

**ORGANIZING AS A LEARNING PROCESS:  
A TRANSFORMATIONAL MANAGEMENT CONTINUUM**

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## INTRODUCTION

New terms such as TQM (Ishikawa, 1976; Deming, 1982; Juran, 1988), Learning Organizations (Garratt, 1987; Senge, 1990; Pedler, Burgoyne & Boydell, 1991), Transformational Organizations (Banner & Gagné, 1995) etc. are increasingly emerging in the Management and Organization literature. However, in spite of the great amount of references made to differentiate earlier approaches from the newer ones, there has not still been developed a theoretical effort to build a comprehensive framework which would give these disciplines evolution sense, and that also would be able to suggest an understandable evolution of company's configuration.

Although Management or Organizational Science is still young, there are as many studies and theories as little consensus to describe, explain and even predict organizations or companies behaviors. This diversity of approaches reflects how complex organizations are and also the increasing subtlety of the organizational studies (Astley & Van de Ven, 1983). As Kickert (1980) states, Organizational Science seems to have all the characteristics of the so called by Kuhn (1962) a pre-paradigmatic science, as it appears that so many approaches, terms, ideas and "paradigms" constantly proliferate (Pfeffer, 1982).

Many theorists have tried to gather and group all the schools of thought and approaches (Scott, 1961; Koontz, 1961; Hutchinson, 1967; Scott & Michell, 1972; Perrow, 1973; Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Pfeffer, 1982; Astley & Van de Ven, 1983; Bolman & Deal, 1984; Scott, 1981), however the problem stays as they are merely typologies of schools, without any comprehensive and integrative view of their evolution. Nevertheless it seems necessary to carry out an integrative process in order to identify relations and contradictions among the different approaches if we wish to improve our organizational knowledge. Our article pretends not only to integrate the different approaches, but also to understand their evolution and even bring out a possible company's evolution.

## LEARNING AS AN INQUIRING - ENACTING PROCESS

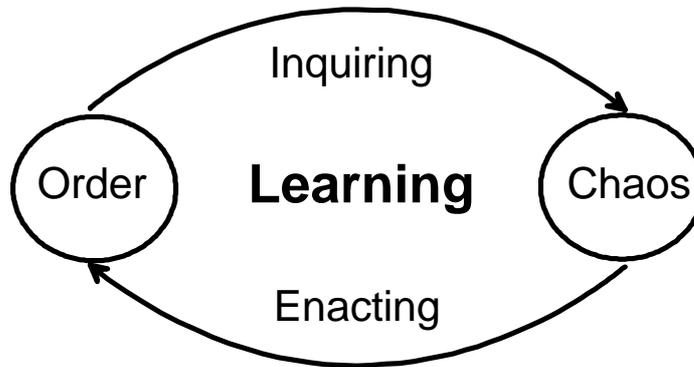
In this paper, learning will be understood as another way to describe the organizing process. We can conceive Organizing as gathering or putting into a unique system what previously consisted of several independent systems (units, groups, parts or meanings). This implies creating a new and unique unit (no matter whether this unit have an ideological, semantical, linguistical, economical, political or religious sense). But, paradoxically, organizing also implies the opposite of what we are saying. A new order requires the previous chaos of the older one. So that, dynamically considered, the order takes in itself the seed of the disorder and vice versa. The term organizing could be seen in the same way as the relationship between life and death, two independent and, frequently, opposite terms. Both are we artificially differentiate, however it is the same negantropic or biologic impulse what drives the child to be born and to death. Phenomenologically, the child dies to become an adolescent and an adolescent dies to become an adult (Grandío, 1996a).

Every time we organize we disorganize, which involves a certain realizing about the new "order" and the last one. This change implies learning and, at the same time, also unlearning.

Once we accept this multidimensional and dynamic nature of organizing, it is easier to understand it as a learning phenomenon. Learning is meant to be a double sided process: **inquiring** and **enacting**. Both processes are dialectically linked and the one has its roots in the other.

Therefore it makes no sense to try to analyze each of them separately. The first process implies an opening to Chaos in search of a particular question (this question depends on the level we are located). The second refers to the complementary (or opposite) movement “in order to bring Order from Chaos”, and also has its particular way depending on the learning level. This is showed in figure 1.

Figure 1: Learning: a Dialectical Link between Inquiring and Enacting.



