THROUGH PRACTICE LENS: How do the organizing of Artistic and Cultural Projects can induce Public School Management

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Resumo: O objetivo deste ensaio é propor o estudo da Gestão Escolar Pública a partir do olhar sobre as práticas no organizar de Projetos Artísticos e Culturais. Para fazer isso, utiliza-se a abordagem da lente da prática, que visa estabelecer uma relação entre a atividade humana e fenômenos macrossociais. Nesta abordagem, a gestão é tratada como um processo contínuo, um constante organizar, que neste caso se baseia nas características da escola. Resultado de 2 anos de observação e baseado na escassez de estudos voltados para o cotidiano da gestão escolar, este estudo foca a relevância da especificidade da Escola na elaboração de ideias para estudo de sua gestão, apresentando as práticas de gestão de projetos sociais em escolas como uma alternativa para desenvolvimento da gestão escolar a partir de sua especificidade.

Palavras-chave: Escola Pública; Gestão Escolar; Projetos Sociais; Prática; Lente da prática.

Abstract: The goal of this essay is to propose the study of Public School Management from everyday approach in a turn to practices in the organizing of Artistic and Cultural Projects. We use the Practice Lens approach, which aims to establish a relationship between human activity and macrossocial phenomena. In this approach, management treated as a continuous process, a constant organizing based, in this case on the characteristics of the school. This study is result of 2 years of observation and it is based on the lack of studies which focuses on everyday approach, also focuses on the relevance of the School's specificity in the elaboration of ideas for the study of its management, presenting the management practices of social projects in schools as an alternative for the development of school management based on school’s specificity.

Key-words: Public School; School Management; Social Projects; Practice; Practice Lens.

INTRODUCTION

In studies regarding Public School Management, Almeida & Junquillo (2013), Poubel & Junquillo (2015) and Abdian, Nascimento & Silva (2016) are relatively recent works on which researchers approach alternative ways of organizational theory (re)interpretation to study the management of public school.

As structuralist view still play a hegemonic role on Organizational Studies, we take practice lens (GHERARDI, 2009) and our humble proposals among those alternatives, as a reliable

1 PPGADM- Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo.
way to discuss contributions to School Management against orthodox discourses that still transform Education in a product of an Enterprise.


Our goal is to propose the study of School Management looking upon the practices in the organizing of Artistic and Cultural Projects.

In order to do this, we rely on the saying of Abdian, Nascimento & Silva (2016) regarding the contributions to School Management found in practice approach.

Abdian, Nascimento & Silva (2016) criticize the study of school management based on orthodox enterprises models, suggesting that we should take a turn to everyday practices to understand the complexity and specificity of the field. Based on this, we found in the organizing of Social Projects as an underrated and under-studied kind of management process that holds potential to effect the whole process of Public School Management.

We know that Social Projects development involves and even changes the school by the examples widely shown in studies regarding the impacts and history of these projects such as Madureira and Moura (2016), Madureira (2014), Parrilha Da Silva and Danhoni (2015), Crepalde (2015), De Sousa Carvalho et al (2015), Japiassu (1998) and Gagliardi (1998).

In fact, as Social Projects Management in the public school refers to a kind of organizing where both social community and school can work together, it could also mean that the needs of the social community in which it is developed sets management. Then, if we look deeper and talk about Artistic and Cultural Projects, we would be talking from a contextual point of view, where school and community need to work together, once art and culture are reflects of the community on which the school is located.

This perspective approaches the suggestions regarding alternative ways to think School Management because they flee from orthodox speech onto the understanding of management.
from the everyday doings on which some authors rely on to criticize how school management is hegemonically discussed.

Abdian, Nascimento & Silva (2016), as example, argue that to do the work of understanding of School Management we should question and describe it instead of prescribe its practices. On a similar approach, Poubel & Junquilho (2015) addresses preoccupation to the lack of emphasis on what people effectively do in the terms of Management.

Finally, according to Souza (2006), School Management studies tend to demonstrate how school organize without describing and analyzing how does it actually functions. In this context, Abdian, Nascimento & Silva (2016) suggests that the way to flee from the orthodox approaches the search for new theory perspectives that do not reinforce this normative scenario.

Using the saying of Gherardi (2009) and Geiger (2009) regarding practice’s effects, we can achieve one path to turn the normative scenario, which addresses the study of practice toward what people are actually doing and the effects of their doings on macrosocial phenomena using practice lens approach.

