ABOUT ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY IN CONOTATIV LANGUAGE

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Abstract

The article intends to put into question the relationship between the organizational identity and identification in the context of changing the paradigms of work. Organizational identity and identification are social constructs that signify the more or less conscious agreement as well as the availability of individuals-organizational members to transfer their physical, cognitive and affective capacity towards an entity called 'organisation'. This is a dynamic process that involves a complex social space and the incidence of multiple-specific variables that, together, make up the organization. The economic globalization and digitization of our time have profoundly altered the default patterns and organizational archetypes. Progressively, the organizational identification erodes as well. The article draws attention on some of the risks linked to the consistency of the organisational entity in the new economic context of postmodern culture.

Keywords: *identification and organizational identity, organization, work patterns.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Organizational identity and identification have a profound impact on organizational conducts, on the functioning of the organization and its performance. The identity of the social issue was originally addressed in relation with the relations between a group and the construction of self-esteem (Mael, Ashforth and 1989; Dutton and Dukerich, 1991[1] Sociological research had highlighted the fact that social identity and self-esteem were, in large part, the result of the interaction between the individual, the organizational members and, in particular, with the group of which he is part. Starting from the individual identity research has expanded on the construction process of organizational identity, so that in the last decades, organizational identity has become a subject of study for both preferred practitioners and the academic world. Numerous disciplines have examined the subject from the perspectives of the various paradigms of research

(marketing, strategic management, organizational and social psychology, Narratology etc.) and personal points of view (Cornelissen, 2002)[2]

Organizational identity means identification of the employees with the organization ' entity ' and organizational identification could answer the question "Who am I in relation to the Organization?" (Pratt, 1998)[3]. "The beauty of the concepts of identity and identification" is that they highlight for the organisation of human action in the organizational environment, said Ashforth (2000). But more than "beauty", the two constructs reflect the perception of the people regarding the organization. On one hand, how members perceive the organizational attributes of the organisation and the Organisation itself for the differences to any other. On the other hand, how identity and organized identification decodes them from any others, external to the Organisation (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991). Otherwise stated, members differ among themselves according to the degree of identification with the organization. As the process of identifying individuals they are amplified to transfer to them the attributes of availing themselves to define the Organization. The most plastic example is that of the students from a rated University among the academic top and those from a University in Romania. Without calling into question the veracity of the state of fact, attributes like "old", "high", "standards", "strong", "credibility" etc. are used for automatic recognition and legitimacy of the graduates from the top University. One person is strongly identified with the organization when (i) the identity of its organizational membership is more than other alternative identities and (ii) when perceiving themselves has many of the features that the person thinks they are defining of the social group, called the Organization.

Identification is a dynamic social construct that relies on knowing the social roles of others, the accepting and the assimilation of the values and purposes of affective attachment to others. After Patchen (1970)[4] organizational identification will be carried out in three dimensions as followed: (i) the feeling of solidarity with others, (ii) support regarding the attitude and behaviour to the Organization and (iii) the understanding of certain characteristics shared with others. For these reasons, the impact of organizational identification means an important aspect in the strategic management of its concerns; inside, it can affect satisfaction and conduct of work for employees, and externally, essentially it determines, the degree of attractiveness and job access, the quality of the employing (Hatch and Schultz, 2000)[5], as well the relations with individuals and groups interested in the functioning of the organization. In conclusion, the strong perception of organizational identification and identity are important variables in achieving all organisational performance (Albert *et al.*, 2000)[6].

II. THE POSTMODERN WORK PLACE ORGANIZATION

We will use the following definition: the organization is the symbolic projection of space and time structures to manage specific societal resources determined according to formal and informal contracts between the company and organisational members. Strictosenso, the organization is an abstraction without any consistency. People brighten these structures, they incorporate the power of the mind and the muscles, they transfer from their personality, they make "corporations". These facts became poignantly visible as they accelerate the process of digitization and the proliferation of the means of production and the management of information. If we accept the sociological definition of the tool as a social relation, then the information is the latest tool as a form of networking the inner-individual, community, institutional, and technological environment. Following the development of information tools was the fact that the organisation of work had restricted the functioning and the operational sphere to two types of structures, which they've named hard and soft systems.

