that one of their determining reasons for considering a conglomerate of people as an identifiable group is that group's commonality of beliefs, values, and morals. In fact, societies that do not have these areas of commonality run the risk of becoming fractured and then falling prey to disintegration, e.g., Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, or having to revert to threat or actual use of force, e.g., U.S.S.R, U.K., U.S.A. to maintain unity.

LAWS

Laws are a method of enforcing compliance with a society's morals and norms. For instance, many U.S. and European laws are descended from the Judeo-Christian beliefs, values, and morals. In a similar fashion, many Middle Eastern countries' laws are based upon an Islamic belief, value, and moral system; and many Oriental laws on Hindu, Buddhist, Confucist, or Taoist systems.

Contrary to some schools of thought, just because a specific act is legal does not make it ethical, moral, or even of value. As an example, in Nazi Germany, it was legal to kill Jews, Gypsies, Blacks, and Homosexuals. Although certain actions may be within an individual's belief system and might even be of value to certain portions of the population, thereby becoming moral and legal through custom or even due process, those actions can at the same time be unethical.

ETHICS

Ethics is the manner in which one applies values and morals, regardless of the legal ramifications. A dictionary definition of ethics is the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation. Ethics is the fundamental branch of philosophy that attempts to define right and wrong, what one ought to do as compared to what one actually does. The figure below shows ethics as a subset of the previously discussed concepts of information and ideas, beliefs, values, morals, and laws encompassing and blending aspects of all. (Figure 1)

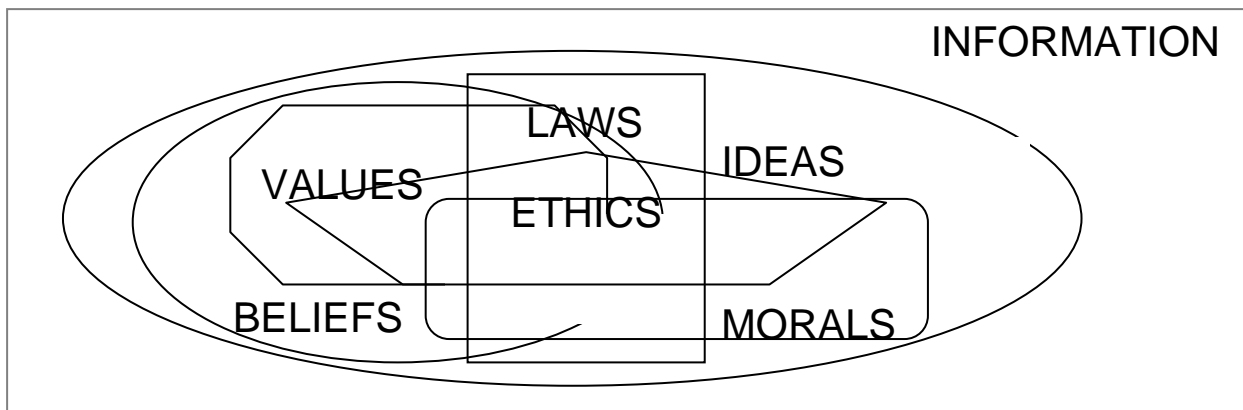


Figure 1 – Ethics Superimposed on a Construct of Information & Ideas, Beliefs, Values, Morals, and Laws

Although good and bad can sometimes have degrees of goodness and badness, and good and bad can have relative and situational value, for the most part something is either always good or it is always bad. This paper specifically rejects that the concept of situational ethics, that system of ethics by which acts are judged within their special and

temporal contexts instead of by categorical principles, are the same as the true ethics as defined in this paper. Ethics, contrary to beliefs, values, morals, or laws, are non-temporal, beyond the effects of space and time. This treatise will demonstrate conclusively that something that is ethical today was ethical yesterday and will be ethical tomorrow. By corollary, what is unethical in the present was unethical in the past and will also be unethical in the future. Although beliefs, values, morals, and laws can vary from place to place and from time to time; ethics are on a separate plane and are therefore above temporal or spatial concerns. Similar to Lawrence Kohlberg's Moral Development Scale, this paper recognizes the higher levels of maturity as a truer representation of universal ethics. In order to attain this higher level of ethical maturity and to recognize universal ethics, one must be able to evaluate ethics from an elevated plane where one can look at the issue from a dispassionate and elevated position. This recognition of true ethics is the crux of this paper's position, which will be more fully discussed in the following sections of Part II.

PART II – COMPARISONS

BELIEFS vs. ETHICS

Should not beliefs be based upon quantifiable facts? If not, how can one prove the veracity of his or her facts? Have not "facts" changed over the years? It was "scientific fact" that inspired Nazi racist and South African apartheid laws. How then can one place their faith in "scientific facts"? Theories and empirical data are only as good as the last datum point. What happens when the exception to the rule finally presents itself? It is difficult, if not impossible, to state definitively that scientific fact is infallible.

On the other hand, should belief be based upon one's religious faith? Is so, how could one ever prove the validity of one faith over another? Are not religious beliefs, both institutionally and individually, continually evolving? If they are not, are people still to

believe that Zeus throw's thunderbolts? There is of course, reason to believe in a divine being that establishes absolute standards of right and wrong. Without such a belief, all could become relative and there might be no absolute criterion of right and wrong, good or bad, ethical or unethical because it would always eventually be up to individual relative interpretation. I.e., why shall I not murder, why shall I not steal, etc., especially when there are such obvious short-term advantages for me? Only with an immutable, universal, omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient figure could these laws be absolute. But the question then becomes, "Whose God?" Specifically because of this reason, the argument for the universality and immutability of ethical standards must be made independently of one's belief or non-belief in a supreme entity. This universality and immutability will be discussed further in section of Part III later in this treatise.

VALUES vs. ETHICS

Part I established that value systems are based upon one's individual beliefs. How then, can an individual be any more assured of the veracity and validity of their values, than of their beliefs? Because of one's beliefs, people often mistake their individual or even their societal values as infallible. Moreover, because of one's placement of worth on these values, one often does not even consider another's point of view or the possibility of another's position; particularly if that other point of view is contrary to one's own. Values then are changeable, vulnerable to the affects of time and location, and because of one's own self-interest in them, can suffer extensively from biases of which one may not even be aware. (Bazerman, 2002) It is a simple thing to demonstrate this concept of the malleability of values by bringing attention to the different values apparent during an individual's maturation process, or how people's values can differ in various cultures or temporal settings. Ergo, values cannot be the immutable basis for the ultimate factor in deciding whether a choice was ethical.

