Towards dialogic administration: a proposal from Gadamer's thinking

Hacia una administración dialógica: una propuesta desde el pensamiento de Gadamer

Vers une administration dialogique: une proposition de la pensée de Gadamer

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Abstract

Traditional administration, the normative-cut and exacerbated-control one, is still in force in theoretical-type proposals as much as it is in business practices, which is due to the resistance to give up instrumental rationality within organizational management. This phenomenon has permeated all the dimensions experienced in an organization; even the most human acts, such as dialogue and communication, have been prey to instrumentation. The purpose of this paper is to set forth the need for dialogic administration capable of overcoming the fundamental pillars of traditional instrumental management. To accomplish this task, a qualitative-documentary type of methodology and a hermeneutic method were used by studying, firstly, the theoretical foundations of traditional administration and, secondly, by interpreting the constituent elements of the "dialogue" category in Gadamer's thinking so as to create a discussion about how Gadamerian postulates may serve as the basis to build a dialogic administration proposal, where dialogue is rescued from instrumentation, and given its place as the most humane in men within an organization and then become an integral part of the organizational culture, because it provides recognition to each person's uniqueness and promotes learning processes.

Keywords: Traditional administration, Dialogic administration, Dialogue, Organizational communication, Organizational culture.

Resumen

La administración tradicional, de corte normativo y control exacerbado, continúa vigente tanto en las propuestas

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de tipo teórico como en la práctica empresarial, lo cual obedece a la resistencia a renunciar a la racionalidad instrumental dentro de la gerencia organizacional. Este fenómeno ha permeado todas las dimensiones que se viven en la organización; incluso los actos más humanos, como lo son el diálogo y la comunicación, han sido presas de la instrumentalización. Este artículo tiene por objetivo proponer la necesidad de una administración dialógica, capaz de superar los pilares fundamentales de la administración tradicional de tipo instrumental. Para llevar a cabo tal cometido, se utilizó una metodología de tipo cualitativo-documental y un método hermenéutico, estudiando, en primer lugar, los fundamentos teóricos de la administración tradicional y, en segundo lugar, interpretando los elementos constitutivos de la categoría "diálogo" en el pensamiento de Gadamer para crear la discusión en torno a cómo los postulados gadamerianos pueden servir de base para construir la propuesta de una administración dialógica, donde se rescate el diálogo de la instrumentalización, se le dé el lugar de ser lo más humano del hombre en la organización y sea parte integral de la cultura organizacional, pues proporciona el reconocimiento de cada persona en su singularidad y propicia procesos de aprendizaje.

Palabras clave: Administración tradicional, Administración dialógica, Diálogo, Comunicación organizacional, Cultura organizacional.

Résumé

L'administration traditionnelle, de coupure normative et de contrôle exacerbé, se poursuit en vigueur tant dans les propositions de type théorique que dans la pratique des affaires, ce qui obéit à la résistance de renoncer à la rationalité instrumentale au sein de la gestion organisationnelle. Ce phénomène a imprégné toutes les dimensions vécues dans l'organisation; même les actes les plus humains, tels que le dialogue et la communication, ont été en proie à l'instrumentalisation. L'objectif de cet article est de proposer le besoin d'une administration dialogique, capable de dépasser les piliers fondamentaux de la gestion instrumentale traditionnelle. Pour mener à bien cette tâche, une méthodologie de type qualitatif-documentaire et une méthode herméneutique ont été utilisées, en étudiant, d'un côté, les fondements théoriques de l'administration traditionnelle et, de l'autre côté, en interprétant les éléments constitutifs de la catégorie «dialogue» dans la pensée de Gadamer de créer la discussion sur la façon dont les postulats gadameriens peuvent servir de base pour construire la proposition d'une administration dialogique, où le dialogue de l'instrumentalisation est sauvé, étant donné la place d'être le plus humain de l'homme dans l'organisation, et faire partie intégrante de la culture organisationnelle, car elle permet la reconnaissance de chaque personne dans son unicité et favorise les processus d'apprentissage.

Mots-clés: Administration traditionnelle, Administration d'approche dialogique, Dialogue, Communication organisationnelle, Culture organisationnelle.

1. Introduction

Each time the world revolves more around organizations, to the point of asserting it is in the managerial era (emphasis) (Cortina, 1996). Hence organizational studies having crossed the barriers of administration, finances and economics, and permeating fields of knowledge such as sociology, psychology, anthropology and philosophy in general (Kanbur, 2008, Nirmala and Pradeep, 2016; Salazar, 2017). This paper is circumscribed within this tendency, since, by means of a qualitative-documentary research and the hermeneutical method, it will study the "dialogue" category in philosophical thinking, in Gadamer's specifically, to make an application thereof in the administrative field.