1. The hard system is made up of tangible assets of the Organisation (buildings, equipment, raw materials, materials etc.);
2. The soft system consists of the following subsystems:
   • The symbolic subsystem/frame of reference (*e.g.*, policies).
   • The functional subsystem (departments, teams, groups, and inner-bonding strategies).
   • The imaginary subsystem (*e.g.*, myths, history).

III. WORK PROCESSES IN POSTMODERN ORGANIZATION

The hyper-competition between global markets generated the speed up and shifting from the sequential activity to the one almost simultaneous, which has produced profound changes in all areas of human life and particularly in organized labour. So, "reunions of the increasingly temporary skills", as Toefler calls the organization, (p. 27)[7] are organized for purposes of increasingly temporary in the whole economy. To be competitive organizations in the current corporate world should be very agile and flexible in order to identify and capitalize the opportunities and, in the same measure, very sober in the spending of resources. Environmental constraints, are forcing the Department of human resource management (DMRU), to the permanent reinventing of organizational structures and systematically redesigning to critical programs. Generally speaking, the DMRU objective is creating a sustainable environment for efficiency functions and organizational processes.

On this background, the general objectives of DMRU professionals, in addition to managing the flows of labour force (input-output) are aspiring to :
• The establishment and continuous improve-ment of corporate collaborative environment;
• The development of a strategic plan for establishing and facilitating decisions related to the future development of the Organization;

- Ensuring the maintenance of organizational values and principles, including the common knowledge fund;
- The continuous development of employment skills-starting with the strictly technical and ending with the correlation ones.

In an economy which less than 20% of the business is the creation of physical assets (Block, w. (2001)[8] and the outputs and inputs are measured in bytes, DMRU professionals have the task to identify, to anticipate critical issues and design feasible solutions for resolving them. "Critical issues" of the globalised economy or otherwise said, the "crisis" organisations our times are crossing, are most often related to the layoffs and the consequences of this phenomenon, among the most pressing are: collective memory loss, mentoring, talent management, and leadership, others as well as aging labour force, increasing training, off-shoring and outsourcing, i/emigration etc. All these phenomena, and often the priority and urgency, and take place against the background of three major constraints: increased productivity, cost reduction and loyalty of the employees, especially the "A" rank type. Loyalty means identification and identity. One of the solutions which seems to meet the standards for environmental pressures and the critical issues raised by share ownership, and stakeholders (groups or individuals co-interested from the surrounding environment) is considered to be flexible work.

III. 1. What is flexible work?

"...a significant part of the workforce is made up of employees with a contract, free agents and other people who work at the company A, but are actually employed by the company B." Robert Reich (ex-Minister of labour), "Working but not" Employed", New York Times, 2001. 'Flexible Work ', also called 'flexiwork' in dictionaries or 'flexitime' is a program working model with a variable and pre-established at any location chosen by the employee. Basically, flexible work replaced the variables of the concept "work": important is what you do, not where you do it. Sure, this kind of work is not suitable for all types of professions, but especially those in the computers technology and certain types of services (for example tourism services, e/commerce, employed by the audit offices etc.). Flexible work does not mean full outsourcing of an activity. The employee maintains the virtual and physical connection with the employing company. Although experienced in the early 90s (accredited originators are considered to be two businessmen: William Henning and Wilhelm Haller) old routines of work (timetable, work desks, folders and binders with sheets written command and control, and all other accessories used for longer paths), the lack of an adequate infrastructure and process-shy nature of employers and of employees does not approve the entire development potential yet of the new model. Flexible work is agreed and expressly stimulated in the legislation of many countries. In The U.S. Fair Labour Standards Act". N.p.[9] or Australia, the legislation expressly provides for a balance between work and free time and flexible working practices in excess of 50% of the time. In 2005, the Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom announced that approx. 50% of the employed labour force is working in the flexitime scheme in a private or in the public sector. So now the 2.3 million people – more than 12.8 percent of the active British work force - are working most of the time home; 27% of the active labour force is working part-time; 41% of businesses have their headquarters in the entrepreneur's house; 60% of the new businesses start at home; over 90% of employers say that they offer different types of flexible work and, ultimately, 3 of the 5 new jobs created are atypical (no fixed timetable and without being permanent jobs).[10]

III. 2. The advantages of flexible work

Employers and representative names in social research (Abrams, r. (2000)[11] are appreciating that flexi work has direct effects in a large scale on the following indices:
- The increase on efficiency of work by focusing on results rather than on processes;
- Reduced financial costs both for the firm (*e.g.* operation of premises and utilities) and the employee (*e.g.* travel costs);
- Empowerment and increased responsibilities for the employees;

- Reduction of discrimination (gender-related, role, physical condition, age etc.) and fostering diversity;
- Increasing objectivity and equity in performance evaluation;
- Reducing the pollution;
- Resizing the report work-free time;
- Boosting the satisfaction of employees finalized by their loyalty.

