

Power Relations in the Project of Economy of Communion: A Brazilian Case Study

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Abstract

The exploratory research, summarized here, is inserted in a context of a socio and environmental "crisis". This "crisis" forwards the need for transformative change. A proposed change, added to the existing ones, is being investigated as an alternative form of management: the Economy of Communion. Within this theme, this research is limited to an attempt of analysis of power in companies that adopt this form of management. First, it was researched with entrepreneurs what would be a common vision to characterize the object. We performed a case study in one of the major Brazilian companies that fit the concept of Economy of Communion. The summary tables produced on the interviews provide evidence to demonstrate idiosyncrasies in the exercise of the power of this new proposed management.

Key-words: economy of communion, power, Brazil, organizational relations

1. Introduction

The urge for transforming actions (corporative social responsibility, sustainability, solidarity economy) has obtained a highlighted spot due to the social and environmental perspectives that, according to some researchers (Capra, 1996; Egri & Pinfield, 1996; Smil, 2008), are becoming graver and graver. This research inserts itself in a context where new ways of management present themselves as alternatives for the central models. With that purpose, it investigates a real practice called "Economy of Communion" that introduces new management strategies significantly distinct. It is a management model that signalizes the attempt of construction of a new perspective of acting in the capitalist production system.

The Economy of Communion (EoC) is an alternative experience for the organizational studies. EoC has presented positive results in terms of productivity and growth, with management techniques that differ from the corporative *status quo*, more related to the inherent needs of the biological human nature (Leitão & Rousseau, 2004; Leitão *et al.*, 2006). It is a philosophical-spiritual proposal originated from the Christian doctrine that, by the hands of its charismatic leader Chiara Lubich, was replicated to a use in conducting companies.

Values that focused in enhance the relationship level between people, defending the spreading of the “behavioral-love” – concept expressed in the Greek word *agape*, used by Jesus Christ – and a distribution of the richness in a more homogeneous way were applied to the business logic. That is due, among other reasons, to the vision of the potential organizations have to conduct changes. The organizational dimension – Power – constitutes the scope of the present research. Analyzing it, Pagés *et al.* (1987) affirm that there are evidences that the relations and practices of Power in the organizational context have created, throughout the whole industrial period, processes of domination and strengthening of the bonds of the individuals to the organizations, in economic, political, ideological, and psychological terms. Therefore, the main objective of this research is to investigate how the Power relations are processed in a company managed under the precepts of the Economy of Communion (EoC). Then it will be presented the referential that seeks to set the research in terms of theory. Afterwards, the method that supported the research will be described. And, finally, the analysis with the discussion over the results.

2. Theoretical Referential

The theoretical referential deals with the concepts of the Economy of Communion, its relation and impacts on the organizations inserted in the project. The main visions of Power in the organizational sphere are also presented and discussed, evidencing the lack of studies about this dimension in this kind of organization.

2.1. The Project of the Economy of Communion

The bibliographic production regarding the Economy of Communion (EoC) has its genesis on the seminal work of Chiara Lubich (Lubich, 2004). These texts are doctrinaire, characterizing the movement and the project as a social ecclesial movement, which bases are on the Gospel and on the Social Doctrine of the Church. The work was recognized by the Catholic Church, by the Academy – where it obtained honorary titles –, and by international organizations (Linard, 2003). Then there were contributions from social scientists, theologians, and philosophers, but, mainly, from Italian economists. These economists bonded to the movement, examining the project of EoC under a theoretical perspective. These contributions (Bruni, 2002; Bruni, 2005) from the researchers were almost exclusively academic essays that attended to the appeal of its mentor to be explained theoretically.