In other words: organizing, as learning, is both a destroying and a creating of meaning (sense making) process, a learning and a unlearning process. In similar way our biological organic cells (the word organize comes from “organ” and “organism”) are simultaneously “dying and being born”. This dichotomy also recalls the famous Schumpeter’s “creative destruction” (1934) concept which he thought to be the essence of the economic development.

Learning is the way organizations, societies and individuals cope with uncertainty. And, as the heart beating or the tide of the sea, learning has two directions: Inquiring, as the opening to the outer chaos and uncertainty, and enactment: the assimilating the new perceptions into the inner order and certainty. In this way, we define inquiring as the opposite or complementary act of enacting: inquiring implies our opening to chaos, to the unknown.

Therefore, to some extent, inquiring correlates with a representation, which also implies certain "new meaning" which is synonymous of increasing comprehension. A representation is a human attempt to make sense from reality, to create order from disorder. And, in our framework, this representation has seven levels, that we name stages. This "stage" is referring to the ontological field of explanation and could be assimilated to the "basic assumptions" of Schein (1985). The "stage" a company or a Management school "is running" can be explained by the "in use" level of abstraction correspondent to the learning level associated with it. Seven levels of "opening" or "inquiring" the environment will be also proposed.

On the other hand organizing is a complex phenomenon that has been studied from different approaches, which lets discern several reasons to justify the existence of an organization. Among others:

- 1.- Economy. Creates economy of resources and increasing efficiency. Reduces opportunistic behaviors and transaction costs (Williamson, 1985)
- 2.- Culture. Creates a shared sense or meaning. Reduces uncertainty and anxiety.
- 3.- Management Coordinating Mode. Creates harmony, coordination and reduction of the friction.

4.- Motivation. Innovation and initiative feeling give rise to expectations. The necessity to be an accepted member of a group can be fulfilled in an organization.

If we accept that human beings have a certain necessity or yearn for learning, the existence of an organization could also be demonstrated by it: organizations would exist because it is easier to learn and innovate with and within them. According to this, learning can be considered as another way of describing or understanding organizations and the organizing process.

### ORGANIZATIONAL EVOLUTION: 7 LEVELS, 7 QUESTIONS AND 7 STAGES

As we have introduced earlier, we propose 7 levels of Learning with their correspondent Organizational Questions and Stages, which are showed in table 1.

Table 1: 7 Levels, Questions and Stages.

	Learning Level	Stage	Questioning		Insight respect previous Stage
7	Realizing	Complex	Creating	↑	Learning depend on the creation of new “insights”
6	Aware	Systemic	Learning	↑	Representations depend on “how we learn and build them”
5	Representational	Informative	Meaning	↑	Objectives depend on “how we see” (representation)
4	Strategic	Economic	Achieving	↑	Rules and Satisfaction depend on “what our objectives are”
3	Imitative	Social	Satisfying	↑	Programs and Rules depend on “members satisfaction”
2	Operating	Normative	Programming	↑	Customs and Routines depend on what the programs dictate
1	Conditioned	Familiar	Accustoming	↑	

The first two kind of learning levels (1 and 2) refers to what is well known in behaviorist psychology, and it has two main ways: classical conditioning, related to Pavlov theories (1926) and operant conditioning, related to Skinner (1938).

**Conditioned** learning refers to synchronic association (pairing) between an neutral stimuli and an unconditioned stimuli (i.e. food), whereas the **Operating** one implies a diachronic association (contingency) between a behavior and an ulterior reinforcement (let’s recall the reinforcement Skinner’s definition as “something that increases the probability of a behavior - response in Skinner’s terms- apparition”). The first one will be unconscious, and exemplified by the typical Pavlov’s experiment: where after several occasions a dog has been fed with a previous small bell ringing, in absence of the food, when this animal hears the bell, salivates. The second learning level could be consequence of a simple reward or punishment depending on a wide spread of kinds of reinforcement. We all unconsciously learn everyday in both ways by **accustoming**, performing typical **routines** (driving a car or using our computer word processor) or **programming** our acts by scheduling our time and meeting the rules and existing **norms** (stopping the car at a red semaphore or pressing a key combination to save a document in our word processor). To cite some organizational analogies, we could find here the classical French & Raven (1959) Coercive Power.

