# Eight Propositions Towards New Possibilities of Studying Organizing and Organizations[1]

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## Abstract

The aim of this paper is to discuss the subordination of administrative theories based on market relations, which leads us to a single model of organization, namely the enterprise. This is a theoretical essay which presents eight proposals in order to contribute to management education and research that can promote knowledge building and encourage the acknowledgement of other ways of organizing, while also respecting the historical creation of different contexts. We seek to systematize the criticism from important authors of the social sciences in Brazil, to help create other options for theorizing in management studies.

**Key words**: enterprisation; theorizing; organizational studies; international management; forms of organizing.

## Introduction

As Latin American researchers in the area of organizational studies we have asked ourselves about the capacity of the area to reflect impartially on the production of historically and politically generated knowledge. This reflection is the outcome of problems that arise in the course of studies carried out together with colleagues from different countries.

It is evident to us that there is growing domination in the Administration field (both in Public Administration and Management) on the part of European and North American societies. This concerns the search on the part of Latin America countries for development of, and adhesion to, a modernization process in the context of globalization, mistakenly considered to be the adoption of the practices and theories of the core countries. Similarly, Furtado pointed to the adoption of sophisticated consumption practices without making any progress in the production methods, when he deals with the process of modernization in Brazil (Furtado, 1974). Administration sciences as the disseminator of the ideology of capitalist relations of production appear to have the necessary tools for implementing the **good news** of the world's modernization, which is undergoing transformation of organizations with various historical structures in a hegemonic model; namely that of enterprise efficiency. Administration sciences are, therefore, largely responsible for eliminating other possibilities of organization that are not enterprise-based. These reflections have led us to work towards building other theoretical possibilities.

The majority of the management theories adopted in Latin America in general and Brazil in particular are developed in quite different contexts from that in which we endeavor to apply them. We are experiencing a process of constant copying, together with a feeling of contradiction between the national reality and the ideological prestige of countries that work as our models. Each day we do our utmost to update and **deprovincialize** (Iuliano & Baldassar, 2008) our academic production. This means that in every generation we start from zero, disregarding what the older generation built and striving to follow what core countries have developed. This idea is also a source of concern in the work of Ibarra-Colado (2006), when the author affirms that the development of Organizational Studies in Latin America is marked by its tendency towards falsification and imitation of the knowledge generated in the Center.

Of course we cannot extend our findings to each and every context, but we believe that what we perceive in the Latin American context is not an isolated phenomenon. It therefore seems that reflecting on this fact and looking for ways to build concepts and theories that are able to consider the movement that each society builds historically goes beyond a local concern, and is also important for more economically developed countries. We just need to look at the current moves in the world's management schools toward what we can call **North Americanization**. This does not mean disregarding what is produced in other contexts or preaching naive nationalism, but establishing conversation processes between theories and contexts resulting in the capacity to do what Ramos (1958) calls sociological reduction.

Sociological reduction is a methodical attitude seeking to discover the referential and historical premises of nature, objects and facts of social reality. This implies an attitude that, while using theories originating in other contexts, adapts these theories by transforming them, in order to consider history and local specificities, as well as the power relations implicit therein. This is the only way in which something could be built that is not a botched copy of what researchers in other contexts have built. The arguments which will be discussed in this paper are derived from Guerreiro Ramos' concern. We emphasize the need for sociological reduction, namely the constant questioning of social and political roots of the theories we use, as well as questioning and reflecting on the context in which we seek to use these theories for the construction of authentic management theories.

Why does this appear to us to be an essential task for those who intend to build theories that can

Faria and Guedes (2010) raised in the call for papers of critical international management: a perspective from the Latin American contingent of the 6th International Critical Management Conference. We assume that the issues raised and the positions we adopt are aspects that, as in the area of organizational studies, may be considered a key issue in the area of international management, due to the problem of power relations that are established in the analysis of this area. It seems to us that this is the result of the intense influence of theories constructed in the core countries. Therefore, the dialogue between these two areas that have strong ties and dialogue in different contexts seems adequate for the construction of new theories that address the needs and desires of specific contexts.