The reason why emphasis will be placed on the need for dialogic administration is because deep down, especially in practice wherein reality unfolds, the basic pillars of traditional managerial thinking continue to prevail, such as hierarchization, differences in category, separation of roles, individualism, distrust, believing in scientific administration, disavow workers as valid interlocutors, resistance from managers to lose their prestige and the lack of training of workers who remain in obedience and submission (Aktouf, 2009; Gantman, Yousfi and Aleadipani, 2015; Ibarra-Colado, 2006).

Therefore, the theoretical framework in this study will firstly give an account of what is understood by traditional administration; it will secondly be reviewed how critical studies on administration reflect on traditional administration, and, thirdly, it will define the category of "dialogue with the other" or "conversation" in the thinking of the philosopher Gadamer. Lastly, in the discussion, Gadamer's contribution will be taken into account to bring it to administrative thinking, thus highlighting the current need to enhance conversations in organizations as part of the organizational culture, so that a step is taken from instrumental administration to dialogic administration.

2. Theoretical framework

A reflection on this topic implies reviewing a conceptual framework that inquires about

the so-called traditional theories on administration, namely, those that are delimited by norms and control as the foundation of managerial performance. Similarly, to proceed with the analysis, the category of dialogue from the work of the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer is highlighted.

2.1. Dialogue in traditional administration

Traditional and dominant administration is understood in the terms in which it is understood by Omar Aktouf (2009), i.e., one wherein fundamental pillars are obedience, discipline, hierarchy, separation of roles, distrust, believing in scientific management and indefinite growth; thus succeeding at imposing dominant and local acting from administrative studies (management*)* throughout the world (Ibarra-Colado, 2006; Misoczki, Kruter Flores and Goulart, 2015).

Now, when talking about traditional administration, authors such as Taylor (2011), Fayol (2011) and Mayo (1959) must be mentioned since they are the ones who laid down the classical foundations of managerial thinking.

Before scientific administration, systematized by Taylor, an "*initiative and incentive*" mode of administration prevailed (Taylor, 2011, p.38). One of the main characteristics of this managing manner was people learning their tasks through oral communication: "workers (...) have been communicated their knowledge orally" (Taylor, 2011, pp. 35-36). Therefore, scientific administration sought to capture knowledge borne by workers and then transfer it to the administrator, so that he'd reduced everything to formulas and laws that could make for more efficient production. In addition, Taylor believed that conversing at the company was a waste of time, because it supposed human beings' natural laziness, which had much more incidence provided several people were working nearby. Similarly, he believed the way to communicate with subordinates to be subject to how smart they were considered (Taylor, 2011).

On the other hand, Henry Fayol sought to rationalize administration through universal principles that needed to be applied for the proper functioning of an organization (Hatch, 1997). Fayol outlined his thinking by descri-

bing the organization's functions, human capacities and universal principles (Souza and Aguiar, 2011). All this led to his definition of administration as "foreseeing, organizing, directing, coordinating and controling" (Fayol, 2011, p. 120). His thinking was centered on the figure of the manager, on whom the good or bad functioning of the organization depended. When referring to dialogue, he is instrumentalizes it in terms of obedience, as it happens when he talks about conventions, of preference for verbal rather than written communication and meetings (Fayol, 2011).

Lastly, Elton Mayo established that efficiency did not depend on physical capacity as much as on social capacity (Cubbon, 1969). During his research at the Western Electric Company, dialogue with operators was promoted and individual interviews were conducted. All this led to the conclusion that the main difficulty in companies lies not on the way of supervising or on the external working conditions, but on the person's internal balance and the informal social group that constitutes the entity (Bertero, 1968). From these research, Elton Mayo (1959) concludes that having a clearly and logically set-up system does not suffice for a company, for it also requires workers to understand the situation of their labor, because, otherwise, they would only work in contention with themselves (p. 117).

Despite the conceptual differences between Taylor, Fayol and Mayo, the "instrumentalization" of the human being is the common denominator, "either as a muscular machine, as an economic animal attracted by material gain, or as a more or less manipulable 'psychological mechanism'" (Aktouf, 2009, p.45).

