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ABSTRACT:

What are the dynamics of knowledge during planning practices? This research aims to analyze the nature of knowledge dynamics during planning practices. Pierre Bourdieu's praxeology (1990, 2000) provides a fruitful framework to understand the role and the interactions between knowledge and practice. Habitus, a set of dispositions for action, offers a dynamic view of knowledge, which is permanently used, constructed and restructured during practice and for practice. This framework is mobilized through an empirical case study. Its highlights knowledge dynamics involved in planning practices: mapping the field, assigning value to practice, developing dispositions and building causal relationship on action.

Key-Words:

- Bourdieu
- Control
- Habitus
- Knowing
- Learning

RESUME :

Ce papier analyse la dynamique des connaissances organisationnelles au cours de pratiques de planification. Il mobilise la notion d'habitus (Bourdieu 1990, 2000) et propose une phase empirique qualitative.

Mots-clés :

- Apprentissage organisationnel
- Connaissances
- Contrôle
- Planification
- Pratique

Planning practices and knowledge dynamics: a Bourdieusian framework

Introduction

Whereas planning remains a major practice for most firms, the way it affects the creation, the use and structuration of knowledge is still to be explored. Since Mintzberg (1990) and Ansoff (1991) highlighted the problematic link between learning and planning, research has shown that planning is not neutral for knowledge (Miller and Cardinal 1994, Brews and Hunt 1999, Pina e Cunha and Vieira da Cunha 2002). Nevertheless, contradictory proposals have been established and the effects of planning practices on knowledge dynamics remain poorly known. What are the dynamics of knowledge during planning practices?

In an attempt to account for knowledge dynamics during planning practices, I mobilize Bourdieu's praxeology to define practice and characterize the relation between practice and knowledge: agents' actions take place in a structured social space, orientated towards specific stakes. Agents' practice is possible thanks to the habitus, a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and thoughts. (Bourdieu 1977). As a consequence, knowledge is permanently created, used or reconstructed in practice and for practice. This social-constructivist conception of knowledge emphasizes tacit and embodied elements.

This framework is mobilized to account for knowledge dynamics in planning practices through the case study of sub-unit of a leading company producing and selling electricity and gaz. Planning practices are defined in a broad sense. They consist in all the activities contributing to the elaboration of plans as the formalization of actions projected over time and orientated towards the pursuit of objectives. The empirical case study is based on meetings observations, interviews and analysis of written documents during a 13 months observation. The dynamics of knowledge identified reflect the way agents use, mobilize and modify their dispositions, beliefs, perceptions of practice and for practice.

The first section of this paper rapidly reviews research which focused on the link between planning and knowledge dynamics and then presents some elements of Bourdieu's praxeology that are useful for our research question: the concepts of field, habitus and practice. The second section presents the empirical study.

1. Background

1.1. Planning and knowledge dynamics in the literature

Whereas planning remains a major tool for many firms, its effects on the knowledge created, used and restructured by managers is still to be explored. What are the dynamics of knowledge during planning practices? Planning has been shown to affect knowledge, but past literature proposes contrasting results: Mintzberg (1994) argued that strategic planning is too rigid a process so that it blocks creativity and impedes reactivity. It is disconnected from operations and obstruct collective learning. For Cohen (1977), "planning is either political or decorative". Langley (1988) presented planning as a public relation tools which tries to legitimate decisions taken elsewhere, at a higher level. Miller and Cardinal (1994), Brews and Hunt (1999), Pina e Cunha and Vieira da Cunha (2002) asserted that planning may impact learning. However, these research focused on a specific form of planning: strategic planning. In the other side, Martinet (2001) considered planning as a tool for learning. Alcaras and Lacroux (1999) asserted that planning mobilizes various sorts of knowledge. Sanchez (1998) showed that during planning processes, people creates, shares and leverages knowledge. As exposed by Lorino (2001), "planning flickers between two contradictory but complementary poles […]: a deterministic programming of a future based on forecast and a collective project serving as a base for collective learning. Any actual planning practice is a mix between these two approaches, with varying proportioning" (Lorino 2001: 183).