Even to begin to try to answer this we must consider that the established management science only presents a possible world, encompassing us in a single possibility. This is, therefore, **liberticide**[(2)], since from this standpoint no other world is possible. This world is the world of enterprise. In the contemporary academic world, we can see the existence of a legitimizing process of the enterprise as an organizational model for human activities. The enterprise becomes the organizational benchmark, and its language, methods, tools, and techniques increasingly contaminate the organizational world. It even spreads to organizations that do not operate solely under the imperative of income; in other words those not guided by the logic of efficiency and whose objective does not include providing goods and services to the market in order to create wealth for the owners and shareholders. This is what Solé (2008) and Abraham (2006) have called enterprisation, a process in which organized relations take the form and traits of a particular organization, namely the enterprise.

We live in times when the enterprise management model is presented as a utopia in progress, which does not allow us to consider alternatives. This way of understanding organizational reality reduces the capacity of researchers and of organizational players to create other possibilities of analysis and organizational action, in addition to those guided by the premises inherent in the enterprise.

Conceptual elements that structure the enterprise model may be easily adapted to other organizations. These premises characterize what is called **reflex modernization** (Ribeiro, 1969). The adoption of foreign values on the part of an organization refers us to the other organizations that disseminate this value. Consequently, their actions and performance criteria become pre-established. On the other hand, autonomous development marks the attempt to act toward transforming organizational reality in an independent and authentic manner. Based on Freire (2005), by autonomy we mean the abilities that a human being, a community or a society develop to build their own ways. Therefore, autonomy can be understood as an exercise in freedom and responsibility. This process is not done in isolation but in dialogue with other human beings, communities and societies.

In this paper, which consists of a theoretical essay, we develop some proposals for studies in administration which, based on the reflection of several authors in Brazil and Latin America, can contribute to supersede the process of domination that was established in this field of study. The eight proposals are then duly presented, followed by the main conclusions.

## Managerial Discourse and Subordination of OT to the Market

In this section, after analyzing the work produced by several Brazilian authors, we contend that Organizational Theory (OT) is subject to market and economic interests which put the market (trade relations) between the center and upper echelons of society, highlighting it as the main actor.

Ramos (1981) makes a distinction between economic and non-economic organizations. An economic organization is "a micro-social system that produces goods, in accordance with objective contractual regulations, possesses the operational means for maximizing limited resources and uses

Consequently, it prioritizes the economic role based on an instrumental logic that enhances the utilitarian calculation of means and ends to maximize profits, and is "only a specific case of different types of micro-social systems" (Ramos, 1981, p. 135).

On the other hand, as Ramos points out (1981), although non-economic organizations have economic functions, they are not their priority to the extent that there is a shift in their actions away from instrumentality in order to maximize profit and a closer approximation to substantive rationality for the emancipation of the human being.

This is the case with non-governmental organizations, non-profit associations, neighborhood associations, cultural and sports organizations as well as public organizations. Ramos (1981, p. 178) argues that these organizations are not as susceptible to the "social enclave of the market" and represent other kinds of organization through which the members of a society deal with "substantive topics of life, in accordance with their own intrinsic criteria, and in the context of specific scenarios to which these topics belong", in other words, another "associated life proposal". In this sense, Ramos does not reduce the organization to the idea of an enterprise, which is a common trend in organizational theory, based on modern teleological reasoning, as stressed by Solé (2008); pointing to ways to break away from the definition of organization limited to an economic administrative role, namely, to the production of organization rather than the organization of production (Cooper & Burrell, 1988). According to França (2010), a possible solution to the current structuring of the economy would be the strengthening and consolidation of another economy. In the opinion of the author, that is the central message contained in Guerreiro Ramos' theory.