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MORALS vs. ETHICS

Unfortunately, the problem of unreliability only continues to exacerbate itself as we continue to evolve this train of thought; groupthink, peer pressure, and other forms of societal coercion require us to accept a “herd mentality”. To succeed in most human communities, one quickly learns that he or she must conform to certain minimum standards including moral standards. According to many accepted definitions, when these standards are “good” the community will prosper; when these standards are “bad” the community will deteriorate. The problem is in the selection of who gets to decide whether a society is actually prospering or degenerating. Against what or whose standards should the society be judged? This paper has demonstrated that morals are nothing more than societal normalized values, and has shown that values cannot be trusted as an infallible measuring stick. How is one to know when morals are “good” and when they are “bad”? What then is the standard against which our morals should be measured?

LAWS vs. ETHICS

One possible answer to the question of how to ensure an ideal ethical society is to design one with an enforceable set of rules, i.e., laws. This ideal society might be based upon any of a myriad of differing governing principles. Many great philosophers such as Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, Spinoza, Jefferson, et al., posited a ideal society based upon democratic principles.

However as history has repeatedly demonstrated, democracies are not free from problems, and in fact there are unique difficulties inherent in democracy. E.g., democracy has been described rightly as two wolves and one lamb deciding on what is for dinner. Many democratic societies, as well as other types, that existed and seemingly succeeded did so all the while through the suppression of their non-citizen or minority communities. Their apparent prosperity was accomplished through numerous means, usually via some type of subjugation of the

non-citizen or minority people. Examples of this are the maltreatment of the non-English communities on the British Isles, Indigenous Americans by European Settlers, and subjugated peoples of colonized Africa by European imperialists. Many societies that continue to succeed today can credit their success to the oppressive behaviors of their predecessors. This is not to say that the other forms of society, autocracies, theologies, oligarchies, or tyrannies are free from similar problems, far from it. Internal ethnic and racial disputes, disagreements over limited resources, et al., all cause internal and external difficulties that are oft times settled by the threat of or the actual use of force. Even in those nations that boast of the equality between the classes, e.g., communist countries, one finds, as George Orwell so poignantly wrote, “all...are equal, but some...are more equal than others”.

According to James O’Toole’s book, *The Executive’s Compass*, even today democracies continue to exist on a precarious counter-balance; perched between the principles of liberty, efficiency, equality, and community. Based on O’Toole’s *Executive’s Compass*, there is no such thing as a perfect society as there must be continuous tradeoffs between the four principles mentioned above. This is not to say that laws cannot be ethical, but unfortunately, there is no assurance of this. There are no guarantees that laws created by societies will be ethically written or enforced, and there are just too many examples of unethical laws throughout history, the revised Commandment 7 of Orwell’s *Animal House*, “some...are more equal than others”, being one excellent literary example.

IMMUTABLE ETHICAL STANDARDS

Is it realistic in an ever-changing environment to expect something to remain constant? But, how can constancy be relative? As with the Jim Crow laws of the post-reconstruction Dixie-south, it is imperative to understand that even if legal, what was once unethical remains unethical now and in the future. What will be unethical in the future is unethical today and

was unethical in the past; even if we can not fully understand why.

It is essential to comprehend that if in the future something is discovered to be unethical that had at one time in the past assumed to be ethical, it is only because of one of the following reasons. First, man (individually or collectively) has grown to the point where he now understands the truth. Second, man (individually or collectively) deliberately and with malice aforethought had decided to act unethically. After additional consideration, a third and fourth proposition, subsets of the first should also be presented. Third, man (individually or collectively) was afraid to act ethically because of potential consequences; and fourth, man (individually or collectively) acted unethically in error. Misunderstanding whether something is unethical or not does not change the fact as to whether it actually is, just as truly believing that the sun rotates around the earth does not make it so.

PART III – DISCUSSION

RELATIVISM

If it were true that ethics are only relative, what would one use as the standard to determine right from wrong? One can attempt to use democratic principles to attempt to measure standards of behavior, but this can present the danger of making ethics nothing more than a popularity contest. Just because a majority of people think that something is right does not necessarily make it so. It must be remembered that Adolf Hitler and his Nazi government were democratically elected, and that a definition of democracy can be two wolves and one sheep voting on what is on the menu for dinner.

To argue the position opposite that of ethical absolutism, i.e., moral relativism, means that both by definition and by implication all behaviors can be ethically and morally equal due to the fact that they would be based only upon individual belief and values. Based on this view, there could be no definitive basis for valuing one behavioral system over another's -

- other than individual choice. This would lead to an unacceptable condition, and as history repeatedly demonstrates would eventually lead to chaos and the threat of, or the actual use of, force to impose one individual's or society's beliefs and values over another's.

RIGHT and WRONG

According to the definition presented earlier in this paper, ethics are absolute, non-temporal, and immutable. This is an ambitious statement, and must be defended to have validity and veracity. Ethics is the branch of axiology that attempts to understand the nature of morality, defining right from wrong. The word right implies righteousness and uprightness, being in accord with what is just, good, and proper. Right also implies conformance to the facts or truth, being correct. Truth is a non-negotiable precept, something is either true or it is not. Wrong has the meaning of doing something that is immoral, or unethical; an injurious, unfair, or unjust act. Wrong also implies the falling short of a standard, or positing an opinion that does not agree with the truth. Something is either the truth or it is not; something cannot simultaneously be both true and false.

Many of us, were raised under the assumption that good (right) will always triumph over evil (wrong). John Wayne in the white hat always trounced the villain, and Flash Gordon always vanquished Ming the Merciless. Well, there was a reason that it was called fiction. In an academic setting students were asked who would win in a capitalistic contest, an ethical or an unethical company. The rest of the class adamantly claimed that the ethical company would win the contest (largely based on the argument of consumer choice and fair business trade laws). I argued that the unethical company would destroy the ethical one before the ethical company knew what hit them. Suppose there are two soccer teams, the PNcwOs a.k.a. "Plays Nice with Others", and the WaACos (pronounced Whackos) a.k.a. "Wins at Any Costs". The unethical WaACos do not have to follow the rules; but just in case, they have either bribed, blackmailed, coerced, or otherwise "own" the

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referees. And if it really comes down to it, the WaACos have the ability to terminate “with extreme prejudice” anyone who objects. Can one really think that the ethical PNcwOs stand a chance of winning? Therefore, it is incumbent upon those readers who would advocate an ethical world to do whatever they can (ethically of course) to prevent the unethical from dominating. As Edmund Burke posited, and unfortunately as history has proven repeatedly to be true, “the only thing necessary for the forces of evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.” (This dictum is significant and will be mentioned again later in this paper.)