Associated to **conditioned learning** we refer here to the **Familiar Stage**, where our continuum starts. Possibly, the simplest and the oldest organization we can find is the family and it could have great analogy with the Mintzberg’s Simple Structure (1979) or Entrepreneurial Configuration (1984). Examples of its artefacts<sup>1</sup> are the figures of the parents, the owner, tools for hand working an so on, meanwhile the basic assumptions could be represented by paternalism, protection and obedience. Note the great analogy with the direct supervision coordinating mechanism (hereafter we substitute the term mechanism by the term “**mode**” because we shall

<sup>1</sup> We use this term in the same sense that Schein (1985) does.

introduce two new coordinating “modes” that cannot fit well with the mechanic view). This stage could find an accurate analogy in Mintzberg’s direct supervision and Maslow’s Physiological Needs (Grandío, 1996a).

### *Customs and Routines depend on Norms and Programs*

On the other hand, related to **Operating Learning**, we find the **Normative Stage**. Beyond the previous implicit familiarity where authority functioned through direct supervision, norms appear to be a further step which substitutes personal relationships with impersonal rules. “Norms work for all”: we do not need to expect some personal advising but simply follow what the laws dictate for a determinate situation. The more the norms comprehend all the organization casuistic, the more efficient the organization will be. Operating learning occurs due to rewards and punishments that reinforces the norms fulfillment, even more than the actual efficiency goals. From that, fear from, and lack of rules questioning seem to be generally present.

But, what are the sources of the norms fulfillment reinforcement? Fear to what is unknown as a potential threat is highly related to the Maslow’s security needs and, probably, **security** is the strongest reinforcement we can find from norms accomplishment. In business terms this also has its analogy in what is called “risk averse”. Bureaucracy and Mechanic organizations (Mintzberg, 1979, 1983), with their operations standardization are good instances of this stage because programming, planning, ruling and so on are activities which allow us reducing uncertainty and getting security. In Management history terms, Taylor’s Scientific Management or Fayol’s principles could fit in this stage. We can also include the Strategic Planning as a representative Management school.

### *Norms and Programs depend on Satisfaction*

The **Imitative Learning** alludes to what it has been called Social, Observational or Vicarious Learning. A conspicuous author in this framework is Bandura (1963). As it is well known, it refers to the capacity of learning from the observation of other’s behaviour and, to a great extent and following the previous power analogy, we could find also three sub levels: the Traditional, Expert and Referent (or Charismatic) French & Raven’s power.

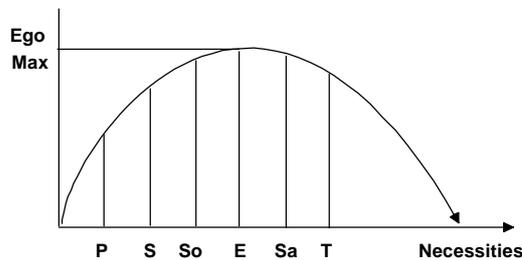
Its related **Stage** is the **Social** one. As the Human Relations School showed, all formal effort is accompanied by a counter acting informal power (Mayo, 1946). As Maslow (1967, 1969) pointed in his Belonging Needs, people need to belong to a group and are motivated by other’s acceptance. Globally considered, we call **culture** to all the coordinating phenomena that emerge because of this necessity. In economic terms, and regarding to the earlier coordinating modes, control through culture is the cheapest way to coordinate. Freely accepted without a sense of pressure, culture represents an implicit norm both tacitly and unconsciously learned, created and performed by copying the others, and specially modeled by the leader’s, behavior.

We could find the Organizational analogies in the Mintzberg’s missionary organization. However, as we develop below, we have to distinguish (Grandío, 1996b) between what we call Missionary X (ranging from unions, political parties through religious organizations and even to sects) from Missionary Z (related to the highest learning level: realizing). The difference we make is rooted in Maslow last works (1969) where he finds a higher level beyond the Self-Actualization needs (he named “Transcendence”). In order to distinguish this new level from the older ones, he resorts to the McGregor (1960) management styles X (which included all the existing needs except

Self Actualization) and Y (Self Actualization itself), and uses the letter “Z” to state the new Transcendence “need” as a natural evolution of this last level.

So, differences between Missionary X and Z could be summed up in two aspects. First, the pertaining needs (that we identify with culture dimension and the missionary X organization) are included by Maslow (near to the love ones) inside the Social (and X) needs, which are also described as a “deficiency needs”. Whereas the Y and Z ones are described as “being needs” or as “meta-needs” as well (Maslow, 1967, 1969). Second, as showed in figure 2, we conceive the X ones as one of the necessary steps in the ego development. This development accomplishes its maximum in the Ego (status) needs, while later needs (self actualizing Y and transcendence Z) imply a decreasing of the ego importance.

Figure 2: Maximum Ego in Ego Needs.