It is important to acknowledge that modern reasoning in its instrumentality decisively contributed to a line of thought about organizations and their practices. This development is, however, restricted to a set of functional precepts useful for reducing uncertainties and maintaining order in business. This characterizes administration as an ideology in which standards, values and ideas justify unequal social positions and reinforce the search for "administrative harmonies" using theoretical references to bring about a reduction in inefficiency (Tragtenberg, 1971). As Böhm (2006) points out, Clegg and Dunkerley (1980) and Burrell and Morgan (1979) also said, sometime after Tragtenberg (1971), that the formal and rational view has become the prevailing ideology of organizational theory.

Today when globalization becomes a *doxa* or naturalized consensus (Bourdieu, 2001), in other words a dominant symbolic force producing a consensus through a set of beliefs established subjectively and objectively to naturalize the world view of the market as an organizing center of associative relations (Bourdieu, 2001), it seems almost normal to consider the management of organizations solely from a business standpoint. Santos (2002, p. 50) also discusses the phenomenon of globalization, explaining what he calls the **determinist fallacy**, in other words, the idea that the dominant logic imposes globalization as a "spontaneous, automatic, unavoidable and irreversible process", which has as one of its main features the total rule of multinational enterprises (Santos, 2001).

Tragtenberg also reflects on the way in which models are imposed. He states that:

> The capitalist system is ruled by the logic of maximum profit, which the technocrats describe as the logic of scientific reason. Therefore, logic bound to values such as maximum productivity, rationalisation and efficiency becomes visible with a focus on substituting concepts and theories by models. These models are selective inasmuch as they are based on hypotheses that are not neutral since they are subordinate to the meaning given to some variables in detriment to others. These models balance the imperatives of scientific reason with the dogmas of capitalist economics and administrative theory, and their result presents reason of economic or political power and not 'power of reason'. The maximum profit model aims to achieve a situation of balance, but there are social antagonisms that disturb its rationality. Therefore, the models optimize 'the present by breaking with the past understood as a process' (Tragtenberg, 1971, p. 218).

Furthermore, we cannot overlook one of Solé's (2008) frequent criticisms of rationality and its centrality in organizational studies. There is no universal definition of what rational is or what rationality is. Yet there is the establishment by economic and symbolic domination processes of a way to understand what may be rationality. This is clearly the predominant way in the capitalist world of linking rationality to the market and the enterprise. This dominant form of looking at rationality is related to the construction of modern European and North American society. The modernizing and streamlining process is then linked to the adoption by other societies of values and forms of organization from the countries considered to be civilized.

It is in this respect that Ramos (1981, p. 1) states that "the theory of organization, as it has prevailed, is ingenuous". And he believes that the reason is because OT "is based on instrumental rationality inherent to the dominant social science in the West ... [which is why] it has a disfiguring impact on associated human life" (Ramos, 1981, p. 1). Pursuant to a critical examination of the work of various authors who have contributed or accepted this transformation of reason, Ramos (1981, p. 86) says that "the so-called science of organization, as we know it today, is enmeshed in a skein of unquestioned presuppositions, which derive from the market-centered society and are reflections therefrom". He believes it is necessary to understand the cognitive policy[3] of this society and thereby overcome the distinction between administration and politics. In this cognitive policy of the market-centered society, he identifies: a parochial view of human nature, the definition of man as a job holder and identifying human communication with instrumental communication. This analysis permits the author to conclude that:

> No society in the past was ever in the situation of a market-driven developed society of our time, in which the socialising process is mostly subordinate to a cognitive policy adopted by vast corporate complexes that act without control. In no past society was business ever the central logic of community life. Only in today's modern societies does the market play the leading role, shaping the minds of citizens ... Contemporary human problems can only be perpetuated and not resolved by cognitive policy. The frontiers of formal organizational theory need to be clearly defined. Instead of placing formal economic organization at the heart of human existence, it is necessary to stress the issue of organizational boundaries, learning the way to be able to facilitate multiple types of social micro-systems, in the context of society's general format, transforming formal economic organization into a restricted and incidental enclave in the vital space of human life, thereby leaving a margin for inter-personal relationships free from projected and organized pressures (Ramos, 1981, p. 87).