However, these works did not provide a clear understanding of knowledge dynamics during planning practices. Most focused on strategic planning and are essays, based on theoretical considerations on planning. does not explore what really happens when people are involved in planning. Furthermore, knowledge is mostly considered as homogeneous, something that people possess, that can be capture and stocked in documents. In all, we still need to investigate knowledge dynamics in planning practices.

A practice-based approach can help to understand what really happens in terms of knowledge dynamics. Practice-based approach has spread among organization studies, with the aim to analyze the real work of practitioners as embedded in a collective context (Johnson, Whittington and Meilin 2003, Whittington 2006, Jarzabkowski 2004, Denis, Langley and Rouleau 2007). Practice-based approaches grants a key role to knowledge dynamics (Lave and

Wenger 1991, Tsoukas 1996, Nicolini, Gherardi and Yanow 2003). However, practice-based approaches overemphasized micro dimensions of practice and work description (Chia and Holt 2007; Lounsbury and Crumley 2007) without relying it to larger stakes inherent in practice. Moreover, planning practices have been largely neglected.

Among the few researchers who studied planning practices, Oakes, Townley and Cooper (1998) analyzed the role of business planning in a changing environment. They examined the pedagogical role of business planning and mobilized Bourdieu's framework to analyze the symbolic violence involved in the struggle to name practices, to favour some practices and to eliminate others. They showed how business planning practices influenced both the identity of agents and the structure of the field. Goddard (2004) focused on budgetary practices and accountability. He mobilized the dialectic between habitus and practice to analyze the role of budgetary practices in accountability in order to explain how accountability perceptions were constructed and how they influenced budgetary practices. His research emphasized the multiple factors that condition accountability perceptions, the interactions between personal and social elements, individual and collective levels. However, his research presents several limits in his use of Bourdieu's praxeology. First, his use is incomplete. He does not mobilize the concept of field which is essential to understand the context of practice, not only in a descriptive way, but in a comprehensive manner. As a structured space of relations with specific stakes, the field is essential to practice. Second, habitus, which is a personal characteristic, is extrapolated at a collective level, which is theoretically problematic and has not been proposed by Bourdieu

These limits are rather common. If Bourdieu's work has been widely used to define practice, (Cook and Brown 1999, Gherardi 2006, Nicolini et al 2003, Jarzabkowski 2004, Johnson et al 2003, Chia and Holt 2006, Whittington 2006), most scholars use only partially Bourdieu's framework. In particular, those interested in learning, communities of practice and knowing barely mobilize the 'habitus' and the properties of 'habitus-practice' relation to characterize knowledge dynamics. Moreover, the concept of field and its implications has been ignored. Authors mainly use the notions of "context" and "situation", which tends to limit practice to micro-analysis of work.

This is all the more problematic that Bourdieu built his framework as a system, where the different elements are difficult to extract and isolate: "habitus, field, and capital, can be defined, but only within the theoretical system they constitute, not

in isolation. [… They] are designed to be put to work empirically in systematic fashion" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 96).

1.2. Bourdieu's praxeology

Bourdieu barely refers to practice alone and does not formally define it. He generally refers to the economy of practice, the practical sense, the logic of practice. In his works, the word practice corresponds to concrete human activity which necessarily takes place in the social world. Practice may refer to very basic activities: what people eat and most of all the way they eat, the sport they like and the way they practice it, their political opinions and the way they express them; the work they achieve and the stakes they poursue.

To account for practice and its logic we need to consider the individual's habitus and the context of the field: "[practices] can […] only be accounted for by relating the social conditions in which the habitus that generated them was constituted, to the social conditions in which it is implemented" (Bourdieu 1990: 56). These notions form a system and one cannot exist without the others.