Gherardi (2009) practice lens approach, through its definition, can offer an excellent tool for (re)thinking School Management from the localized organizing as proposed by Abdian, Nascimento & Silva (2016).

In order to explain it we will first discuss the polysemy of the term ‘practice’ as we approach some definitions of practice and that one definition on which we will rely on. We then define practice as the product of a negotiated order, which has shortly crystallized a shared mode of doing and sustains it while the premises for its change are being set (GHERARDI, 2009).

After that, we discuss School Management to draw a line into Social Projects organized by public school as a way to articulate school and community through the organizing of artistic and cultural projects. In order to do that, we assume Management as a process, defined by the ongoing practices of everyday (DUARTE, ALCADIPANI 2016; DE SOUZA, DA COSTA E PEREIRA, 2015).

1 PRACTICE BASED STUDIES (PBS)

Practice Based Studies (PBS) discuss many themes and bring different contributions from Practice Theory to Social Sciences (SCHATZKI, 2001; GHERARDI, 2009; CORRADI, GHERARDI, VERZELLONI, 2010). We can talk from tourism, handcrafting and strategy as Walter, Augusto & Fonseca (2011), Zwick, Silva & Brito (2014), Faria & Silva (2015) and Rezende & Silva (2016) to culture and art as Silveira (2015) and Júlio (2016).

PBS can also be presented as an alternative approach for putting together School Management and Practice Theories. We argue that the contributions of the practice lens approach to investigate management (GHERARDI, 2009) allows us to analyze practices and its effects (GHERARDI, 2009; GEIGER, 2009; RECKWITZ, 2002).

The analysis of practices and their effects, according to Corradi, Gherardi and Verzelloni (2010), make up the approach of Practice Oriented Studies (POS). The metaphor of the lens is one way of studying what people actually do and the circuits of reproduction of their doings (CORRADI, GHERARDI and VERZELLONI, 2010; GHERARDI, 2009).

An example of POS with the use of the lens metaphor is Schultze and Orlikowski (2004). In this work, the authors demonstrate how phenomena at the microsocial level involved, created and recreated macrosocial level phenomena. In Orlikowski (2004), the use of a certain tool of a computerized system hinders the relationship between clients and sellers in a company.

In the present essay, the relation between what people actually do and its effects starts from the involvement of the organizational process of society's participation in the development of artistic and cultural activities inside a school. As the study of practice from the lens approach also involves the study of the effects of practices, we argue that understanding this organizational process can map its effects on school management.

In order to understand this approach, it is necessary to return to the consequences caused by, and, the consequences that followed the phenomenon called Practice’s Turn (CORRADI, GHERARDI & VERZELLONI, 2010; GHERARDI, 2009), a phenomenon that occurred in the years 2000 in Practice Theories toward the (re)significance of PBS.

This phenomenon involves ontological discussions, paradigmatic changes and different meanings given to the notion of practice in a theoretical complex that need understanding for what we are developing in this essay. We will use the historical rescue of this phenomenon

both to understand the concept of practice and to justify the choices we made regarding the approach to practice as a lens in this essay.

1.1 PRACTICE TURN AND CONCEPTS OF PRACTICE

Reckwitz (2002) argues that, from an ontological point of view, practice as a set of theories is linked to social and cultural theories, the latter being based on different ways of explaining and understanding action from the use of metaphors. According to Reckwitz (2002, p. 10), the theories of practice represent an alternative to "[...] beyond the problematic dualism and ways of thinking...”

Other authors such as Gherardi (2009) and Corradi, Gherardi and Verzelloni (2010) reinforce Reckwitz's (2002) statements regarding the ontological difference between theories of practice and other ways of approaching human activity. We can also note this difference in empirical studies, as is the case of Araújo and Amaral (2018), a study based on the description of practices against Fernandes, Todescat and Cardoso (2018), a practice-based study. The contributions of these studies are also quite different, while the first describes practices of a given activity, the second part of how people organize themselves into groups from the practice of an activity.

From those studies, we can note how there is variety in the meaning of the term "practice." This polysemy, according to Gherardi (2009), represents a positive aspect, since the multiplicity of meanings makes practice a comprehensive, 'multipurpose' tool that extends across a wide range of issues, but it also has negative consequences, one of which is the imprecision of the definition of practice (GHERARDI, 2009).

In Reckwitz (2002) definition, practice is a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are used, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood. For this author the practice is social and the positioning of the social in practice, follows an alternative course to the notions of mentalism, textualism and intersubjectivism.