2.2. The need for a reflection on traditional administration: critical management studies

The traditional current of administration has not been free of criticism, among the main ones is the so-called critical management studies (hereinafter CMS for its acronym in English), which emerge as a path to liberation and emancipation from the Anglo-Saxon hegemony in the field of organizational management (Chanlat, 2015, Fernández Rodrí-

guez, 2015, Gantman, Yousfi and Aleadipani, 2015, Ibarra-Colado, 2006, Misoczki, Kruter Flores and Goulart, 2015, Visser, 2010). Thus, CMS have managed to develop a body of knowledge that resists traditional American and British epistemic colonialism (Ibarra-Colado, 2006), especially in France, Brazil and Mexico.

In Brazil, CMS have been led by authors such as Alberto Guerreiro Ramos, Mauricio Tragtenberg, Fernando Prestes Motta and Henrique de Faria (Misoczki, Kruter Flores and Goulart, 2015) who have yielded knowledge on this topic since the 1950s of the 20th century, coining the " *anti-management* "concept or "anti-administration", which, more than a manifesto against capitalism and the market, is a reflexive attitude in favor of Latin American autochthonous practices and thinking. Along this line of thought, Professor Eduardo Ibarra-Colado's work in Mexico has bestowed light upon the field of organizational studies and CMS, demonstrating how Latin America has imported, imitated and repeated the Anglo-Saxon tradition (2006).

Other countries such as Spain, with contributions by Fernández Rodríguez (2015), Turkey with Ozcan's (2012) and Holland with Letiche (2006), have also contributed to this current. In Colombia, studies derived from the group *"Nuevo Pensamiento Administrativo"* (New Administrative Thinking) from the Universidad del Valle (Cruz, 1998, 2002, Cruz, Aktouf and Carvajal, 2003, Rojas, 2003), have yielded research in the CMS field, gathering from interdisciplinarity so urgent to understand administrative practices, especially from French sociology, which has contributed notoriously in this field (Taupin, 2015). Although the development has been remarkable, there is still a need for reflexive research, both theoretical and practical, in various categories seeking, above all, to free administration from the rational-instrumental logic to which it has been subjected throughout the traditional current (Chanlat, 2002).

2.3. The concept of "dialogue" in Gadamer's thinking

Without it intending to be a section on Gadamer's work, the category of dialogue in his thinking stands out from its definition, epis-

temological conception and ethics, imperative to contrast them with traditional-cut administration theories later on.

2.3.1. Contextualization of the "dialogue" category

At present, there is a deep interest on the topic of dialogue from different fields of knowledge, such as pedagogy (Freire, 1970), psychology (Vygotsky, 1993), and philosophy (Arendt, 2005; Buber, 1977; Cortina, 2002, Gadamer, 1998, 1999, 2001a, Habermas, 1992, 1999, Rawls, 2006, Taylor, 1993). Despite this interest, one cannot strictly speak of a structured theory of dialogue. Nevertheless, it may be said that there have been three major currents in this regard: studies from the philosophical point of view, as an abstract element from mathematics or symbolic logic, and as a therapy tool (Velasco and de González, 2009).

Now, an initial approach to the dialogue category contextualization must be performed by etymology, a path leading to the Greek word διάλογος (dialogues), which may be divided into the prefix διά (through) and the noun λογος (word, project, speech, reason, etc.). It should be noted that *logos* does not have a specific equivalence in Spanish (Aguilar, 2013).

From Socrates, *logos* has been identified with word, reason or truth; a conception product of western reductionism to the rational. Notwithstanding, Heraclitus understood *logos* as a regulating principle of all becoming, which included all dimensions of the human being such as reason, desire, emotion and feeling (Soler and Flecha, 2010). Likewise, Aristotle also referred to this category in his classic definition of man as a living being endowed with *logos*. Gadamer has endorsed this definition, but prefers to translate *logos* by language or linguistically (Fernández, 2006).

For both Aristotle and Gadamer, *logos* is the essence of people, since it belongs to all and all belong to it (Hermann, 2014). Indeed, to speak of *dialogue* is to enter the sphere of the authentically human, wherefore, warns Gadamer (1998), *logos* should not be taken as an instrument, since man is inserted into

language just as much as he is immersed in the world. If the *logos* is the basic differentiation of the person with respect to other beings, then saying *dia-logue* is equivalent to saying through (*day*) the humane (*logos*). Dialoguing is to be men in the fullest extent of the term: "dialogue encompasses man as a whole" (Panikkar, 2003, p. 82).