The project began as a business practice. Such practice became reality when integrated by businessmen not connected to the focolarian movement (a movement of the Church, centered on unity that offers man a modern spirituality), non-religious or belonging to other religions. In this moment Chiara Lubich realized the effectiveness of the ideas and convoked Academy to study it (Leitão & Spinelli, 2008). According to Leitão and Spinelli (2008), the young researchers were the first ones to reply to Chiara Lubich instigation. According to Biela (1998), the focolar movement has four complementary dimensions: i) social; ii) moral; iii) religious; iv) economical. From this last one would be created the project of economy of communion. The project was launched in Brazil, in May, 1991, with global perspectives, in Vargem Grande Paulista, São Paulo, to be the business and economic version of the movement, since, according to Lubich (2004); it became necessary to bring principles to a concrete and transforming action. The cities of Mary (“Maria”, in the original), the cities that witnessed the Focolarian Movement, were the location of the first industrial centers of the economy of communion.

The project is in expansion. As observed by Linard (2003), the companies of the EoC project operate in local markets and have its capacities of global expansion supported by a network of communication of the focolarians, which is apt to grow globally the ideas of the project. By the end of 2006, there were more than 820 companies spread across the five continents, most with the maximum of 50 employees (Leitão & Spinelli, 2008). According to the data of the Report 2010-2011, made by the Brazilian office located in Vargem Grande Paulista, Italy is the country with the biggest number of companies registered and with the major academic production, right above Brazil. This same report presents a number of 840 companies in the world in 2011, with a growth of 51% between 1996 and 2011. Brazil and Italy also share the biggest number of companies with, respectively, 167 and 347 companies in the Project. Bruni (2005) affirms that the economy of communion seeks a new relation between the market and society, defying the dominant ideologies in this era of globalization. They are private companies inserted in market, still preserving private property, but sharing the profit in communion. They would have a humanist vision about the way of managing business. Pinto e Leitão (2006), on the other hand, say that the differences in these companies are related to the way the organization relates with its stakeholders. The difference is in the quality of the interpersonal relationships and, mainly, in the interorganizational (Pinto & Leitão, 2006).

The quality of the interpersonal relationships was researched by Kurtz (2005) and by Sampaio (2006) to justify the potentiality of these companies to operate as organizations that learn. The interpersonal relationships are presented as the behavioral element relevant in these companies and are imbricated in what is called “sharing culture” that has as its foundations the Christian love and the principle of the unity of spirituality (Lubich, 2004). However, despite many recent studies about Economy of Communion (Almeida & Leitão, 2003; Kurtz, 2005; Leitão & Rousseau, 2004; Bruni, 2005; Pinto & Leitão, 2006), it is evident a considerable gap of knowledge about Power in the organizational dynamics of these companies. It is believed that the understanding of the behavioral dimension of Power is relevant to the comprehension of how are these more substantive managements – or if, in fact, they are substantive at all.

2.1. Management in the Economy of Communion

According to Sertial (2012), one of the peculiarities that characterize the entrepreneurial way of working of the participants of the project is the orientation regarding the profit using. According to the approach of the EoC, the profit distribution is done through three different ways:

- Donations to social actions, usually through the relations of the focolars movement – that means, maintained by them or with a strong relation to it;
- Maintaining the capacity of reinvestment for the company;
- Maintaining structuring actions to maintain and promote the preserving of the “sharing culture”, which include education programs and formation of people to share these values.

Moreover, the management structure of the companies is also characterized by four main factors. Firstly, the structure for payment of the companies emphasizes on paying above the market average to reward the extra effort stimulated by the company. There are also recruiting policies that emphasize the hiring of people with past problems in other organization with the objective of rehabilitating them into market. Another important factor in the work relations of the EoC companies in general is the degree of participation in the decisions. For that, Sertial (2012) affirms that in these companies it is common the existence organizational councils, meetings, assemblies, and other formal structures that promote the increase of communication between the different hierarchical levels, seeking for a bigger participation for the voices of the lower levels. Lastly, the companies act to foment the sense of community with the business. This may include events to enhance the social interaction among the employees and their families and the communities around the company.