1.2.1. The field, agents and forms of capital

Bourdieu defines social worlds in terms of fields, relatively autonomous microcosms in the macrocosm of society at large. Fields are built, structured and organized through time. They are the product of a history. Each field is ruled by its own stakes and specific interests, even in those presented as disinterested, such as science or arts (Bourdieu 1990). Organizations constitute fields, themselves included in larger fields such as industries, competitive markets, economies and societies (Bourdieu 2005: 205, 217).

If photographed at a given moment, the field is a field of forces and struggles. Its structure reveals "the state of the forces between agents or institutions engaged in struggle" to dominate the field (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 77). Agents fight for the stakes that are specific to each field, in order to increase their position in the field, through the accumulation of capital. Capital can take numerous forms: economic, cultural (degrees, knowledge of cultural codes), social (networks and social relations), technical… According to the field, some forms of capital are more valuable than others. They also change with time. Capital is unequally distributed among agents. The amount and relative weight of the various forms of an agent's capital condition the possibilities for action. Through competitive

relations, agents try to conquer additional capital and/or increase the value of their capital, even if this remains at an unconscious level. Although those struggles might appear vain to external observers, they are crucial for agents.

As a matter of facts, the concept of fields offers a relational and dispositional view of social world: agents occupy positions that are defined relatively to others and to the stakes motivating them. They act according to their positions and the possibility for actions, the dispositions, they developed. Dispositions, bridge action and knowledge in a dynamic way through the concept of habitus. Habitus is the set of dispositions which generates practices. It is constructed, mobilized and restructured during and for practice.

1.2.2. Habitus as a mode of knowing

The relation between habitus and practice helps to comprehend the relation between knowing and practice. Habitus is a system of lasting, transposable and socially constituted dispositions (Bourdieu 1990). It "functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions, and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks" (Bourdieu 1977: 95). Habitus is a repertory of dispositions. It includes appreciations, beliefs, thoughts, about what is possible and what is not, what is good and what is bad. It constitutes guidelines for action. Agents develop their habitus through their experience in life. The fields they are involved in and their positions in these fields structure their habitus, and habitus structures, generates practices. Thus habitus is both a structuring and a structured structure, an acquired system of generative schemes: a "system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations" (Bourdieu 1990: 53). It has a double nature (Héran 1987): habitus is "the social embodied" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 127). The field structures the habitus and habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world. Habitus is also both personal and social: personal because it is acquired, structured and restructured through the particular experience of each agent, and social, because it takes sense in the specific context of the field.

As a "structuring structure", habitus works as an art of inventing rather than a catalogue of knowledge. It allows to produce an infinite number of practices, even if these practices are limited in their diversity (because they are constrained by our own capabilities, schemes, and also restricted by the rules of the game):

"habitus is an infinite capacity for generating for generating products –thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions- whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production" (Bourdieu 1990: 55). As a matter of facts, habitus allows improvisation. This is the base for practice because contexts and situations always vary. Even if we can find previous frames and compare situations one with another, we never twice with exactly the same context, and practice will always have to differ. Improvisation is also necessary given the "emergency of practice". During practice, we have no time for deep thinking. Agents are not concentrated on what they are doing, but on what they will do next. Using the sport metaphor, Bourdieu asserts, "the one who is taken by the game does not adjust to what he sees but to what he foresees, sending the ball not to where his partner is but where he will be after shooting" (Bourdieu 1980: 157)

This pre-reflexive and non-mediated relation to practice is the practical sense that Bourdieu opposes to logic. Our practice is not simply driven by conscious intentions as cognitivists and subjectivists suggest. As a matter of facts, we can face two different relations with practice, its rules, its norms and its agents : first, logic, which is the "mind process which consists in thinking mind process" (Bourdieu 1980: 52). This mind process can be conceptualization, globalization, causality, that we mobilize through reflection on our practice, just like a sportsman analyzes his own practice with his coach after the game. Second, the practical sense, widely lying on our perceptions, the embedded and immediate actions. "we must acknowledge that practice has a logic that is not logical, in order to avoid to allocate more logic that it actually has." (Bourdieu 1980: 144)˙ Bourdieu's innovative point of view is to focus on this practical sense we develop and use while practicing. Habitus "generates practice and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends." (Bourdieu 1990: 53)