2.3.2. Dialogue with another as conversation in Gadamer

According to Vessey (2009), Gadamer does philosophy of dialogue in three veins: dialogue with texts, dialogue as the mode of language and dialogue achieved through the fusion of horizons. Of all the aforementioned meanings contemplated for dialogue by the German thinker, emphasis will be placed on dialogue as thought and conversation, since these two conceptions are transversal to the above extents.

Dialogue is fundamental to the very act of thinking, for when the person thinks, he dialogues to himself. In this meaning, Gadamer (1998) recalls that Plato defined thought as "the internal dialogue of the soul with itself" (p. 151). Now, dialoguing with oneself is a condition for dialogue with others, because first there must be a deep knowledge of who one is, there must be an interpretation of one's own way of life, there must be a consensus with oneself to open the possibility of dialoguing with the other. Following this line of thought, Gadamer (1998) affirms that such internal dialogue of a person with himself "is at the same time an anticipated dialogue with others and the entrance into dialogue of others with us" (p. 196).

This leads to dialoguing with the other, which is conversation, which may acquire three levels. In the first level, conversation exists wherein the other is considered as an object or a means to reach a predetermined end by one of the interlocutors. At a second level, there is a one-on-one conversation, but it occurs in a calculated and competitive manner, where interlocutors want to overcome the other. On the third level, wherein authentic conversation is built, the objective is the subject on which dialogue is held and its truth. It is in this last level that a success-

ful conversation emerges, which is characterized by three essential conditions: openness to the other, the center is occupied by the thing and its truth, and being open to the possibility to which the conversation leads in itself. (Binding and Tapp, 2008).

To get closer to the concept of successful conversation, it's possible to resort to the answer given by Gadamer (1998) when asking what a conversation is:

> Conversation always leaves a mark on us. What makes something into a conversation is not the fact of it having taught us something new, but that we have found in the other something that we had not yet found in our experience of the world. What moved the philosophers in their critique of monologic thinking is felt by the individual in himself. Conversation bears a transforming power. When conversation is achieved, something remains, and something remains in us that transforms us (pp. 206-207).

This definition contains several aspects that deserve broadening up through Gadamer's own argumentation. The German philosopher touches the field of alterity by referring to the other as someone who aids his interlocutor in discovering something that he had not found in his own experience, that is, a true conversation leads to consensus through the un-concealment of the truth that emerges as a result of the conversation itself. Therefore, on one hand, conversation leads to consensus where the other's total otherness is acknowledged in order to arrive at the truth together, and, in turn, it becomes an educator insofar as it transforms and leaves a mark on each interlocutor (Fernández, 2006).

Therefore, it may be concluded that dialogue, in Gadamerian thinking, acquires both an epistemological and ethical sense. The epistemological sense lies in the argument according to which each person has his own horizon, given his situation and being in the world; consequently, an absolute truth cannot presumed to be had, rather the truth will be un-covered, which has an impact on learning; but, in turn, this leads to an ethical dimension, because these different meanings or interpretations of the world demand recognizing the other in his total alterity, since the other always has something to say according to his situation (Gadamer 1998).

2.3.3. Ethical sense of the conversation: alterity and consensus

True conversation is achieved by the natural condition of a person as a being endowed with language, which becomes the condition of possibility for any conversation (Gadamer, 1998). Dialogue starts from a minimum consensus based on the *logos*, since all human beings are endowed with it, as Aristotle has already argued. Thanks to this condition, man can speak, i.e., "he can communicate everything he thinks; and moreover, thanks to this ability to communicate people can think the common, have common concepts, especially those concepts that make the co-existence of men possible" (Gadamer, 1998, p.145). Notwithstanding, despite the naturalness of the logos in the human being, there are some difficulties that the German thinker gathers in a series of inquiries that become the basis for a diagnosis of the inability to dialogue:

> Is the art of conversation disappearing? Do we not observe in the social life of our time a growing monologization of human behavior? Is it a general phenomenon of our civilization that is connected to the scientific-technical way of thinking thereof? Or are certain experiences of self-alienation and solitude in the modern world that close the mouths of the younger ones? Or is it a decided rejection of all consensus will and rebellion against false consensus prevailing in public life what others call incapacity for dialogue? (Gadamer, 1998, p.203).