2.3. The Phenomenon “Power” and the Economy of Communion

According to Galbraith (1984), the word power is used with frequency without a proper reflection regarding its meaning. Clegg and Hardy (1996) affirm that the most used definition nowadays does not match the first concepts that define power as the ability of making ones do what you want, even if against ones wills. However, there are dissonances between the thoughts when it comes to conceptualization. The structural-functionalist line of thought seeks to develop the administrative science, researching ways to control and regulation over future events through its causes. On one hand, the perspectives adopted for the studies about power are to make cognoscible the use of the phenomenon and to enhance the “utility” function in the organizational interests. On the other hand, the line of thought represented by Michel Foucault, seeks to penetrate within the contradictions and subtleties present in the essence of the phenomenon. Foucault (1982) observes that the very ontology of the phenomenon characterizes it as not possible to be analyzed – i.e., idiosyncratic, a fight of hostile forces.

Foucault (1982) recommends the knowledge of the mutually constitutive relations between the studied system and the environment, paying attention to the interconnectivity and the forms of domination present in this environment. The examination of power must not be away from the context. Foucault (1979) sought to analyze the mechanisms of power and its incidence over the individual, focusing on the effectiveness of action. He sought to comprehend the manifestation of power in its lowest level: on the relationship between individuals. This narrow perspective on the analysis of power inserted by Foucault (1979) does not make the actors of higher levels less worthy of analysis; it only, however, focuses on the action itself, changing the level of granularity.

Accepting this vision, power is not treated as a substance or faculty, but as execution itself. It is clear, then, the relational essence in the phenomenon of power in the *foucaultian* thought – once its establishment happens in the relationship between individuals: an action in relation to another action. To Foucault (1979), the relations of power have its roots in the network of relations that characterizes a society. Ergo, it is a relational phenomenon. The norms that try to create limits and define Power in the organizations are, unmistakably, variables to be considered when the relations between the organizational subjects are analyzed. However, it is rejected that the complexity of the presence of the “Power” phenomenon may be comprehended in its fullness by these rules. It is ratified, then, that in the discourse of Foucault (1979), the normative law is a weapon to be used on the fields of Power, and not the sole and direct origin of the Power of an organizational actor.

“This way, the dominant notions of power (that underline both modernist approaches and functionalists) were challenged. The Power was not only another convenient, manipulable, and deterministic resource. It is the opposite; all the actors operated within a structure of domination – a dominant network of power relations – inside which the perspectives of ways out were limited for both the dominant groups and for the subordinate groups.” (Hardy & Clegg, p. 275, 1996).

Another referential work to the development of the present study is the work of Max Pagés *et al.* (1987), which analyzes the Power relations between organization and individual. Pagés *et al.* (1987) use the dialectic combined to psychoanalysis as an analytic instrument of a multinational organization. Profound contradictions are presented on the discourse of the answers of this study, identifying signs of stimulation of productive forces. On one hand, it is an incentive to initiatives, to intellectual activity, to creation capacity, and to cooperation to give the workers every kind of satisfaction of the economic, political, ideological, and psychological. However, and concomitantly, other stimulations were noticed. Those produced guarantee of control, subordination of the productive forces of the workers to the company’s goals, generating significative degrees of angst. Ergo, the organization would face a double necessity of developments and mediations.

These dualities develop themselves in multiple ways and are worked on the economic level through policies of high salaries, possibilities of ascension in the career, acceptance of the profit objectives and company growth, and the acceptance of the capitalist *modus operandi*. On the political level, administration techniques would be developed so they could guarantee the respect to the main directions, seeking to allow the individual initiative through controlled autonomy techniques. On the ideological level, the process would present certain doctrine spread throughout the company, but that finds variants in the functional body even without radical contradictions to the previously established *status quo*.

“The organization works, on one hand, as a pleasure machine and, on the other hand, as an immense angst machine. The angst provoked by the omnipresence of the controls, by the unlimited and intangible character of the demands, is compensated by multiple pleasures that the organization offers, especially the pleasures of the aggressive kind, the pleasure of conquering, of dominating clients, the colleagues, of overcoming and dominating oneself.” (Págés *et al.*, 1987).