Schatzki (2002) in turn, defines practice as an arrangement of activities. The author explains that the practice involves two dimensions: activity and organization. In this sense, the author complements that a practice refers to a series of tasks and sayings connected by understandings, rules, tele affective structures and general knowledge.
The definition of practice can also be observed from a historical perspective, in this case involves paradigmatic changes (RECKWITZ, 2002). In this sense, a classical view influenced what we now call the theory of practice by, Schatzki (2001), for example, will return to the 1950s to treat such evolution.

In this history, practice theorists break with traditional elements, incorporate elements of the structuralist paradigm and, following an interpretative turn in the mid-1970s, follow an approach with the post-structuralist view (RECKWITZ, 2002; SCHATZKI, 2001).

Throughout this path, it is opportune to emphasize that the classification of practice in paradigmatic perspectives should not be watertight. According to Reckwitz (2002), even if influenced by the structuralist paradigm, Practice Theories shows characteristics that do not fit this paradigm and approach a more questioning approach, which ends up being noticed in the approach of practice in the field of organizational studies.

In the field of organizational studies, so-called Practice-Based Studies (PBS) appear around 1980. According to Gherardi (2015), they come with the so-called "practice boom". Such studies incorporate structuralist and interpretative attributes in its conception.

According to the author, the boom of practice unleashes the loss of the questioning capacity of this theory. According to Gherardi (2009, 2015), the 2000s mark a turning point in the theories of practice in the organizational field on which theorists turn to the searching of aspects of a more questioning perspective of practice. In this perspective, Gherardi (2009) argues that activities represent the "tip of the ice-berg" of a momentary "doing" organization.

Approaching practice by a questioning way, allows pairing it with the contributions provided by Abdian, Nascimento and Silva (2016) that school management needs to be questioned instead of prescribed. Then one way to go is through understanding how Social Projects involve organizing inside school. This understanding reveals the effects that certain doings have on the development of social projects from the way these activities are carried out.

In the search for a concept of practice that offers space for the approximation between this approach of school management and practice, based in Gherardi (2009), we will define practice in this research as the product of a negotiated order that shortly crystallizes a shared way of doing that sustains itself while the premises of change are being created.

In order to analyze the assumptions we pointed out in the field of school management it is important to contextualize Public School Management field. We do this based on some studies that discuss public school management and on contributions from the field of practice in order to demonstrate how practice perspective can inform one way of approaching public school management with less orthodoxy.

2 STUDIES ON PRACTICE CONTRIBUTIONS TO PUBLIC SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

The studies that approach the everyday in school management are relatively recent. Almeida and Junquilho (2013), Poubel and Junquilho (2015) and Abdian, Nascimento e Silva (2016) are examples of works that focus on contributions from this field to school management.

Another interesting study is De Almeida and González (2018), in which the authors confront the ideal of democratic management with the management practices of a school in Pernambuco. The authors demonstrate that, although there are tools for democratic management, participation in decision making by the school community does not occur.

We note that that De Almeida and González (2018) is characterized by demonstrating how the school has organized itself along a path analogous to the propositions of Abdian Nascimento and Silva (2016), however, they do not offer means to (re)think this management from their practices.

In this way, we observe that there are possibilities not yet explored in this approach, among which we highlight the suggestion of Abdian, Nascimento and Silva (2016) to search for new theoretical directions for understanding the complexity of educational / school administration / management.

One reason for addressing school management is in Paro (2010), this author calls attention to the idea of school administration / management as an aspect of main importance for discussion about education, according to him the school management represents the "[...] means for achieving ends and a conception of politics as coexistence (conflicting or not) between subjects ... "(PARO, 2010, p.765).

Paro (2010) also emphasizes that there are several reasons for the value of school administration / management; although it is the focus on efficiency, with cost reduction and...
better use of resources that justifies these reasons. However, considering the character of this research, focused on the analysis of the effects of practices from the approach of Gherardi (2009), we will deal with management overhaul.

Studies such as Oliveira and Carvalho (2018) and Lima, Fonseca and Dos Santos (2018), which analyze the manager's role in school, demonstrate how management does not reach the prescribed ideal. Although they present the way school management is practiced, we note that these works are based on prescribed management models to do so.