***Norms and Safety depend on Objectives***

Whereas this latter three kind of learning could be included in what Argyris (1982) call “Single Loop” learning and are close related to classical Psychology, **Strategic Learning** supposes a qualitative leap from which it could be assumed a certain degree of human free will and emerge what economists call rationality. Although the economic sense of rationality is quite ambiguous (Grandío, 1996a), and its discussion goes beyond the purposes of this paper, it is useful to recall the Simon’s concept of “limited rationality” and his understanding of organizational, even the human, behavior as a kind of “problem solving process” (Simon, 1947). In this learning level emerges the first degree of “thinking over” and there is finally some room for questioning if we are “going in the right direction”, so it is evidently related to the concept of strategy. For us, it is important to emphasize the existing clear cut distinction in this vision between **goals** and **resources**, objectives and instruments, for it represents the core explanation of the actual paradigm in management (strategic management), and lay the foundations of the next learning level: the Representational.

The rising of the strategic and economical rationality has its correlated phase: the **Economic Stage**. In this stage, the core topic will be focused on the dichotomy of **means** and **goals**, from which a simplified rationality will rise. This approach will tend to control through results (let’s recall the corresponding Mintzberg’s Coordinating mode: Outputs Standardization). An obvious corollary is the Diversified/ Divisional Configuration (Mintzberg, 1979, 1983), which main emphasis lays on financial statements, ROI’s, SBU’s and the like. Also corresponds to the MBO techniques (objectives and means again). It includes a huge number of well known approaches but, widely considered, it ranges from the economical view of the M form linked to the Industrial Organization (Williamson, 1985), to the military planning increasingly shifting to Strategic

Management of Ansoff (1965, 1976, 1979) and the intermediate postures owned to Porter (1985) with his popular Competitive Advantage.

If we focus on the correspondent inquiring level, it is easy to recognize a strong analogy between Outputs Standardization and Achievement Needs. **Achievement is for individuals and groups what Outputs or Goals are for organizations** (Grandío & Bou, 1994; Grandío, 1996a). There is also a supporting literature in this way, emerging from Weber (1947) studies about the relationship between Protestant religion and the spirit of capitalism and developed later by McClelland (1961) invoking the achievement need to be the very spirit of economic development.

As objectives or outputs are the key aspects, people will tend to “hiper-differentiate” between these and the “means” to get them. This also implies a clear cut frontier between two well known processes in strategic topics: Formulating and Implementing and, probably, it reflects the organizational existing power boundaries<sup>2</sup>.

As the term Strategy comes from the military field, the term “enemy” is also a necessity, now euphemistically substituted with the term “rival”. So, competition emerges as the natural (and essential) atmosphere where organizations are immersed. Although cooperation exist it is seen, again, as a mean to obtain the main goal: the ability to compete.

### ***Objectives depend on Representations***

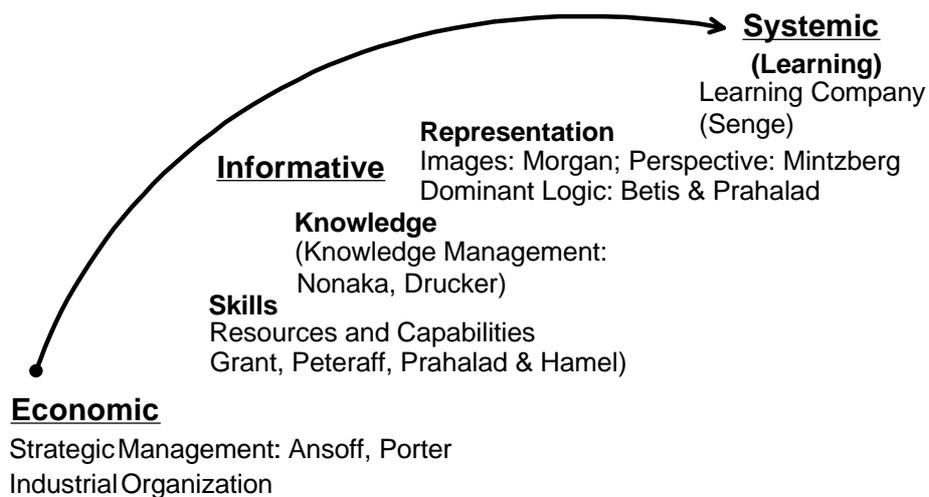
In a certain way, we could understand the **Representational** learning as a continuous interrogating about which the goals and the resources are, and if they are the right ones, what imply teleological questions. In this way this learning level go further, meaning that all depends on how we represent reality.

