

Artículo de investigación

Towards an alternative understanding of communities in practice

На пути к альтернативному пониманию сообществ в практике

Hacia un entendimiento alternativo de las comunidades en la práctica

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Ghazi Ben Saad ¹³⁶**Abstract**

Despite the valuable contribution of recent debates on the role of communities in the process of intra organizational coordination, especially those related to communities of practice, several questions remain settled and relegated to an outer edge. Particularly, we will be discussing weather communities can clear up the mechanism of selection of emergent rules and practices within an individualistic paradigm: can the individual be matched with communities and hence repositioned in the issue of intra organizational coordination? We also pose the possibility of conceiving firms as a corps of interconnected communities of struggle through which we aim at enhancing a thermodynamic vision of interactions that take place within and between distinct communities. Our discussion will be firstly built on Nietzsche's critiques of Identity with regard to the development of affirmation of rationality and difference, and secondly on Bourdieu's explorations of the roles and impact of struggles on the process of social distinction within groups interacting at both cognitive and practical branches. The background of the paper is above all an apology of sociocognitive distance. Our main findings pertain to the necessity of getting rid of a rosy conceptualization of social communities by emphasizing the role of their history and social traditions in their organizational performance where they cannot be efficient or effective unless they remain heterogeneous and enhance their members distinctiveness.

Key Words: Social Communities, Organization, individualistic paradigm, Sociocognitive interactions, intra-community.

Аннотация

Несмотря на ценный вклад недавних дебатов о роли сообществ в процессе внутриорганизационной координации, особенно связанных с практическими сообществами, некоторые вопросы остаются нерешенными и отодвигаются на задний план. В частности, мы будем обсуждать, могут ли метеорологические сообщества прояснить механизм выбора возникающих правил и практик в рамках индивидуалистической парадигмы: можно ли сопоставить индивида с сообществами и, следовательно, изменить положение в вопросе внутриорганизационной координации? Мы также представляем возможность представить фирмы как корпус взаимосвязанных сообществ борьбы, посредством которых мы стремимся улучшить термодинамическое видение взаимодействий, которые происходят внутри и между различными сообществами. Наша дискуссия будет, во-первых, построена на критических оценках Ницше идентичности в отношении развития утверждения рациональности и различий, а во-вторых, на исследованиях Бурдьё роли и влияния борьбы на процесс социального различия в группах, взаимодействующих как в когнитивной, так и в практической областях. , Основа статьи - это прежде всего извинение за социокогнитивную дистанцию. Наши основные выводы касаются необходимости избавления от радужной концептуализации социальных сообществ путем акцентирования роли их истории и социальных традиций в их организационной деятельности, где они не могут быть эффективными или действенными, если они не остаются разнородными и не повышают индивидуальность своих членов.

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Ключевые слова: социальные сообщества, организация, индивидуалистическая парадигма, социокогнитивные взаимодействия, внутриобщность.

Resumen

A pesar de la valiosa contribución de los recientes debates sobre el papel de las comunidades en el proceso de coordinación intraorganizacional, especialmente las relacionadas con las comunidades de práctica, varias preguntas permanecen resueltas y relegadas a un borde externo. Particularmente, discutiremos que las comunidades climáticas pueden aclarar el mecanismo de selección de reglas y prácticas emergentes dentro de un paradigma individualista: ¿puede el individuo ser emparejado con las comunidades y, por lo tanto, reposicionarse en el tema de la coordinación intraorganizacional? También planteamos la posibilidad de concebir a las empresas como un cuerpo de comunidades de lucha interconectadas a través de las cuales aspiramos a mejorar una visión termodinámica de las interacciones que tienen lugar dentro y entre comunidades distintas. Nuestra discusión se basará en primer lugar en las críticas de Identidad de Nietzsche con respecto al desarrollo de la afirmación de la racionalidad y la diferencia, y en segundo lugar en las exploraciones de Bourdieu de los roles y el impacto de las luchas en el proceso de distinción social dentro de los grupos que interactúan en las ramas cognitivas y prácticas. El antecedente del trabajo es sobre todo una disculpa de distancia sociocognitiva. Nuestros principales hallazgos se refieren a la necesidad de deshacerse de una conceptualización optimista de las comunidades sociales al enfatizar el papel de su historia y tradiciones sociales en su desempeño organizacional donde no pueden ser eficientes o efectivos a menos que sigan siendo heterogéneos y mejoren el carácter distintivo de sus miembros.

Palabras clave: Comunidades sociales, organización, paradigma individualista, interacciones sociocognitivas, intracomunitarias.