SEARCHING for the ROOT CAUSE

What does one do now that they understand that their beliefs, values, morals, and laws may not be in line with ethical behaviors? First, he or she must recognize what might be the causes of their unethical behaviors. Second, the individual must understand how these vices manifest themselves. Once they do these two things, they can then develop a plan on how best to act proactively in order to prevent future unethical behavior.

This treatise has taken the initiative to use a concept called the “Seven Deadly Sins” to explain the causes of unethical behaviors. The premise here is that although unethical behaviors can occur by accident (acts of omission), they more often than not occur through deliberate acts (acts of commission), and will be discussed more fully in the next section of this paper. To paraphrase the reason for unethical behavior from Part I, Immutable Ethical Standards Section, unethical behavior only occurs due to; not knowing, knowing but not caring, or knowing but being coerced into those behaviors. The difficulty with trying to create a universal system is trying to find a methodology that everyone can accept and use, i.e., an approach that is not exclusionary to any specific group of people on a religious, racial, ethnic, or other basis.

A discussion of the potential root causes that affect the reasons for unethical behavior is now in order. In turn, these root

causes are concepts that are equated with right and wrong. Theoretically, if people can avoid these root causes and conduct ourselves by doing the corresponding ethical (virtuous) behaviors they can eliminate, or more realistically at least reduce their unethical behavior. Note the **bold-faced** words used in the following paragraphs of this section, they were **bolded** in order to highlight the intrusive, venomous, invective, and infective nature of the “seven deadly sins” especially when used to the excessive, as opposed to “all things in moderation”.

Pride is an **inordinate** self-esteem and conceit that displays itself in **overly** conceited or disdainful behavior that leads to the scorn of others. It leads to the worst of competitive behavior, the types of conflicts that result in win-lose scenarios. On the other hand, humility, whose etymology is from the Latin *humus* earth; implies not being overly proud or haughty behavior. Humility lends itself to seeing ourselves as we actually are and not comparing ourselves to others. Humility does not mean having to surrender one’s own beliefs, but it does lend itself to looking for win-win situations, especially if both parties have humility entering into negotiations.

It is important here to discuss the differences between competition and conflict in relation to win-win and win-lose scenarios. The word competition implies rivalry, opposition, contest, and struggle with the possibility of win-win results. The etymology of the word competition is from the Latin *competere* meaning; to strive in common, to come together, to agree, or to seek. Competition can be friendly, with the contestants thereof working together at the conclusion of the competition. An excellent example of this type of competition is the competing of several contractors for a U.S. Department of Defense contract. After the “bidding-wars” are completed and the prime contractor has been named, often there is a collaborative effort of all of the previous competitors working together under a common banner in support of that same contract. On the other hand, conflict implies a clash, battle, fight, or war, with their inherent win-lose outcomes. Conflict results in enmity even after

the conflict itself has been concluded. The etymology of the word conflict is also from Latin, but this time implies the striking of blows. When problems and issues are not resolved in a timely manner but are allowed to accumulate, grow, and fester; resolution frequently comes through the process of conflict. When this happens, resolution may finally be achieved, but often it is achieved at a horrific price. Examples of conflict can be seen in the plethora of wars that have been fought throughout history, a notable example being that period of European history beginning with the Hundred Years War and culminating with World War II. Moreover, whether the issues or problems which set off the conflict were actually ever finally resolved by the conflict is in itself an open question. A study of World War I, which was known also as “The War to End All Wars” but was followed by World War II, can be used as a proof text of this point.

Avarice or greed is the **excessive** and **insatiable** desire for gain and winning often in the fields of wealth or power, always at the **expense of others**. Often this vice expresses itself as **winning at all costs**, leading to win-lose scenarios. Alternatively, generosity denotes a lofty and courageous spirit that demonstrates nobility of feeling and generosity of mind, not being offended if others get the credit or praise, giving without having expectations of the other person. Similarly to humility, generosity in no manner suggests the surrender of one’s own beliefs, but it does lend itself to finding win-win situations, especially if both parties are willing to be generous.

Envy, jealousy, and covetousness are synonyms that connote a **resentful** awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another, combined with an **unhealthy** desire to possess that same advantage. They also imply **intolerance** of any rivalry or unfaithfulness; being predisposed to suspect rivalry or unfaithfulness. There is also a feeling of **hostility** towards a rival or one believed to enjoy an advantage, feeling an **inordinate** desire for what belongs to another. Conversely, love (*agape* and *philos*, as opposed to *eros*) actively and altruistically seeks the good in others. Love of this nature

always and actively seeks win-win opportunities.

Wrath and anger imply strong **vengeful** anger and indignation, often revealing themselves as a consequence of envy, jealousy, and covetousness. As such, wrath and anger are not a priori causes, and therefore will not be discussed in as much detail as the other causes. In contrast, kindness implies a sympathetic or helpful nature and a forbearing nature, using a gentleness that arises from sympathy and empathy. As such, kindness just like love, always and actively, seeks the win-win opportunities.

Lust comes from the Latin *lascivus* and presages **wanton, undisciplined, unruly, mean, and cruel** behavior. Lust often is a consequence of avarice or envy. Conversely, self control holds lustful and wanton behaviors in check, preventing the consequential unethical behaviors.

Gluttony is the act of **habitually** greedy and **excessive** indulgence. The word glutton’s etymology is from the Latin *gluttire*, to swallow and *gula*, the throat. Gluttony implies selfish and impulsive acts made **without forethought or consideration** of other’s needs. Gluttony is in direct opposition to love, kindness, and self-control in that it does not look for the win-win scenarios. Faith and temperance are subsets of love, kindness and self-control because they take other’s rights and needs into consideration before acting.

Sloth is the disinclination to action or labor, and is usually demonstratable as **apathy, inactivity, complacency**, and an inclination to laziness. This type of behavior becomes a problem and a root cause of unethical behavior when it prevents or inhibits the concern for others due to one’s own indolence. The topics of indolence and indifference will be addressed more fully in the next section concerning omission and commission. In contrast, zeal is the eagerness and ardent interest in pursuit of something. In this case, the somethings are the attributes of humility, generosity, love, kindness, self-control, faith and temperance, and zeal itself.

Through the rigorous discipline of the avoidance of the “seven deadly sins”, and the

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equally rigorous application of their opposing virtues, humankind may be able to eliminate or at least reduce the amount of unethical behavior exhibited daily. Otherwise, humanity shall be limited to continuing to react to unethical acts rather than being proactive in their prevention. This would be akin to a medical doctor who only treats disease reactively, instead of taking advantage of the proactive measures of immunizations, vaccinations, and other forms of preventative medicine.

