ESSAY

WHERE DID WE COME FROM, WHERE ARE WE GOING? A COLLECTIVE SELF-CRITICISM AND DESIRABLE HORIZONS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL STUDIES IN BRAZIL

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The following texts, versions of those presented at a free session of the Sixth Brazilian Congress of Organizational Studies (CBEO), view collective self-criticism as essential to the evolution of researchers of Organizational Studies (OS), a field that needs to forge desirable horizons for itself. They also invite peers to reflect on our recent trajectory, in particular on: (1) inheritances, contrasts and demarcations regarding OS' parent discipline, Administration; (2) a possibility of growth when we are touched by academic virtue; (3) the challenges and propositions which may arise from a recent editorial experience; and, finally, (4) new work directions for a research group to become more effective and articulate in its teaching, research and outreach actions. In the end, an effort at reflective summary is added.

PRESENTATION

By Marcio Sá

At the Fourth Brazilian Congress of Organizational Studies (CBEO), in Porto Alegre, a debate titled "The Habitus, Rather than the Method, of a 'Political' Researcher" was held which was later published in the *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Organizacionais* (Barros, Sá, Mattos, & Oliveira, 2016). At the Fifth CBEO, the previous debate was extended and inscribed into the title "Political Self-education in Social Research: Lasting Intentions and the Priority of the Local", whose starting point was a simple provocation: researchers are in a permanent (self-)education process. The texts presented were collected and published in the *Teoria e Prática em Administração* journal (Mattos, Barros, Sá, & Costa, 2019) under the same title. My purpose for the above summary was simply to record the trajectory that precedes and enables the debate that took place at the Sixth CBEO and was later adapted for this publication.

Criticizing, in contexts where the adjective "critical" seems to work as a recurrent password or surname, does not sound like an innovative task, even though there are Critiques (well-designed, insightful and inspiring ones) and "critiques" (innocuous replication). With the purpose of going beyond both, this debate starts from the following thought: in order for a young scientific community to mature, it is necessary to practice and encourage the development of its *collective self-critical* capacity.

Self-critical competence does not usually appear openly in academic settings. However, the more a community demonstrates openness to exercises of this nature, i.e., of substantial, radical and public reflection on itself, the more it will deserve recognition as a plural space that welcomes and respects genuine and diverging testimonies – of course, as long as ethical premises

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are observed. It is by means of the freedom to take a stand on collective transformations that we can both look at its recent trajectory in order to learn from our perceived (mis)directions and to outline plans beyond the short term.

The following texts view self-criticism as an essential component for the substantive evolution of a community that recognizes and constitutes itself as a national society of researchers; they also invite peers to reflect on aspects of their/our recent historical trajectory from that perspective. In so doing, their purpose is to expand the discussion up to the scope of the community itself in order to raise and expound a debate about: (1) inheritances, contrasts and demarcations regarding OS' parent discipline, Administration; (2) a possibility of growth when we are touched by academic virtue and the way of life of more experienced peers we work with; (3) the challenges and propositions that may arise from a recent editorial experience; and, finally, (4) new work directions of a research group in its efforts to be more effective and articulate in its teaching, research and outreach actions. After all, we believe that in order for a community – which undertakes to wear the garments of Science – to progress and develop in the best possible way, it must come to terms with the accomplishments and frustrations of its recent past.

In sum, what motivated us to embrace this proposal was the desire to promote a debate about more recent aspects of OS in Brazil and extend our gaze towards the next decade so as to discern horizons. Each participant was given the necessary freedom to render an account with any degree of intimacy about their personal experiences as they saw fit. But, beyond rhetoric, we came together to discuss ideas about and for ourselves. At the end of the original presentations, an effort at reflective summary was added.

FRIENDSHIP AS THE FUTURE

By Rafael Alcadipani

The origins

Any appreciation about Organizational Studies (OS) in Brazil will necessarily be a partial account from the perspective of its renderer. Therefore, my appreciation of our field of knowledge makes no pretense of being neutral or bearing the truth about what national OS have been so far. This text is a reflection on what I have perceived during my 20-year career in the field.

There is no consensual definition as to what OS are; to me, OS are research and academic reflections that analyze the functioning, broadly defined, and the peculiarities of organizations. I believe that their origins in Brazil can be found in the works of Alberto Guerreiro Ramos, Mauricio Tragtenberg and Fernando Prestes Motta. Although Guerreiro Ramos and Tragtenberg had an important part of their careers in departments of Social Sciences, and Prestes Motta also taught at the Faculty of Education of the University of São Paulo, Brazilian OS, as in other countries, gained prominence within Administration schools. In its origins, Brazilian organizational thinking was hardly concerned with conducting empirical studies. An important exception is the work of Liliana Segnini (1988), supervised by Tragtenberg. In her book *A liturgia do poder: Trabalho e disciplina* [The Liturgy of Power: Work and Discipline], she analyzed the mechanisms of power operating at Bradesco [N.T.: Brazil's largest privately held bank.]. I consider this to be one of the classic texts of national OS.