Gadamer differentiates two types of incapacity for dialogue, which are the one that recognizes itself and the one that does not. Regarding the first one, it becomes flagrant in therapeutic dialogue because here the patient recognizes his pathology, and what is sought to be cured is the inability to dialogue through dialogue itself. With regards to the inability to dialogue that does not recognize itself, it usually happens to someone who does not see this disability in himself and awards it to the other, and this is primarily due to the inability to listen to others:

> He only does not hear, or in his case he hears badly, he who permanently listens to himself, he whose ear is, so to speak, so full of breath that he constantly infuses himself by following his impulses and interests, who is unable to hear the other (Gadamer, 1998, p. 209).

Gadamer (1998), commenting on negotiation, which is one authentic dialogue situation, along with therapeutic conversation and family dialogue, argues the following: "the decisive condition is undoubtedly one knowing to see the other as another. (...) In this vein, a business conversation itself confirms the general note of dialogue: to be able to converse you must to know how to listen"(p. 208). Despite all the efforts required to reach an agreement, Gadamer hopes that it can be achieved thanks to a sort of latent consensus according to which there is a mutual recognition of the differences between people who engage in dialogue. In this line of thought, the acceptance of this difference, of the interlocutor's alterity, becomes the imperative condition to start the conversation. In this regard, the German thinker argues:

> There is no "a" me or "a" you; there is a self that says "you" and says "I" in front of a "you"; but they are situations that already presuppose a consensus. We all know that calling someone "you" presupposes a deep consensus (Gadamer, 1998, p. 216).

Conversing, therefore, is letting oneself be questioned by the other, even the truths that have been forged in one's own horizon. To converse is to merge horizons. It should be clarified that the "horizon" category has the philosophical meaning of "situation", namely, the human being is a being submerged in circumstances, judgments, relationships, and valuations that determine his way of interpreting a thing in itself. Following this train of thought, speaking of "fusion of horizons" when conversing is to advocate the natural ability of people to share the meanings of their experiences and knowledge, not so that one way of interpreting is lost in another, but rather to expand them by means of the other's wealth:

> The true reality of human communication is that dialogue does not impose the opinion of one against the other or adds the opinion of one to that of the other as a sum. Dialogue transforms one and the other. A successful dialogue means it's no longer possible to fall back on the dissent that set it in motion. The coincidence that it is no longer my opinion nor yours, but a common interpretation of the world, enables moral and social solidarity. What is fair and is deemed as such, claims of itself the coincidence it reaches in the reciprocal understanding of

people. Common opinion is constantly forming when they talk with each other and it leads to the silence of consensus and the obvious (Gadamer, 1998, pp. 184-185).

Additionally, Gadamer (1999) explains how "openness towards the other implies, then, the acknowledgment that I must be willing to let something against me be in me, even though there is no other person who will uphold it against me" (p. 438). In this apparent wordplay lies a deep truth, that one wherefore in a real dialogue both interlocutors attend with absolute certainty that, firstly, the interpretation of the other may be partially or totally contrary to one's own; and, secondly, that this interpretation shall never be imposed. Authentic dialogue leads to a common interpretation of the world, ultimately leading to the truth of the thing itself, which is the epistemological sense (Fernández, 2006).

2.3.4. The epistemological sense of dialogue with the other: conversation as an educator as transformer

Learning is not something that the other instills in his listener, but something that he himself discovers thanks to the conversation with the former. Gadamer (2001a) gave a lecture entitled *Education is self-education,* and whose goal was to argue the thesis that it is only possible to learn through conversation, for it helps to discover the truth. This conception is similar to that of his teacher Heidegger (2007), when he reasoned that "something true is a ἀληφές, something not hidden" (p. 22).

Conversation helps to un-hide the truth that each interlocutor carries in himself, that is, it aids to find in the other something that even by itself had not been found; but that very act of finding is a self-conquest with the aid of the other. That is why the German philosopher asserts that education is self-education (Gadamer, 1998, 1999).

Additionally, the epistemological sense of conversation helps to overcome that reductionist conception wherein only information that broadens the horizon of knowledge of each interlocutor is exchanged in a conversation. It cannot be ignored that in the conversation achieved the entireness of the hu-

man being is shared, wherefore dialogue with another not only informs, but even better, transforms, broadens the total horizon of the interlocutors and not only the horizon of knowledge (Green, 2011).

Let us clarify that a conversation does not ensure a consensus in itself, as it has its own course:

> What will "come out" of a conversation cannot be known by anyone in advance. The agreement or its failure is like an event that takes place within us. So we can say that something has been a good conversation, or that the stars weren't to its favor. These are ways of expressing that conversation has its own spirit and that the language that runs through it carries its own truth with it, namely, it "reveals" and lets something appear which from that moment is (Gadamer, 1999, p.461).