Although we can object to some of Guerreiro Ramos' interpretations, he and Solé (2008) clearly show the relationship between management sciences, or more specifically, organizational theory, the process of modernization, enterprisation and the centrality that Guerreiro Ramos understood to be the market. This shows, as mentioned above, the predominance of one world over all others and the distortion of all organizations and all relations by the enterprise and by the management discourse that accompanies this model.

It is in this sense that the consideration of context, the appropriation of theories and sociological reduction are required as ways of building theories that do not restrict human freedom, that are not the proponents of power relations established in other historical contexts and that are committed to building other worlds. Ideas are only misguided when they are rebuilt on local contradictions.

Dussel (as cited in Misoczky, 2006) warns us that:

> Although many researchers in colonised countries proudly consider themselves critical (or advanced) thinkers, many seldom recognize how Eurocentric they are without being European. This is a key issue and to ignore it is unforgivable …. It is, in fact, another angle of the 'conquest.' Their minds have been colonized in such a way that the idea of the 'other' is the mirror image of the European or American identity.

This does not merely imply making an inventory of the multiplicity and plurality of organizations, as Böhm (2006, p. 15) reminds us, but showing the "production of the place through the complex interactions between the domains of the economy, the state and civil society". These research trails lead us in an incontrovertible way to consider the analysis of public policies and their potential and capacity to influence organizations and their ways of organizing. Thus, in the scenario that Brazil has lived through since the start of President Lula's government, one sees in the cultural field, for example, the appearance of new cultural policies with traces of the political insertion of civil society seeking a new model for community participation through a renewed concept of culture, with anthropological rather than sociological emphasis (culture as a field of diversity of expression). However, these studies cause us to examine yet again the conservative role of the crystallized structures of organizations (in this case the cultural departments of government at their various levels and the legal apparatus that was created). Despite the innovative discourse and efforts to adopt cultural policies that contain elements of transformation, they seem to increasingly curb the freedom of spontaneous cultural and art movements from preserving their dynamism (organizations of folk culture organized in a network, associations of artists, and so on). They are, therefore, at an impasse between the dynamic freedom of society and the crystallization of public structures, however transforming their programs may be.

Therefore, building theories that respect the different contexts implies considering the historical relations between the State, the market and civil society in our societies. It implies considering the power relations in the formation and the current configuration of the Brazilian State. The State being a key agent in the modernization process, and therefore of global enterprisation, while at the same time having a major role to play enabling groups in society to preserve their characteristics and relations, cannot fail to play a leading role in this construction. We believe that the state's role is as important to organizational studies as it is to studies in International Management and that these two fields of study can mutually assist each other and achieve more fruitful results to break down the barriers of the ideological vision of the supremacy of private enterprise introduced by American studies, as was also shown by Faria and Guedes (2005).

## The legitimation behavior of researchers: a critique

In today's academic world it is clear that there is a process of legitimation of the enterprise as a model for organizing human activities. This process may be intentional or otherwise. In the latter case, the researcher presupposes that this is a **natural process**, which is even more dangerous, since it is obviously not natural. It is socially constructed and dependent upon power relations.

This characteristic of the world of current organizations seems evident in the cultural field, for example. For instance, Evrard and Chiapello (2004) state that, although the objectives of cultural organizations relate to artistic activity, they are, after all, considered to be enterprises, bearing in mind that these two terms are used as synonyms. This idea leads the authors to explain that **cultural enterprises** depend on **management** to effectively achieve their objectives, and add:

> in addition to discourse on the specificity of art and culture that acts, at least to a certain extent, as an alibi for moving away from management and its coercions, we can see that several problems faced by those responsible for art and cultural enterprises belong to the sphere of **general management** (Evrard & Chiapello, 2004, p. 6).