It must be highlighted that the restrictions of political, ideological, and psychological cores always existed. However, as pointed out in Pagés *et al.* (1987), a crescent capacity of companies to penetrate in ideals, values, lifestyle and the structures of personality. Such characteristics found in the multinational studied by Pagés *et al.* (1987) increase the relevance of understanding the phenomenon Power in the Economy of Communion. That is due to the fact that the EoC organizations have been described with more humanized management forms, which would imply a behavior in the relations of Power also differentiated.

In this sense, the work aims to understand the phenomenon Power in these organizations to contribute in the understanding of the gap that seems to exist in the knowledge of these organizations. For such, understanding Power as a relational matter, in the sphere of the micro-relations between individuals, seems to be an adequate focus to the comprehension of the phenomenon in the context of EoC, that explicates so much the relevance of the interpersonal relationship in the conquer of organizational goals. The intention is to understand, too, if the quality of these relationships implies in a different relation in the contradictions between capital and work, and in the problems of organizational society.

3. Research Methods

Within the qualitative approach there are different investigation methods. Among those the Case Study (Godoy, 1995; Yin, 2002). The Case Study is an investigation method that characterizes itself by the profound analysis of a specific reality. Case Studies are recommended when questions such as “how” and “why” are submitted, when the researcher has low control over the events, and when the focus is located on contemporary phenomena inserted in some context in real life (Amaratunga *et al.*, 2002; Yin, 2002). According to Dubé and Paré (2003), the Case Studies are proper when the investigation object is complex, so it is necessary a vision of the whole, and when the studied phenomenon cannot be analyzed out of the context where it occurs. This investigation method is also proper in the cases which it is necessary a certain depth in the research (Dubé & Paré, 2003; Eisenhardt, 1989). Eisenhardt (1989) presents and discusses still the possibility of using the Case Study to construct theories.

By the characteristics presented by the Case Study and the dimensions already discussed, this method of investigation fits this work’s purposes. Moreover, to Ellram (1996), the Case Study may be used to: (1) explore a determinate subject or problem, in order of a deep understanding of it; (2) explain a phenomenon; (3) describe a phenomenon; and (4) predict characteristics of a specific phenomenon. Some of these purposes of the Case Study proposed by Ellram (1996) justify the use of this method for this research. The present research is characterized as a case study of exploratory nature. The exploratory nature is defined by its applicability in the study of themes of new areas or in those in which is intended to extract theory from a determinate situation (Roesch, 1999). The field study that was made, basically, was developed in two phases. The first phase consisted of a combination of 5 (five) interviews, with average length of 30 minutes, with entrepreneurs from economy of communion. In these interviews, the approach was more conceptual, seeking to identify the understanding of those businessmen regarding the matters involving decision and Power relations within the EoC organizations.

The second phase occurred through a case study, made in a medium size company, in Curitiba/PR. Such organization is considered as vanguard and consolidated as one of the biggest differences of EoC in Brazil. It was already studied in different themes in important academical works about the project in Brazil (Gonçalves, 2005). The semi-structuration of the interviews refers to the creation, previously, of a gathering of guide questions, from the theoretical review made beforehand, pointing to matters related to the Economy of Communion and Power. Moreover, it was sought, from the answers of the respondents (phase 1), to introduce more punctual aspects that had not been previewed in the original script. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed, so it would be possible to analyze the content of them and allow the creation of analysis categorization, when the results were described. There were 16 interviews with managers (8), office employees (5), and workers (3), with an average time of 45 minutes. These interviews aimed obtaining a direct vision regarding the Power relations in this organization. Moreover, it was also analyzed the peculiarities of the organizational culture that contextualizes the study *locus*.

