

Towards a Unified Research Program for Organizational Studies

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to argue the epistemic peculiarity of organizational studies, which have an object of study, research methodology and theory developed, and the peculiarity of interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity that characterize when it comes to know, understand and participate in the organization, which is the object of study. Leagues and complementarities arise with management science and other social sciences; hence the need to provide epistemic identity to organizational studies is considered, through its philosophical, methodological and theoretical peculiarities, by creating a research program from the perspective of Imre Lakatos.

Keywords: Organizational Theory, Organizational Studies, Epistemology, Research Program, Epistemic identity.

1. Introduction

The organization as the object of study has evolved over time, and at the same time, has been generated new approaches that from the ontological and epistemological point of view are looking for know it, explain it or understand it. According to Ramirez, Vargas and de la Rosa, such approaches complement each other, link, and above all improve the possibilities to understand and transform human organizations, supported on the foundations of the studies of the administration, which constitute a solid discipline that has been contributed by decades to the systemization of best practices for driving the development of enterprises. The origins of the Administration are located conventionally in the works of Taylor and Fayol at the beginning of the past century, with this discipline acquires a place in the sciences from the organizational theory that is carried out in their field. From then on, the Administration has developed a long journey, which includes its epistemological and methodological definition that has been clarified and has allowed its progress as a science. For its part, the Organizational studies share with the Administration the "material basis" (Ibarra & Montaña, 1986, p.13), it means, the theories developed by organizational theory, in addition to other theoretical artifacts from the sociology, psychology and even the human biology, from there emanates the multidisciplinary approach that characterizes them and at the same time, the need for a definition and epistemological legitimacy in the academic world.

The organizations have existed since Prehistoric times, but it was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that formal theories of the organization were developed and disseminated, trying to incorporate new forms of analysis. Given that there is a proliferation of approaches or paradigms that are studying the organization, this is not a well-defined theoretical object that responds to Simple laws and the authorities had also failed to set up an agreement among the scholars of the field, with respect to its object of study. However, the consensus established considers the organization as a complex phenomenon that finds in this complexity, the nature of the design of its formal structures. In this sense, Montaña points out that:

The organization, in both social space complex, can be understood as a meeting point where intersect various logics of action - political, cultural, emotional, rational, etc., multiple players that advocated by various social projects and, therefore, different interpretations of the institutional sense, reflecting particular interests, but also illusions, fantasies and anxieties. The borders - physical and legal-, the objectives and formal structures, regulations, organizational charts and plans represent only the most visible part of the Organization; its real significance lies in areas which are not noticeable at first sight, out of the everyday knowledge that gives us the experience; hence the importance of the academic effort by doing so intelligible" (Montaña, 2004, p. 5).

In his argument, Montaña refers to that part of the complexity of the organizational studies that has to do with this object of study which covers the visible and observable, as well as invisible and unobservable, this is the subjectivity of the actors involved in the organization and relationships of control, leadership, subordination, among others, which are being established between them.

For its part March (1981, p. 574) notes that "organizations are complex combinations of activities, purposes and meanings; meet coordinated tasks that should be unthinkable without them, and without which is difficult to imagine a modern developed society" and draws a distinction between the level of engagement that can have the formal organizations, which can be *docked or loosely coupled*. The degree of coupling in an organization is defined as the level of interdependence between two or more subjects, artifacts, elements or parts that make up an organization. For Weick (1976, p. 3) "a loose coupling means that each event or communication in the organization retains its own identity and some evidence of their physical separation and logic [...] a weak coupling also carries connotations of impermanence and dissolubility" that is, within the organizations.

Such couplings are carried out with regard to the intentions, to the actions or decisions and loose couplings do not appear to be avoidable, but rather the implementation of rationality in the organizational action has implicit limits in coordination, attention and control. In the category of loosely coupled systems of March, notes the Weberian instrumental rationality, which has precepts to sort things in society, as a kind of superego that puts order to what happens in them, showing the possibility that human organizations throughout history are attached or loosely coupled.

Recognize the complexity of the problems of human organizations that overflow the plots of institutionalized knowledge, raise the need to study them in terms of multidisciplinary and trans disciplinary spaces where the various approaches, theories and methods, try to explain to organizations based on their structures, of the people who conform them, their strategies and their culture.

The particularity of the epistemic organizational studies, which have an object of self-study and a research methodology and theory developed, as well as the peculiarity of the multidisciplinary and transdisciplinarity that characterize them, when it comes to know, understand and intervene in the organization, based upon the constitution of a new scientific field, for this reason in this document is part of the philosophy of science to propose a logical and systematic management to develop a "Research Program" from the perspective of Imre Lakatos (2007, p. 65), for organizational studies.

To reach such a proposal is part of the conceptualization of the organizational studies, the history of its development and formal theoretical in Mexico, as well as the search for their identity in the field of Social Sciences, for finally outline the features of an own Research Program for these studies. The following arguments bring us closer to this possibility.

2. Organizational Studies as a Field of Study

Organizational studies are the result of the incursion of various disciplines of humanistic nature, such as sociology, history, psychology and anthropology, among others, in the study of the phenomena that come out of the sphere of influence and control of the management of organizations.

Beyond study processes and ways to improve, it seeks to analyze social phenomena that take place within the organizations and are the result of the networks of relationships between the various members that the make-up and that affect and are affected by these relationships, given that social groups, by the very nature of the individuals that shape and reflect all those elements of the environment (culture, traditions, beliefs, conflicts, etc.), that is re-contextualize and manifest in the organizations. Hence Medina stated that:

We will require new looks of the strategy and culture, in such a way that the two do not subordinate to the other. It is necessary to recognize the complexity of the relationship in order to avoid the temptations of extremism simple. The society does not determine the forms of organization - and management systems-, as well as nor is it true that the organization dictate the procedural guidelines of the society: both are part of a correlate of double track focused on its own complexity (Medina 2007, p. 16).