Although the mainstream considers this position **natural**, many teachers and researchers disagree with this viewpoint. Their criticism begins with a specific fact, namely that nowadays we live in a world dominated by the logic of the market and the enterprise. They believe that the domination of the economic dimension – *i.e.* the central place of efficacy as an indication of legitimate action in society – gives way to the organizational model known as the enterprise that becomes the most suitable model for organizations to guarantee their prosperity and perform individual skills. It is essential to understand how these problems and these discussions that we have been conducting in

organizational studies are shared by students of International Management, as shown in Faria and Guedes (2005).

As expounded in the previous section, the development of capitalism gave rise to a specific kind of organization, namely the enterprise, and gave pride of place to this organization in modern society. Organizations that had the option to evolve practices removed from management logic were, in the last few decades, coercions to adopt a **managerial spirit** and the cult of the market (Chanlat, 1999) as the only model for their administrative practices whenever there was a need for legitimacy and to ensure survival.

This concern is also voiced by the authors who prioritise the importance of discussion regarding the representation of organizations as empirical models (Pesqueux, 1999) and by those who are interested in the capacity of organizations to incorporate the national context (Motta, 1997; Ramos, 1981). The investigation of different organizational practices may bring to the fore their socio-cultural relevance. This raises the question of academic production in management characterized by the use, without criticism, of imported models. The prevailing research works to build specific models that help reflect on managerial practice of the different kinds of organization in the different contexts. Even if society adopted the enterprise model as its benchmark for the organizational form, it should be considered that various organizational models and practices do not have the commercial dimension as a parameter of organized human life. Instead, they are organized on the basis of a set of values and their primary goal is not to provide goods to a consumer market. These organizational models and practices are not founded on the imperative of efficiency, much less on the core concern of creating wealth for their owners.

Institutionalization of the enterprise model furthers an increase in rationality of processes, the reduction of uncertainties and institutionalized order. This world view is **the possible** (Solé, 2000) which places us in the commercial domain, as it is an ideology, namely of representation that contributes to the legitimization of the specific type of power (Pesqueux, 1999; Tragtenberg, 1971).

Since modern society has found in the enterprise model the benchmark for understanding and, more importantly, prescribing forms of management, researchers should be interested in other possible modalities of organization and management.

A key point for us to consider in research processes consists of questioning our method of approach to our **object of research**. This process transcends the boundaries of that which is already defined in the mainstream of organizational theory, and makes us consider the aspects that we have attempted to outline earlier in this text.

Solé (2000) had already called attention in his theory of the possible-impossible and in his theory of enterprisation to the fact that the enterprise is a total social phenomenon. It is not possible to understand it if we look at it from an exclusively economic or sociological or even psychological perspective. The study of organizations implies a transdisciplinary and internationally discussed approach. This is the finding that Carvalho and Andrade (2006) state in their discussion on the importance of considering the State in organizational analyses, anticipating frequent criticism in relation to the levels of analyses and disciplinarisation of the fields of knowledge.

Consequently, we have asked ourselves about the importance of criticising the categories of analysis that we used which, confined to a discipline and level of analysis, turn our gaze to what is commonly called an object of analysis of organizational theories. Today we believe that it is necessary to extend this object and cross barriers between the disciplines so that we can contribute to building other possible ways to organize society. We think that this way implies a process of politicisation of theory, resuming the relations of power established when building the production of organization. This means removing technique from the center of the explanations given to human constructions. It also implies appropriating and putting in context theories in order to consider the political and social context to which we directly refer as being the core of our theoretical effort. Lastly, it implies adopting

organization and the production of organization as a total social phenomenon that transcends the barriers of the disciplines.

## Eight proposed approaches to theorizing organizations

These reflections led to a fundamental questioning of traditional teaching and research in the study of organizations. In fact, we wish to stress that, overall, these teachings and research even lead to a frightening vision of totalitarianism, namely global enterprisation (Solé, 2008).