It is the contention of this paper that even without attempting to alter another's beliefs and values, one can reach the commonality of universal and immutable ethics. In addition, the ability to avoid win-lose situations in favor of finding win-win scenarios eliminates a major source of unethical behavior. This does not seem to be too lofty a goal, or one out of reach for mankind; all this would require is the avoidance of greed and excessive pride. Also, similarly to how a medical doctor would prefer to have the knowledge to be able to prevent an illness rather than cure it after the fact, practitioners of ethics in general and business ethics in particular should prefer to discover the root causes so that an outbreak of unethical behavior can be prevented before it occurs.

OMISSION, COMISSION, and COLLUSION

Commission denotes a deliberate planning and carrying out of a specific or general plan. Individuals who commit unethical acts through commission have thought about and planned their unethical acts prior to executing them. It then becomes incumbent upon all of us who believe in ethical behavior to proceed with a two-pronged offensive to overcome this cause of unethical behavior. First, those that profess to behave ethically must overcome their tendency towards indifference. And secondly, they must always be on guard against those who would denigrate and diminish their ability to act ethically. As posited by Edmund Burke so eloquently, "It is imperative to remember, that the only thing necessary for the forces of evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing."

Omission is defined as apathy towards or neglect of one's duty, one of the results of sloth. The word omission comes from omit, having as its root the Latin *omittere*, meaning to disregard, which has close ties with the word indifference. Holocaust survivor and philosopher Elie Wiesel defines indifference as meaning that it makes no difference which choice is made. Concerning indifference Elie Wiesel wrote, "The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference. The opposite of art is not ugliness, it's indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy, it's indifference. And the opposite of life is not death, it's indifference." "Indifference, to me, is the epitome of evil."

Because omission, indifference, and their root cause sloth are so insidious, they can at times be even more dangerous than commission. As mentioned previously, people must always be on our guard against this methodology of perpetrating unethical behavior in ourselves as well as in others. It is not practical to demand or to expect zeal from everyone. Yet at the same time, it does seem realistic for everyone to at least be able to work on overcoming their own sloth; thereby simultaneously decreasing all of humanity's penchant towards indolence and apathy. Individuals like to think that because they are not actively participating in an unethical behavior itself that they are not actually a party to the unethical acts. As Edmund Burke and Elie Weisel would concur, through an individual's indifference and not attempting to prevent the unethical acts, the individual is actually knowingly colluding in the behavior. Somewhere in-between omission and commission is the art of collusion. Collusion is a secret agreement or cooperation especially for an illegal or deceitful purpose, and has the same etymology as the word ludicrous. The point behind revealing this etymology is to recognize that both words relate to amusing or laughably obvious absurdities and incongruities meriting derisive laughter or scorn due to their being absurdly inept, false, or foolish. For examples of real-life collusion and the consequences thereof, it is recommended that the reader view the 1950 movie, "Trial at Nuremberg" starring Spencer Tracy. This movie portrays an excellent

example of the defendant's ludicrous position thinking that their collusion would obscure their guilt. Individuals often collude when they believe it is in their best short-term interests not to fight the system. It is incumbent upon everyone to recognize when they or others are being coerced into collusion either by individuals, an organization, or even by society in general. Knowledge is power; and with this power and some zeal, (or at least the lack of indifference) it is possible to fight this tendency towards collusion.

CAUSE and EFFECT

It is only because ethics, or rather the lack thereof, has been, is, and will continue to be so pervasive in society that it has import. Moral relativism has infested many of current society's institutions due to its being such a popular teaching method of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that moral relativism's ultimate demise is the belief that all behaviors are ethically and morally equal; one's own beliefs versus another's enforceable only through the threat or the actual use of force. Similar to the post-reconstructionist Jim Crow laws, it is often only upon reflection that one becomes aware that certain actions which people first thought were ethical, are in actuality unethical. Ultimately, it is only because unethical behavior always causes harm to others (and often even to one's self) that people are concerned with the subject of ethics, and have the right to demand compliance with universal ethical standards.

The verb humanity is a word that is supposed to demonstrate actions marked by compassion, sympathy, or consideration for others. The word humanity can also be used as noun and is intended to demonstrate characteristics that set human beings apart from the rest of the world. In opposition to humanity, inhumanity is the state of being (or the act of doing) cruel or barbarous (acts). All that this treatise asks is that humans act humanely. Regrettably, as Robert Burn noted so eloquently and accurately, "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn." Unfortunately, and most probably due

to man's finite lifespan, mankind often looks at ramifications only in the short-term. Because of the short-term viewpoint, many individuals and entire societies subscribe to the, "He who dies with the most toys wins" philosophy. Similar to Kohlberg's theory concerning the stages of moral development, to measure the viability of ethical standards and behavior adequately requires a broader, and in this case, a longer-term perspective. A prerequisite to the understanding of ethics' non-temporal attributes is to comprehend that ethics might not be measurable in or by limitations of the four dimensions (X, Y, Z, and time) as we currently understand them. The best perspective to understand ethical universality and immutability is through long-term analysis, not spur of the moment analysis.

This realization of the non-temporal aspect of ethics corresponds to what Baruch Spinoza identified as the third level of knowledge. At the third level, the mind realizes that there is more to the universe than one can see, and no longer views phenomenon (empirical or otherwise) as finite and temporal, but rather it comprehends their essential characteristics under the aspect of eternity. Perhaps Spinoza was harkening back to Socrates' inspirational declaration, "The unexamined life is not worth living".

Part IV – EXAMPLES

BARUCH SPINOZA (1632-1677) and Geometric Analysis

In his epic dissertation, *Ethics*, published posthumously, Spinoza clarifies and justifies his vision of ethics, matter, and the world, from a pantheistic perspective. Through precise geometrical deductive logic, a process derived from Euclidean geometry, Spinoza demonstrated that ethics are both absolute and universal. He established that the validity of ethics could be proved by a systematic approach identical to that of mathematical arguments and proofs, asserting that ethics are based on a geometric model in which his axioms and propositions logically build upon each other and are mutually supportive. By using this approach, he proved that ethical

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truths have the same progression and precision, and eternal validity and veracity as mathematical truths.