Introduction

Edith Penrose (1959) identifies two major theoretical paradigms: “core” and “network” which she actually sees as promising leads to future debates on the theory of the firm. She notices that;

"It is clear that this type of organization (i.e., based on core and business network) is likely to continue to spread for some time..., and may call for a new theory of the firm in Economics and changed views about the behavior of markets and the effects of 'free market' competition".

The combination of core and network has been already carried out, for example within the models of the internationalization process of firm (Johanson and Mattsson, 1988; Johanson and Vahlne, 1990; Mattsson, 1997), actually on the basis of Penrose's (1959) works, but since then, the so-called combination has been extended to an intra-organization level which is more valuable indeed. If the role of capabilities and core competencies, in the shaping the process of the growth of the firm, is not questionable any more, their analysis cannot be however fruitful unless we conceive firms as network of social communities. Actually with the advent of a

knowledge-based economy, we cannot dissociate knowledge from the place where it emerges or from the specific characteristics of the types of interactions related to the diverse activities and practices that take place within each community.

Scholars are increasingly recognizing knowledge and learning as well as, and may be above all, communities and networks as strategic imperatives of organizations. For instance, the illustration of the firm as social communities, epistemic communities (Cowan et al., 2000), communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger 1990; Brown and Duguid, 1991), Knowledge-intensive communities (Cohendet and Diani, 2003; Cohendet et al., 2004) shows this. The firm as a nexus of social communities has become today one of major ideas that increasingly capture the attention of recent organizations. These latter should be regarded as a whole set of tightly- interconnected assets of sociocognitive resources where resources owned by a single social community are, in a less or more way, dependent on those owned by other communities. Each community's effectiveness, too, is closely affected by those achieved by the others. This interconnection keeps with Wenger's (1999) call for the need to enhance the dynamism of the community through the

conceptualization of the organization as a constellation of interconnected communities of practice.

It is now well established that communities of practice are important to the functioning of any organization but mostly they become crucial to those that recognize knowledge as a key asset (Wenger, 1999). A brief definition of communities of practice can be illustrated with respect to John Seely Brown's¹³⁷ description that they are;

"peers in the execution of real work. What holds them together is common sense of purpose and a real need to know what each other knows".

People in the community are defined through the knowledge they generate which in turn gives them value that goes beyond any task or project-oriented considerations. Communities of practice are in short the ideal place where people can learn the best. For it is indisputable that works debating on communities of practice have been a great advancement to the theory of the (growth of) firm, we will not be dealing essentially with their contributions. Rather, we aim at bringing a new look to communities of practice that remediates to the rosy picture with which these latter are presented. We actually attempt to relieve some lacunas that once we clarify them, and add to the present literature, we would better understand intra-organizational interactions starting from those involving members of a single community to those putting together different communities.

The background of this paper is an apology of (the need and benefits of) distance within and between communities i.e. between individuals, between individuals and the community, between communities, between communities and the organizations. If both autonomy and obedience are necessary to the functioning of communities, a better matching between them can be achieved, however, though a less rosy structure of intra- and inter-communities interactions. The starting point consists of questioning how much suitable is the idea of building life, interactions and exchanges within and between communities in a rosy manner i.e., on the only basis of voluntary trust, spontaneous cooperation and intrinsic motivation. What we argue for is that especially the first two elements cannot exclusively ensure the compatibility of rules and emergent practices within and between communities. We do not reject the idea of

intrinsic motivation, nor the emergence of tacit knowledge and the benefits we can reach by stressing communities as an efficient form of intra-organizational coordination or in other words, as the focal point upon which issues of coordination can be based. Still, we think that such conceptualization may fail in explaining the mechanism of selection of rules at the individual level where both corporate culture and corporate identity takes primarily their essence. The so-called conceptualization is incomplete and needs to be refined to a certain degree.

Our response can be given through certain main elements, firstly: as long as markets and hierarchies may fail (which has been indeed proved respectively in the transaction costs theory and in the organization competence theory) communities may also fail. Besides, we believe that there is a need to reposition and reconcile the idea of complementarity between communities vis-a-vis their autonomy. A community is not entirely self-governing or self-directed. A community exists for the need to assume an organization sub function and for the purpose to allow other communities to exist and co-evolve. Moreover, we argue that communities cannot reach the status of well-working entities if they lack an external environment favorable to their functioning. They cannot escape from an external regulation, a hierarchical regulation, at least through the institutionalization of the space of their actions and practices. Therefore, a deeper analysis seems ineluctable. Actually, we propose to tackle the issue of relationality in the space of practice both between individuals (intra-community) and between communities (intra-organization). Our discussion about the nature and dynamics of this relationality will be based on the contributions of Nietzsche as well as on those advanced by Pierre Bourdieu. The former part pertains to our will to reconcile Nietzsche's thoughts with methodological individualism. The second part is concerned with entropy and organizational disorder. In short, by raising the issue of space we seek to concentrate on the role of sociocognitive distance within and between communities.