In this immediate relation between habitus and practice, Bourdieu emphasizes embodied aspects. Attitudes and beliefs are internalized, which allows practice in an immediate way. "We learn bodily" (Bourdieu 2000: 141), "the world is comprehensible, immediately endowed with meaning, because the body, which thanks to its sense and to its brain, has the capacity to be present to what is outside itself, in the world, and to be impressed and durably modified by it, has been protractedly (from the beginning) exposed to its regularities. […] It is inclined and able to anticipate [these regularities] practically in behaviors which engage a *corporeal knowledge* that provides a practical comprehension of the

world." (Bourdieu 2000: 135). Agents develop their practical sense that enables one to act as one "should", without positing or executing a rule of conduct, but within a logic in practice.

This immediate fit between habitus, practice and field may lend support to a strong social determinism (Fowler 1997; Gorder 1980). Mutch (2003) acknowledges that the use of habitus in organizational research is much looser than Bourdieu's emphasis of habitus as generative structure: "there is a tension between Bourdieu's use of the concept as a generative structure that conditions practice and the focus in the literature on communities of practice on structures that emerge from practice" (Mutch 2003: 383).

However Bourdieu explicitly rejects such determinism (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 135-136). and insists on the generative capacity of habitus: "I said habitus as not to say habit: the generative (if not creative) capacity inscribed in the system of dispositions as an art, in the strongest sense of practical mastery, and in particular as an "ars inveniendi"… a notion constructed against determinism" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 122). The structures of the field exert a strong effect on habitus and practice, even if it not experienced as a constraint by the agent. Moreover, it is a relation of conditioning rather than determinism: the structure of the field conditions the habitus but this is not inexorable (Bourdieu 2000: 64). The past and the context does not determine all future practices. There is large space for change in practice and, moreover, the structures of the field, that were historically constituted, can be changed through agents' efforts.

1.3. Consequences for knowledge dynamics

This approach of knowledge dynamics is rather close to research on knowing in practice (Gherardi 2006, Cook and Brown 1999, Orlikowski 2002, Nicolini 2007). In this perspective, knowledge cannot be considered as something possessed, a self-standing set of propositions that can be stocked in memories and easily transferred. Rather, knowledge is something that is permanently used, created, restructured for practice and through practice. It must be better considered as something we do, knowing in practice (Tsoukas 1996, Cook and Brown 1999, Nicolini, Gherardi and Yanow 2003). Knowledge, or better said, knowing, is dynamic. It permanently evolves through practice. It is rooted in a context of interaction through practice and the mediation of artifacts.

Knowledge is contextual: it is linked to the conditions of its emergence. Its value is also conditioned by this context. It is situated (Suchman 1987) in "moments of

lived work, located in and accountable to particular historical, discursive, and material circumstances" (Suchman 1987: 188). Knowledge is also engaged, in the sense that,as practice, it is not disinterested and is orientated towards the achievement of goals.

Knowledge is personal since it is built through the experience of agent, but it is social because the action of the agent is rooted in the field as the social world where it takes sense and value. Tacit elements are essential since most aspects of knowing in practice rely on non-reflexive, immediate aspects.

However, a Bourdieusian perspective emphasizes the permanent interaction between the agent and the field, practice can be seen as a permanent position-taking expressing struggles over the stakes of the field, that can be analyzed in terms of capital (value and form).

2. Empirical study of knowing in planning practices

In this section, I present an empirical study of knowing in planning practices. I first briefly describe the context of the company, a leading firm in the electricity and gas industry facing deregulation. Then I present some methodological elements. Last, I identify four knowledge dynamics.