Based on Spinoza's work (i.e., his geometric proof of the universality of ethics) and the observable reality of mankind's recorded empirical history, it appears that humankind seems to be on an ethical journey. That is, ethics is an absolute and although ethical behavior might be considered by some to be a final destination, ethical behavior can also be considered as the journey. As a rational being, every time one chooses to act ethically as opposed to unethically they take another step towards that ultimate destination of ethical perfection. By corollary, every time one chooses not to act ethically, or elects to contribute to unethical behavior, they take a step further away from that same ultimate destination.

IMMANUEL KANT (1724-1804) and the Categorical Imperative

The rationale for introducing Immanuel Kant's concepts into this discussion regarding the universality of ethics is twofold. The first is his belief in and defense of a priori logic and the second his concept of the categorical imperative. Kant established a fundamental rational and a priori basis for right and wrong in his writings. Kant's works followed a methodology of using practical reason, based solely upon things about which reason inherently reveals to its users. Kant, as a rationalist, believed in and expanded the ideas of inductive and most especially deductive reasoning. He was able to do this by brilliantly arguing that a prior knowledge actually exists, as opposed to the empiricists who believed that all knowledge must come from either one's own direct or others' indirect experience. Based on his rationalist deductive approach, Kant was able to demonstrate that ethical behavior not only existed, but in fact was required to be, independent of religious belief systems.

Kant demonstrated through precise logic and rational discourse that ethical behavior has its basis in pure reason. Kant posited that there is a single moral obligation,

which he named the Categorical Imperative. It is from this Categorical Imperative that all other ethical obligations originate, and against which all ethical obligations have to be measured. Kant argued that ethics are an inherent principle of reason itself, not based on conditional or changing facts around us, such as one's emotional state. Accordingly, he believed and demonstrated that ethical obligation is both totally rational and universally applicable. Under Kant's test, one cannot treat others based upon how one feels about them as individuals or even based upon the context of a specific time.

Kant incorporated exceptions into universal ethical standards based on his categorical imperative. Exceptions, like the general rule, are universal as well; not just a singular exception based on the whim of an individual at any particular time or place. Lawrence Hinman, Director of the University of San Diego's Value Institute and Center for Ethics in Science and Technology, provides his students the following example concerning this concept. Although it is not normally permissible for a car to speed, one can universalize an exception to this rule for ambulance and fire engine drivers. Kantian ethical universality also requires that a person of duty remains committed to these universal maxims, no matter how difficult things may become personally. This would include the avoidance of collusion discussed earlier, at times requiring a great deal of individual zeal and effort; nor does Kantian ethics allow favoritism, either of which (giving in to pressure or favoritism) would negate the universality and immutability of ethics.

ALBERT EINSTEIN (1879-1955) and the Unified Field Theory

A premise of this paper was to defend that a global ethical standard exists. This universal standard would be similar to what Albert Einstein and other physicists have been looking for since the early 1800s; a universal standard that Einstein called the "Unified Field Theory", and others called the "Theory of Everything". A discussion of Einstein's Unified Field Theory is beyond the scope of this paper,

but the pertinent portion of Einstein’s theorem explains that there are forces in the universe that work with and counteract each other thereby producing a state of dynamic equilibrium. A simplistic illustration of these forces is shown below in Figure 2.

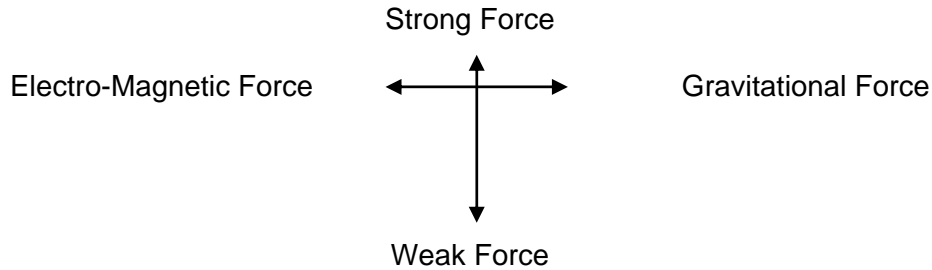


Figure 2 – Einstein’s Unified Field Theory

If one of these forces were suddenly to overpower the others or to disappear, the physical universe would tear itself apart until a state of equilibrium could once again be established.

To James O’Toole, the author of *The Executive’s Compass*, there are ethical counter-point forces that keep the ethical

universe in state of dynamic balance, similar to Einstein’s Unified Field Theory. This dynamic balance, as opposed to a state of static balance allows for movement around the axis. O’Toole described his ethical world in terms of liberty, efficiency, community, and equality. An illustration of O’Toole’s executive compass is shown below in Figure 4.

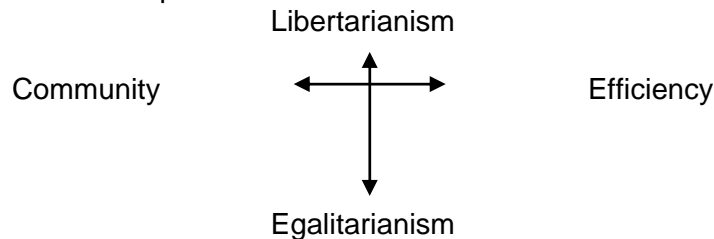


Figure 3 – O’Toole’s Executive’s Compass

O’Toole’s Moral Compass is like a balance working to keep the four forces in a state of dynamic equilibrium. As long as the bubble is close to center no single extreme force is in charge, and the ethical world moves along relatively smoothly, albeit not perfectly. And exactly like Einstein’s model, if any single ethical force were to dominate the compass or not to factor in at all, then the ethical world would enter a state of turmoil until a new dynamic balance was established.

*ABRAHAM MASLOW (1908-1970)
and the Hierarchy of Needs*

According to Maslow, if one has not fulfilled his or her lower level deficiency needs, one cannot move up on the hierarchy scale. Many people know someone, who although not necessarily meeting all of his or her physiological (lowest level) needs has however, found love. And perhaps knows of someone else that although not living in total safety, that has found love and belonging. How many times have people

seen, not the (financially) affluent but the (financially) poor, rise to the highest ethical standards? Not those who live in the fancy gated communities in (physical) safety but those in low-level or ordinary housing, or even the “homeless” who behave more ethically. Not the in-crowd, or the most influential and popular, but the outcast who oft times demonstrates how to behave ethically; e.g., Jesus, Buddha, Gandhi, M.L. King Jr., et al.