A deeper analysis means concentrating on the role of the individual inside the community. The fact is that as long as the individual owes to the community his accomplishment, the community owes to the individual its existence. In no case the locus of knowledge creation is meant to be displaced from the level of the community to that

¹³⁷ John Seely Brown is a VP and Chief Scientist at Parc Xerox.

of the individual. However the implementation of excessive homogeneity within communities may be helpless since it may cause the dissolution of the individual. Social values are naturally divided into those values that keep a person socially-oriented and those that develop a sense of individuality: man is mainly assumed to reproduce himself by social activities and by exchanging energy as long as he assumes the fact that his "existence" rests, in Shils (1975) sense, on the fact the human beings have a need for personal communion as well as for incorporation into something which transcends their single existence. Then, "the community would signify a unity but is not a unity", which Hayek (1949) manifests through his refusal to accept the silliest of the common misunderstandings: the belief that individualism postulates (or bases its arguments on the assumption of) the existence of isolated or self-contained individuals, instead of starting from men whose whole nature and character is determined by their existence in society.

It is in the individual that we can comprehend the meaning of the community because he transcends this very community and deserves then to be dealt with primarily. Hence, it stands to reason to stress the role of individuals within communities in order to better comprehend the issue of compatibility of individually-selected rules- as well as people's ability to solve problems by their own- and therefore the certainty of coherence of the cognitive and sociocultural identity of the community.

In this perspective, a further proposition is to conceive firms as communities of "noble/symbolic" struggles where "noble" is meant to be the channel of strong and vivid interactions that would introduce an "impressive" character into people's actions which makes them produce or capable of producing an intended result or have a striking effect. "Symbolic", is meant to stress the representatively and image that groups seek to reveal through their actions. It is in fact for this reason that we preferred the use of "struggle" over 'conflict' since we conceive relations between individuals as an energetic act and/ or attempt to achieve something, such as reputation mostly, when conflicts are rather relative to open clashes between two or more opposing groups.

Struggles, moreover, have to do with *Identity*. Kogut and Zander (1996) note that strong identification with an organization increases cooperation among members. Through the engagement in these ongoing practices, members reinforce the value of their shared identity which

further helps them to establish connections and have orientations with each other. However, the same frame of mind may also lead to an organizational form of groupthink with less flexibility around change. Kogut and Zander (1996) note that shared identity also imposes the weighty costs of ruling out alternative way to organize and to exploit new avenues of development.

The design of the paper is as follows. We begin by a brief review of the concept of communities of practice. The next paragraph will be devoted to the analysis of the role of the individual in the issue of intra-organizational coordination. We then examine if the idea of introducing a struggle-based vision to communities can enlighten our approach to their functioning, that is within a single community and between different communities. We argue that struggles appear at both intra and inter-communal levels and are stimulated by some given purposes that go beyond any calculated logic. Authority face to communities of practice will be also briefly discussed.

Literature Review

The famous adage that knowledge is power and in response should be continuously amassed, activated and regenerated, has firstly promoted the idea that knowledge is an unavoidable. It has accordingly given incentives to firms to concentrate on the process of growth of knowledge, cumulative knowledge in Penrose terms. It can be however better understood by studying knowledge creation through communities and networks since this same knowledge cannot be separated from the communities that enable it, create it, cumulate it, use it, share it, transfer it, adjust it, and actualize it.

Towards a reconsideration of the concept of distance

The new representation of the firm, as a nexus of communities, is primarily carried out in the purpose to counter both neo-classical and transactional paradigms that restrain the analysis of organizational coordination and performance to the issue of allocation and optimization of resources, under the assumption of "all resources be given" (specifically cognitive ones), while it is more interesting to extend the analysis to the process of dynamic creation of resources. In the ancient paradigm, the failures of markets in coordinating firm's behavior is remediated only by a hierarchy-based view. As suggested by

Penrose (1959), the so-called new representation represents a radical rethinking of business and economic models. The author notices that;

Another approach has been recently advanced centering on the `culture` of a firm to bind together the self-interest of the members of the firm`s community, from workers to top management. This is put forward as a relatively non-hierarchical form of administrative organization which is referred to as `the new organizational context`. With a philosophical approach very different from opportunism, much emphasis is placed on the possibilities of enhancing trust and co-operation in the administration of the firm as an alternative to contractual ways of guarding against opportunism. It draws heavily (...) on the role of confidence building and responsibility in the social philosophy of the firm.