Although there is no certainty on the consensus, it is humane to confront one's own horizons against others' and give oneself the opportunity of such confrontation being able to broaden the horizon of those involved in the dialogue. To converse, a certain self-limitation is required, a recognition that one does not possess absolute truths and acceptance of one's own horizon's finitude; yet, in turn, it is necessary to acknowledge that the other has his own interpretation of himself, things, tradition and his own knowledge in general. Hence, listening to the other, in fact, is an inescapable requirement for authentic conversation (Gadamer, 2001b).

Conversing, indeed, is not imposing arguments, it's sharing them, and letting them, if they are truly done, end up in the silence of consensus or the obvious. Therefore, it can be said that depriving oneself of listening to the other is to deprive oneself of knowing a different vision and creation of world, it is to fear confronting one's own vision with that of the other. In short, he who refuses to listen to the other shows more of his worldview weakness and what he considers as true, than of his strength. Not listening is manifesting refusal to expand one's horizon and fear to corroborate that some truths may not be such (Monteagudo, 2013).

When two people find each other through conversation, there is a certain encounter of

two creations and visions of worlds, whose experiences are individual and non-transferable:

> It is possible to conceive a whole philosophy on conversation based on these experiences: the non-transferable point of view of the individual, wherein the whole world is reflected, and this same world that is offered in the different individual points of view as the same and identical world. According to the grandiose metaphysical conception of Leibniz, admired by Goethe, the multiple mirrors of the universe that individuals are make up the whole universe as a whole. This picture could be configured in a universe of dialogue (Gadamer, 1998, p. 206).

In summation, this journey through the thought of Gadamer trying to understand what he means by "dialogue with the other" has yielded some results, which may be listed as follows: (1) Dialogue is not an instrument, it is the abode of human beings with others, is the most humane of man, hence Gadamer (1998) warns that "to be able to enter into dialogue despite everything is, in my view, the true humanity of man" (p. 209). (2) To converse is to learn to be with the other, acknowledging him in the totality of his being: "language is present where there is dialogue, that is, in being with others. (...) To be with others is our vital situation, (...) to understand oneself in the being with others is the task imposed on everyone" (Gadamer, 2002, p.306). (3) True dialogue leads to learning: "I believe that one can only learn through conversation" (Gadamer, 2001a, p.529), because in the game of dialogue, of the answer question, of giving and receiving, the truth is emerging, because "language 'pulls' something from 'concealment', and brings it into the open, to the word and to the risky enterprise of thinking" (Gadamer, 2002, p.321). Dialoguing, in this sense, is to share horizons and, "because of that, when there has been dialogue, we feel 'full'" (Gadamer, 1998, p.151).

3. Discussion: dialogic administration as an anthropocentric proposal in organizations

This section proposes to rescue the category of dialogue as a human potential in organizations, which promotes learning and liberates the creative spirit within the framework of critical thinking, clarifying that given the scope, methodology and method of this research, an empirical contrast was not carried out, which is a limitation to the study and, at the same time, becomes the opening to contrast in the business world, in future research with different methodologies and methods, how the dialogue is lived in the management of the organizations.

3.1. Dialogue as a source to humanize humanity in organizations

Dialogue in companies, when it exists, is reduced to a simple instrument or a managerial tool among others. If a brief tour is made through the importance of communication in organizations, a common tendency to instrumentalize it becomes evident (Medina, 2005, Salas, 2011, 2013), which is due to the fact that administrative thinking has not managed to escape late-nineteenth-and early-twentieth-century context, a time with a tendency to absolutize rationality with the assumption that it leads to prosperity and order (Marín, 2006, Schwetter, 2008).

Now, if the general rule is the tendency to conserve the main postulates of traditional administration (Aktouf, 2009), where dialogue is prey to instrumentalization and utilized as a productivity means, there are proposals where dialogue is given its true meaning As an example of this, there are research showing how organizations are built through conversations, speech and language (Bédard and Chanlat, 1997, Coelho, Schubert, Buss, Gue, Schlindwein and de Lima, 2014; De Moura-Paula, 2014; Echavarría, 2003; Vélez, Ruiz and Zuleta, 2012).