It had been my assumption that ethical behaviors would be associated with the top tier of Maslow’s Hierarchy. It appears however, based upon the empirical evidence such as that cited in the previous paragraph, that Maslow’s reasoning concerning the necessity of successful completion of the lower level steps being required prior to moving upward on the scale is not true. Therefore, ethical behavior has to be either able to be associated with one or more of the lower rungs, or based upon observable empirical data Maslow’s thesis is incorrect in this matter. I would suggest that the answer is a combination of the two. First, Maslow is incorrect, people are not stagnant, but are in a state of flux between his defined levels. Second, ethical behavior being universal transcends Maslow’s levels, and is applicable to all peoples, everywhere, and at all times. These answers directly support the concept of a universal and non-temporal ethical standard and structure.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this treatise was three-fold: first, to convince the reader of the immutability of ethics; second, to discuss and define root causes of unethical behavior; and third, to demonstrate the applicability of ethics in today’s scientific world.

By definition we discovered that the concepts of individual beliefs, values, morals, and legal systems are irrelevant in the discussion of ethical universality and immutability. Although these concepts are all a part of ethics, none of them, individually or collectively, can demonstrate nor can they explain adequately the non-temporal and universal uniqueness of ethics. Of all of these concepts, only ethics demonstrates the requisite attributes to be considered both immutable and universal. Through evaluation of some of the theories of Spinoza, Kant, Einstein, and Maslow; we have learned that for ethics to have any value and authority it must be universal and non-temporal, i.e., immutable. If ethics are indeed relativistic, then one person’s opinion is as valid as anyone else’s and there can be no value in them other than that of mob-rule and violence. Therefore, in the argument regarding ethical universality and immutability, individual religious beliefs, values, morals, and laws become irrelevant.

Chris Argyris’s double-loop theory involves learning to change underlying values and assumptions, not just the results. In this paper, a serious attempt was made to avoid the problems associated with single loop learning, which is identified as the reactive approach that many organizations and individuals use regarding ethics. An example of this single loop learning might be that if one does something unethical they will be punished, or if one does something ethical they will be appropriately rewarded. Single loop learning is prevalent in the field of law enforcement, but is used also in areas of moral enforcement, e.g., parents and their children, as well as clergy and their parishioners. Argyris’ double-loop learning theory corroborates Kohlberg’s Moral Maturity Model, in as much as people are trying to act at a higher, more mature level, altruistically, and without the need for immediate gratification.

EPILOGUE

Ultimately, the realization of what it takes to be ethical hinges on only three simple concepts. First, humankind must adapt a longer-range perspective. While people are locked into a short-term mentality such as “the one with the most toys wins”, universal immutable ethics will never be fully established. Ethical maturity requires preventing short-term determinations of what is right or wrong, ethical or unethical. Kohlberg’s Model of Moral Maturity and the Heinz Dilemma are excellent tools to aid in the realization of the pitfalls of short-term vision. Long-range vision may also be a difficult task as the non-temporal aspect of ethics makes this difficult for the casual observer to realize. Second, greed and pride must give way to humility and generosity that actively seek out the win-win scenarios. Only through win-win scenarios and the elimination of greed, hate, and pride will humankind be able and willing to stop long enough to learn the lessons of the advantages of ethics. Universality and immutability actually make ethics easier to understand, as they do not change from location to location, circumstance to circumstances, or from time to time. And third, people must all overcome their tendency towards indifference and sloth. As Elie Wiesel stated, “I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.” If humankind is ever to realize the advanced state of ethics recommended in this paper themselves, then they also must resolve not to be indifferent.

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A Eulogy, a Foil, and a Rebuke: To Whom, in Which Order, and Why?

Fernando M. Pereira Alves

The author wants to thank S. Parker and S. Meisiek for their useful comments. Had the time granted been longer, the integration of their comments would have been ever larger. If some mistakes still persist, the author asks forgiveness, because none of them has been committed intentionally.

Meisiek and Barry's (2007) "Through the looking glass of Organization Theater" article deserves a eulogy.¹ Published in the **Organizational Studies** (OS), this article produced an "analogically mediated inquiry in organizations." In other words, it analyzed the impact of theater, whenever it happened inside organizations. For their work, theatrically speaking, I applaud both authors and say: "Go up and take a curtain call." Naturally, thunderous applauses also came from most Aacorners²-and-OS subscribing readers. Bluntly, I had wanted to be the first to praise.

Even so, I praise them now for their defense of theater, as a managerial tool. For my warm note, let me use the theatrical appreciation signs of contentment, common on reporting such events: most Aacorn people whistled, stamped their feet, and clapped their hands. To make this allegory even more radiant, let me state: applauses toppled the shaky Aacorn-and-OS Theater. To use the ultimate theatrical compliment, let me shout: this theatrical article brought down the Aacorn-and-OS House.

Had I alone a critique to make, however, it would be the following: this article brought down the house, but it did not raise the roof. To be sure, the paper stops short of presenting, as

a foil, the various and vicarious³ theatrical experiments that some Aacorners had tried, for the best part of six years, at the annual conferences of the Academy of Management (AOM). Though a collective work, a few amateur writers and actors (Boje, Ferris, Hansen, Taylor, just to mention a few), all Management and Organization professors who met at the Fringe Café, tried to make theater accepted by the relatively "boring" Academy of Management. Among the participants, boring was a commonly heard adjective. To this little group, theater could be a catalyst or a change agent, by bringing in joy and pleasure.

Poulson, the head figure, usually applied camel case to write AcademyArts", though Bartunek's (2007) preferred "Academy Arts." Suggested in 1995, born in 2000, a few AOM professors used to present art, poetry, theater, paintings, photography, performances, in that "village square." Bartunek described several "learnings" from the experience. In what ways, could have this experience implications for others, interested in the implementation of novel ideas? To her, there were six: (1) how an initial idea evolved over time; (2) how excitement became real; (3) how participants became "too attached" to the idea; (4) how ideas needed appropriate structures to develop; (5) how the original impetus for an idea could eventually be forgotten; and (6) how an innovation might be assessed based on different criteria from the original purpose. Differently from Bartunek' article, I am more interested to cover *terra incognita*.

¹ **Eulogy** takes more the Greek sense of "speaking well" than the Latin sense of "epitaph"; **foil** implies "good contrast to something"; and **rebuke** means "a telling off" as expression of criticism or disapproval.

² **AACORN** stands for Arts, Aesthetics, Creativity, & Organization Research Network, which assembles a few hundred people interested in relating art and management. Initially, most of them were dissidents from the Academy of Management. From the acronym AACORN emerged the noun "aacorner."

³ In medicine, **vicarious** means something occurring in an expected part of the body (for example, menstrual bleeding in the nose, breast, or sweat glands). In organizational context, what was not occurring inside the Academy of Management was expected to occur at the Fringe Café.