2.1. The field: A European leading company in the electricity industry

The study took place in the subsidiary of a European leading company producing and selling electricity. Facing deregulation, the company turned to a technical culture (capacity to build nuclear power plants, secure infrastructures…) to a commercial culture (develop services, increase customer loyalty,…). The organization was completely transformed, through decentralization. Local centres in charge of commercialization of selling, distributing electricity and maintaining the network became key elements.

The observation was conducted in one of these local centres. This centre was in charge of a part of Paris. It employed 1,100 persons and had 315,000 clients (segmented in 3 groups: large companies and administrations; small and medium companies and stores; household customers). With the new strategic orientation and organization, the centres gained in autonomy and in importance, whereas before they were just applying rules that were decided at the central level. Each centre has to design a five year strategic plan with mainly qualitative goals. After

acceptance by the national level, the centre has to develop new management and control system based on large participation of agents in order to implement their strategy. The CEO of the centre is a key agent, gaining in status and possibilities for action. The empirical observation took place in year 3 of the first strategic plan implemented by a new CEO. In this company, CEO of centres function in the same way as high level civil servants prefects: they constitute a corps, they move every 5-10 years. This CEO was nominated at a moment of poor performance. The centre was ranked 98 over the 102 national centres, the previous CEO was considered as a very bad manager by most agents. The new CEO benefited from a strong legitimacy: he was trained as an engineer, which is a key capital in this company with technical culture; he had previously managed successfully other centres; he was perceived as a "social" manager, with good relations with trade-unions, which is also a key asset in this company. He presented himself as a son of technical agent of the company and major trade-unionist, arguing for a sort of heritage.

The basis for the new organizational and managerial system was planning: ad-hoc planning and cyclic planning (based on budgeting) in order to involve a large number of agents in decision-making processes and changes. He promoted collegial decisions through the board of directors, meeting every Monday morning, which became the central place for major decisions. The board would launch ah-hoc planning when they considered that an issue would impact organizational culture. He also created a club of managers, meeting each quarter, with the "120 most important managers" and participating to strategic workshop. This club was explicitly presented as the main tank for planning groups members. It was highly valued by managers to be member of the club.

I studied 23 planning processes: marketing planning, technical planning, safety planning, cross-functional ad-hoc planning (on unpaid bills; reducing cost of vehicles, optimizing major clients service,…) and 12 budgeting processes. These processes lasted from one month to one year for the elaboration phase: I observed some of them from beginning to end, whereas others were only partially observed for this phase. They produced plans from a range of one year to five years. Some involved only top managers, whereas others mobilized a large scope of employees.

2.2. Methods

This observation lasted 13 months half-time, with the status of observant researcher. This company is used to welcoming researchers, mainly in

engineering fields. I was neither employed by the company, nor a consultant. I had no wages nor compensation from the company. My status of lecturer at the University helped to obtain trust from the interviewees. I presented myself as an independent researcher aiming to understand the control and planning system and its impact on people. I was allocated an office in the company at the management control stair, which allowed me to work in situ, to be available for last-minute meetings, informal talks, lunches. The sample of planning process was constituted in an on-going way, according to the prescriptions of Strauss and Corbin (1998): the sampling strategy was to both maximize the differences between the cases in order to capture the largest spectrum of practices and to minimize differences along similar cases in order to allow comparisons. The sampling process stopped at saturation, when it appeared that a new case would bring no more relevant information.

Data were collected through interviews, informal talks, observation of meetings and documents.

- Interviews: 51 persons were interviewed (half of them were interviewed various time): all members of the board of directors of the subsidiary (13 people), managers (most of them were members of a planning group), some operational agents; 3 persons at the holding level, in charge of the implementation of strategic planning and budgeting at a central level. According to the position of the interviewee in the organization, interviews were non-structured, semi-structured or structured, with different interview guides. They lasted from 30 minutes to 3 hours. Every interview was transcripted within 48 hours and transmitted to the interviewee for validation but this also allowed to raise comments, new questions and discussions, also treated this way.