III.3. Particularities in management of human resources engaged in flexi work

Adopting flexible working practices requires far-reaching strategic organizational changes. They shall not be confined to providing technical support and technology but are expanding among the values and the organizational climate, especially on the meaning of organizational identity and identification. In the case of flexible work practically there is a activation of a mutual contract in which trust is a condition sine qua non: companies assume that employees have the option to choose the programme of work, responsibility and self-control of the results and employee fully honours its results and objectives of the activities. Besides, the company is forced to create an organizational environment that facilitates collaboration and innovation, and employees waive the "custom territories"-offices.

Flexible work has new connotations for the concept and practice of management. The company must generate special rules for efficient and effective functionality of virtual teams (*e.g.* changes in programs, processes and algorithms operating just in time), on the one hand, and on the other hand, we must bear in mind to maximize efficiency with regard to inner-relating with stakeholders.

In this context, and due to a exogenous control focused on results, the employee shall manage in semi-autonomous mode his work. Regarding the team, it is important to develop communication protocols and reporting so as to retain its cohesion.

The most managerial shares are transferred to the design of connections and interrelationships between departments and teams. Broadly, the management is focused on the following types of coordinates (Lederer *et al.*,)[12]:
- Data collecting;

- Consultancy;
- The analysis of labour;
- Setting the units of measurement;
- The planning of technological change, planning of networks and communication channels, DMRU policies, others;
- Calculating and reducing costs;
- Evaluation;
- Training.

In the same registry, it considers that flexible work confers a high degree of openness and transparency in the operationalization of partnership roles employee-employer. Both contractual partners are aware of the need to be prompt in the identification and implementation of solutions with greater value added and to accept the unusual ways of doing things and to deliver it.

A special chapter in the employer-employee relationship is planning the employee career development. Achieving a culture of continuous learning is the guarantee of competitiveness in any organization. Flexible work causes the employer to explore new types of training projects and invest in specific service programmes, for acquiring the best practices (benchmarking), sales operations, good correlation etc. in order to align the employee's needs to the company goals.

David Ulrich[13] considers that innovative training process in the Organization has two components, which they named the business establishment services (services business unit) and centre of excellence (centres of excellence). Services business unit covers the following types of activities: basic technical training for local needs, skill development training and transfer of knowledge and consulting services related to performance. The centres of excellence are responsible for the expertise, direction and coordination of organizational resources in order to create the company brand of availableness, development programs of the leadership, managerial succession plans and talent development.

Trends in recent years are increasingly more visible directed towards e-learning. This type of training increases the accessibility and degree of the knowledge transfer, but also decreases the costs and time of formation (Brynjolfsson, 1993; Johannessen *et al.*, 2001).The technology of

information has the merit of extending the whole base of knowledge, from tacit to explicit, from knowledge related to the process of work, the internal inner-bonding to the external aspects, from the individual to the Organization as a whole (Alvesson, M 2000, Dewett& Jones, 2001; Johannessen *et al.*, 2001; Powell & Dent-Micallef, 1997)[14].

From our point of view, as any human action, eălearning has its disadvantages, the main being the loss of contagion motivational-energy of the group and trainers. In addition, the issue of training in organisations, including the online one, needs a new vision. 'Learning' can no longer be designed as a delivery service of cognitive content or actionable models for the members of a public or private economic entities. In a strategic perspective, learning should be managed and integrated with other aspects and elements of the organisational environment and first and foremost, with the qualification of the stakeholders involved. We consider (i) the responsibility of the Organization to qualify potential customers and consumers through information and training sessions to consumer behaviours and benchmarks, as well as (ii) sustaining the training with mentoring and coaching.