Despite their good efforts, as you now know, the experiment unfortunately failed to attain that positive changing purpose at the Academy of Management. Apparently, the argument used by the AOM commissary was: "You had your start, now form a special interest group." Much painstaking and soul-searching then followed. Now, while taking a Southern Comfort sip, let me put the following question: had the same trial happened elsewhere, would the same results recur? Apparently, as the praised article documents, the same unhappy ending happened at least in their similar story: indeed, Meisiek and Barry described a related case study of Organizational Theater in a Northern European hospital. As a foil, as a contrast, however, the same experiment done at the biennial conferences of the Art of Management and Organization has been a success, since its inception. Last year, theater has thrived again during the Fourth Conference at Banff Center, AB, Canada.

The previous paragraphs, devoid of all pretense, reveal two things: (1) that I was also a participant in that same theatrical experiment; (2) that during a 15-year professional career in a big chemical corporation I also tried a couple of times to introduce theater, in its simpler form of stand-up comedy, and also faced the same kind of ambivalent adherence-resistance; and (3) after a three-year experiment, the same results also occurred at the Technical University of Lisbon. From these three different samples of life, I would risk to express the following concerns:

First concern: Acceptance of theater by top management as a managerial tool does not depend on the intrinsic quality of theatrical production.

Second concern: Only flexible organizations are willing to accept the changes induced by inner theatrical production.

Any objective evaluation would confirm that Aacorn authors wrote excellent plays for the Academy of Management. None of the actors behaved in an overly theatrical way.

None gave any avail to easiness, none overreacted, and none was a ham. On stage, among other things, Aacorn players always avoided low-comedy effects. Looking retrospectively, they shunned, by instinct, effects and instruments that, improperly used, could be concessions to lenience. Examples of these gawky effects could have been: (1) farce, (2) stooges, (3) bazookas, (4) slapsticks, (5) barnstormers, (6) Annie Oakley(ies), (7) billingsgate talks, (8) sound-effect machines, or (9) acknowledge-the-corn effects. To make these examples clear, let me explain one at a time.

1. As most of us know, the word **farce** comes from Latin *farciare*, meaning "to stuff." In the Aacorn case, authors evolved from linear to complex stories; in old Rome, however, excessive jokes heavily stuffed the feeble miracle plays. Let me recall one of the Aacorn plays: the good-intended professor paying a visit to a faraway village, located in a very underdeveloped country. He went there with a purpose: to cure the local sick cows, suffering from low-milk production. By misconception of their husbands, local women took the prescribed hormones; thus, women were the ones, not the cows, which gained breast-milk abundance. On the business and economic side, while teaching in Mozambique at bachelor's and master's levels, I came across similar fallacies. On the medicine side, this case could happen even in the most developed countries: how many times have similar malpractices occurred in U.S. or E.U. hospitals?
2. **Stooge** is another term of trade. It designates a comedian's accomplice hidden in the audience. Up to a certain moment, the actor's real identity and purpose remain unknown to the public. Similarly to a pigeon hunter, the stooge usually ties himself to a captive seat; at

critical moments, his function is to raise hell during the play, thus making the public laugh. In theater, he imitates a captive pigeon, well seated on a “stool,” in front of a net. In real life, the tamed pigeon helps capture wild pigeons, for later sale or supper in the market. With invisible strings attached to the pigeons’ wings, now and again the hunter makes the wings flap. Eventually, the bird’s flapping wings will entice passenger pigeons into the net. Thus, by elision, stool pigeon became stooge. Another allusion also exists, this time to the metal industry: a stooge is a tool used by jewelers, to set off precious stones. Alas, the AOM theatrical experiment could have been for Meisiek and Barry their philosophical missing gemstone. Because it takes two to tango, I wonder why they have forgotten to do so. As a foil, why have they not remembered the Acorn experiment at the Academy of Management to check their article’s results? Those, who were so well enabled to look “Through the Looking Glass,” should perhaps have gained a better view of the other side of the organizations’ mirror.

3. **Bazooka** comes from the combination of two Dutch words: *bazu*, meaning trumpet, and *kazoo*, taking its name from the same word. In the 1930s and 1940s, Bob Burns created a variant form of kazoo similar to a long-sounding horn. With this quasi-instrument, Burns sang and vibrated a little strip of paper, thus making people laugh. In contrast, Acorners never were neither comedians nor vaudeville performers. They were well-trained professors,

who wanted to make the Academy think and laugh.

4. Acorners also abhorred **slapsticks**. In the same way as the Spanish *castañolas*, two loosely fastened sticks, wielded as a club, make a loud slap. To produce laughter, some low comedians often spank each other with this device. In the Chinese theater, the orchestra uses similar devices to produce even more dramatic and surprising effects. In none of their plays, however, have Acorners lowered themselves to the point of using slapsticks, even for the sake of getting an easy sado-masochistic giggle. Still, the Academy finished their *gustoso* interplay.
5. By reason of their ranting and storming, actors have long been called **stormers**. In the early years of theater, there were not enough playhouses to hold all the troupes of players that toured England. Poor troupes, wandering far afield, often played in barns. Hence, these players got the name of **barnstormers**. For a good cause, while trying to make the Academy more exciting at their annual meetings, eventually Acorners became “hotelstormers.” Even so, they have done it differently from so many politicians, who often tap dance their way out of much more difficult situations.
6. Because free passes were commonly punched, thus becoming full of holes, such a theater ticket was often called an **Annie Oakley** pass. Indeed, Annie was a famous rifle shot. As a part of her act, she used to shoot holes in a playing card, held by a courageous assistant. In contrast, Acorners never gave away free passes to gain an audience. Moreover, likely or unlikely Annie Oakley,

Aacorner never killed any assistant.