Since the end of the nineteenth century, the study of organizations has experienced a stunning evolution that has led to various forms of theoretical approaches, including Rendón & Montaña (2004, p. 2) indicate eight: "management, organization theory, institutional analysis, sociology of work, the sociology of organizations, organizational analysis, sociology of the company and organizational studies". These studies have taken different approaches at the time, depending on the level of progress in the theory, as well as the disciplinary perspective from which it is regarded as the organization.

The diagrams of conceptual and methodological Administration, inherited from the Enlightenment, have demonstrated their exhaustion and lack of capacity to heuristics organizational realities increasingly complex, in which the instrumental rationality is blurred to acquire multiple meanings, before barely considered. In this sense, Medina (2007, p. 17) points out that: "the search for new paths necessarily passes through the recognition of the organization as the relation between order and disorder, in cycles of complexity and bifurcation", assuming also the understanding of the administration as knowledge and power that uses the organizational discourse, as well as the models and organizational-administrative techniques, that are no longer sufficient to get a better understanding of the complex organization, that is why even the disregard of the inter and multidisciplinary approach toward transdisciplinarity.

Considering the complexity that characterizes the subject of organizational study, Montaña enters the field of the analysis of organizations through the trans disciplinary, using categories as self-regulating systems, creative - productive systems and complex systems, bringing with it new undergone methodological and since then a new epistemological development that passes all the social sciences to reach organizational studies.

In this regard Ibarra and Montaña pose that the organization, a complex phenomenon, cannot be seized from a single glance or a single discipline, so that it is not possible to think of a "discipline of the organization". In this sense, the theory of the organization, with all its limitations, represents an effort to the integration of the knowledge that by their proposals, occurs sometimes cone and other eclectic knowledge, as novel. For this reason, it is necessary to recognize that this effort does not escape from the area of the false utopia, the claim to synthesize and reformulate a series of disjointed approaches with methodological bases even different: sociological, psychological, anthropological contributions, political science and history, to mention a few.

Thus, a theory of the organization formed in an interdisciplinary way seems contain the germ of their limitations that is specific to establish "diplomatic relations" between the disciplines without knowing the necessary plurality of existing knowledge on multidisciplinary and transdisciplinarity. This step the simple establishment of "diplomatic relations" (Morin, 1992, p. 244) between disciplines in this new interdisciplinary character requires this transdisciplinary nature, which implies the establishment of a new open paradigm, recover the notions of subject and disorder to arrive at the explanation of the organizational complexity, of the unity-diversity of the organized.

Organizational studies are enrolled in the Social Sciences because - metaphorically - the society is within the organizations. As Edgar Morin says, the parties are in the whole and the whole is contained in each part. That is why the symbolic life that characterizes the postmodern organizations, has never gone away and the social relations metaphorization play an important role in the process of organizational self-regulation. The Morin approach applied to organizational studies, generates two major requirements:

On one hand, to go beyond the simple idea of organization and structure, to incorporate the analysis processes for the constitution of systems, in this case of the social whole.

On the other hand, recognizing the impossibility of decoupling the known object of the subject that you know, that is to say, "the inability to form a man of science cut off from the subject that conceived, and as a result, isolated aspects of the social, ethical and political " (Ibarra and Montaña, 1992, p. 64).

Before such approaches, transdisciplinarity appears as an alternative to enable various phenomena until now dispersed and fragmented disciplinary penalties, being able to recognize its nature essentially organized.

As it can be seen, the theoretical efforts and research gave, consolidated the proposal from an institutional point of view, administrative, academic, and research, an issue that remains to be resolved until our days, the search for the identity of the so-called epistemic organizational studies, despite the fact that several of their precursors and followers have pointed out this lack, such as drawn Ramirez, Vargas and de la Rosa. Hence, to consolidate the epistemic identity of the organizational studies is necessary to rely on the explanatory frameworks of epistemology, philosophy of science, methodology of the science, and sociology of science.

3. The Search for Identity in the Organizational Studies

As has been seen until now, the organizational studies emerged as an alternative and complement to the theories of organization, which emerged in the field of administration, and whose epistemic perspective is framed in the positivist view of science that has as its model the methodology of the natural sciences. In these methodological procedures the ultimate aim is the search for laws supported by rigorous empirical observations subject to quantification techniques, where the theories resulting from such laws are forced to exhibit an ironclad systematic and logical consistency.

As an example of the above, highlights the contributions of General Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, Woodward, Burns and Stalker, Donaldson, Lawrence & Lorsch) and more specifically the approach of the contingency of Davidson. It should be emphasized that from this perspective, there was an attempt to give a technocratic nature and practical-professional to the study of organizations, being a central objective, contribute to the management in their tasks of direction and control. Espinoza argues that the positivist claims that have been pointed out, legitimized by resorting to the epistemological elaborations of the Vienna Circle, resulting in the current main organizational prevail the characterization of the science proposed by the above mentioned group of scientific methodologists.

However, the breakdown of the basic approaches of the Vienna circle which has been observed in the past twenty or thirty years, has had a devastating effect, the consequences of which are still not adequately sized. The questioning of the positivism of the Vienna circle can be found in the work of Wittgenstein and Quine, as well as in the developments of the notorious scientific methodologists and historians of science as Feyerabend, Rorty, Lakatos and particularly relevant to the social sciences, Kuhn. The new conceptualizations of science break radically with the positivist assumptions quantitative isolated from the postulates of the interpretive paradigm or qualitative.

Science is no longer seen as a solid building that reaches progressive and increasingly greater heights of knowledge according to Valenzuela built new floors of laws and theories and it is recognized that even the natural science is affected in a decisive way by historical elements, social and political among others, in such a way that the passing of knowledge and science is not predetermined linearly in a inexorable logic of accumulation and measurable, but rather takes place in environments marked by discontinuities, crisis, convulsions, ruptures, gaps, interests and other outside elements purely rational criteria. From a critical perspective, are reversed the roles and become the social sciences which are in a position to give account of themselves and of the natural sciences, which leads to the thought that "we are faced with a world epistemologically invested in relation to the notions received in this area" (Valenzuela, 1997, p. 65).