It is an urgent need to emphasize dialogue as the most humane of men, as Gadamer understood it. Sight of the fact that organizations are made up of people and, therefore, it is necessary to show the importance of the humane in companies cannot be lost, because Morin's (1999) pressing call to "work for the humanization of humanity" also echoes within them p. 58).

3.2. Organizations that dialogue to learn

Based on Gadamer's (2001a) thinking, it may be asserted that a human being learns

through conversation only and, in parallel, if organizations are people, thence, companies only learn through dialogue. Following this line of thinking, organizations that learn do so in a dialogic way (Sordé and Ojala, 2010). An organization that promotes privileged spaces for conversation evidences how new ideas arise, how it is transformed and reinvented to respond to a highly changing environment. This interaction among people makes possible not only the creation, but also the re-creation of companies. An organization which does not re-invent itself or does not continually re-create itself, owes it to the lack of successful conversations and the good use of the word (Bédard and Chanlat, 1997). It is worth remembering that the word conversation comes from the Latin word *conversus*, which bears a relationship with "to become", i.e., to the extent that organizations are networks of conversations, they become, transform and change (Vélez *et al.* 2012).

This supposes, on the part of directives, the capacity to recognize that knowledge in the organization cannot exclusively proceed from top management, but that it is rather a process that emerges from successful conversations, formal and informal, in all directions of possible relationships within of the entity (Bedard and Chanlat, 1997; Taupin, 2015).

To ensure conversations leading to learning creation, interlocutors are required to not base their linguistic emissions on instrumental rationality, whose purpose is to use language to obtain its intended objective, but on communicative rationality, understood in the terms of Habermas (1992, 1999), whose purpose is to reach a consensus on a specific topic. The basic difference between instrumental administration and dialogic administration is that the first language uses as a means of power, whereas the latter's purpose is to reach an agreement, or arrive at the truth or what's most convenient for the organization, all based on the acknowledgment of dialogue participants as valid interlocutors. Instrumental administration "dialogues" to *inform* decisions, while dialogic administration dialogues to *form and together build* the best possibility for the organization (Sordé and Ojala, 2010).

Now, faced with the implementation of dialogic administration in the organizational reality, many questions might arise, such as, is there a successful conversation, in Gadamer's terms, when talking with a "superior"? Are managers willing not to impose their ways of life (points of view), nor to make use of the formal authority bestowed on them by their position when talking to their collaborators? Is there sufficient maturity in management to recognize the other in the totality of his circumstances? Are the directives ready to give up the privileges granted by traditional administration for over a century to allow themselves to be challenged and questioned by their workers?

Answering affirmatively to these questions, and others along this very perspective, is the raison d'être for the dialogic administration proposal. The main barrier that must be overcome is that according to which power and dialogue are incompatible. Undoubtedly, in organizations it is impossible to pose an ideal situation of dialogue where there are no asymmetries with respect to formal power; nevertheless, this cannot become a situation that prevents the possibility of dialogue, for although it is not feasible to eliminate asymmetry conditions, conditions of equality can be sought out to create dialogue situations, where the other is acknowledged as a valid interlocutor (Garza and Arredondo, 2015).

On the other hand, it all depends on the intention held by those who possess the formal power within companies, for if their desire is to *impose,*when they dialogue, they generate relations of those who can and those who must; but if they intend to *share*, dialogic relations are generated, namely, relationships where knowledge is constructed amongst all; "in other words, in a process based on the ethics of dialogue legitimate power is acknowledged, but not coercion" (Garza and Arredondo, 2015, p.92), and it is understood that conversing is not imposing arguments, but sharing them.

In summation, the contribution made by dialogic administration, in organizations that learn, is based on the assumption whereby knowledge is a process constructed through the conversation of the affected members by the matter being discussed, as understood by Gadamer (2001a), for which different formal power roles and lines are not an impe-

diment when there's a dialogic attitude that presupposes willingness to interact with the other, allow oneself to be questioned and to expand one's own horizon (Garza and Arredondo, 2015).

3.2. Organizations that dialogue to recognize each other

One of the results of the research on the dialogue category in Gadamerian thinking is the ethical one, that is, the one wherefrom it's inferred that authentic dialogue is only possible when the other is recognized in the totality of his circumstances (Gadamer, 1998; 1999). This specific aspect must be fundamental within the dialogic administration, since it is assumed that the worker is a being endowed with *logos*, and, therefore, is a subject whose interests are not exclusively limited to the maximization of profits or organizations' value generation, he is rather a different person, he is much more than a worker that serves as a means to achieve organizational purposes (Aktouf, 2009, Bédard and Chanlat, 1997).