The Malaise in Organizational Studies

The eminently theoretical verve, the strong sociological, reflection-driven inspiration and the lack of concern with managerial applicability have deprived our OS of an easy position within the country's Administration schools. On the one hand, the other areas of Administration, such as Marketing, Finance and Operations, identified with a functional character and the applicability of knowledge, viewed OS with suspicion; on the other hand, the OS themselves felt little identification with what a traditional Administration program is and perceived themselves much more as a form of Social Science.

However, a good part of Brazilian Social Science has always nourished great prejudice about the work developed in Administration. It is as if anyone with an Administration degree were unable to understand the complexity of social thinking and were necessarily pro-market – a great sin in the eyes of Brazilian social thinking. Brazilian Social Sciences, largely insular and provincial in the way they were established and maintained, have never viewed Administration as a field of knowledge they could respect. This adds to the fact that, in OS, until recently, there was minimal commitment to empirically grounded analysis, which drove the field further apart from Administration schools, since some field studies created a stereotyped view of what companies and organizations are, what managers do, etc. More recently, some empirical concern became established, but largely under a labor division logic where the teacher does not collect or analyze data. Many Administration teachers do no research, students do it. In addition, empirical studies are rarely inductive, and the vast majority of them resort to some European thinker and try to

force the empirical material into the explanations provided by that great European theoretical master.

In this context, I consider that Brazilian OS have an identity problem at their root, since while they are not recognized by Brazilian social thinking, they do not feel comfortable within Administration schools either. It is as if OS did not recognize the validity of Administration's functional areas. In other words, OS are in a seriously paradoxical condition in Brazil: they are not recognized by those they want recognition from, and they do not recognize those in the same space as them. Under this logic, an important part of Brazilian OS tends to deny the traditional company and its contemporary variations as an object of analysis, focusing instead on organizational types on the verge of the economic system. This is not a problem in itself. The consequence is that OS talk less and less about the object of the Administration schools they are situated in, which drives them further apart from Administration from a traditional point of view. By no means do I advocate that OS need to produce shallow managerialism, or the closure of the field. On the other hand, we have missed many opportunities to produce in-depth knowledge about the complexity of traditional and emerging capitalist organizations. The lack of an empirical concern following a rigorous methodology means that many analyses are superficial and do not take into account the complexity of organizations.

In addition, the OS area has always been filled with conflicts. Disputes one can hardly know why and to what end, between critics, institutionalists, behaviorists, symbolists, and so on, mark the trajectory of our field. These almost childish disputes of meaningless egotism, also characteristic of Brazilian Social Science, have caused coexistence at public debates in the field to be, at times, marked by a symbolic violence that, in my view, inhibits new talents. There is also another inconsistency: some study power and commit abuse of power. Some study culture and disrespect different cultures. Some self-declared critical researchers practice exactly what they criticize. Some researchers study diversity but do not show the slightest respect for diversity in their daily practice.

Moreover, although OS try to present themselves as different from other areas, there are OS researchers who practice overt academic productivism, which weakens the field. One last aspect worth highlighting is that it has been and still is very common for "researchers" in our area to be more concerned with engaging in political disputes in the academic field, with pursuing positions of power in program boards, development agencies and deans' and provosts' offices at public and private universities, and with creating journals and holding editorial positions at them, to the detriment of consolidating a solid research career. Finally, and unfortunately, many from the new generations can be seen repeating what they saw as a model in the previous generations, and some figures that should be role models for the young seem to act rather with their liver than with reason, spreading bitterness everywhere. A serious problem here is the strong endogeny of our educational institutions, which means that graduate students find employment at the same institution as their supervisors, who often hold a sort of academic vassalage over them. National OS come close to Brazilian Social Science by adopting inconsistency between theory and practice, by getting caught up in spurious power struggles and by settling down in endogenic inertia. As I reread this session, I believe I conducted a somewhat negative analysis of our area so far. Nevertheless, I believe the future of OS in Brazil is very promising.

What is our future?

First of all, I can see that we are finally talking about many of our problems, thus bringing reflectiveness into the field. We owe this, to a large extent, to the organization of women researchers and the emergence of black people to positions of visibility in OS, who help think of the established practices and open the "Pandora's box" of the inconsistent and violent ones. Of course, the rancidity of those who always seek positions of power tries to hinder the emergence of the diverse in the field, but the strength of the future is much greater than the resentment of the past.

In addition, the current changes in our society towards being more attentive to diversity, and the dramatic changes organizations are undergoing due to changes in the social and technological order, place our field in a position to have a lot to contribute to thinking and reflecting about the future of organizations in our country. For this task, OS are well equipped with concepts and can develop research that raises important questions and outlines answers for a society in which the challenges are greater and greater. The current context calls for the kind of reflection that can be done in OS.

The generation that is gradually assuming positions of power in the field has, in my view, a greater sense of friendship and respect than the previous ones and seeks to open avenues for new ways of thinking and acting. The future construction of OS in Brazil depends on strengthening the feeling of being a friend, rather than a competitor, in order to generate catalyzed collaboration in times such as these. It is also important that teachers in the field take on their role as researchers and not just as managers of students' research.

It is necessary to think of an OS area that seeks dialogue with academic communities abroad, towards both South and North. International exposition is essential for exchanging experiences and innovation.