In this state of affairs, various theories or neo-positivists critical developed their proposals to study the organizational phenomenon by placing questioned exclusive claims of their respective main currents. Therefore, the scenario is an intellectual environment conducive to the emergence of new approaches and theories, which is accompanied by new process of redefinition of the intellectual field. This goes against the tide of dogmatism and academic conservatism, since the new proposals bring different ideas that postulate the importance of the intellectual plurality in the social sciences. That pluralism implies interpretative heterogeneity and dialog within the disciplines, precisely what organizational studies want and achieve.

The main theoretical proposals that underpin this new conception of science have been borrowed from the hermeneutic, phenomenology, structuralism and poststructuralism, as well as the various neomarxism. The new approaches tend to be more receptive to the incorporation of theoretical elements that have their origin in various disciplines, building bridges including, the linguistics, the humanities and the reflections of aesthetic in nature. In this way, the speech of the organizational studies opens at the integration and the theoretical synthesis, by what some authors even speak of a postmodern science.

3. The criteria of Donaldson for a Defense of Positivism in the Analysis of the Organizations

Heir of the Comteana tradition, sociological positivism, represented by Donaldson in the current era, has been applied to the study of organizations in an attempt of explanation and not interpretation of the behavior of the individuals that are found in its interior, making use of the causal principles, in such a way that the generalization and determination are the basic components of the positivist theory of the organization, in such sense, Donaldson defends all systematic process driven by the hypothesis test, repetitions or failures to replicate, and the accumulation of empirical generalizations, considering as progress, all theorization of the organizations on the basis of the results of empirical research and its application to the resolution of real-world problems.

Sociological positivism that influenced and still influences with their concepts, categories and scientific fundamental theoretical premises operated by the Administration, Management and Organizational Theory call, has been relegated as orthodox, linear, conservative, ahistorical and completely absent from the criticism. As an example of this particular form of explains to the organizations, these are views from positivism, as instruments of dominant class, marked by the rational planning, in which the subjects have no possibility of emancipation.

Unlike a course of "normal science" (Kuhn, 2006, p. 33) in the prevailing of the functional theory, academics of some groups identified with the critical theory or interpretative, express little interest in problems of measurement and research design and are not trying to build a set of accumulated results of the research that can be replicated, as they consider the contributions of the sociological positivism to the field of organization studies is limited to the constant repetition of certain fundamental propositions that are proven or not, that is to say, that may or may not be verifiable.

Precisely, as a way to defend its postulates Lex Donaldson in his work: in defense of Organizational Theory. A reply to the criticism is looking for overcome attacks issued by the critical studies of the quotas, despite the fact that Professor Donaldson is the exponent of the school of the contingency. Donaldson observes that much of the discussion about the traditional studies of the organization poses the fundamental question, can there be a science of the organizations? (Donaldson, 1985, p. 75). This question poses two problems: the ontological status of the organizations and the epistemological status of the theory of the organization (Burrell & Morgan, 1985, pp. 298-299).

The application of the techniques of the natural sciences to the organizations and the belief that organizations are solid concrete things, were questioned by (Burrell & Morgan; Clegg & Dunkerley) and Donaldson claims to have "defeated" (Donaldson, 1988, p. 28). These criticisms of the positivist theory of the organization, according to Donaldson (1985, p. 51) "are a misappreciation of the philosophy of science [...]" or reflect a " [...] wrong interpretation of sociological theory" (Donaldson, 1985, p. 173). In this regard, argues that the proposal for the positivist analysis of organizations is the adequate.

Donaldson believes that progress in theorizing about the organizations is given according to the results of empirical research and its application to the resolution of real-world problems. Following this line of reasoning, we have to the defense that performs Donaldson of what he calls organizational theory, which is based on the assumption that the relevant arguments are not and should not be in the level of ideas nor on the level of individual interests, but that must be linked to empirical level. Argues that the analysis and organizational design should be based on well-founded empirical generalizations, based on long-term research programs. And therefore, the functional structuralist theory within the positivist sociology of organizations filled with these requirements.

In the discussion about the scientific status of a science of the organizations, defending the positivist theory of the organization, Donaldson (1985, p.5) proposes that three conditions must be observed: the ontological status of the organizations, the epistemological status of the theory of the Organization and the epistemological status of the Organizational studies, this author is based on the belief that organizations are concrete things and sound, similar to the natural sciences, with the result that is necessary to apply the techniques of the natural sciences to social phenomena, to be able to know, through the functionalist theory that seeks to expand the theory of the organization to assimilate their rivals, in such a way as to incorporate to your criticisms, so in this way, the extension of the traditional explanatory frameworks and reject the attempts to eradicate the concepts and objects of study traditional. Given this promise of expansion that is founded still the current debate, it is interesting to note the defense mechanisms of his theoretical.

To begin, Donaldson rejects the incommensurability of paradigms because it inevitably involves the segregation and intellectual relativism. In this sense, the concept of incommensurability refers to the inability to compare two theoretical structures (typically theories, but in the case of this work, total paradigms). That two theories are immeasurable does not mean they will not be able to be compared only by their concepts and terms, but that is also the incomparable dimension concerning scientific practices. The incommensurability in the structure appears to explain the beginning of a crisis, that is to say, when a dominant paradigm is in crisis and another new paradigm emerges as an alternative.