As secondary sources, internal documents of the company were accessed, such as diverse memos and reports, in a way to make possible to the researchers the complement for their data. Moreover, it was also used the observation method, in order to obtain the behavioral ways identified during the study period. For the analysis of data, the transcribed interviews, documents, and specific notes from the researchers were compiled and prepared for the treating through the software *Atlas.ti*. The categorical technique for content analysis, orientated by Bardin (2009), was developed, regarding the material of the depth semi-structured interviews. The case study had a quantitative treatment inherent to the content analysis (selection and mensuration of categories). For such purpose, the categories were defined from the interviews with the entrepreneurs (phase 1) that were also found on the speeches of the respondents of the case study (phase 2). However, there was an expansion in the quantity of categories due to the richer lexically from these last interviews. It is supposed that the decomposition-reconstruction process in this method performs a determined function in the indication of correspondences between the analyzed text and the subjacent reality. The content analysis lies implicitly in the belief that the categorization (passage of rough data to organized data) does not add detours, for excess or lack, in the material, but reveals invisible indexes, to the level of rough data (Bardin, 2009).

3.1. Work Method

Firstly it was used the theoretical referential with the objective of selecting relevant questions to the set-up of the questionnaires. The second step was the realization of Phase 1 of the research and the analysis of its results.

The rules of mutual exclusion, homogeneity, pertinence, objectivity, fidelity, and productivity (Bardin, 2009) were respected and, from this phase, the following categories were reached: “Interpersonal Relationship”; “Bureaucracy”; “Liberty”; “Participation”; “Dialogue” and “Focus on Human Being”.

The third and last step was the interviews in the studied company and the analysis of the material generated 13 expanded categories. They are: “Bureaucracy”; “Focus on the Human Being”; “Trust”; “Leadership”; “Liberty”; “Opportunity”; “Dialogue”; “Respect”; “Participation”; “Consult”; “Meetings”; “Interpersonal Relationship”, and “Ethics”. As the quantity and the rough data collected in this step was bigger, and it was needed a second grouping. According to Bardin (2009), this is about the grouping of 13 categories in families according to analogy of its contents. Next it will be discussed the main results obtained through the research itself. Then the conclusions will be developed from the results and confronted with the theory.

3.2. Results Analysis – Entrepreneurs

The category “Bureaucracy” groups speeches that emphasize the minor presence of control mechanisms. This participative characteristic that includes the different hierarchical levels also presents a relationship with the category “Liberty”. That may be illustrated in the following excerpt:

“Authority and hierarchical structure serve to maintain the order in the company, although they use to be small and very flexible – and the relations between the levels are very intense.”
(Entrepreneur A)

The “Bureaucracy” and “Interpersonal Relationship” categories communicate between themselves on the speech of the interviewed when they explain the small grading of formal elements in behavioral patterns. These elements are less needed due to the values such as mutual trust, reciprocity, and communion, present on interpersonal relationships, and understood by Carmeli *et al.* (2009) as vital pillars in the construction of knowledge in the learning organizations. According to Entrepreneur C, *“the control systems are generally very free, for they are based in personal relationships...”*

“Because the company is to the man, and is also to bring a gathering of relationships so people can feel well as they work, feel pleasure on it. There is no division between the businessman and the employee in the relationships.” (Entrepreneur C). This report shows an example of the bond between the categories “Interpersonal Relationship” and “Focus on Human Being”.

According to Entrepreneur E, *“there is no division between the entrepreneur and the employee regarding the relationships. The entrepreneur of EoC has to be open to dialogue.”* This allows a connection between themes component of the categories “Dialogue” and “Interpersonal Relationship”. The association between the categories “Dialogue” and “Liberty” was found in excerpts like the one of the Entrepreneur B, which interprets that “in the [EoC] project it is noticed a smaller hierarchization and more communicability between the levels. The reports, in a general analysis, suggest that the relations created between the categories “Liberty”, “Interpersonal Relationship” and “Dialogue” end up generating decision processes with a more consulted or participative nature, characterizing the category “Participation”. It was also highlighted that these companies are used to working with participative decision-making environments; however, it is this triad that occurs in all the levels of the organization that brings contributions and initiatives to the scenario. Summarizing, the interviews with the entrepreneurs have helped the constructivist interpretation of a conceptual sketch to the understanding of the EoC companies’ dynamics. It contributed a lot both for the achievement of the case study as for a better preparation and conduction of the interviews.