Finally, it is important for us to have people who, by their daily example, make us better. Today, in our field, we have numerous inspiring figures and many others that I believe can help to build our OS. There are also many students I have met at so many congresses in Brazil that personify the change we need. These are figures that make me believe in a promising future for our area. It is this window of hope that makes me see a better future. May it be so!

IN DEFENSE OF ACADEMIC VIRTUE OR ON A "WAY OF LIFE" FOCUSED ON STUDYING, TALKING AND RESEARCHING

By Ariston Azevedo

> This is necessarily a personal account, but one written in the hope that others, in special those who are beginning independent work, will make it less personal through the facts of their own existence. (Mills, 2009, p. 21)

At first glance, perhaps what I am going to say here has more in common with what was discussed at the aforementioned sessions "The Habitus, Rather than the Method, of a 'Political' Researcher" and "Political Self-education in Social Research: Lasting Intentions and the Priority of the Local", held at the Fourth and Fifth CBEO editions, respectively. I say this because after taking stock of "Where Did We Come from, Where Are We Going?", what occurred to me was the desire to talk about "a way of going". If I change the direction of my speech, I do so because I realize the fact that the "way we are going" has revealed a facet, at least in the last 10 years, that is very harmful, and not only to me, I believe, but to many who desire a more vigorous and challenging academic community, and therefore refuse to or show frequent resistance against "playing the game". But I also do so in order to suggest an alternative to the prevailing "way" we are going.

Although we as academics, or would-be academics, have a wide range of functions, such as teaching, studying, researching, outreach, consulting, university management, scientific management, specialist services, etc., our careers are mainly focused on teaching and researching. These two activities summarize our craft, so to speak. And it is exactly here that, in my view, we face a serious problem today: the "way" we are going has caused us to fail to do either well.

We are increasingly moving away from teaching excellence, because by promoting the belief that those who know how to research know how to educate, we virtually cancel the process of didactic-pedagogical training of graduate students in Graduate Programs and Courses (PPGs). In other words, we have insisted too much on training "researchers", to the detriment of training educators. The cultivation of pedagogical illiteracy that prevails in PPGs, especially in Administration, is inadmissible, since, as Paulo Freire (2013) and Pedro Demo (1997) have pointed out, teaching requires research, but we must not forget that what is at stake in education practice is human education, i.e., the challenge, through the educational process, to educate and be educated as human beings. Thus, teaching requires a different type of knowledge that the graduate student, for the correct exercise of educational practice, needs to master.

We are also moving away from excellence in research as philosophical-scientific-technological research practices submit to the imperatives of a homogenizing instrumental rationality, thus eliminating the complexities and diversity of scientific practice to make them fit into a single assembly line aimed at indiscriminate production of papers. This elimination deprives students of a conscious, critical, autonomous, creative and responsible education committed to the development of knowledge just to offer them the role of a swift, alienated producer who, albeit fully equipped for the formalistic or ceremonial handling of theories and methods, almost always produces papers detached from any long-term research or study project, which is one of the reasons why we are rather consumers than producers of theory.

Apparently, this is not my view only, since these facts have long been denounced. In 2006, for example, upon finding that Administration PPGs' curricula and educational practices emphasized "the training of researchers" over "the training of teachers", Fischer (2006) proposed a change in course to counter this situation: PPGs should create "a strand of research, a program, or at least an activity that promote reflection on teaching and learning in Administration" (pp. 193-194) (emphasis in original). One cannot deny that PPGs have been making efforts to alleviate the problem. Since then, teacher training activities for graduate students have proliferated, such as: teaching internships, the co-supervision of students in undergraduate, Master's and even Ph.D. programs, article evaluation for congresses and journals, classes requiring

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presentations, flexibility in scholarship rules so as to allow graduate students to teach, class sharing in graduate programs, among others. Nevertheless, nearly a decade after Fischer's diagnosis (2006), the problem still echoed in the words of analysts like Patrus and Lima (2014): "graduate programs are primarily aimed at training researchers and clearly distant from pedagogical training" (p. 6). Two years later, the accusation would come up again in Lourenço, Lima and Narciso (2016), in the following terms: in administration graduate programs, the pedagogical dimension is "a forgotten dimension" (p. 708). Except for a few initiatives here and there, on the whole, almost nothing has changed.

Having abandoned teacher training in our postgraduate programs, it is worth inquiring about the training of researchers. One of the aspects that stand out – and is the result of this exclusivist education process – is the fact that we have reached such high levels of paper production that we refer to the results of our activities as academic productivism. Let us not forget that there is much controversy about what counts as academic output. The productivism we attribute to ourselves and is required of us concerns only the number of articles; it does not necessarily concern readings, studies, research, talks, article evaluations, participation in examination committees, congresses, supervision, teaching, university management, etc. In other words, it does not cover other activities we carry out, also in excess. In fact, in his semantic analysis of names ending in "ism", Barbosa (2014) highlights those words that receive the suffix "ism" and carry the meaning of a pathology (p. 84). To me, this seems to be exactly the case with our productivism, which is pathological and one-dimensional.