Continuing with the notion of incommensurability, when a candidate for a new paradigm is in dispute with its predecessor, Kuhn poses: "what is it that makes the group leave a normal research tradition in favor of another?" (Kuhn, 2006, p.258). In response, Kuhn pointed out the different dimensions by which are conceivable that two rival paradigms cannot be put in direct competition. In the first place, the supporters of two rival paradigms will not agree in regard to the problems facing it (and solve) a candidate for paradigm, that is to say, there is an incommensurability of standards and definitions. This is what concerns Donaldson.

Two scientists in different paradigms are, in the words of Kuhn, in "different worlds". This is not to say that there are many worlds, and that has different scientists working in each one of them, since if several scientists look at the world, which look has not changed the step of a tradition to another. However, after a change of paradigm, a world may contain bodies that fall slowly, while another contains pendulums that repeated their movements constantly. In this regard, if the transformations in perceptual science accompany the changes of paradigm, do not pretend that scientists claim directly its perceptual changes, since it is a slow phenomenon.

In first place, the more usual argument is that those that propose a new paradigm assert that this solves the problems that have led to the old to the crisis (many "critical experiments", which are the ones that discriminate well the two paradigms, are crucial to the conversion becomes effective). Although no one can always say that have been resolved the problems that led to a crisis. In fact, "the theory of Copernicus was not more accurate than that of Ptolemy and not directly led to an improvement of the calendar" (Kuhn, 2006, p. 273).

Along with the arguments of Donaldson, we outline the defenses that the author points out as a justification of why you should use the positivist theory for the analysis of the organizations. Let's take a look at the first defense:

Distinction between organization and society. This social relation is expressed in the metaphor of physical levels of internal/external and micro/macro analysis. The organization, a relatively "micro-phenomena" (Donaldson, 1985, p. 123), is a subsystem of society; "the theory of the organization is a discipline of sociology" (Donaldson, 1985, pp. 117-118). The theory of the organization refers to those parts of the social structure located within the organization; the sociology deals with the broader society by means of this distinction, the theory of the organization is protected from the criticism of those who argue in favor of a sociology of the organization: a wrong level, a different object of study, according to Donaldson. In this way, the possibility of a Marxist theory of organizations, for example, is discarded as a contradiction in terms: "Marxism is a theory of society; therefore, it cannot be a theory of organizations" (Donaldson, 1985, p. 127). By means of this distinction, it is protected from the criticism of those who argue in favor of the sociology of organizations. Let's dig a little bit more in their arguments that nullify the possibility of existence of a critical theory of the Marxist organizations of court:

Organizational studies will be better if you resist the seduction of being assimilated to the approach to sociology in general [...] In addition, the contingency does not represent a irrelevant school in the analysis of the organizations, to the contrary, it marks a milestone that defines dimensions of organizational analysis through objective measures of structure that allow us to understand the operation of the same (Donaldson, 1985, p. 127).

Compared to the criticisms of the theory of the organization, Donaldson argues that from his perspective, the theories of structural-functionalist are convincing and notes in addition to the empirical studies that use comparative quantitative methods are appropriate, while the "alternative programs" (Donaldson, 1985, p. 12) in the theory of the Organization, recognized the need to improve the theoretical framework and flexible definition of their objects of study. As to the method, Donaldson believes that rather than abandon the use of quantitative methods; these must be refined, taking into account that "a large part of the empirical and theoretical literature refers to this meta theory" (Donaldson, 1985, p. 12).

Second line of defense: the scope of the theory of the organization. For Donaldson, the focus of the theory of organizational behavior is goal-oriented, coordinated toward one objective: "organizations are 'objects' of study in its own right, because they are objectified human productions, which as such acquire a meaning that transcends the individuals who make up" (Donaldson, 1985, p. 8), therefore the theory of the organization does not attempt to explain everything that happens within the "legal wrap" of organizations (op. cit.). For the author, the theory of the organization is considering a narrow subset of a subsystem of society, therefore, is a ruse and an artificial matter, the delineating phenomena that it cannot handle the theory of the organization, and then use another theory to "demonstrate" the inadequacy of the approach for Donaldson, what organizational theory cannot explain, is not their object of study, or is in a wrong level, which is within the organization, but beyond their subset.

Third defense mechanism: the teleological explanation of the positivist theory of the organization. Donaldson presents the theory of the organization as a new discipline that struggles to define itself and legitimized, away from their origins in the sociology of Weber. In pursuit of its aims and purposes, Donaldson argues for the relevance of the methodological approaches that enable them to find causal relationships and regular patterns as generalized rules of behavior in organizations, arguing the usefulness of the approach to structural-functionalist to understand organization and its current playlist.

For Donaldson, critical sociology is problematic in relation to organizational studies, in two important aspects: first, because it deals with the wrong level by studying the broader society, and second, because it is outdated, due to the fact that their theories are classic and contemporary not, in such a way that the exponents of the critical sociology become the custodians of a conservative old orthodoxy. In relation to the resistance to the paradigmatic change, Donaldson considers that there are resistances between the guardians and the opponents to a paradigm, given that the resistance to change is the norm. Its position is forthright in defending the idea that the positivism has functioned as a method and has been established that hegemonic control over the production of knowledge, specifying clearly what is cognizable (ontology) and how you are going to be known (epistemology) and that these livelihoods have configured the scope and content of the studies of the organization and the nature of the rules that govern the academic profession in this field of studies.

At the bottom of the criticism of Donaldson toward his detractors, underlies the defense of a field of study and analysis of the organizations that can be seen from the economy and is linked to a greater extent to the Administration, which transcends disciplinary fields but converges in the analysis of the organization as an object and as a contemporary social actor: the called theory of the contingency.

4. The Crisis of Epistemic Identity in Organizational Studies

In the defense of Donaldson to the primacy of the positivism as theory and as a methodology to study the organizations, is clear that a crisis prevails: epistemic, theoretical and methodological in organizational studies. In this sense, despite the fact that researchers like Ramirez, Vargas and De la Rosa, do not explicitly state that the Administration has such as conceptual and theoretical limits to understand many phenomena of his environment and that lost capacity heuristics, if they assert that the Organizational studies were born to complement not only to the Administration, but also to organizational theory. However, very significant contrasts were found that could make us think about a new program of research and that as a mid-range methodological strategy, could be complemented.