3.3. Results Analysis – Case Study

The organization analyzed by the case study is a distributor of medium size for nutritive and hospital products for children and athletes, with more than 500 active clients in Paraná, and branches in Brasília, São Paulo and Pólo Spartaco. The company has about ninety employees, plus representatives. It has more than a hundred contributors, total. Next it will be presented the analysis of the families that emerged from the analysis of the interviews.

3.3.1. Power and Bureaucratic aspects

It is noted that the organization does not focus on the implementation of bureaucratic artifacts with restrictive purposes over the actors’ behaviors. According to the interviews, they exist, but they are flexible.

This condition is directly connected to the charismatic leadership manner that the entrepreneur conducts the organization. It is interpreted that this family influences considerably the other ones, for if the two categories were demonstrating too formal norms, and authoritarian leadership, possibly there would be a difficulty to obtain the categories of the other families in the way they are classified. The excerpt below, from the owner of the company, portrays this family and its impacts on the other ones.

“Well, norms are fundamental to any group in human societies, and in a company is no different. We have our norms. However, these norms are created by the whole group; they were not created by others or copied from what somebody else has done. We created our own norms through a profound discussion the leaders; they were presented to me as a result of the collective thinking, and they are fundamental.” (Entrepreneur)

3.3.2. Power and cultural aspects

This group concentrates aspects of the dissemination of principles and values of the EoC project in the analyzed organizational dynamics. They appear disseminated in the speeches of employees and managers in a homogeneous way. They are presented, still, as significative indexes of differentiation for the company regarding the market, and other companies outside the project.

“The differences clearly exist. The way of acting of these people comes from a series of principles. The respect towards people is one of the main columns that sustain this project. Respect with its contributors. Respect is not imposed; it is deserved. Respect towards your suppliers. Respect for your competitors. The company always collecting taxes, sometimes being tempted to sonagate, but always being ethical. A perennial ethic. And we observe, on the other hand, a fast growth of the respect that naturally leads to development. But it is not easy, because when we leave it is not written that this company is a different company. We face all the problems – or even more problems – that the other ones face.” (Manager 5)

3.3.3. Power and relational aspects

The interviews confirmed a special quality of the relationships in the organization, as presented before in studies such as Kurtz's (2005) and Sampaio's (2006) in different EoC organizations. *Manager 7* emphasizes that *“power must be conquered, but if you put it through imposing, you get people to work that way when you are present, when, if you get to conquer it through the company's ideal, you get people to commit – and putting themselves under the leaders orders. Then you win them over through respect, and admiration. The interpersonal proximity makes this differentiation easier.”*

3.3.4. Decision

It was noticed a mixture of high levels of participation during the decisions. When asked about a group of people randomly gathered in the deposit area – and observed by the researchers -, *Employee 5* explains that *“that was a meeting with the entire sector to fix some problems that were identified. We have that almost every week. In the beginning it was more like only the manager speaking, but now everybody participates, and we have space to put out our own ideas. It generates a strong group spirit, one helping the other – especially because, when one makes a mistake, everybody does too”*

Figure 2 illustrates how complex it is the dynamic of Power in this organization. This structure seeks to portrait the gathering of themes present in the interviews. Through Figure 3 it is intended to inform that the intimate relation between the categories creates a narrow composition of factors that supply differentiated characteristics in this gathering of interviews for the set of interviews present on Pagés *et al.* (1987). It is important to highlight that this structure is still different from the conceptual structure of Phase 1 – as expected. It is noted that quotes agglutinated in the families of “power and bureaucratic aspects”, “power and cultural aspects” and “decision” were significantly beyond the categories found in the interviews of the EoC Congress. That fact suggests that the organizational reality of the aforementioned company already presents idiosyncrasies regarding what the entrepreneurs idealized as a model EoC company behavior.