Although the term representation has been finally chosen by us regarding to learning, the correspondent stage has been labeled as **Informative** for it embodies better the emerging “Information Era” propitiated specially by the explosion of the Information and Internet Technologies. But we can easily distinguish three sub phases (that is also to say learning levels) inside this broad stage (in order of abstraction): **Informative**, which would include what it seems to be the immediate alternative paradigm to Strategic Management (and the more theoretically closed to it): the *Resource Based View* (Prahalad & Hamel, 1994; Grant, 1991; Peteraff, 1993), **Knowledge** with its core focused in *Knowledge Creation Management* and which reflection can be seen in Drucker’s (1993) new approaches (let’s recall his “post capitalist society”), Nonaka (1994), and **Representation** which has many analogies in Management literature: i.e. the Morgan’s (1986) *Images of Organization*, *Strategy as a Perspective* in the 5 P’s of Mintzberg’s Theory (Mintzberg & Quinn, 1991), and all of his analogies of this with culture, personality of organization, “weltanschauung”, ideology etc., Senge’s (1990) *Mental Models*, Betis & Prahalad’s (1995) *Dominant Logic*, the Autopoietic Theory (Maturana & Varela, 1980; Krog, Roos & Slocum, 1994, Whitaker, 1995) etc. This is showed in figure 3.

Figure 3: Three Contemporary Stages  
(Source: Grandío & Chiva, 1997; Grandío, 1997)

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<sup>2</sup> If we go deeper in this topic from a behaviorist view, we realize that, meanwhile “objectives” are politically treated (people in this stage would say: “strategically formulated”), resources are increasingly treated (and devaluated) in an impersonal (mathematical and mechanical) way (strategically implemented).



Unlike the previous quantitative stage, what matters now is the qualitative aspect which focuses on “how is it” instead of “how much is it”. Perhaps, to a certain extent, it also could be an average estimating of the “*Noetic Absolute*”<sup>3</sup> (Brosse, 1981) of our western culture and civilization, since our next two levels have an unmistakable eastern flavour and, in the statistical and historical sense, their stages belong to an immediate future and require a huge “*quantum leap*”, a copernican shift in our most basic assumptions about the world we live in.

Summarizing, and in an academic sense, we are deeply convinced that Representational level implies an actual synthesis between psycho-sociological and economical views. We use the word synthesis as opposed to eclecticism, in the sense that it transcend both views into a new level that we could be widely label as Business Organization Science that would include in its roots, obviously, many other social sciences like Politics, Anthropology etc. in a new order to understand our new society of organizations (Drucker, 1993).

### ***Representations depend on Learning***

**Aware** learning means the fact of an holistic taking notice of the actual “what is”, staying in the present without dichotomies or contradictions (for instance between organization and environment), understanding this latter term in the sense of the Festinger (1964) cognitive dissonance. Paradoxically, let’s note that the very being plenty aware of any contradiction becomes a truly awareness state. As Krishnamurti (1969) says:

*“The images create the space between you and what you observe and in that space there is conflict, so what we are going to find out now together whether it is possible to be free of the space we create, not only outside ourselves but in ourselves, the space which divides people in all their relationships”.*

The awareness state implies more flexibility than the representation one; in fact goes beyond it. It could be founded in the nature of Dialogue such as Bohm (1987, 1998) and Senge (1990) has described it, implying suspense of any thought, impulse, judgment and serious attention to the

<sup>3</sup> Widely considered, this authoress refers with this term to the whole and ultimate representation world of meanings a person or group is able to cope and manage.

overall process is considered. Image (or representation) is, at the most, a provisional researching instrument in expectation of a new light on any phenomenon.

Its correspondent stage is the **Systemic** one. We know how systemic thinking implies seeing the world as an interrelated wholeness. Instead of causal and linear links among parts, a system is a recognizable dynamic pattern of relations. Systems theory, we owe originally to Von Bertalanffy (1951), has its ultimate organizational development in Senge's "Fifth Discipline" and in his "Learning Company". And, as Bettis and Prahalad (1995) say, learning new things means, to the same extent, unlearning the old ones.