Within these contrasts are the following:

... The Organizational studies focus the study and analysis of the organizational phenomenon in its wide diversity and management focuses on the generation and study of techniques, practices and administrative procedures to make more effective especially to business organizations. Another very important contrast is the object of work, i.e. organization versus company, on the one hand the Administration as a discipline has focused on the company as a field of action; while the Organizational studies have focused on the organization as a field of study. Organizational studies focus from an analytical point of view to the study of the set of elements, circumstances and/or processes which allow us to understand the organizational reality in its wide diversity and complexity, and on the other hand, the Administration approached from a functionalist point of view the set of factors, circumstances and/or processes which affect, or influence determine how favorable or unfavorable the performance of various types of organizations is, predominantly the business. Organizational studies is located mainly in the field of understanding, the Administration is located predominantly in the prescription. As well, from a same phenomenon, process or practice, you can make a difference in terms of the meaning assigned either by the organizational approach or by the Administrative Panel. Finally, in terms of methodology, organizational studies preponderantly make use of qualitative methods and case study; to turn the Administration predominantly uses quantitative methods and its trend is to study groups of organizations/companies" (Ramirez, Vargas & De la Rosa, 2011, p. 17).

Another of the aspects in which they differed the administrative discipline and organizational studies, is that the first few times will stretch out your hand of inputs from other disciplines and when they do, generally, these have already been processed within the scope of the Organizational studies and of the theory of the Organization, whereas in the organizational studies, the researcher in accordance with its object of study you can use the concepts and tools of various disciplines which it believes can help to interpret a reality or to build it, therefore, "the investigator may propose to their partners different arguments under various approaches: descriptive, explanatory, sympathetic, interpretative and/or purposeful" (Ramirez, Vargas & De la Rosa, 2011, p. 30). How do the researchers cited patent, at this stage in his development, the epistemological problems, and methodological gnoseologic are marked in the organizational studies and therefore, its lack of epistemic identity.

Given that each organization is unique and the phenomena being studied within it have different characteristics, it is not possible to establish a pattern, this is the reason why the whole discussion between the positivist theory of the organization and its critics, depends on the ontological status of the organization and its relationship with the society, which leads to organizational studies to appeal not only to multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity (Barba and Solis), but also to the transdisciplinarity, which involves crossing the boundaries between disciplines to understand their complex object of study with their own specific questions, assumptions, methodologies and findings.

In this sense, Montaña makes a count of the various social disciplines that contribute to the study of organizations by noting that the social sciences are *multiple, changing and without clear boundaries*, which implies that they can circulate with disciplines that are not necessarily located in the social sciences. With regard to the organizations concerned that:

Any organization is set in a context that is both spatial and temporal, at the same time cultural, technological, economic, political and social; but that the organization is not mere reflection but project based on a high level of heterogeneity; that the environment is reconstructed in the organization, as well as the organization is in broader social spaces (Montaña, 2004, p. 29).

However, even in the nature of the disciplinary convergence agree the theoreticians of organizational studies, which is why some claim that the organizational studies can represent an interdisciplinary field (Clegg & Hardy; Pfeffer; Hatch; Montaña), a field of knowledge, or they might be understood as a meeting point between various disciplines in the social sciences who are interested in the organization and the organizational phenomena, looking for contravening the dominant hegemonic logic of the administration and management. In fact, for Montaña "organizational studies in Mexico do not represent a discipline, but a meeting point of disciplines. Particularly is considered that the organizational studies can be one of the bridges of communication between the Administration and the Social Sciences" (Montaña, 2004, p. 1).

The ontology, understood as the study of what it is, in both is and exists, allows us to identify which by its constitution, organizational studies are a core of intelligibility from many disciplines. If resumes to Lyotard, the organizational studies are as a postmodern disciplinary space that shares the theoretical and methodological contributions from various disciplines, due to its object of study runs transversely between several of them and therefore cannot be located as proper object of a particular discipline. Beyond these conceptualizations, which are located in organizational studies as a meeting point for various disciplines that converge on a common interest: the organization, Montaña argues that there are other postures that indicate its transdisciplinary nature, which has to be diluted among the various disciplines from which the organization is studied.

In this regard Medina says that in the first place, you must accept the lack of unity of the paradigmatic organizational studies, in order to overthrow the fallacy that monolithic would retrieve the tools necessary and sufficient to form a general field of organizational theory, from a fragmented perspective: methodological anarchism. With respect to the sources from which they can draw the organizational studies, the author proposes:

Incorporate new theoretical bodies from disciplines as diverse as anthropology, communication, philosophy, linguistics, and semiology, among others. In addition, it could seat returns to the watering place of systematic biology, psychology, management, economics, history, the systems approach and sociology. Even the theoretical physics because this area of scientific knowledge has now made significant contributions to the organizational discipline (Medina, 2010, p. 105).

Following this same idea, it is appropriate to return the advice of Pfeffer, in relation to the dangers that arise when some paradigm is in development:

This absence of a well-developed scientific paradigm makes experimenting with anything new or different is more desirable. You also have the undesirable property to allow the preferences, virtually without restriction of scientific norms and standards will be widely distributed unbridled. Then, the lack of a strong sustenance in a discipline or in the phenomena, are likely to be trapped by the fads and new developments (Pfeffer, 2000, pp. 265-266).