Two actions in course were identified in the organization: the emphasis in the certification ISO program, and what was called an “armoring attempt” by the owner to problems that, according to the interviewees, could be solved by the middle managers. These actions are relevant because they tend to change the configuration of the scene presented in Figure 2. About the standardization via certification programs, it was noted that it was given a great emphasis by the researched groups of the strategic level regarding organizational priority. It was noticed a concern in highlighting that such increase over the processes control only aimed the enhancement of operational efficiency. According to the interpretation of the researchers, this possible drastic change in norms that seek to emphasize the hierarchization level of the organization would impact the other two families related to the power phenomenon – even being able to augment the level of formalization within the relationships and, consequently, also move the decision-making process that was practiced in the organization.

In a similar way, the Director’s armoring action to contacts with employees that could be done, and even solved, by intermediary managers could create deep changes on the diagnosed picture in the future. Two possibilities present themselves in this case:

- The entrepreneur’s leadership, observed and described by the employees of the operational tactical level could change if the managers could not maintain a conduction style similar to what the Director had during the growth of the organization. This point is crucial because the frequency of compliments to the owner’s conduct conditioned the analysis that the conformation presented in the speech to the “Leadership” category disseminates the values and principles of the Project. Therefore, it has a considerable impact in the interpersonal relationships – and, by extension, in the power relations and decision-making.
- It was noted that some managers received compliments to their management forms inside the sectors, regarding leadership and opening to participation. Ergo, there are indications that these managers could be more omnibus multipliers of the EoC concepts in the organization if they developed demeanors similar to the Director, or according to the ideas preconized by him.

4. Conclusions

The work presented had as its objective to comprehend the characteristics of the power and decision-making phenomena in Economy of Communion companies, aiming to verify if those also had manifestations as oppressive and manipulating forces as verified by studies of Pagés *et al.* (1987) in modern companies. Despite certain homogeneity found in the answers – which permitted the finding of certain peculiarities in the power relations and its impacts on decisions – the testimonials let clear the existence of a constant process of learning in the company, aiming the goals and principles of EoC, which may allow doubts, detours, or mistakes that are confronted in a daily basis with those principles, in a dialectic relation that leads to a constant learning/changing dynamic. Hence, it is noted that they seek evolution in a supposed “optimum model” of management and of EoC. However, it is reinforced that these apexes, inherently, do not exist, neither for the management nor for the Economy of Communion.

The conceptual image obtained through the analysis of the testimonials’ content, from the five entrepreneurs, pointed to an arrangement that initiated a series of special points. We did not disregard the limitation that this conceptual interpretation over a reduced sample of the Project’s participation contains. We though, however, that the partial conclusions of this analysis served to raise homogenous discourses, presenting characteristics that lead to an answer to the problem-question. The two content analysis shows that these organizations seek to manage in a different way, based on their own ideological pillars, which live with the market competition. They demonstrate that due to the minor valorization of hierarchy, it would be only through the understanding the amplified relational dynamic between the individuals of the organization that one could find – and be able to comprehend – Power. And the relationships *de facto* are different both in the idealized model as in the testimonials of the case study.

Despite relationship quality being more focused in the categories “interpersonal relationship” – present in both studies – and in the Family “power and relational aspects”, found in case study, there is a vivid tendency on the testimonials of mutual influences between the sets, apart from intersections and overlapping that were disregarded for analysis effect and interpretations illustration, but that are signaled through connections between the categories and families.

It is important to confirm that this linear division does not exist; it is only an effort to ease the analysis and that, by consequence, creates the conclusion that the interdependence of the myriad of explicated factors allows the differentiated presence of these phenomena in these organizations. Here lies one of the main points to be considered and that may cause strong changes in the picture of the categories and relations apprehended in the case study, for the identified actions and the actions with changing potential have direct bonds with the categories. The problem is not to change, for this is necessary and inevitable; the matter is if the principles that favor the human necessities present in the organization will be protected in front of the new relational dynamic. It is still noteworthy that what is shown in EoC culture is antagonistic to domination and exploitation of people. Economy of Communion despises a predatory environment, and the testimonials confirm this idea – previously exposed by the main authors in the subject.