***Learning depends on the creation of new "insights"***

Finally, **Realizing** learning implies the opening of new perceptive paths where previously there were only a poor or null sensibility. Moreover, new semantic nexus or differentials are established among categorical aggregates that were characterized by either their previous tightness or their separateness before. Closed concepts to this could be found in the "aha" of the Gestalt Psychology (Kohler, 1917). Roughly means a shift of cognitive configuration. Let's bethink that the well known English word "configuration", usually handled, by Mintzberg for instance, in the organizational field, represents an accurate translation of the German, and psychological, word "gestalt". In sum, both terms lie on the assumption (linked to the previous learning level) that parts often derive their nature and purpose from the whole and cannot be understood apart from it. Moreover, in a systemic way, a mere summation process of individual elements cannot give account of the whole. Its core experience focuses in what Senge names "**Metanoia**", term which also goes beyond the former learning modes. It represents an actual paradigm shift and, moreover, the changing from one stage to another. The metanoia acts also "automating" the previous sustained paradigm which became instrumental to the newer one. Experientially understood, this stage is named by Senge "**Alignment**" and has great analogies with what Maslow calls "**Peak Experience**" and Grandío (1996a) "**Tuning In**".

Globally considered, as with the term representation synthesizes the innermost social and cultural aspect of our model, the term aware synthesizes the deepest learning aspect. But the term realizing synthesizes the necessary "insight" or "aha" to jump from a lower to an upper learning level, the **creation** of a new comprehension or relationship.

We could insert here, as a natural development of the Learning Company, the "Fourfold Vision" (Rooke & Keeley, 1994), the "Seven Organization Energies" (Tosey, 1994) and finally, the Transformational Company view which is claimed to be a real new paradigm (Banner & Gagné, 1995).

Table 3.- Levels of Organizing/Learning, Human Needs and Psychology and Management Schools.

Learning Levels	Maslow	Psychology School	Management School
Conditioned	Physiological	Classical Conditioning (Pavlov, 1904, 1926)	
Operating	Security	Operant Conditioning (Skinner, 1938)	Scientific Management (Taylor, 1911) General Principles of Management (Fayol, 1916)
Imitative	Social	Vicary, Observational (Bandura, 1963)	Human Relations (Mc Gregor, 1960; Mayo, 1946)
Strategic	Achievement	Problem Solving (Simon, 1947)	Strategic Management (Andrews, 1971 ; Ansoff, 1975; Porter, 1980, 1985)

Representational	Status (Ego)	Cognitivism (Miller, Galanter & Pribram, 1960). Constructivism	Resource Based View (Grant, 1991; Peteraf, 1993) Knowledge Management (Nonaka, 1994) Images of Organization (Morgan, 1986)
Aware	Self Actualization	Humanism (Mc. Gregor, 1960; Maslow 1967, 1969)	Learning Organization (Senge, 1990)
Realizing	Transcendence	Transpersonal (Maslow, 1970)	Transformational View (Banner & Gagné, 1995)