Making the formalistic, alienated production of papers the focus of researcher training created this dysfunction. Among its external causes are: adopting managerialist views and practices into our daily activities at universities, PPGs, research groups and even in our classes, which has turned teachers and especially researchers into science managers and bureaucrats; increased institutional pressure by funding and control agencies (CAPES, CNPq, Research Foundations); the dramatic increase in co-authoring due to institutional pressure; the distribution of funds through calls for projects, which further encourages competition between researchers and their PPGs. There are also internal causes, such as: a distorted view of academic glory and excellence which associates success with the number of papers published; the unbridled quest for monopoly over themes, objects, theories and methods; the dogmatic scientism that almost always leads to formalism in doing science and to an endless repetition of case studies; the exacerbation of

intellectual vanity that has turned the Lattes Platform into a glamorous catwalk of egos; the use of the "sliced science" tactic to boost one's Lattes curriculum, and so many others.

In analyzing the issue, Mattos (2012) says that the main cause of productivism lies in a kind of "distortion" created by researchers themselves; in other words, it is a direct consequence of the poor quality of our academic output (theses, dissertations and especially papers), since it seeks to "conceal" with scientific formalism "the maturation that research projects have failed to achieve. Thus, productivism becomes the expansion of poor academic output, since with good output, the more, the better" (p. 566). Specifically, Mattos says, the problem is being caused by some types of vicious behaviors that have become customary among us, such as the overuse of indirect citation and misappropriation of ideas, the use of data treatment instruments that allow recurrent replications and similar experiments, the excessive methodological permissiveness granted to the so-called qualitative studies, and the disregard, in texts, for the non-academic reader. Not for no reason, both in relation to congresses and the vast majority of papers we produce, are we faced daily with accusations such as: "weak articles, shallow discussions, lack of conceptual innovation, lack of rigorous arguments, methodologically worthless articles" (Alcadipani, 2011, p. 1175) or "immature, incomplete, 'sliced', repetitive or 'recycled'" texts with evidence of ethically questionable academic conduct (plagiarism, self-plagiarism, undue co-authoring) (Rego, 2014, pp. 340-341).

Although productivism is a recent problem and goes hand in hand with "poor-quality academic output", I do not think that the latter is entirely a consequence of the former. Machado-da-Silva, Cunha and Amboni (1990), in one of the first analytical bibliographic surveys of scientific output in the area of Organizational Studies, had already noticed the problem of poor-quality texts produced during the period from 1985 to 1989. It remained throughout the 1990's, as Bertero, Caldas and Wood (1999) observed, but it has become blatant nowadays. Science, as we know, is a historical-cultural phenomenon, and so is its quality. There will always be good-quality and poor-quality science. What changes is whether it is, in a given period, a rare or common phenomenon as it is today.

Unfortunately, this way of doing science distorts researchers' training by supporting a type of productive sociability founded on ephemeral research with very low scientific and social impacts, where productivism and its corresponding "academic surplus value" proliferate, as well as the annihilation of autonomy of thought, of the plural space of necessary dialogues between ourselves and between us and

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society, and of researchers' commitment to the real problems of their immediate social reality. In my view, the naturalization, in graduate programs, of the contempt for teacher training, on the one hand, and the exaltation of researchers' training in the productivist way, on the other, have become a pathological case among us. We are facing what Ramos (1995), in his criticism of the national sociology of his time, called "pathology of normality": once a given modus operandi settles in a community, certain mental attitudes and their corresponding conducts are assumed to be normal. Thus, its members internalize certain habits by considering them normal, although they are pathogenic, although they are morbid. More recently, other authors have designated this type of behavior as "normosis", which they defined as "a set of norms, concepts, values, stereotypes and habits of thinking or acting, which are approved by consensus or by the majority in a given society and that cause suffering, illness and death. In other words, it is something pathogenic and lethal that is executed without its creators and actors being aware of its pathological nature" (Weil, Leloup, & Crema, 2003, p. 22).

This pathology that affects us distorts the very notions of academy and science as it creates a social consensus that drives the academy to disregard criticism about itself, especially since the main beneficiaries of this widespread illness organize in order to preserve the status quo. Therefore, they form a conservative-reactionary academic stratum that wants to continue to shape the training and working patterns of the young in graduate programs in order to guarantee, by means of quantity, their funds and academic prestige. They do not seek distinction through ideas, but through numbers! Therefore, it seems necessary to offer alternatives.

My proposal is to rehabilitate the didactic-pedagogical training process in PPGs and reshape the current researcher training process in order to enable the consolidation of a virtue specific to the academic way of life – academic virtue. It is a virtue whose main ingredient is what my friend Paulo Grave and I call Conceptual, Methodological and Teleological Rigor (RCMT) and which manifests itself in academic work activities, i.e., studying, talking and researching understood as activities aimed at building knowledge.

This proposal implies changing habit (automatism, routine) for habitus, understood here in the Aristotelian conception. At the Fourth CBEO, habitus was referred to in the Bourdieusian sense; here I speak of habitus as a virtue in the Aristotelian sense: virtue is a habit {habitus} or disposition {hexis} of character that enables its bearer to perform an activity or function perfectly, and therefore perform good deeds (Aristotle, 1999, II, 5, 1106a 14-25). At the Fifth CBEO, "self-education" and

"lasting intentions" were dealt with; here I speak of virtue as a {hexis} disposition that is also self-educative and lasting: the activities developed in accordance with virtue or excellence are "more durable because those who are happy spend their life most readily and most continuously in these; for this seems to be the reason why we do not forget them. The attribute in question, then, will belong to the happy man (...) always, or by preference to everything else, he will be engaged in virtuous action and contemplation" (Aristotle, 1999, 1100b 6-12).