This issue is in fact rooted in the one Hayek (1949) posed decades ago concerning social coordination in a context of distributed knowledge i.e., the possibility of use of authority as a mechanism of coordination. If Hayek (1949) attacked *authority* by introducing the concept of *spontaneous order*, his works remained unachieved. As a matter of fact, still his ideas are extended today providing some alternative leads (mostly in the realm of the evolutionary theory of the firm and knowledge-based economy) such as routines, common knowledge, knowledge intensive communities and communities of practice. Foss (2002) notices that the majority of recent works on knowledge have a Hayekian flavor.

In this perspective, organization competence theory argues that firms exist and define their scope to ensure that there exists a broad platform of cognitive resources as well as a climate of trust and shared language within the firm (Snyder, 1997) that enables these resources to co-evolve in a dynamic way. This platform also enables disparate members to coordinate, communicate and combine skills information, and other assets in order to achieve performance outcomes (Ghoshal and Moran, 1996; Kogut and Zander, 1996). For instance, with respect to Snyder`s (1997) discussion on `embedded assets` which Williamson (1975) sees as `Impacted firm boundaries form people`s proper evaluation of firm assets. Actually people often identify their responsibilities at the workplace by learning in a personal way that does not necessarily coincide with the one conceived and attributed by the firm and/ or the top hierarchy. We could not ignore that an intrinsic evaluation does procure people a

certain autonomy, a genuine power, however tributary of the degree of trust that unites them as community components, and stimulates them to act in a cooperative mode.

In this perspective, communities of practice, as commonly defined (Wenger, 1990; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Brown and Duguid, 1991) consists of people who are informally as well as contextually bound by a shared interest in learning and applying a common practice. This implies besides that `practice` is as much about learning, i.e., `knowing, according to Cook and Brown`s (1999), as it is about doing, i.e., `knowledge-in-action` in Schon`s (1987) terms. This approach focuses on the processes and context of creation and diffusion of organizational knowledge. It stresses the role of distributed knowledge systems: knowledge is not the property of the individual but is distributed across knowledge system and cognitive communities (Cohendet et al., 2004). Wenger (1999) provides a number of functions that every community of practice is supposed to fulfill with respect to the creation, accumulation and diffusion of knowledge in an organization:

- Each community of practice - that spreads throughout an organization - should be regarded as a *node* for the exchange and interpretation of information as long as a *channel* through which information is disseminated across organizational boundaries.
- Communities of practice can retain knowledge in `living` ways in that they enable the preservation of tacit aspects of knowledge that formal systems cannot capture, which eventually eases the integration of newcomers and asserts for their `practical` involvement and effectiveness.
- The implicit collaborative inquiry, that guides people's interaction inside a single community, makes membership valuable, for people invest their professional identities in being part of a dynamic, forward-looking community.
- As it emerges from the previous point, communities provide homes for identities and if organizations seek to benefit from people's creativity, they must support communities as a way to help them develop their identities. This cannot be however effective if

organizations work with communities of practice from the outside since such approach may be very likely interpreted as a hierarchical manipulation.

Hence, in accordance with these properties, all recent works agree that conceiving the firm as a network of communities has the advantage to unveil and to emphasize the informal aspect of information exchange and knowledge creation Snyder (1997). Intra-organizational boundaries do not correspond to typical geographic or functional boundaries but rather to practice and person-based networks. Communities are, in sum, considered as the ideal organizational entity, i.e., the focal point through which it is fruitful to analyze the cumulative formation of tacit knowledge as well as intra-organizational interactions that shape the process of the growth of the firm. Communities can be thereby considered as an alternative form of organizational coordination, this applies especially when people move beyond routine processes into more complex challenges, because in these moments they are substantially informed by their community of practice as their primary knowledge resource and the primary knowledge source as well. In a deep sense, it is by these communities that knowledge is owned in practice (Wenger, 1999).

Possible failures of communities

After exploring the concept of communities and beyond the valuable contributions of recent works on communities of practice, several related questions remain settled. The first question is to check whether we can imagine *community failing*. Communities, like markets and governments, do not come without limits as argued by Bowles and Gintis (2000) and Cohendet and Diani (2003). Bowles and Gintis (2000) suggest that the tendency for communities to be relatively homogeneous may make it impossible to reap the benefits of economic diversity that results from the complementarities among differing skills and other distinctive inputs. Moreover, the authors discuss 'a less obvious community failure that pertains to the consequences of the composition of a community'. They suggest that where group membership is the result of individual choices rather than group decisions, the composition of groups is likely to be more homogeneous than any of the members would like to expect which in turn deprives people of valued forms of diversity. Amin and Cohendet (2004) notice that;

Government by community (...) does not come without limits. One of the major causes of failures in communities is the risk of parochialism, discrimination, or vengeance on other communities, or incompatibility with the hierarchical imperatives of or organizations.