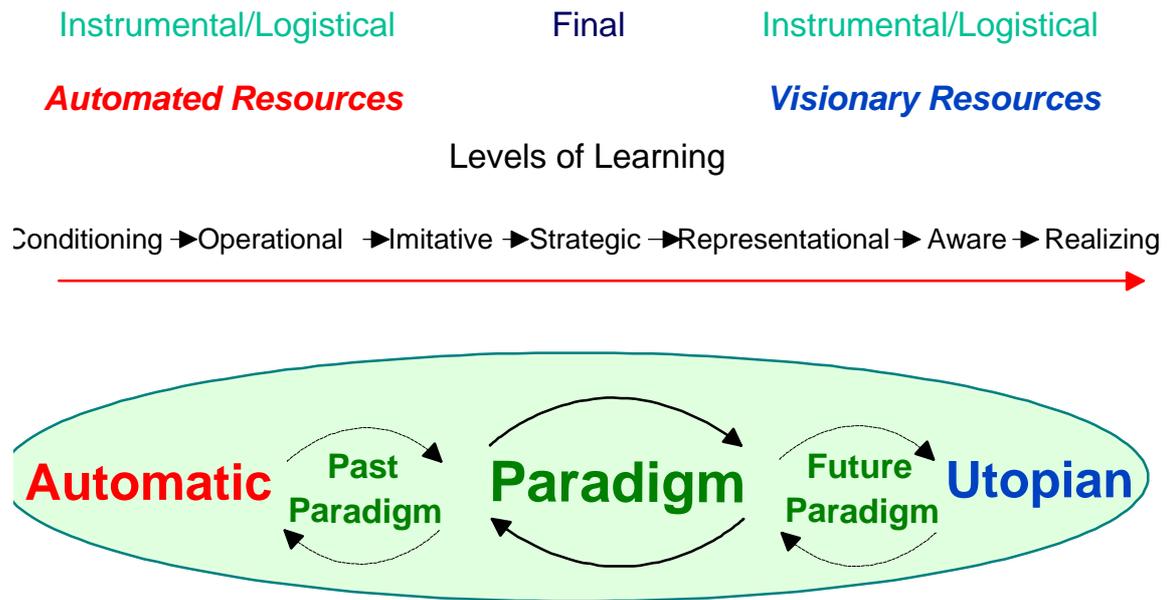
## AN EVOLVING CONTINUUM

The precedent organizational typology based on learning levels should be also understood as a process through which organizations and management science go through. However, the main issue in this evolution will be to clarify this process, the dynamic aspect through which companies and people in them go further and change the paradigm.

None of the stages excludes the characteristics of the others, but rather it could be understood as a matter of goals and resources. The stage where an organization stays determines its consciousness goals, that we refer as “paradigm” (all attributes and characteristics belonging to this stage) and implies considering previous stages as transcended, assimilated and relegated to the subconscious, in a word: **automated**. In the same sense, future stages are considered as “desired”, unfeasible and ultra-long term objectives, in sum: **utopians**. Perhaps we could address it as supra-conscious: that it still have not become conscious (for subconscious field was once conscious). We can find an instance in the driving car learning: first is something utopian, perhaps we feel it far from our capabilities and even extremely complicated. As we are practicing, it absorbs almost all of our attention and consciousness. Finally, when we become an expert driver all skills required are working without taking any notice of it, automatically.

In Organizational terms we might suppose we are in the Economic stage. Surely our main goals would be related to profits, performance, greater incomes, lower costs and the like. But, immediately we should have to mention what the “resources” (instrumental or logistical) are to manage in order to achieve these objectives. To our perspective, these resources can be divided in two: the operational or automated ones (you work “over” them) and the visionary or utopian (you work “towards” them). In decreasing order of importance, and among the operational resources, we find those attributes and characteristics of the social stage (human resource management, culture as a coordinating mechanism etc.) normative stage (rules and operation technology) and familiar stage (direct control, necessary commanding etc.). Similarly, and also in decreasing order of importance, among the visionary resources we would find the informative features (information technology, educational programs, intangible resources, skills acquisition and development etc.), the systemic ones (learning processes, team work, participating, shared knowledge etc.) and the complex ones (creative tension, awareness, intuition etc.).

Figure 2: Articulating the Stages Evolution.



### *Inside the Paradigm*

As we have suggested, a paradigm represents the “in use” stage in which our consciousness is focused. This paradigm contrast against all the rest of unfocused stages, whose features are seen in a foggy manner.

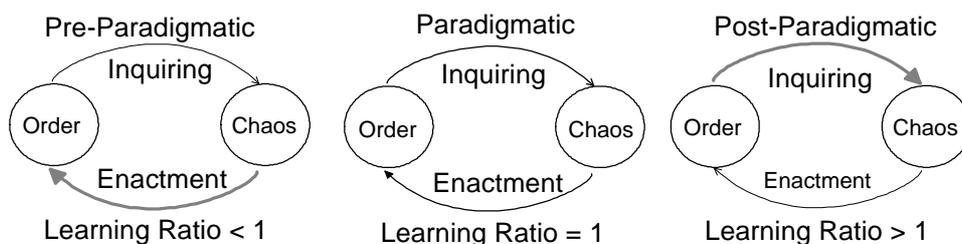
The manifestation over time and space of each learning level is what we call a stage or paradigm. A particular stage is the enaction, manifestation or reflection in time and space (historically understood) of a determinate certain learning level. In other words, every stage will be characterized by a level of learning, which is the institutionalized way of learning and that also implies a certain inquiring mode.

The question would be how an organization can change its stage or paradigm and go through another learning level. We could surmise two complementary sociodynamic modes of the inner paradigm evolving: the bottom-up (in the Durkheim sense: leaders are the reflection of the group thinking) or the Up-Down one (related to Stuart Mill or Weber framework: groups are the result of leader’s thinking). But, whatever the mode would be, we always find three typical communities in each stage: the “pre-paradigmatics” (focused in previous stage representations), the “paradigmatics” and the “post-paradigmatics”.

Dominating over the traditional pre-paradigmatics, the most of the people (in a statistical centrality sense) in each stage “shares” the related cultural aspects that belong to that determinate certain learning level. We could call this majority the paradigmatics. But are the post-paradigmatics those that challenge existing stage with an increasing criticism (Up-down). If this fact is added to that of a growing disaffection among the “usual practitioners” of the main paradigm due to environmental evolution or social transformation (Bottom-up), we have the engine which moves the evolution towards later stages.