In sum, it is hexis, understood as a stable possession, i.e., lasting as long as possible, that expresses one's autarchy or mastery over oneself so as to be virtuous, or a spoudaios. Thus, spoudaios academicus is one who studies well, talks well and researches well, that is, in accordance with the conceptual, methodological and teleological rigor that his purpose and object require. Sociologist Wright Mills, for example, was clearly aware of the need for this rigor in the training of those who go about the academic (and intellectual) endeavor: "I do not know the full social conditions of the best intellectual workmanship, but certainly surrounding oneself by a circle of people who will listen and talk – and at times they have to be imaginary characters – is one of them." (Mills, 2009, p. 28).

It is opinions such as that of Mills and of people I have worked and still work with, as well as so many others I have read and studied, that led me to affirm that RCMT could be pursued as a quality of the academic, whether of Administration or Organizational Studies. Observance of such rigor is what has marked the incessant quest of those I call spoudaios academicus. They are, in relation to this virtue and its purposes, tireless and bold, which is why they have always fought the pathologies of normality that incessantly affect the academic world.

"ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COUNTER": THE CHALLENGE OF PEER REVIEW IN THE ACADEMIC PUBLISHING PROCESS

By Ariádne Scalfoni Rigo

The invitation to participate in the free session of CBEO 2019 arrived in March. By that time, the decision to leave the editorial board of *Organizações & Sociedade* (*O&S*) was already mature. According to some friends in the academy, that would be a good opportunity for a farewell. Privately, I had doubts about accepting the invitation as it involved asking ourselves where the field of Organizational Studies (OS) is coming from and where it is going

in Brazil. To me, that sounded like one of those analysis sessions (I actually mean psychoanalysis) that are uncomfortable, yet essential for one's self-knowledge and consequent reinvention.

Challenge accepted, I will try here to contribute with what I was tasked with: to present some challenges and propositions from my editorial experience as head of *O&S*. I will make some remarks on the trajectory of the field, but I stress that my contribution in this respect is limited. I will start by contextualizing, since I believe that our main concerns, challenges and propositions originate from the context we have built and in which we live.

The "scientific civilization" and the pain of publishing

Created to protect us and compensate for our individual limitations, our scientific community is at once a source of security and of suffering. Freud (2010) explained the existence of civilization, in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, as a way of limiting individuals' transgressions by submitting them to its norms and rules. Our "scientific civilization" (here we can only think of the field of Administration or, more specifically, OS) is filled with laws, rules and codes that guide our behavior and often impose painful processes, among which is publishing . Yes, the publishing process often hurts. It hurts when it is imposed and meant for compliance with tough performance metrics. Academic productivism, well translated by the phrase 'publish or perish', is violent. From having an idea, to studying it, to writing it down and submitting it to peer appreciation and acceptance, a long and often frustrating process takes place.

Consequences of what we may view as the "policy" of academic productivism are already being discussed in the Brazilian academy of Administration (Freitas, 2007, 2011). The consequences most commonly discussed – and even published – are the mass production of papers of dubious quality (Freitas, 2011), authors' misconduct such as plagiarism and self-plagiarism (Clair, 2015), reviewers' misconduct such as vague reviews and discourteousness (Gondim, 2004), the perverse effects on the health and psyche of researchers under pressure, conflicts and rivalries between co-workers (Rego, 2014), among others. In addition to the consequences laid on researchers' shoulders, the fact is that producing articles to meet targets established by our scientific community produces direct effects on editorial processes. Of course, these effects are not exclusive to the field of Administration, let alone OS, however, some challenges at *O&S* may be related to the field's characteristics.

The apparently impassable challenge of peer review

The pressure to publish in well-reputed journals contributes to "inflate" and "inflame" editorial processes. It "inflates" them by increasing the number of articles. It "inflames" them by making the process more painful. In its almost 26 years of existence, *O&S* has built recognition in the field and, since 2010, it is a Qualis Capes A2-rated journal. Therefore it receives about 400 articles a year, but publishes about 10% of them. These numbers are not higher than those of *RAE*, for example, which is more general in scope and receives almost 1,000 articles per year. But in my view, the theoretical and empirical peculiarities of the OS field make "the whole thing" more complicated.

OS mobilize a number of theories and methodologies in curious realities. Rationalities, temporalities, critical discourse analysis, semiotics, critical theory, bodies, sociomateriality, discourse/image-oriented sociological analysis, silences... Examples of theoretical categories and methodological approaches to understand, for example, circuses, tribes, samba schools, candomblé temples, funeral homes and the unconscious itself. Not rare are the cases where finding reviewers who are willing to tackle authors' theoretical-empirical and methodological "endeavors" becomes a nearly impossible mission.