Our procedure does not stop at this criticism. What should be done to free the study of organizations from the reflection consisting of making a particular organization, namely the enterprise, the mandatory model of all human activities on the planet? We ask ourselves, with conviction and humility, about the proposals we could formulate in response to this question.

The eight proposals given succinctly below are the result of Vieira and Solé's (2007) discussions. Their objective is to highlight important aspects of studies and research we conducted in the peripheral countries and, if taken properly, they can contribute to the building, not of a new universal knowledge, but a new knowledge that extends from the particularities of their historical contexts to enhance organizational options.

### Proposal 1: To discuss the idea of "universal efficiency" as an ideologically determined historical category.

It seems more necessary than ever for teachers and researchers to ask themselves the following question clearly: How is it that in learning and research, the enterprise is becoming increasingly the organization model for studying all human organizations? We intend to approach this question based on the hypothesis that, in our world, we are strongly imprisoned in the belief that the enterprise is the most effective and efficient organization ever created by humankind. It is indeed the premise according to which there is a universal efficacy and efficiency – invented by the so-called **modern** or **developed** world – that should be queried in research and learning. This is possible through the recognition that these are historical categories, heavily laden with ideology and which can and should be subjected to questioning in order to demystify the concept.

### Proposal 2: To discuss the dangers of the process of organizational mimicry.

Mimicry is a dangerous mistake. The **best practices** in the literature on management that all human organizations are supposed to copy – since they were presented as the universal organization models – are the practices of enterprises. These **best practices** do not consider the historical context of organizational forms. Moreover, this notion of **best practice** sets a relationship of dependence between the organization to be copied (the enterprise) and those that must copy in order to survive. This behavior makes it hard to question the power from which the enterprise benefits, *i.e.* power that goes far beyond the organizational issue.

However, competitiveness, efficiency, productivity and even efficacy are components of the enterprise model that can be easily adapted to other organizations. These premises are what Ribeiro (1969) calls **reflex modernization**. When an organization adopts a foreign value, he explains, it increasingly mirrors the organizations that spread this value and consequently its actions and performance criteria become pre-established. Accordingly, Ribeiro (1969) talks about **autonomous development** to describe the attempt to act in order to transform organizational reality in an independent and authentic culture.

It is worth making a distinction between the two cases. In the first, we address the principle of **diffusion** and according to this logic, a center disseminates elements to the parties, irrespective of the contexts, purely by the wish to dominate. The second involves logic of **transference**, where the notions of independence and mediation are essential to the occurrence of an action. In fact, the logic of

and materialization of partial states of order. The transference will be made thanks to the constant interrelations concerning different elements in the different organizational contexts. The idea of transference helps identify networks of associations and encourages analyses to reveal different forms in order to organize the **organizational world** – forms that can permit going beyond the enterprise model.

### Proposal 3: To define the type of organization under study.

We find that teachers and researchers (whatever language they speak) often use one and the same word – organization – to name the different human organizations that they discuss. This reflex action carries a greater risk: since the enterprise is the organization model, the word organization being increasingly used to say enterprise, the reflex action is to project the enterprise on every human organization – to think of all human organizations through the enterprise. Our proposal is simple, and it is to clearly and systematically define the type of organization under study. It may be a public organization, cultural organization, and so on. If it is an enterprise, it is convenient to use the word enterprise, and not the word organization. This attitude obliges us to work on creating organization categories. This does not mean abandoning the concept of organization, and we propose to keep it as a general concept (such as sports).

### Proposal 4: To take into consideration the role of the historical organizational context.

We teachers and researchers believe that it is absolutely necessary to understand that context is an element with a strong influence on forms of organization and action. This does not mean that we must consider the environment as a variable to be manipulated. The context must be conceived from a historical perspective that explains the relations created in the organization structuring process. As indicated by Motta and Caldas (1997), every society, to a greater or lesser degree, filters and transforms in its own way the ideas and technologies to create its own organizing versions. We must understand these particularities and these organization formation processes. This implies rejecting the belief in which there are general rules that apply to all situations of management, work and organization, regardless of context.