All these kinds of failures emerge from the fact that communities may turn into a communitarist home, mostly because of lack of distance i.e., diversity and difference within it. In such case, the community is auto-imprisoned in the midst of a set of sociocultural values that extract it from the environment and actors that surround it. Within a zone of hesitation (let it be seen as Vygotsky's zone of proximal development), the group seeks an identity and also attempts confusingly to evolve toward an upper state in order to reach the identity and image it wants to reveal to others. Along this phase, the community— already shattered and overwhelmed — experiences a process of self-identification with a genuine image, charged with conventional values, that forces its distinction from other communities, which eventually leads it to an unavoidable state of conflictual insulation. A double gap is auto-created by community itself, firstly vis-s-vis itself and secondly with regard to the other communities with which it interacts, under a useless and handicapping competition framework. Recent works on virtual communities (Lerner and Tirole, 2001) have actually emphasized how some communities can build a 'procedural authority' such as professional codes of conduct. Lerner and Tirole (2001) argue that in such cases, the behavior of the community or individuals can be often guided by the search for reputation.

As markets substituted nature, so firms partially substituted markets and hierarchies have been supported by communities, then we see no reason why refusing to focus the analysis on individuals inside communities, inside firms and markets. This may be very likely the direction of evolution of Economics. The fact is that if we have focused on communities to resolve some of the problems faced by the firm, then we cannot resolve those faced by communities unless we concentrate on their components, i.e. on individuals since they are the most conscious of the reality that unites them and be nature of knowledge they generate together and use to coordinating and managing their activities (Kashisaz & Mobarak, 2018; Kheirabadi & Mirzaei, 2019; Eslami & Ahmadi, 2019; Jabbari et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, the form of failure with which we are mostly concerned consists principally of excessive levels of homogeneity within

communities. The unique objective we are aiming at in the following paragraph is the emancipation of the individual from and barriers that may overwhelm him with expressions which results are nothing but his sinking and dissolving into something 'common'. It is then our intent to examine how values emerging within communities may transform into a tacit barrier. Tacit obedience can be in fact preserved without any major pain because it implies no force upon the will of each member of the community: when obedience is maintained tacitly, it may stimulate the metamorphosis of communities, however, towards a communitarian order. The passage from community to communitarianism extends Amin and Cohendet's (2004) idea of the emergence of invisible hierarchy or power structure in the division of work and command.

Matching the community with the Individual

If we push to the extreme the present rosy approach to communities, then we would be running to a certain autism and to a lack of social responsiveness or interest in others. Our idea is that communities cannot be conceptualized by ignoring a very likely and pragmatic atmosphere of heterogeneity which seems to be useful not only in exploring the pervasive mechanisms of normalization that continue gaining place (within modern societies) but also in introducing distinctive conceptions of selfhood and individuals as well as of resulting organized practices. In this paragraph, we openly refer to Nietzsche's thoughts concerning the role of the 'social individual' which can be interpreted actually as a way to reconcile the author's position with methodological individualism.

"all unity is unity only as organization and cooperation- just as a human community is a unity- as opposed to an atomistic anarchy as a pattern of domination that signifies a unity but is not a unity".

In other words, we believe that every being- as in the case of the organization- is not a unity of either an atomic or mediated sort, but is rather governed by a nexus of relations of struggle (and often followed by conflicts) in that relationality cannot be affirmed unless distance emerges and is then taken into account. This means that community in which we believe should be conceived as the foundation for various attributes that means that we should not conceive its properties as simply observable and momentarily latent and/or as the cause of the emergence of one single property: variation and diversity within communities is needed for its survival and

metamorphosis; otherwise, there is a chance that a community becomes a 'monologue' that deprives its members from creativity. Must the individual, within communities, be taught to become a function of the ancient community and to ascribe to himself value only as a function?

If the German philosopher esteems that part of people who maintains itself best cannot do unless its members generally share a vital public spirit, due to the similarity of their long-standing and incontrovertible principles (that is, of their common faith that brings good to the subordination of the individual in such way that their character is given solidity, first innately, since the first time they join the community, and later through learning. He adds however that whatever maybe these solidity and long-standing, what is danger in such strong communities, founded on similar, is an increasing inherited mistake and overwhelming constraint that kills individuals creativity and willingness to innovate as well. Despite that communities of practice are in-stored in the purpose to enhance the value of 'personal evaluation' of tasks, responsibilities and practices, still they do protect a climate of less or more credence of obedience that contravenes, in fact, their primary willingness to strengthen a dynamic and evolutionary vision of the firm.