I have made efforts to identify some pattern in the trajectory of subjects published in *O&S*' hundred-plus published issues (about a thousand articles) by means of keywords and titles. The variety of subjects is immense and portrays well the field's plurality. I found that some subjects were "diluted" along the way (from 1990 to 2019), perhaps due to saturation and consequent disinterest. For example, subjects like organizational culture and power relations in organizations are rarely submitted or appear as secondary categories in the analyses. Others have remained present since the 1990's, such as organizational learning, as well as subjects related to work (meaning and market) and organizational change processes. I was also able to identify some subjects that have become frequent in the last decade. For example, approaches related to all types of discrimination in the organizational environment (such as gender, homophobia and race), those on consumption and consumerism and those related to sustainability and corruption. I know that these approaches do not portray the entire OS field, but they indicate its concern with the course our society is taking.

This plurality of theories, methods and realities investigated in the OS academic output is welcome, but it comes at a price. It further narrows what to me is the main bottleneck in the publishing process: peer review. Where are the peers? They are

few and very busy already. How to find more peers? In Sociology, Psychology and Philosophy, perhaps, though not without facing some prejudice due to the fact that we are "from Administration", which is believed to exist only to make the market work. An interesting alternative is to involve our young PhDs (or even PhD students) in journal evaluation processes. However, if we ignore the need to prepare them better for this task, we will reinforce the well-known problem of opinion quality. We will become poorly trained reviewers with no feeling for the job. Evaluating a scientific article requires more than knowing the theory and the methods. It requires knowing and recognizing one's role as a reviewer and its importance in the process. In OS, evaluating a scientific article also requires knowing the complexity of the field and being open to the multiple possibilities of building knowledge. It requires sensitivity and openness to plurality in research.

Conquering the challenge of peer review: A possibility

It is undoubtedly very important for us to enhance the training activities of our graduate students on all aspects of the review process, as well as on the topics, fields and methods we consider relevant to discuss and publish. Our research groups and curricular routes are the proper contexts for this. In OS, we can dedicate more efforts to a broad training in epistemology and possibilities of qualitative methods and analyses; a type of training that points to the plurality of the field and, of course, teaches how to build constructive opinions. I also believe it is important to continually discuss how to live better in the "scientific civilization" and how to rebuild it.

But institutional mechanisms for valuing the reviewer's work are fundamental. This idea is not new, but no action has been taken in our country yet. As we know, the reviewing of articles in journals has no actual value in the Capes [TN.: Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel] evaluation system. Over the past five years as an editor, I was disturbed to find innumerable opinions that contributed significantly to the improvement of published articles and say nothing to the reviewers but "thank you very much". We know that, at some points in the academic career, these reviews count, but in the publication process, they should count more than some dubious cases of co-authorship.

Of course, building and institutionalizing such a recognition process is not simple. After all, the way the scientific community works has been in place for a very long time, thus making it difficult to imagine significant changes. But they are

possible. To begin with, aspects such as impact factor, Brazil's Qualis journal rating system, and objectiveness of opinion by editors and by the authors themselves could be considered. I believe in this possibility and in its potential to untie the knot of academic publication processes, including shortening the time span from submission to publication. It is essential to recognize that critical appreciation by our peers is what allows us not only to improve the quality of what we publish, but also to enrich our academic trajectories.

ERODING THE IVORY TOWER: THE EXPERIENCE OF NEOS/UFMG

By Luiz Alex Silva Saraiva

Although the term university encompasses great differences as to its concept, it has been known for some time that, as an institution, the university is in crisis around the world. Several discussions suggest its inadequacy as a locus of professional training (Tight, 2010), its conservatism, elitism and limitations in promoting social inclusion and emancipation (Amano & Poole, 2005), its failure to break institutionalized professional hierarchies (Fry, 2015), its lack of dialogue with society (Mamdani, 1993), among other aspects of a complex group of problems in the university.

In part, this is due to an uncertainty about the weight of society and the market on its framework (Fischer, 2001). Although concepts have been developed around society and around meeting social needs, a good part of universities is built and evaluated in function of meeting market demands (Saraiva, 2011), which makes decisions related to curriculum (Fischer, Waiandt, & Silva, 2008), faculty selection, teaching, research, etc, instrumental to those demands. Thus, it is hardly surprising that there is a growing weight of academic managers (Saraiva, Bauer, & Paiva, 2009), who are much more focused on management than on the academy (Costa, Barros, & Saraiva, 2014).

In a peripheral context like Brazil, this lack of definition takes on even more dramatic contours, not only because of the discrepancy between the number of slots in public and private universities, but also because of the concentration of students in private universities, primarily focused on teaching, while public universities, despite the recurring problems of public policy continuity, are stronger in teaching, research and outreach. Given the relevance of public universities in Brazil, I will talk about them in this text from an organizational perspective.

The field of Organizational Studies possibly experiences these issues more acutely than the other subjects in Administration, due, among other aspects, to its predilection for theorization and for the criticism of thoughtless empiricism, which brings it dangerously close to the ivory tower metaphor: an academy with complex, hermetic concepts and practices, resplendent in the distance in all its pomp and glory, but inaccessible to non-academics who wish to approach it. The result is a group that speaks to itself most of the time. With its back turned to society and its needs, this group is condescendingly satisfied in listening to its own voice on topics that it considers relevant, in approaches it deems appropriate, in a minimal context of contact with society.