Another way to see the difference between pre-paradigmatics, paradigmatics and post-paradigmatics is conceiving a ratio between the flux of inquiring and the flux of enacting. This ratio would be higher than 1 in the post- paradigmatic ones case, equal to 1 in the paradigmatic and minor to one in the pre-paradigmatic case. This is represented in the figure 3.

Figure 3: Learning Ratio and Paradigm.



We can interpret the post-paradigmatics as a kind of natural learning leaders. No matter in the level they play, leaders have in our framework the role of accelerating the learning and organizing process that, actually, is a changing event. Organizations, groups and individuals are susceptible to change and evolutioning but, without the leader’s action, this change would happen less rapidly. Such a kind of “Masters of Change” (Moos Kanter, ççç), are continuously “bringing chaos into order and making order from disorder” and, probably, are more closely related to transformational than to transactional leaders (Bass, 1990, 1996; Nichols, ççç), to charismatic leaders (Conger, 1990) than to usual managers . And, let us say that we think this phenomenon to be asymmetrical: frequently, above all at the short term, the degree of flowing towards chaos is greater than that towards order so that, in traditional organizations, this leaders have only a constructive role in little doses.

We can find the leader’s analogies in Natural Sciences. We have the catalysts in Chemistry and the Enzymes in Biology. A very little quantity of them dramatically accelerates the speed of a chemical reaction or the complementary anabolic and catabolic processes in biological organisms. Unlike chemical components, living biological organisms (in a phylogenetical perspective) are increasingly complex. And, newly as we noted above, “bios” (life) is a negantropic driving force: it tends to higher complexity.

Social Systems are a higher degree in complexity and this process is expected to be more scored to the inquiring side than biological systems. We even suggest that organization systems, beyond social ones, represent another “quantum leap” in complexity and that the change rate (let us say the learning ratio) is significantly greater.

As an example and taking again the economic stage, we can find a majority that defends this paradigm distinguished by strategic learning. However, and due to evident social and technology transformation, among others, previous paradigmatic people have begun to challenge and/or to replace many of the axioms of the actual paradigm. In this process they will accept new approaches as little differentiated from the older owned ones, that do not need, at the beginning, to be considered as a new paradigm. At the same time post-paradigmatics, that could be also named

“double-loopers”, begin to inquiry the existing paradigm, demanding a new one. Both forces would bring a new organizational sense, new worries and focus issues and also a new learning level.

Moreover it is important to understand that the ultimate realizing learning (insight) is necessary to happen, in a certain way, in post-paradigmatics and paradigmatics in order to really change the stage, as they need to realize that the key factors they believed in are not the most important but, other ones are. What we mean is that, independently of the level we are considering, there must be always a certain “aha”, even this is only a glimpse that last a few seconds, for the change to occur. What differences this from the actual realizing level is that, in this latter, the very “aha” is the paradigm itself, the “raison d’être” and the main coordinating mode in that organization, meanwhile in the former situation that “insight” happens almost unconsciously. Therefore, **it is always the realizing learning which permits to pass through each stage.**

These changes imply, obviously, cultural changes or mental models transformations, that would need to be unlearnt to be able to learn new ones. In a certain sense, culture (as an enacting process) and learning represent two opposite forces that permit stabilization and change within organizations.

## CONCLUSION

In this article we pretended to explain organizations, and their evolution, through learning. This organizational phenomenon can allow us to deep and understand the reasons of the differences among organizations, their changing problems, and furthermore classify the management literature, creating an evolving continuum. This evolutionary framework can allow companies to position in it, in order to recognize their focus, way of learning, mental models and to face other paradigms and their implications or necessities.

If each stage implies a certain learning level and also a particular mental model, beliefs and consequently behaviors, we must stress the importance of understanding the difficulty of changing stage, which implies coping certain chaos. This chaos means tension, which could be split into two aspects: anxiety and the so called by Senge (1990) creative tension. The anxiety should be minimized or even assimilated for the existence of the latter, which evokes the real learning (generative learning in Senge’s terms).

In order to complement this theoretical framework, empirical analysis could be accomplished. A learning-stage questionnaire, based on our continuum is scheduled to be constructed in order to find out the particular stage of a certain organization or group of organizations. Likewise related theoretical studies are being carried out to extrapolate and link our findings to other domains like society, art or religion.

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