Consequently, it is not enough from a conceptual viewpoint to work at the organizational level in an attempt to identify presumed isomorphic processes to theoretically guarantee the survival of an organization. This behavior leads to reducing the role of the historical organizational context to that of wallpaper – in other words, to a functional variable that can be manipulated. This approach gives the context a superficial influence in the structuring process. This is why we must **put in context** and see every human organization and organizational process as a social phenomenon that transcends the disciplinary barriers.

### Proposal 5: To introduce a strong historical perspective in the processes of learning and researching.

The relationship of teachers and researchers vis-à-vis history is called into question. We could say that the less historical the teacher's or researcher's perspective, the more it is part of the events in progress, the more it is restricted both to the existing world and, lastly, to totalitarianism that is the reality of the global enterprisation process. This is the reason for the proposal to introduce a strong historical perspective into teaching and research over the long term. We propose that teachers and researchers acquire the reflex action of putting their studies concerning contemporary organizations into perspective (enterprises, cultural organizations, etc.) by referring to the works of historians and ethnologists. The domain called the **study of organizations** may deserve this name on condition that we also study organizations invented by the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Aztecs, Amazon Indians and so forth. By studying these organizations carefully we discover that they are all efficacious and efficient – each in their own way and in their own world. The long-term historical perspective enables us to see that the enterprise is not the most efficacious and efficient human organization and that efficacy and efficiency are historical categories, rather than universal notions.

**Proposal 6: To introduce case studies concerning non-enterprise organizations into Administration education.**

A new organizational theory needs to be formulated. This theory should be based on empirical data concerning different forms of organization. This new theoretical approach will allow us to shirk off the conservatism that characterizes the teaching and research topics induced by the criteria inherent to a type of society dominated by the enterprise. From this standpoint, we believe that an alternative to this society may emerge in which the enterprise will gradually become the model for legitimizing organizational forms and organizing different dimensions of human existence. Therefore, we must introduce case studies into the teaching of Administration, concerning organizations that are not enterprises.

In the words of Carvalho and Vieira (2003), this proposal is demanding because it opposes the predominant school of thought and will demand plenty of effort and time to establish its legitimacy. Despite obvious differences in the contexts concerning public, social and even cultural organizations, the easiest method would be to indiscriminately apply the organizational concept inherent in the model of enterprise management. However, this **gentle** approach according to the terminology of Carvalho and Vieira (2003) – or **ingenuous** as Ramos (1981) describes it – is highly impractical and ineffective if we wish to take into consideration the diversity and singularity of the contents and contexts when we address administration and management practices guided by any logic other than that of the enterprise.

At Solé's (2000) invitation, we should be aware of our **impossibles** as most teachers and researchers have convinced themselves that there are no alternatives to the logic of the enterprise. Solé recalls that, in general, becoming aware of their **impossibles** helps human beings to create new **possibles** for themselves. We may likewise refer to Martin Heidegger (2006) who proposes that we consider the human being as **being-in-the-world**, who acts in the world on the basis of philosophical and theoretical benchmark structures.

Undertaking comparative research to identify forms of organization and management other than that of the enterprise can undoubtedly lead to the teaching of legitimate organizational forms adapted to different national realities (we think of this especially with regard to the specificities of cultural organizations, particularly those in favor of emancipation).

**Proposal 7: To increase our field of vision of organizational phenomena by lowering the barriers between the disciplines.**

These sundry proposals and all the reflections presented above, oblige us to question our own approach to the object of research. The analytical categories used automatically by research professors – those in the area of management – are extremely debatable. These categories, taken as the norm, trap us in a single possible world as they make us focus on and see only what they allow us to see, namely the enterprise.