When both obedience and acceptance of obedience prevail through communities, that is when sameness dominates communities at their center as long as at their boundaries, then the expected contributions of communities to the learning process of organization whether, in the sense of Wenger (1999), through the knowledge they develop at their core and through interactions at their boundaries, or in the sense of Cohendet et. al. (2004) through intensive (the qualitative aspect) and frequent (the quantitative aspect) interactions would enable actions to take place and complementarity will be simply found to have already been evaporated.

In sum, so long as the unity that dominates the practical life and the cultural identity of the group is overly support to be, as it is, useful to newcomers, communities may fall in the trap of favoring their preservation at the expense of their up-going. Accordingly, they may also promote a sense of practical conformism at the expense of an individually- oriented sociocognitive freedom and creativity. Communities of practice cannot be, on the other hand, restrictively supposed to function as a whole integrated and self-reliant body, entirely autonomous.

History and tradition of a community – that do shape the identity of the community- should not be both demanding every single member to observe prescriptions without thinking of himself as an individual. Communities cannot therefore be conceptualized as if everything was custom and whoever wanted to deviate or elevate himself above it had to come, to a certain degree, indecent. So, in fine, we reach a certain disapprobation of cutting themselves off from the community, and if they did, they may be very likely treated as destroyers of the spirit and identity of the community. To release someone from a community becomes dangerous, even more injurious for the community than for the individual. The closing idea of this paragraph is that the strength of the community would be relative to the degree of its heterogeneity, dependent on the strength of its members to remain distinct. This same idea is extended in the following paragraph at the inter-community level.

Inter-communities Distance and Struggles

Nietzsche's critiques of identity are useful in the development of affirmation if relationality and difference, both embody inequality in power. Inequality is thereby a dynamic of force and resistance – which can be perceived to be agonistic (Widder, 2000) – that manifests through struggling for effect involving at the same time competition and competitiveness. This means that relations cannot be resolved through a movement to become same: power, struggle and heterogeneity are implicated in all relations as basic components. As argued by Widder (2000), resistance should not be understood in a restrictive sense as a counteraction to force, but mostly as a consequence of the discontinuity in relations of force themselves. Resistance, the author adds, is thereby implicated even in relations that can be characterized as 'cooperative', as with "the noise and struggle of our underworld of utility organs working with and against one another". When removing distance and underestimating variations and possibility of adaptation, a 'globalized' organization is deprived off the power that arises from not conceiving relations in themselves having sense-in-itself. Relations between communities are therefore necessarily unequal, not only domination and submission but also force and resistance, conflicts and struggles.

From Distance to Struggles

One the contrary to theoreticians who prefer to tackle the issue of distinction of classes and

groups through the concept of struggle of classes and groups. Bourdieu (1979) suggests that the problem with empirical researches for example, whether descriptive or explicative, is that scholars accept implicitly or explicitly – a theory that reduces classes or fractions of classes to an ensemble of punctual distribution of properties that pertains to interactions between individuals before or after the battles and the struggles in which these same properties are rooted and through which they have been produced. Such as distinction whether have transfiguration or unrecognizable, cannot exist except through struggles in the purpose of exclusive appropriation of distinctive intrinsic properties and external signs that allow and sustain natural distinction.

Introducing a natural order comes hence to introduce distance, maintain and nurture it in order to divide the space of thinking and practicing into agonistic entities that co-evolve together through exchange and complementarity. This obviously requires a delimitation of frontiers between group in order to enhance their singular identities. It is by this way that groups can expect gaining through exchange without wondering of their human relation stretch out or be deformed. With distance, individual distinctiveness provides people with enough motivation and incentives to cooperate and compete (Bourdieu, 1979).

Communities operate indeed on the basis of distinctiveness and without distance there would be no communities: a community can only gain specification through its relations with other communities, and so removing these other communities would leave nothing at all. In fact, when adapted to the codes that structure their interaction inside their community, i.e. when people are naturally brought to act with respect to a given class of existential conditions, in Bourdieu's sense, that shape their thinking modes, knowledge creation process and practices. Then the emerging knowledge is automatically associated to a distinctive position, thus characterized by a distinctive value, even without any intentional willingness to be distinct. Bourdieu's habitus- the system of long-standing and transportable structured, as active structuring structures that individuals incorporate into the process of socialization – provides them with distinctiveness.