Doing a brief allusion to the context of discovery, organizational studies, like other social sciences, are faced with the debate of which is the best method to access the knowledge, being in the center of the discussion, the dichotomy that is posed by the use of quantitative and qualitative methods. In the historical review, is noted that the researchers grouped in the theory of the organization and administration, opt for quantitative methods, while those who are located in the organizational studies, by qualitative methods, although among the latter there are those who are inclined to the mix methodological, assuming the largest effort in work, time and money that this implies, for the sake of achieving a better understanding of the phenomenon. In this dispute there is no agreement on which is the best method for the field, and in accordance with Martin and Frost, there are those who are inclined to seek consensus, such as Donaldson; Pfeffer and Reed, while others advocate the proliferation of paradigms, such as Burrell & Morgan & Van Maanen.

As can be seen throughout this journey, we are faced with a diverse set of approaches and proposals that cancel in the final analysis, the chances of having a single definition, totalitarian, meta-theoretical, of the "object" of their own organizational studies. What prevails today in the interior of the field is a series of narratives that denote the local agreements that each community established on the basis of their own interests and their ways of understanding and operating the knowledge. This situation clearly reaffirms what we have been pointing out, that the organizational studies are a field of plural, diverse and complex knowledge, from which you can appreciate various edges of the structures and processes that constitute the organization. These approaches are located somewhere between the extremes represented by the temporary solution of certain problems of the local organization, the interpretation of its social consequences and the possible alternative projects that they may respond. It is precisely this complexity and plurality, from which emanates its strength, as the debate and criticism are positive aspects to the generation of knowledge.

5. The Philosophical Approach of Lakatos

Before the dilemmas discussed in the previous segments, now is presented the proposal of Imre Lakatos to understand the methodology of scientific research programs, such as explanatory framework to define ontological and epistemically to organizational studies, on the assumption that the epistemology aims to explain the peculiarity of a science in regard to the delimitation of its object of study, the interpretation of its object of study, as well as the rigor of the research process that continues for the achievement of results and the communication of the same. Understood as a scientific research program, the organizational studies have the opportunity to resolve current conflicts with regard to its identity and its epistemological object.

While the majority of philosophers of science of positivist court focus on validation, legitimation and existence of the sciences, consider indispensable the construction of theories and sound methodologies whose process and outcomes are replicable or in the construction of empirical propositions and logics, Lakatos accepts the fact that the object of science is not to seek the truth, but the best explanation of the object of study, through the development of the theory.

For Lakatos, it is essential the demarcation between science and pseudoscience, which considers that beyond being a problem for philosophy of living room, has a political and vital social importance. In this sense, what characterizes the scientific conduct is a true even skepticism with regard to our theories, given that "profession of blind faith in a theory is not a virtue but an intellectual crime" (Lakatos 2007, p. 10). Lakatos gives critical importance to the theories that once contained or have a degree of independence with its creators, as a result, the author considers that:

A theory may have a scientific value even eminent, although no one understood and even less created in it. The value of a cognitive theory has nothing to do with their psychological impact on people's minds. Beliefs, convictions, understandings [...] are states of the human mind. But the scientific value and objective of a theory is independent of the human mind that created it or understands it. Its scientific value only depends on the support provided by the objective facts to this conjecture (*op.cit.*).

In the above quotation it is possible to identify the criticism of Lakatos to Kuhn, assuming that the category of scientific revolutions that proposes this, constitutes for Lakatos, only an irrational belief change, a kind of religious convention, which has nothing to do with rational criteria. Doing the same exercise of demarcation, Kuhn disqualifies the 'S' of Popper as a criterion of demarcation, because scientists which are part of a current theoretical refused to leave even when there is evidence against him.

Looking for a criterion of scientificity, Lakatos noted that the inductive logic probabilism of the Circle of Vienna, attempted to define the probability of various theories according to the total available evidence. This provides a continuous scale from the weak theories of low probability, until the powerful theories of high probability. Later, in 1934, Popper proposed a new criterion of demarcation: a theory is scientific if we cannot specify in advance a crucial experiment (or a comment) that can make it untrue, and if we refuse to specify such potential 'marker' (Popper in Lakatos, 2007, p. 12). The question is whether the scientists are willing to specify the conditions that the observable soundly rebutted. To solve the problems that the scientific revolutions of Kuhn and the 'S' encyclopedia could not, Lakatos presents the methodology of scientific research programs as a criterion of scientificity: "The typical descriptive unit of the great scientific achievements is not a hypothesis isolated but rather a program of research. Science is not just trial and error, a series of conjectures and refutations" (Lakatos, 2007, p. 13).

Lakatos distinguishes between scientific research programs or progressive and other pseudo or regressive. In a progressive program of research, the theory leads to discover new facts unknown until then. However, in the regressive programs the theories are manufactured only to accommodate the facts already known. Unlike the scientific revolutions of Kuhn in which, if we have two programs of research rivals and one of them progresses, whereas the other degenerates, scientists tend to align with the progressive program, for Lakatos, if the theory is delayed with respect to the events, this means that we are in the presence of research programs and poor regressive, which does not mean that therefore must be rejected, because many programs that sailed in oceans of anomalies, were rescued in the future by other scientists, returning to this theory, its power heuristic.

Contrary to Popper, the methodologies of scientific research programs do not offer an instant rationality. You have to deal with benevolence to the programs in development; may take decades before the programs lifting off the ground and make progressive empirically (Lakatos, 2007, p. 16).

One of the critical aspects of the proposed 'S sophisticated Lakatos is the replacement of the concept of theory, as a basic concept of the logic of the research, by the concept of series of theories. What has to be assessed as scientific or pseudo is a succession of theories and not a given theory. These series of theories Lakatos called them research programs.