Another point that cannot be neglected is the vision of people regarding profit. It is well spread the idea that everything is done through the financial surplus; from the reinvestment in the business to the donation for a poverty fund, passing by the formation of a new business mentality and the objectives of the EoC project. Communion, in an economic level, is too dependent and thankful to profit. However, the main goal of these organizations seems to be, indeed, the human being. The excerpt below, extracted from the testimonial of the Director-owner, is very close to what was exposed by Leitão *et al.* (2006) regarding the association between the intrinsic needs of the human being and the participation of the workers in favor of the organization. It is emphasized that it would be fit to try and receive the most of the human being without disregarding his condition of human being. This excerpt synthesizes many aspects that these companies have and offers reflections of multiple levels.

“Power inside an organization is directly connected to the culture of such organization. And in the culture of EoC, which the idea is to share, the director does not decide alone. If everything is shared, he does not feel as if he owns the truth, but only as a group leader. Henceforth is born a new culture; a new worker feels free and creativity thrives. Usually, the lack of freedom makes people less creative. The free person is the one that lets all creativity thrive. My company is under construction. It is still young, only 18 years-old, and I wasn’t born an entrepreneur, so I’m learning every day. However, a participative management, not for democratic reasons, but for respect to the human being – this is the culture of reciprocity. When a person has an idea and this idea is put to practice, the person buys the idea and commits herself to that.” (Director).

To finish, it was not noticed any kind of subtle mechanisms of domination or manipulation of people, as presented by Pagés *et al.* (1987). Ergo, it is concluded that the research demonstrates the existence of differentiated aspects, insofar as what regards the power practices, present in the synthesis developed through the content analysis. These first conclusions suggest that this study must be carried on, searching for a broader generalization over the quantity of the interpersonal relationships that impact the power relations and, when the subordinated management techniques are combined to these values, they may produce competitive advantages. As far as what future researches about this theme are concerned, it is still considered that this study makes way to other researches, for them to seek generalizations in the connections and constructs that were presented. It is believed that, after this exploration that has given these dimensions (categories), this study could continue its path towards the quantitative data, aiming their empirical substantiation.

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Figure 1 – General vision of analysis categories and its inter-relations

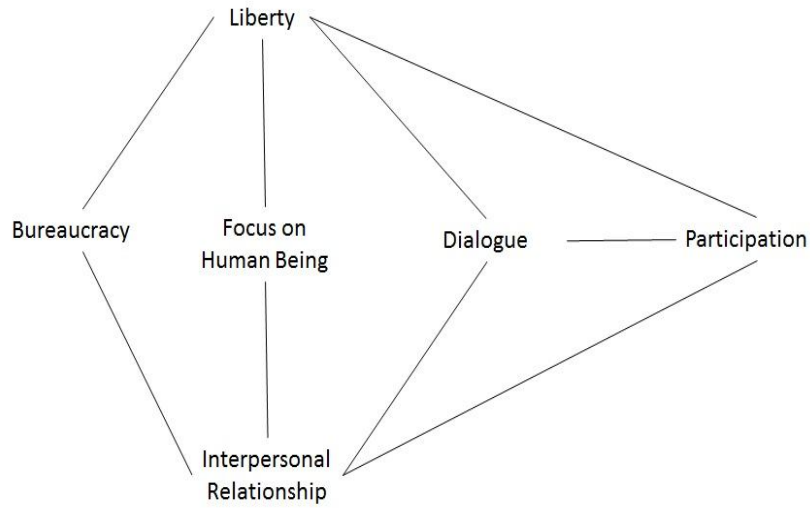


Figure 2 – Grouping in families