It is in fact through conflicts and for the need of conflict that the principles of division function and when they produce knowledge, concepts, routines and codes, they produce groups, the

same groups that produce them as well as the groups against which they are produced. Furthermore, Bourdieu (1979) suggests that the principle of logic division, the system of grouping, does not exist and cannot be efficient unless it reproduces- in a transfiguration from, with respect to the symbolic logic of the differential (discontinuous) space- distances often in a sequential and continuous way. Systems of grouping would not be, on this account, an interesting decisive stake of struggle if they have not strengthened the existence of groups by bringing on necessary structured representations that enhance the effectiveness of objective mechanisms of grouping. In other words, distance becomes the means that provides structure to the established order. Moreover, at the same level, if we conceive social reality, that links individual experiences, rules and practices, as a whole set of 'report of force', that is because it in stores and translates a whole set of report of senses.

The institutionalization of distance, as suggest by Bourdieu (1979), i.e. towards a reconsideration of the concept of distance, its registration in the durable and tough reality of things and institutions, is coherent with its incorporation, which is in fact the easiest and more certain way for the restoration of a natural background to activity. Activity acquires by this way is a thermodynamic aspect that the French sociologist links to a physicalize vision where distinctiveness and distance are generative of energy; a creative energy, indeed, that denounces what opposes energy as entropy and permits to escape from falling in the trap of homogeneity, conformism and indifference.

Communitarianism

We will be interested here in the concept of identity (and accordingly in the concept of reputation) which we see as the major variable that can be responsible of the metamorphosis of social communities into a communitarian home. The law of identity is not form of knowledge at all. It is only a connection of regulative articles of belief. Identity can be henceforth defined as the distinct personality of a given "body" which is moreover regarded as a persisting entity. Social identity is the (feeling of) identity of a group of individuals as far as they are influenced by their belonging to a group and/ or a culture. Common habits, ideas and routines may actually be clear markers of a shared cultural identity, but essentially it is determined by difference; we feel we belong to a group only by noticing and highlighting differences with other groups and

culture. Individuals actions become then the means that enables them to distinguish other individuals, groups and culture instead of being pleased to be simply distinct. This is how the feeling membership of sharing an identity leads to a process of identification. Membership of a group appears sufficient to make members think that the group is the best of all possible groups for them. Ultimately, it is ethnocentrism that represents the point of view that makes the social group to which a person belongs the center of all things in that person's world, and elevates the group above all other possible groups. The phenomenon can be explained in terms of individual cognitive processes. The group to which a person belongs is known as the in-group; all other groups become then the outgroup. Organizational identity provides a sense of a shared central character and also of distinctiveness. So identity does more than providing a definition and limitation of membership. It also shapes the attribution of self-interested behavior.

By positing identity groups are alas compelled into error and if this permits a favorable internal atmosphere it may also generate a suffocating atmosphere with other groups. Kogut and Zander (1996) note that strong identification with an organization increases cooperation among members and directs additional effort towards organizational tasks contributing to all members. Engaging in these ongoing, global and collective practices, members reinforce the value of their shared identity which furthermore helps them to establish connections with and orientations to each other (Kogut and Zander, 1996; (Willem and Buelens, 2002). Common identification provides the basis for a continues and evolving sense of trusts, cooperation and loyalty which may significantly ease the conduct of complex, complicated and distributed organization tasks. However, it also turns out that identity sharing limits knowledge creation and inter-individual interactions to a same frame of mind based spirit. The same frame of mind may actually lead to an organizational from of groupthink which decidedly generates less flexibility around change. Kogut and Zander (1996) point out that shared identity "also imposes the weighty cost of ruling out alternative way to organize and avenues of development".

As it is enabling, Willem and Buelens (2009) say that it is also inhibiting, "identity becomes organizational groupthink, interacting face to face leads to burnout aligning efforts discourages improvisation, learning by doing is lost through turnover, and supporting participation is

immobilized because of conflicts". Things turn out and if the organization was this train where only one wagon is the leader of all others and where reputation is the targeted destination. Communitarian groups however make reputation possessing an unshakable character, a reputation, that usually enables the enjoyableness of the general consideration whereas, people belonging to such groups feel delighted with fossilized entity. The group therefore sets in a rigidly conventional pattern of behavior, routines, or beliefs.

Social communities make the division of labor the encoding of social knowledge into a structure that defines and coordinates of individual behavior. As outlined by Kogut and Zander (1996), they define therefore the conventions and rules by which individuals coordinate their behavior and decisions making. In such way, communities become the normative territory to which members identify. Accordingly, identification enables and facilitates the process of organizational learning, the social formation and development of values, or of convergent expectations.