The research programs are made up of two types of heuristics:

A). *The negative heuristic*, which constitutes the core of the program, it cannot be changed, is preserved by a *protective belt* that are the auxiliary hypotheses, which receive the impacts of contrast. Lakatos proposes that to defend the core firm, the auxiliary hypotheses will be adjusted and readjusted and even completely replaced. The core that makes up the negative heuristic is irrefutable by methodological decision of its supporters, the anomalies must not only cause changes in the protective belt of observational and auxiliary assumptions in the initial conditions. In this way, "a program of research is successful if this leads to a progressive shift from problematic; it fails, if it leads to a regressive change" (Lakatos, 2007, p. 66), which implies that the program as a whole, must exhibit an empirical intermittently progressive change. The term intermittent for Lakatos implies that is possible to accede to a program in spite of the apparent refutations, to do this using the protective belt. However, it also poses a research program can be collapsed and abandoned when the strong core stops anticipating new facts.

B). *The positive heuristic*. The research programs are also characterized by its positive heuristics, which consists of a set, partially structured, suggestions or leads on how to change and develop the *rebuttable versions* of the program of research, on how to modify or complicate the protective belt "rebuttable presumption" (Lakatos, 2007, p. 69). The heuristics of the positive program prevents the scientist is lost in the ocean of anomalies. The positive heuristic sets out an agenda that lists a sequence of increasingly complicated models, simulators of reality: the attention of the scientific focuses on the construction of their models according to the instructions laid down in the positive part of your program. Counter examples ignore the "real", "data" available (*op. cit.*). The rational selection of problems carried out by scientists working in meaningful research programs is determined by the positive heuristic of the program, and not by the psychologically embarrassing (or technologically urgent) anomalies that are listed but archived after in the hope that, when the time comes, will be converted to validation of the program.

Criticism of the Lakatos detractors are naive enough to believe that when you view a refuted theory, automatically must be replaced with another heuristic of greater power, without there being a protective belt of the positive heuristic, which is precisely the function of save and protect the core protector, responding the refutations and accumulating anomalies that at a given moment can be resolved by the research program.

6. Organizational Studies as a Research Program

Returning to the conceptual categories of hybridization and amalgam of Giménez (2004, p. 268), practicality in Organizational studies have come to the pluralization and fragmentation of a very fast way that has had as main roads the specialization and the "hybridization" or amalgam. Specialization entails the segmentation of the object of study of a discipline according to different criteria: scale, specific institutions, and individual social facts. For example, from the years 80 and 90 the research on organizational studies grow dramatically, but this growth was accompanied by a hybridization or amalgam that consists of the merger, recombination or crossing of specialties or fragments of neighboring disciplines that prevailed until our days. These organizational research; do not include complete disciplines, but only sectors or parts of the same. Authors such as Dogan and Phare, argue that, at least in the last two decades, the greater part of the innovations in the field of social sciences have come from, not of multidisciplinary, but of the amalgam, that is, work done by small teams of researchers in the boundaries between disciplines, in the crossing points between specialties.

The amalgams that raises Giménez, demonstrate the permeability of the disciplinary boundaries of the so-called organizational studies since they imply in practice, the movement of concepts, scientific categories, fundamental theoretical assumptions, theories, methods and techniques of research specific to different disciplines, is true that the organizational studies constitute a field that emerged from the administration, is clear that tries to shape a new research program with the theories that make up the central core or positive heuristics, and the auxiliary assumptions that are fed by the protective belt. But is also true, that the organizational studies are a research program in development, which is to be treated with kindness, because rationality does not offer a snapshot.

As has been revised in this article, the organizational studies represent a body of knowledge that has its origin in such disciplines as sociology, administration, psychology, among others and has been progressing through its distinction of the disciplines where is born, a process that Lakatos refers in the following way: "a scientific research program may face a substantial set of accepted scientific knowledge; as if there will be planted in a hostile environment that goes step by step conquering and transforming" (Lakatos, 2007, p. 74). In the brief history of the organizational studies, the most important distinction you have to do the organizational studies has been in relation to the administrative discipline and to sociology, so that it is possible to identify in this future, what drew Lakatos:

Some of the more important research programs in the history of science were grafted in older programs in relation to which were clearly inconsistent [...] grows the young program grafted, ends the peaceful coexistence, the symbiosis is competitive and the champions of the new program try to completely replace the old (Lakatos, 2007, p. 77).

This is what happens at the current stage of the organizational studies, where they try to prove their independence of epistemic and theoretical science that supported them (sociology, psychology, management, human biology), and in this struggle, there is what Lakatos regarded as two extreme positions and equally irrational connection to the "grafted" programs:

The conservative position that is to halt the program until is resolved in some way the basic inconsistency with regard to the old program, what Lakatos is critical alluding to the fact that it is an irrational inconsistent work on fundamentals. The "conservatives" will concentrate their efforts on the elimination of the inconsistency in an explanation (approximate) of the postulates of the new program in terms of the old program, given that they understand that "it is unreasonable to continue with the program again without a successful reduction of the above mentioned class" (Lakatos, 2007, p. 80). On the other hand the *anarchist position* with regard to the programs that is grafted in "exalt the anarchy of the foundations as a virtue and to consider the inconsistency (weak) as a basic property of the nature or as a last limitation of human knowledge" (op. cit.)

Above these two positions, is the *rational position with regard* to the grafted programs, which seeks to exploit its heuristic power, without resigning oneself to chaos on the fundamental that is under construction. This position is to take charge of the organizational studies, fighting among a sea of anomalies, to become a recognized and self-contained program of research.

Finally, on the question of how are deleted the programs of research, Lakatos noted that a regressive movement of problematic is a reason so insufficient to eliminate a program of research as the outdated "refutations" or the "crisis" on Kuhn's categories, on the other hand he proposes a objective reason (not psychological partner) for rejecting a program, that is to say, to eliminate its strong core and its program for the construction of protective belts, and is "the emergence of a rival program of research that explains the success of its rival prior and you are overcome by an additional deployment of *heuristic power*" (Lakatos, 2007, p. 93).

For Lakatos, the rationality that instant proposes Popper with their rebuttals, constitute a failure, due to the fact that rationality is fallible and is running slowly, hence that: "the continuity of the science, the *tenacity of some* theories, the rationality of a certain magnitude of dogmatism, can only be explained if we interpret the science as a field of battle of the research programs and not the isolated theories" (Lakatos 2007, p. 116).