What must be emphasized is that, regardless of work patterns adopted by the Organizations – classic or flexible - continuously training is the optimal way of empowering employees and the Organization as a whole, with auto-critical reflection, with shared values and temporal viewing horizons.

PROTOCOLS AND FLEXIBLE PRACTICES

1. The work programme can be: flexible, between certain hours in the morning and afternoon; normed on a daily basis outside of time (*e.g.* 2/3 hours overtime, 2/3 days per week to prolong holidays or the studies vacation); partially-in a number of hours/year; "jobshare" (in which a strict task is divided by one or more employees); career break (sabbatical year), and others. Whatever the program is, this alternates the externalisation of organizational work in physical presence within the company.

2. Flexible space. The most frequently used locations and conditions of work are the following: own house; "flexible work" (*e.g.* at a coffee shop, provided they have access to the internet); wherever necessary (*e.g.* to clients or partners headquarters, in services etc.); inside the company spaces other than an office on its own (*e.g.* conference room, show rooms etc.).

3. Appropriate technology platform: programs-including programs for "meeting", laptop, local area wireless networks, modern telephony (VOIP) and many other acronyms and technical and technological gadgets. But the trend is toward "cloud computing" meaning toward the rental of software and information storage services – as services rented in from third parties in order to cover specific objectives.

From our point of view, flexible work, legislatively supported and stimulated and especially experienced by multinationals, has big opportunities to replace the classic process of labour. This means the dismantling of what empirically and scientifically is associated with the concept of "organization" and, therefore, the interpretation of "human resources" to "straight capital"; employees become productive equipment. The ambiguity of the new organizational roles also extends to the social roles. Who/what is the individual who works at home, in Suceava, for a 'call centre' in Singapore, feeding his child, scheduling his washing machine and so on. There are numerous other socio-psychological aspects of whose configuration and future solutions which are difficult to imagine today. For example: how we will look and operate:

• Social real networks and the cohesion of groups and teams;
• Communication without mixed forms;
• Socialisation and integration of new employees;
• Sense of belonging and loyalty;
• Mentoring and coaching;
• The policies related to the safety and health of employees;
• Organizational culture and climate etc.

A questionable premise associated to flexible work (in the sense that it is at the same time strength and weakness), represents sustainability and social cohesion. Adherents to this model of

human activity appreciate that (i) flexible work expands opportunities for access to the labour market for disadvantaged groups (*e.g.* disabled people, or with family responsibilities in relation to children, the elderly, the sick) and, as a result, (ii) employees can retrieve or take part in voluntary community services. There are problems that have already attracted the attention of analysts and social futurologists (see Nashbit, Toefler, Korten)[15]; widely shared opinion and to which we take part too is that the State should assume the powers for which the company is crediting and financing: social protection for individuals and disadvantaged groups. Sure, flexitime is a plausible occupational substitute for some people who otherwise have insurmountable problems. But encouraging and/or the expansion of the flexible work, such as the optional stage or another experiment to maximize profits, has a too high for the steadfastness of human civilization. This occurs in spite of the results of the studies about teleworking (to reduce greenhouse effect with 51 million tons/year in the US).

In conclusion, probably the present usage of 'organisational identity and organisational identification' will undergo with many avatars – in form and in content. Perhaps that individual and collective benefits delivered by the sciences and new technologies, will annihilate the mental defence shields of our perceptions about the ' natural ' man. This, however, should not diminish the attention required when choosing our own developments and on the degree of our responsibility of hybridization. Under a social deprecated contract (which stipulates the inner-change of transfers and obtaining the legitimacy between parties)-the organization still claims the organisational identification and employees continue to be self-defined by the membership and by the assimilation of attributes of the organisation in which they are members[16].

As a particular aspect of modernisation, flexitime, flexible work and teleworking offer the individual the advantage to choose the optimal scheme of work-free time, as well as the possibility of saving the travel time and related costs. The rational for choosing flexible work for the organization is part of the competitive strategy used for lowering costs: utility, storage space, others and ultimately, the costs of human resource management. Associated hazards of teleworking are much more expensive, however, and the personal and organisational consequences unforeseen in the medium and long term. However, we appreciate that flexible work as experienced now, interferes with the organisational-institutional structures, roles and social values. These are not an ideal *modus vivendi* but they represent our way of being, living and knowing who and what we are.

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