Form distance to command: Institutionalized Communities

Let's point out last, but not least, that communities do not exist naturally, nor they appear in a hazardous way. In practice, they are formed, their members are recruited and designated, some goals are assigned in order to be achieved and so forth. Even if the knowledge generated ex post does not correspond to what expected by the hierarchy (which very likely occurs), communities are in a certain way already institutionalized before they even start contributing to the activity of the firm. As long as they last, they remain stick by this status of 'being institutionalized'. This facet figures as a part of the history of any given community and cannot be ignored, so communities have to do with it and do the people who once had established them and allowed their existence. The idea is that communities cannot reach the status of well-working entities if they lack from an external environment favorable to their operational mode at least through the institutionalization of the space of their actions and practices.

As Bourdieu (1979) suggests, the primary perception of social world, beyond any simplistic mechanistic reflection, is always an act of knowledge and recognition that incorporates the external principles that contribute and shape the

construction of the thing that has been built in the community. We cannot therefore separate both the existence of the community and its contribution in producing knowledge as well, from the institutional mechanism that allowed it. Accordingly, we cannot plead for a total autonomy of the community and if we did then it would lose its position and significance. Community should be actually regarded as the finger in the hand; it moves in different ways, almost in an autonomous way, but still cannot be separated from that very hand it belongs to. Hierarchical authority is also unavoidable since it is involved in shaping intra-community dynamics of knowledge creation as long as in affecting the type of interactions between communities. Such authority intervenes through the confrontation of created knowledge and achieved performances by different communities. Authority can intervene in modulating the quantitative and qualitative aspects of interactions within and between the communities (Sadeghpour et al., 2017; Alpeisso et al, 2018; Banam & Mehrazeen, 2016; Tayebiniya & Khorasgani, 2018).

If we refer to Snyder's (1997) piano tail, then we can say that diverse qualifications of piano will subsist as long as individuals are formally or informally allowed to have under limited freedom, and these qualifications will remain hence within communities often in a conflictual way through continuous struggles to survive. Through these conflicts, they do impact people's practices. The intervention, which we hint at here, must be however unsteady in that it must evolve each time situated circumstance are related to the internal or external environment of the organization. The unsteady and discontinuous aspect of hierarchical intervention are explained by Langlois (1993) position that says that transaction costs about which are essentially short term costs, long term ones cannot be hence entirely resolved by the hierarchy.

Conclusion and Discussion

The main focus of this paper was to complement the recent contributions that dealt with the role of social communities in intra-organizational coordination of the firm. We argued that such communities may fail and the community-based analysis must be reinforced and thus paralleled by an analysis that pertains to an individualistic paradigm. Stressing the role of the individuals is regarded as a response to the issue of compatibility of selected rules and emerging practices. While we cannot deal with

compatibility if we lack already from complementarity which precondition is firstly and above all distance. The background of the paper was indeed an apology (the need and benefits of) distance between individuals, between individuals and the community, between communities, and between communities and the organizations. It is through the incorporation of distance that we can enhance both distinction and distinctiveness and interiorize complementarity that the external environment of the organization poses at the level of practice. Distance calls naturally for the thermodynamic vision of interactions that take place within the organization, which we illustrated through the concept of struggle as the combination of cooperation and competition that joins eventually the idea of truces. But at least one central question remains settled at this level: how far is this thermodynamism responsible for the evolution of an organization or in other words, what are the means that an organization must use in order to benefit from this thermodynamism and avoid entropy and loss of organization at the same time? Some would say it cannot because organizational coordination, as in the case of every decision, involves wildly both irreversibility and irreversibility.

Beside, this paper opens an interesting debate concerning the transformation of the spirit of communities into a spirit of communitarism. We think it is being promising to explore this point and see how a community can be auto imprisoned and why it runs the chance of conflictual insulation. A starting point consists of tying the issue of communitarism with the concept of identity. In a very simple way, we believe that there are two antagonist modes that yield to construction of identity: the first one, which we qualify as affirmative, consists of building identity following an inside-out schema, while the second, which we qualify as negative, pertains to the opposite schema. In the former case, the identity of the group emerges on the only basis of the internal mental platform shared by the members of the community. The negative construction model is however deductive in that the group assigns to itself the identity which is not shared by others, an outside-in framework. On the basis of this brief discussion, two main questions can be eventually evoked. Primo, are communitarian groups not in fact seeking their identity by rejection of others with which they co-operate? What does it mean for a community to be the same as itself, or be simply the same if it changes constantly?

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