The methodology of the research programs of Lakatos allows you to define ontologically to organizational studies as a postmodern disciplinary space where at you have an object of study that postmodern also collaborates with various disciplines through the inter and transdisciplinarity, whose overlap includes both the natural and social sciences, with whom it shares objects of study, methodology, theories, and other aspects of the investigation.

Returning to the two fundamental components of the proposal of Lakatos to shape programs of research, we have the *negative* heuristics, including the various theories that make up the core of the theories of the administration, core of theories from sociology, anthropology, psychology, biology of the learn, among other, based partly on the inductive hypothetical and deductive hypothetical methods, but that also belong to the hermeneutical flows and forgiving.

On the other hand, the *positive heuristic*, where are the methodologies of the organizational studies as the qualitative and quantitative methods that constitute the belts that protect the central core of the program. That is to say, a research program for organizational studies is first in its design under three conditions: that is enunciable, which is reproducible and has formulated limits. In this design should enter disciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary categories to build the human reality in relation to the following aspects: ontological, epistemological, methodological and theoretical a body to do logical approaches to understand/explain to the organizations.

7. Conclusions

The discussion of paradigms is far from being complete. Donaldson highlighted some of the terms of this discussion with the application of the scientific method for the integrated organizational analysis, and refuted many of the faulty assertions of critics of the Aston Group and the theory of the contingency. This debate has edges very positive but also negative effects.

On the positive side, some of the groups of theories are establishing strong positions, with high levels of consensus on research priorities, central themes, standardized terminology, and the other distinctive symbols of the so-called "normal science" (Kuhn, 2006:33). This debate must bind the practitioners and scholars of organizational studies, to confront another explicit way and tacit assumptions, and perhaps prevent the unthinking adoption in many occasions of concepts, categories and scientific fundamental theoretical premises of other disciplines.

On the negative side, articles that address the identity of the epistemic organizational studies are minimal, and most of those who defend the organizational studies as a theoretical paradigm have been limited to the level of ideas, with words in a sea of endless repetitive prose. Few authors, who publish in leading journals on the organization, translate theoretical research that would enable the organizational perspective here raised, to grow in search of its own research program and therefore their epistemic identity. Even very few critics identified by Donaldson that have played a leadership role, stimulating the creation of sustained research programs that resolve some of the disputes at an empirical level.

The first conclusion to be drawn from the proposals made in this document has to do with the recognition that in science, there is no single truth or manner of addressing a problem, even more, the change is the only constant, so that in the case of the new scientific fields such as the organizational studies, is necessary to make a compilation of all epistemological, methodological and theoretical livelihood, to give order and meaning through the systematization that allows the development of a research program such as the one proposed.

The special interdisciplinary feature, and transdisciplinary approaches to organizational studies that makes them establish "diplomatic" relations with other disciplines, as well as the complexity of its object of study, should not be seen as a limitation or problem, but as a fortress, since it implies the constitution of a new open paradigm, to recover the notions of subject and disorder to arrive at the explanation of the organizational complexity, of the unity-diversity of the organized (Morin & Piatelli-Palmarini). This approach generates two major requirements: First, to go beyond the simple idea of organization and structure, to incorporate the analysis processes for the constitution of systems, in this case of the social whole. The second, recognizing the impossibility of decoupling the known object of the subject that you know, in other words, "the inability to form a man of science cut off from the subject that the conceived and as a result, isolated aspects of the social, ethical and political (Morin and Piattelli-Palmarini, 1983, p. 211).

In addition to the above approaches, Ibarra and Montaña warn that up to now, diverse organizational phenomena have been dispersed and fragmented disciplinary penalties, reducing its heuristics ability, which imposes the need for transdisciplinarity to understand the organization. Under this perspective, is looking for a new look with which perform supplementary readings and/or more appropriate organizational phenomenon.

In the same order of ideas, Montaña said that the organizational studies are a meeting of different disciplines and perspectives in United theory and method to explain to the organizations and not a field of specific knowledge and differentiated, hence the search for her epistemic identity becomes imperative, in front of the diverse set of approaches and proposals that cancel in the final analysis the chances of having a single definition, totalitarian, meta theoretical "object" of their own organizational studies, prevails today a series of narratives that denote the local agreements that each community established on the basis of their own interests and their ways of understanding and operate the knowledge.

This situation clearly reaffirms what we have been pointing out, that the organizational studies are a field of plural knowledge, diverse and complex, from which you can appreciate various edges of the structures and processes that constitute the organization, and that the approximations to its object of study are located somewhere between the extremes represented by the successful solution although cyclical of certain local problems of organization, and the interpretation of its social consequences and the possible alternative projects that could give them solution. Its strength lies precisely in its variety and complexity. It should be noted, however, each organization is unique and the phenomena being studied within it have different characteristics, so it is not possible to establish a pattern of exception, that is to say, would be living together organizational studies with that carried out from the Administration, each one with its own particular approach and perspective of analysis.

The proposal which we present here, creates a *lakatiano program of research* to give identity to the organizational studies, involves giving body, integration, and connection to the multiplicity of glances, disciplines, perspectives and methodologies that today make up the organizational studies, epistemology helps to explain the peculiarity of a science, in both delimits its object of study, as pointed out Luis Montaña, in the case of the organization, permanently changes. By what generate an epistemic identity, means to contribute to the generation of theories that point to the understanding of an aspect or process of organizational reality, with solid philosophical underpinnings, which makes it possible, through the *research program* that is proposed.

Well then, it is the great experience of being part of a seminal research program. An important feature on the seminal programs is that not only help you to structure a field of study, but they are increasingly also subject to a large amount of criticism, because only through its "shaming" is that can be determined new guidelines, and organizational studies are in that state.

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