It is absolutely necessary to increase our field of vision of the organizational phenomena by lowering the barriers between the disciplines in order to build other analytical techniques that favor the construction of another society. This procedure presupposes **politicizing** the theoretical debate; in other words, ceasing to see **technique** as the central explanatory factor of human constructions. This is how we have to begin to create and use new **contextualized** categories to be able to imagine very different organizational experiences. It is now time for teachers and researchers to ask themselves and society a series of innocent but basic questions: Why competitiveness instead of solidarity? Why innovation instead of tradition? Why the desire for constant change instead of acknowledging the genius of our ancestors? Why mimicry instead of the affirmation of the identity of the nation? Why efficiency instead of happiness?

**Proposal 8: To encourage each teacher and researcher to think about the premises that**

Both teachers and researchers work on the basis of and in the context of their presuppositions. For example, the more often they take for granted that the enterprise is the most efficient organization and the less they ask themselves about their preconceived ideas, the more they become blinkered. Moreover, the less they challenge their own views, the more they restrict their students and readers to their presuppositions. How can they become conscious of their presuppositions? Solé (2008) maintains that the researchers' major presuppositions (of any human) are the **possibles**, the **impossibles** and the **non-impossibles**, that they unwittingly create for themselves. For example, most economists and sociologists believe that it is impossible for the enterprise not to be the most efficacious organization, and that it is impossible that global enterprisation is not an irresistible, mandatory, necessary and even natural process. Our proposal is to encourage all teachers and researchers to ask themselves what are their **possibles**, **impossibles** and **non-impossibles**, namely the premises on which their course is built, and the premises around which their research methods are based? Experience shows that adopting a long-term historical outlook helps specialist researchers in the study of contemporary organizations, to become aware of the **possibles**, **impossibles** and **non-impossibles** with which they study these organizations. For the teacher and researcher, identifying and explaining them is to increase their own freedom and that of the students and readers.

## Conclusion

The objective of this paper was to discuss the subordination of the administrative theories based on market relations, which leads us to a unique model of organization, namely the enterprise.

First, we argue, by analyzing the work developed by several Brazilian authors, that Organization Theory (OT) is subject to market and economic interests which puts the market at the center of society. In today's academic world it is clear that a process of legitimizing the enterprise as a model for organizing human activities is taking place. We stress, however, that although the mainstream considers this position to be **natural** many teachers and researches do not agree with this viewpoint and have a critical view of it.

Authors like Ramos (1981) already touched on the need for theorizing in order to preserve different organizational experiences. He says that a new theory of organizations should reveal the existence of different ways of being organized, possibilities that go beyond the prevailing organizational model – a model that considers questions of organization from the viewpoint of criteria inherent to a type of society in which the market is the role model and integrating force. Thus, it is important for us to outline the influence of trading organizations in relation to human existence so that we can recognize that "such organizations should be confined to a terrain, as part of the multicentric society provided with various scenarios" (Ramos, 1981, p. 191).

We contend that an organization cannot be reduced to the concept of an enterprise, which is a common trend in contemporary Organizational Theory based on teleological rationality, as mentioned by Solé (2008). We have to break away from the definition that reduces an organization to the administrative function, namely, an organization of production. We must conceive an organization as a production of organization (Cooper & Burrell, 1988).

In order to accomplish the objectives established in this paper, we presented eight proposals for the purpose of contributing to research and management education that can promote knowledge building and encourage the recognition of other ways to organize, as well as to respect the historical building of different contexts. Therefore, we sought to systematize the criticism voiced by important authors in the social sciences in Brazil to help build other possibilities of theorizing in management studies.

## Notes

[1] A first version of this paper was presented at Critical Management Studies 2010 in Warwick, England.

[2] A French word that means **killer of freedom**.

[3] The author defines cognitive policy as "the conscious or unconscious use of distorted language, the purpose of which is to lead people to interpret reality in terms suited to the interests of the direct and/or indirect agents of such a distortion" (Ramos, 1981, p. 87).

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