- Meetings attendance: meetings dealing with a related aspect of one of the planning process; the monthly board of directors when control issues were examined; meetings of all the managers (twice a year).

- day-to-day observation: being present 2 to 3 days a week in the organization, I had many informal talks with people (interviewees or other people) around coffee-machine, cafeteria lunch, social events (such as Christmas party, special exhibition sponsored by the company) that helped to understand their perspective. Notes and remarks were written everyday in a journal of board.

- Documents: plans, methods, surveys, notes, ... I used the procedure guides, the internal notes dealing with planning practice in a broad sense (from strategic planning to budgeting) and the related documents such as tableaux de bord, budgets, meetings reports. These documents helped first to understand the

context for the organization but some also served as data and were coded in the same way as interviews.

The data were organized in 'incidents' (Strauss and Corbin 1998), parts of interviews, notes, written documents, which could inform the link between planning practices and knowledge dynamics. They were coded in a systematic way (Strauss and Corbin 1998), from a large et factual coding towards a conceptual coding, with at last four categories.

The validity of this research cannot be founded in the same criteria as traditional and positivist research, even if the questions raised are rather similar. I lead the principles of Lincoln & Guba (1985), who focus more on the strength of research process and data collecting than on veracity of results, which are considered as fallible. As a matter of facts, the principles of validity are guideline for the whole result process. I looked for the a. Credibility of research; b. transferability of conclusions; c. auditability of research; d. Confirmability of research.

The types of knowledge dynamics reflect the way agents know in planning practice, i.e. how they develop and modify their dispositions, beliefs, perceptions during practice, and at the same time mobilize these dispositions, beliefs, perceptions for practice. I acknowledge an social-constructivist posture. My data coding reflects my interpretation, not that of the interviewees (Schwandt 1994).

2.3. Knowledge dynamics in planning practice

I identified four main sorts of knowledge dynamics in planning practice, according to the use of this knowing in practice: the way knowing, as durable set of disposition, beliefs, perceptions, is modified during practice but also used and mobilized for practice. The four types consisted in: 1°) mapping the field: positioning the agents in the field of the organization; 2°) assigning value to practice: developing perceptions, judgments on practice; 3°) developing dispositions for pratices (planning and managerial practices); 4°) Building causal relationship on actions as a system of beliefs on dispositions, positions.

2.3.1. Mapping the field

Agents participating to planning meetings spend time to map the field: they situate the people, what they have done; they position the information they get about activity.

First, agents try to position the other participants in terms of job they occupy, their hierarchical level, from where they come. They particularly distinguish people coming the technical side and people coming from the commercial side. Inside the technical side, they distinguish agents from the "strong" technical background (agents who work or have worked on the infrastructure) and the "soft" technical competences (agents who work on the equipment inside the client's place: wires and meters for instance). They also situate people through their social networks: to whom they are "friends", "buddy" ; to whom they are "affiliated". They frequently use the traditional vocabulary of knighthood to describe these relations: "alleged"; "liege-man". In the same way to describe the organization's lock-in, particularly strong amongst commercial agencies and between "functional" (used to design marketing, finance and technical departments) and "operational" (agencies) departments, they talk about "baronies", "territories". Some people are also categorized by others through their trade-union membership. Trade-union membership is not compulsory in France. This company has the specificity to be among the most unionized, even at the higher levels of the hierarchy. Inside the company, agents distinguish people according to their trade-union membership but also according to which trade-union they are member. Like in many French companies, people also classify the others according to their academic curriculum, particularly among those who completed a "grande école", elite business or engineering school. "She is an ESCP", referring to one of the Parisian business school; "he is an ESTP", referring to a construction engineering school.

2.3.2. Assigning value to practice

Through planning practices, agents give value to practices through formal, but, most of the time, through informal ways. To do so, they interpret the CEO and the board position's taking as signals they send to what is valuable or not, suitable or not, acceptable or not, in terms of behavior, decision-taking, actions.