7. In their plays, Aacorner never had dialogues in coarse, abusive, **billingsgate talk**. About two centuries ago, Thomas Bowdler's (1807) **Family Shakespeare** removed, from the Bard's works, all improper words to any family's ears. Without "bowdlerizing," the Aacorn playwrights employed expressions that were of common use in any corporation. From its beginning, it was clean grassroots production. Even so, the AOM excommunicated the Aacorn authors and players "by bell, book, and candle." In the 8th century, the Catholic Church introduced this ceremony, which was no doubt a very theatrical rite, even recently suggested in Brazil. After reading the sentence, the old ritual imposed that the Holy Church cardinal rang a bell, closed a book, and extinguished a candle. With no rites, however, the Academy of Management disclaimed *urbi et orbi* all the theatrical Aacorner, as entertainers, from her divine worship ceremonies.
8. For his play **Appius and Virginia** (1709), John Dennis, an English critic and playwright, devised a thunder machine. His play was a failure, but his **sound-effect machine** became a hit. Later, when others pirated his thunder effect during a performance of **Macbeth**, Dennis used to complain that someone had stolen him "his thunder." From this incident, it emerged the old English expression "to steal one's thunder." In spite of this, most Aacorner are ready to swear, by heavens, that they have never stolen any sound-effect machine, not even a time machine, much less a fax machine, from any plot, from any player, from any author.
9. Finally, let me remember an old English expression, **acknowledge the corn**. As most of you know, this expression denotes "no" acknowledgement at all. In this particular case, to acknowledge the corn means no acknowledgement of the Aacorner. The AOM high ranks barred the low ranks from trying to introduce theater as a management tool. In this context, the expression "higher ranks" means the commissary responsible for the decision of closing the Fringe Café. "Lower ranks" means anybody lower than him. In a way, he upstaged the Aacorner. Apropos, here is an old American story. Once upon a time, a farmer bought two flatboats. To make his fortune at the market, he loaded one boat with corn and the other with potatoes. For the travel and amusement expenses, he also carried some little money with him. Then he sailed down the Mississippi River towards New Orleans. Upon arrival, while looking for a resting house, he stopped at a casino--the House of the Rising Sun?--where he gambled and lost not only his money but also his boatloads. Returning to the wharf, he found to his greater despair that, in the meantime, a sudden twister had sunk the flatboat full of corn. Eventually, he met with the holder of his gambling promissory notes, who demanded immediate delivery of the produce. The farmer shrewdly said: "I acknowledge the corn, but the potatoes you can't have." His line was a wise

crack, since the corn was at the bottom of the river.

Aacorners had a similar reaction to the “acknowledge-the-corn” attitude, when they moved from AOM conferences to “Art of Management” conferences. The year before Katrina, one of the Aacorn funniest plays happened in the Big Easy. A year later, after Honolulu, as if in a blow-after-blow sequence, the Academy of Management gave to AcademyArts, and its Aacorn members, the painful “no” acknowledgement-at-all attitude. As actors say in their theatrical lingo, the Academy of Management “sat on its hands.” Since then, despite the good memories from complacent audiences, it has not been easy for all theatrical Aacorners to deal with the AOM rejection. How can any former participant forget this?

Before Meisiek and Barry’s paper, a kind of Foucault’s pendulum seemed to follow its natural from-right-to-left swing: the boring AOM, the less boring EGOS, the never-to-be-forgotten AcademyArts, the unforgettable Fringe Café, the Aacorn brethren, the ad hoc Art of Management. After Meisiek and Barry’s paper, the pendulum began to follow its contrived from-left-to-right swing: Art of Management, Aacorn, the not-yet reborn Fringe Café, the not-yet resurrected AcademyArts, the semi-rigid EGOS and, finally, the rigid AOM. In a two-dimensional world, this could be the metaphor. Yet the world is a three-dimensional entity. Thus one has to wait longer, to see the results of a 360°-full circle. For the sake of the 3D-metaphor, it takes roughly 33 months. To regain the political forces within the Academy of Management, apparently nobody can shorten this long time span.

With the pendulum getting close to EGOS, Meisiek and Barry tried a new equilibrium at a midway point. Yet, inspired in Taylor’s *finale* for his Paris’ Art of Management play, the question that matters here is about **Ties That Bind**. If this were the criterion, then here is a fair balance: for a rebuke, an AOM tie; for a foil, an Art-of-Man tie; for a eulogy, an Aacorn tie.

So far, only a flexible organization, such as Art of Management, has been willing to accept the changes induced by inner theatrical production. Sooner than expected, any

inflexible structure, such the Academy of Management, rejects any imaginative creation, as a menace to its power structure. In this type of situation, participants are forced to become more flexible, while looking for smaller compliant organizations, similar to Fringe Café or AcademyArts. In the medium term, not all individuals have come to terms with rejection. Despite a good evening encounter, the morning-after syndrome still keeps some of them, looking for a subrogate limbo--the latent Aacorn network. Most Aacorners even try a bigger womb, namely, the Art-of-Man biennial conferences. However, biennial conferences are perhaps a too long period to wait. As a result, they are now trying the EGOS annual conferences. After all, Aacorners are active people and like to write a paper each year.

In 2004, I played a *bona fide* character called Rasheed during the AOM annual meeting in New Orleans. Since then, my philosophical touchstone for critical moments of life has been: once Rasheed, why not always Rasheed? In my mind, the revival of this character still occurs a few times over a year. Mentally, I play him either in his home village or in any other world’s Big Easy. In accord with the international current issues, Rasheed was exuberant, ecumenical, and environmental. For giving me such an interesting travel companion, this article is a thank-you note to all the Aacorners who wrote and interpreted such a witty, waggish, humorous play.

As a large theatrical gesture, here is a give-back proposal. For the “animation” of us all, let us revive Rasheed. To do that, resist making him a Phoenix revival sign or a David-versus-Goliath symbol. Simply, develop its legacy or legend, as a character tolerant to any professor’s ambiguity. In certain aspects, Rasheed was clumsy, but you have to understand that he was born with two left feet. Consequently, forget me as Rasheed’s first amateur actor. Sometimes, actors have to play other characters, even villain characters, such as Iago. As the Foucault’s pendulum keeps moving back towards the AOM initial point, Rasheed could become more than an icon or an idol—perhaps an idealized mental picture, an **imago**.

Thus, do not ask Rasheed do the impossible, like walking over waters, crossing the beach spearhead, and knocking daringly at the

AOM gates. If the gates do not open wide, let him simply write on the wall his discontentment: "There is a connection, even if feeble, between Management and Organizational Theater." As an external observer might have said, perhaps there are potential political concerns of the AOM group that provide resistance to these plays. Like an Amish believer, the plainest is the strongest. Since long, the public seems to crave for a character who, with no going back, acts in favor of his reputation. As an inspirational metaphor, let him try Verdi's first libertarian line: "Va', pensiero, sull'ali dorate!"

In the meantime, one follow-up question remains: how flexible is EGOS going to be in relation to Aacorners' perspectives? After it became apparent that our two incumbents won their place among the stars, I fear some will tend to jump on the same bandwagon. Some like being in the limelight, some find the public attention flattering. If you asked my position, I would ponder two concurrent arguments. First, while the pendulum swings, I would remember the aphorism: "Never make a decision too early." Second, if the pendulum stops, I would recall the final theatrical trope: "It ain't over till the fat lady sings."

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