Currently, organizations are required to be true meeting places, where each person feels recognized in his uniqueness, where the difference is the richness of the organizational culture and where diverse thinking enriches the totality of the community interacting in the space called company. Indeed, work, place and man are not antagonistic realities, but elements from the same manifestation of being (Aktouf, 1985).

Dialogic administration aims at making this transition from the organization as a workplace to a meeting place, perhaps trying to respond to an existential vacuum that has brought individualistic culture with it, a vacuum that is causing people to seek to integrate into communities and corporations to recover his concrete "I" (Cortina, 1996). Dialogic administration responds affirmatively to the following question:

> Can't the company be a community that proposes to its members a world of *meaning*, that is, that proposes an *identity*, a *sense of belonging*, *shared values*, a *common task*, a *common good* that does not differ from each other's, and even a sense of "excellence" that individualist universalism is incapable of considering? (Cortina, 1996, p.83).

In dialogic administration the human being is an *end* and not a means. This affirmation of man as an end in itself is taken for granted in the theoretical field (Kant, 1975), but the same does not happen in the practical one, since it would suffice to take a tour through some companies and even listen to human management scholars to discover that man continues to be referred to as "resource" or as a cost of "labor" (Marzano, 2011).

Human beings as an end in organizations do not quarrel with profitability and value generation. This approach may be objected by saying that they are mere musings; however, it would be good to remember Kant's thinking (2012), for whom the only really good thing is goodwill, i.e., the intention borne in the act, which in this case would be the humanization of the human being within companies; therefore, productivity, profitability and value generation would be effects. If the will to boost or favor dialogue within organizations is not the humanization of men, but a curtain behind which only economic interest is hidden, it would be unethical; it would be, in short, a way to instrumentalize dialogue (Cruz *et al.* 2003).

The challenge is to put men as the center and end of organizations, which implies recognizing them in their authenticity, for which the most appropriate path is dialogue, because as Higuita (2011) states:

> Every worker is authentic in what he speaks, he makes himself understood when he takes the floor (...). Notwithstanding, the apparent obsession of traditional administration postulates with time management, being brief and considering economic rationality as a dogma can silence a person, and prevent him from finding himself with the other, preventing him from being. Forbidding to speak (even subtly) is a way of violating. (...) When the possibility of speaking or participating is restricted, people communicate by gestures or by other means because speech is a fundamental aspect of the human being (p. 75).

Indeed, current administration must change from the instrumental paradigm to the dialogic paradigm, that is, to promote dialogue in order to make possible the full experience of otherness and learning in the company, which, in addition, may bring about other benefits for the organization.

4. Conclusions

Dialogue, from its etymology and the approach to what Gadamer understands, led to how men are humanized, how they learn and relate by being endowed with *logos*, which becomes the possibility to create, re-create and produce new realities All this has not been fully taken into account by the postulates of traditional administration, instead, it has focused its attention on men as objects. In its effort to rationalize and be an objective science, classical administration has turned the human being into a piece of the organizational machinery, leading to inhumane practices.

Nonetheless, the person, by its very nature, shows resistance to any type of reductionism that leads to being considered as a means, as an object or as a simple part of a process, because, as Pascal (1977) well understood it, "men infinitely surpasses men "(p. 147); that is to say, there is a natural reaction of dissatisfaction when reification or reductionism is sensed. In Aktouf's words (2004): "the human being is destined, by his self-reflexivity capacity, to the search for that which liberates him, emancipates him from all forms of coercion that would make him an object-being" (p. 223).

With this anthropological assumption, and based on the development of the dialogue category in Gadamer's thinking, dialogic administration aims to put man as the center and end of organizations, where each person is taken into account in all their circumstances, where she is recognized as a valid interlocutor and as someone different by her vision of the world and her horizon.

In an administration that seeks to promote dialogue, its ultimate purpose is not to motivate or satisfy the worker, it rather seeks to re-know it in all his dimensions. The human being is what matters in dialogic organizations, therefore, other effects are under the shadow of the ultimate end of institutions which is the person.

Proposing a dialogic administration implies a cultural change which must transcend administration programs (Marín 2013), perhaps recalling what one of the pioneers of administrative thought, Mayo (1959), already said when he stated that administrators should realize "that the problem set forth before them is not economic, but human and social" (p. 170). Ultimately, in the dialogic administration attention is focused on the human being or, in other words, the struggle to restore the humane to men within organizations.

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