This evaluation can be based on the orthodoxical, official norms. These norms are mainly initiated by the CEO but during planning practices, norms coming from other agents can develop, as will analyzed further. For instance, the board of directors defined the main non-cycling planning categories that are presented in internal glossaries, with some methodological elements, principles of organization. When a new planning process is initiated, its categorization in one or another type considerably impacts the value assigned.

Agents do not assign value from norms immediately, directly. They interpret the norms according to other elements, that can be the behavior of the CEO and the board, contradictory norms coming from the central level, from the trade-union, from their personal point of view and interest. For instance, the objectives assigned to the group in charge of the marketing plan were to focus on customer loyalty for gas; this objective appeared to them contradictory with the global objective of favoring the increase of electrical heat. They decided that they will not implement some possible actions because they could deteriorate electricity heat rate that appeared more important for them. In the same perspective, a planning process on safety that appeared at first sight of most participants as unimportant and "non-strategic" gained in importance and significance because the CEO attended the two first meetings. Planning processes which are perceived as "too long" also loose in credibility. In planning practices, the use of some tools is critical. Control mechanisms are a key element: if a performance is not monitored or if a monitored performance is not controlled, agents stop considering them: "*the indicators that were defined are not reviewed. They are good but we do not use them. I do not know who drive them.*" (interview with commercial manager). Another one asserts: "*these indicators are rather complex to use. Concretely, we spend more time in calculating them than in using them. This is problematic.* » (interview with commercial manager).

Through planning practices, agents try to influence the value assigned by their colleague to practice. In particular, the CEO and the board of director use discourses, monitoring tools, evaluation processes, to indicate the value they want for a given practice. Objectives and goals play here a key role.

Managers also use the discourse and the goals given by the CEO as an argument to value a tool or a practice. An action being registered and measured gain in importance and managers use this to orientate their teams: "*The direction asks me for this or that performance; it requires to implement this or that policy, therefore the policy is legitimate.*" (interview with an agency manager). At the contrary, one head of department who had no objectives for two years (for organizational change reason) acknowledges that it blocked him to justify some actions to his team. "*it was impossible to say : "this is good for us, for the global organization. How to legitimate what I was proposing? Negotiating the objectives is the guarantee that these actions are necessary.*" (interview with the head of small business agency).

Planning groups also contribute to orientate the value assigned to practice through the decisions taken. Various groups began their work by finding a

common definition of their topic, such as 'safety'', 'unpaid'. Departments have different visions of the topic. For the customer relation service, it is a client who has not paid at the first invoice and to whom they had to send other mails; for accountants, it is a bill still not paid after the third (and last) invoice, that is passing in a provision account; for the commercial department, it is a client to whom they have to stop supplying for unpaid bills; for the law department, it is a sued client. Team members first explicit their conception of 'unpaid' and they collectively choose to adopt a common definition, which reveals lots of tensions, conflicts, diverging interests.

2.3.3. Developing dispositions for planning practices and managerial practices.

Agents involved in planning practices capitalize on their experience. They learn to plan and the planning game: for instance for planning leaders, they progressively learn how to choose the participants: they carefully select team members; they rapidly became aware that they could not solicit always the same persons who were overload. They realized that participation to a planning group was valuated in the company. It was a signal of recognition, it had a managerial impact. They used planning participation as a managerial award. They also happened to nominate an agent who was positioned as "reluctant to change", "CGT" (referring to the major trade-union which is perceived as very leftist, conservative and reluctant to management by most of the managers), in order to isolate them from their groups of influence, neutralize their position. Participants (who sometimes occupied front line functions) also learnt planning methodologies and tools such as building action plans, proposing indicators and objectives, preparing a powerpoint presentation for the Board. Some happened to reuse these tools in their own operational practices.

It happens that agents needed some help to accompany such learning. The controller, a consulting company and the CEO were considered as support staff in order to teach some issues, particularly in controlling aspects. They tried not to do themselves the work whereas it would have been quicker because they were convinced that the "do it yourself" would be the best way to improve the skills of the people. The controller and the CEO also acknowledged that they learnt through this and they gained in pedagogical skills.