I intend to briefly report the experience of the Center for Organizational Studies and Society at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (NEOS/UFMG), which has been redesigning its configuration and actions in order to work more effectively in terms of teaching, research and outreach with a view to coming actually closer to society. The perspective we have adopted erodes the ivory tower and proposes other ways of creating the university. It is noteworthy that we are not talking about tearing down the tower; that would be pretentious, considering that we are part of a historically established institutionality. However, this should not prevent us from thinking about eroding, weakening, wearing thin what is presented to us as the only possible form of university, in favor of other concepts and practices that are more committed and close to social concerns.

NEO's Scientific Dissemination project (NEOS/FACE/UFMG) (Saraiva, 2018) consists of 17 outreach actions in the Communication core area that systematize, record and promote the group's actions according to the guidelines for outreach in Brazilian higher education (Ordinance No. 7, 2018).

The NEOS/UFMG is organized in Study and Work Groups (GETs) that aim to associate undergraduate and graduate researchers around aggregating topics that combine teaching, research and outreach. There are currently three GETs in place: "Gender, Sexuality and Race", coordinated by Professor Rafael Diogo Pereira, "History, Daily Affairs and Power", coordinated by Professor Alexandre de Pádua Carrieri, and "Cities", coordinated by Professor Luiz Alex Silva Saraiva. There are GETs that hold periodic study meetings to design their practices, others are research-based, and others are organized around outreach.

These GETs have their own sub-coordination bodies in charge of organizing activities, assigning tasks, designing and managing projects. The three sub-coordination bodies include students, in addition to the GET coordinator, who reports to a management group whose purpose is to plan, organize and monitor all processes related to teaching, research, outreach and university management carried out within the scope of the Center. This group works under the supervision of a general coordinator in charge of the academic management of the group. The group's outreach actions are:

- maintaining the NEOS blog, which announces and provides online registration for society-oriented events, reporting activities and meetings held by the various GETs, and recording general information;

- the NEOS newsletter and annual activity report, which publishes information on academic activities related to individual or collective research;

- the NEOS YouTube channel: a free digital, public collection of events held by the Center;

- internal communication: a formal communication channel between the coordination body and its members, which centralizes the entire flow of communication;

- DeConstructions: a set of debates that aim to promote discussions of interest to researchers and of social interest. The event is free, and attendees are awarded a certificate; the hours count as complementary activity time for undergraduate students;

- Research results: public, free disclosure of results of the work carried out by NEOS researchers to society;

- Farol – Revista de Estudos Organizacionais e Sociedade: a scientific journal published every fourth month by the NEOS/UFMG which aims to contribute for Organizational Studies from a non-functionalist perspective;

- NEOS methodological workshops: at these workshops, theoretical concepts and content are addressed by faculty with recognized experience and expertise in the topics covered, as a means to expand the theoretical-methodological repertoire of the group's members;

- NEOS Facebook page;

- NEOS talk circles: these allow informal discussions with guests who approach issues that are innovative and challenging to the group's researchers;

- NEOS institutional website: it presents in general terms the Center for Organizational Studies and Society and its positions in relation to the community;

- NEOS general meeting: it brings together all NEOS researchers around an agenda concerning strategic aspects and challenges to the group;

- GET on Cities meeting: it problematizes knowledge about the relationship between Cities and Organizational Studies;

- GET on Gender, Sexuality and Race meeting: it problematizes knowledge about the relationship between Gender, Sexuality and Race and Organizational Studies;

- GET on History, Daily Affairs and Power meeting: it problematizes knowledge about the relationship between History, Daily Affairs and Power and Organizational Studies

All these face-to-face activities are announced through social media, free and open to the public, and attendees are awarded a certificate including the number of hours of activity time.

The GET on Gender, Sexuality and Race develops an outreach work with the Tina Martins Shelter for Women which involves management support and a partnership with the shelter's design course where the sheltered women make objects they can sell, thus generating jobs and income for themselves. This activity is officially recognized by the UFMG Human Rights Network.

The outreach actions of the GET on History, Daily Affairs and Power take place around the project "Governance of Water Resources: Analyzing the Profile and the Training Process of Representatives for State Water Resources Councils and River Basin Committees", funded by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES). The project has conducted dozens of actions for the training of agents to deal with the issue of water in society. There are two doctoral theses in progress, and numerous actions combined with teaching, mainly in undergraduate programs.

The GET on "Cities" develops the outreach program "Exchange of Knowledge, Valuing and Visibility for the Identity and Culture of Quilombo Luizes" which conducts a series of training actions, debates and talk circles. These activities have provided the foundation for two elective courses in the graduate program, namely "Differences and Territorialities in the City" and "Territorialities and Differences in the City" (total of 45 hours), in the first semester of 2018. These courses, in combination with

the outreach experience and research data, were the starting point for the elective course "Differences and Territoriality in Cities" (total of 60 hours) in the undergraduate program in Administration, in the second semester of 2018. In addition to the evident gains for the faculty and graduate students involved, there was an extraordinary feedback by undergraduate students, who had not had the experience of elective courses based on the research-outreach combination. The same occurred in 2019, though with a different focus. Since there are three black women in the group who are from the outskirts of Belo Horizonte, the elective course "Organization, Territoriality and Blackness" (60 hours) problematizes the silence about the racial issue in the training of administrators based on discussions about "baile funk" parties, favelas, urban quilombo communities and African Brazilian carnival bands. All of these activities have also generated dissertations and doctoral theses.