The development of new dispositions for practice are not necessarily beneficial for the organization. Some discrepancies between agents interest and the

organization's interest may appear. For instance, many agents learnt how to increase their apparent performance and to play the game of control. When safety became a key issue, the number of people injured with low casualty became a strategic indicator for all departments. Higher injuries were not considered as strategic because they had almost disappeared. Thus, some managers encouraged their agents to declare higher injuries to cut the driven number of low injuries.

2.3.4. Building causal relationships on action

Planning practices provide an opportunity to think about daily practice and to understand its stakes, how it works. It offers space for the analysis of practice, agents take some distance with their operational practice and try to give sense to it. This does not mean that they are completely reflexive, but they try to escape the day-to-day routine. This particularity of planning practices may be compared to the strategic workshop opportunities raised by Bourdieu (2005:208) as a specific moment of reflexivity for agents that can also be compared to some reflexive practices in sports by athletes and their trainer, through the analysis of a game.

In planning practices, most teams adopted a reasoning in terms of stakes and impacts, in order to force them to build causal relationships between different actions. "*We collectively validated the stakes of the process: economic stales, image, … We adopted a reasoning in terms of impact. Then, we identified the levers of action by analyzing every stake. Then, we defined the actions to implement. The actions were agglomerated in various action plans. For every plan, a groups of two people had to define the objectives, the resources and the indicators to monitor the actions. The pair has to answer various times to the question: how can we improve this point? What are the key performance factors*?" (interview with a manager in charge of the technical planning).

Agents involved in planning practices also try to translate quantitative objectives into actions, or actions into objectives. Talking about an objective of sales on a specific product that increased by 500% and considering this planning gap "*When your normal sales level is 400 and your team is asked to do 2000 next year, the agents protested. We worked and thought all together. We first saw the interest of this product, for the safety of appliances at the customer's home. This was a big commercial argument. Then we thought about the process. How can we organize our teams to fulfill this objective? To sale this product, we need a direct*

contact with the client. It helps to propose other services, diagnostics, consulting, all the products that our agents like to sale." (interview with a manager in charge of a commercial plan).

A key moment of planning practice in order to build causal relations is the analysis of performance. When there is a gap between the objective and the result, a search for explanation is needed. This occurs because performance measurement and evaluation has become a serious game, managers are asked to rationalize the differences between objectives and performance. They enter an ex-post analysis which may be collective. For instance, trying to optimize the automotive vehicle number in the company, one objective was the sharing of vehicles among agents. This objective was lead by a cross-functional planning group in charge of the global optimization of the vehicle cost. Facing the bad performance, the group chose to question the causes of the problem and completed a qualitative survey based on interviews. They realized that the problem was cultural. People did not like to share vehicles where they wanted to let their files and documents, and also keep it for personal use. So they had voluntarily over-estimated their needs in order to be sure to keep it for themselves only.

Conclusion

This research documents the knowledge dynamics involved during planning practices. It is built on both a social constructivist perspective on knowledge and knowing in practice, using Bourdieu's praxeology and on the empirical analysis of a longitudinal case study. The concepts of field, habitus and practice provide a relational and dispositional system to frame knowledge dynamics and practice. In this perspective, knowledge is permanently structured during and for practice at the same time it structures practice; it is as much something that agents perform as something they possess. Knowledge is contextual, inherently linked to the context it was developed, and goal-oriented. Knowledge is both personal, rooted in agents' experience, and social. Knowledge is heterogeneous, tacit and embodied elements are essential. Through the empirical study, I tried to account for knowledge dynamics in planning practices. I studied 23 planning processes in the same organization, with a large scope of planning practices. Four knowledge dynamics were identified. These modes of knowing provide an understanding of

the link between knowledge dynamics and practice, how knowledge is generated, mobilized, used, transformed, for and through practice.

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