This account makes no pretense of guiding anyone, since, within the same institutional context, the university can be understood, conceived of and implemented in very different ways. However, I believe it is important to make a successful experience public. Our trajectory suggests that creativity and organization can change the face of a research group and make it increasingly concerned with the social relevance of its concepts and practices. This seems to us to be the way to erode the ivory tower, i.e., by making the university actually oriented to society, its true reason for existence.

AN EFFORT AT SUMMARY AND QUESTIONS

By Marcio Sá

I could not begin this effort to highlight some of the points addressed by my dear colleagues without reiterating what I did when the aforementioned table was opened, that is, to affirm the personal affection and professional respect I nourish for each of them. As I reread them to prepare this attempt at a "closure", I was happy to see again that, each in their own way, they were all successful in personally and professionally engaging in the initially proposed discussion; I am grateful to them for that too.

What may add more strength to what was said that afternoon is the spirit of what we sought to inscribe in the terms "collective self-criticism" and "desirable horizons". After all, we were willing to explain what we think about the dimensions of a collectivity of which we are part and for which we desire a better future. In addition, we were also driven the shared belief that exposing ideas with freedom, intellectual honesty and respect

for opposing views is a healthy academic practice that we wish to cultivate.

Rafael was firm in reiterating aspects of his (self-)critical stance on the trajectory of the field in which he was immersed and through which he constituted himself professionally over the last two decades, but he also sought to sow hope by highlighting bonds of affection that he believes are growing stronger among some of us, after all, this can be contagious. On the one hand, "friendship as the future" can work as a motivation to overcome the historical "malaise" in national OS; on the other hand, it can be the relational ballast that allows joint constructions and glimpses of potentially more fruitful horizons. But I wonder how far we are from it. Do we really need this feeling to build a healthy and prosperous atmosphere for the field? Perhaps a first step for this is to sow cooperation, but how germinate it in such a competitive time-space?

Ariston summarized his reading of "productivism" and proceeded to present an original proposal for the training of teachers and researchers in the area, i.e., "to enable the consolidation of a virtue specific to the academic way of life" among us. In his thesis, the rigors (conceptual, methodological and teleological) and the activities (study, talk and research) in which the former should manifest themselves could set us on a good path in terms of training and knowledge-building. The challenge I can see in the proposal is collective, the (re) incorporation of social practices more suitable to an academy with a more explicit virtuousness, and intimate, the (re) conversion of beliefs that are internalized and encouraged by the "new economic ideology of science" (Serva , 2017). Here, I confess my hope is smaller than I would have liked, but the recurrent manifestation among peers of dissatisfaction with the prevailing modus operandi works as encouragement. If many are not satisfied with what they see or experience in the training of teachers and researchers in our graduate programs, perhaps dimensions and practices that are more substantive to the profession can be reframed in terms of the 21st century. But are we willing to do so? I do not believe the majority can come to act with 'yes', but I do not doubt that it is possible for each of us if we are inspired by our spoudaios. The ones I had were a minority, but even today they are significant to me, both at times which require major decisions and in the pursuit for reducing the inconsistency between convictions and daily practices.

After years at the O&S editorial office, Ariádne has amassed a set of experiences that allow her to carry out analyses and present proposals in the area of peer review from the perspective of those "on the other side of the counter". The issue of training and virtue in our profession also reverberates here, since there is no systematic training for this function among us who "learn it by doing it". In addition, the non-virtuous performance of such a critical role in the scientific publishing market has caused pain to and left marks on many of us. The proposal to increase the valuing of the work of those willing to play this role with fairness, seriousness and respect for others is relevant and could echo among those who occupy decision-making positions at the national level. A fairer and more generous accreditation system for those who dedicate time to exercising this activity with quality can help reduce the productivist drive that has been shown to be harmful in several aspects and levels of analysis.

When one of the main research groups in the subarea, if not the main one, proposes to erode the "tower" in which it also raised itself, and conducts teaching, research and outreach actions directed to the social problems in this part of the world in which we live, we realize how much self-criticism and horizons can strengthen each other. What Luiz Alex proposes and the initiatives already underway in the NEOS can reverberate among several other groups (formal or not) throughout Brazil, that is, NEOS can also be at the forefront in terms of a greater involvement of national OS with urgent social and organizational issues. In other words, perhaps by pursuing a greater engagement in social and organizational change we can devise and plan more effective meanings for our teaching and research practices combined with outreach. However, just as the incorporation and practice of publish or perish take a toll, so will the turn in the direction pointed out by NEOS, it is impossible not to reiterate the question: who among us will be willing to do so?

The answers are up to each of us. What I allow myself to say, finally, is that at least some of us are questioning ourselves, devising alternatives and giving us reasons for hope. I end by mentioning two pleasures, namely to bring together Rafael, Ariston, Ariádne and Luiz Alex in a debate, and to summarize and reflect on their opinions, initiatives and proposals.

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