As stated by Abdian, Nascimento and Silva (2016), school management depends on a specific theoretical corpus, but there is dissociation between the planned school and the actual school as we have seen in Lima, Fonseca and Dos Santos (2018). In this way, we should not consider studying such dissociation, but go further seeking new directions for the study of school management (ABDIAN, NASCIMENTO and SILVA, 2016).

Such a search can be exemplified in the study by Gobbi, Carvalho and Dumer (2018) in which everyday life, dealt through dialogue practices, comprises a relevant factor for the study of school management. The authors demonstrate that we can understand school management as an emerging process anchored in the balance between multiple perspectives and the need to maintain school functioning.

Like Gobbi, Carvalho and Dumer (2018), we believe that management is an emerging and continuous process. We start from the contributions of organizing to define management as a continuous set of processes through which the organization is sustained (DUARTE, ALCADIPANI 2016; DE SOUZA, DA COSTA E PEREIRA, 2015) and from this perspective, we defend the possibility of escaping from a traditional conception of school management study.

At this point, we argue that potential knowledge in everyday life does not end with the demonstration of how the prescribed goals are not met; neither in the prescription of management practices, but in the use of daily knowledge to generate the new directions proposed by Abdian, Nascimento and Silva (2016).

In a similar way to the studies of De Almeida and González (2018) and Almeida and Junquilho (2013), we question the organizing present in the Social Projects inside school, but
from the reflexivity of the practice lens, we use everyday knowledge to discuss how the organizational process in these activities involves school management.

We maintain that management practices linked to school social projects represent a way to rethink the management in the school from its daily life, since it refers to activities based on the specificities of the context in which the school is inserted and with the necessary participation of the community.

In this sense, what can we tell about how social projects involves School Management? In the next topic, we explore some possibilities to link it with our overall goal, to think about practices in the organizing of these projects involving at some point the School Management and what does it means for the study of this fields.

3 SOCIAL PROJECTS AND THEIR EFFECTS UPON SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

If it were not for the fact that the model on which school management works are based does not get applied in practice as shown by Abdian, Nascimento and Silva (2016), or the fact that they are even distorted as shown by Lima, Fonseca and Dos Santos (2018), there would be no problems to treat management from a model based perspective.

Once management models actually have guidelines for an effective school management (ABDIAN, NASCIMENTO and SILVA, 2016, RUSSO, 2004, SOUZA, 2006), if it weren’t for its distortions School Management would have more effectiveness toward the ideal of management, anyway, as we discussed along this essay, this is the problem with School Management: the lack between the planning and the doing. Then, how the organizing of Social Projects can get through this lack?

Orlikowski (2004) shows the answer, the macrosocial phenomena can be triggered by microsocial doings, and, with practice lens approach, we can draw the effects of from one to another. Then again, what would be the difference in the organizing of Social Projects face the management models? Well, the difference between organizing Social Projects and the actual models of School Management are the necessary presence, in the former, of the social community in the process and that we talk about the local community.

With local community participating on the organizing, we add local context to management. We argue that through this perspective we would be forced into drawing a new theoretical
approach to School Management, as stated by Abdian, Nascimento and Silva (2016), its now based on the real context in which school is located.

As Social Projects refers to a kind of organizing where both social community and schoolwork together, it could also mean that management is being set by the needs of the social community in which it is developed. Even though, if we look deeper and talk about Artistic and Cultural Projects, we would be talking from na even morecontextual point of view.

We already know that Artistic and Cultural Projects involves and even changes the school by the examples widely shown in studies such as Madureira and Moura (2016), Madureira (2014), Parrilha Da Silva and Danhoni (2015), Crepalde (2015), De Sousa Carvalho et al (2015), Japiassu (1998) and Gagliardi (1998), but we didn’t discuss it on School Management yet.

Then, how practice lens approach can contribute to Public School Management? Considering how it is relevant to contextualize School Management into social needs, we can use practice lens to draw the effects of organizing Artistic and Cultural Projects in school to the overall organizing in school. We do this looking at the effects of the practices in the organizing of these projects towards the school.

As stated by Gherardi (2009), practice has its reproduction circuits and that points us back to the goal of this paper. Practice lens (GHERARDI, 2009) as a way to look into practice effects, POS, (CORRAD, GHERARDI & VERZELLONI, 2010) takes us to the organizational phenomena reinterpretation in Schools.

Through this paper then we suggest the use of these authors’ contributions as a way to get to what Abdian, Nascimento and Silva (2016) calls “the search for new theoreticbasis into School Management comprehension”. This perspective would achieve what the authors please, interrogation of School Management instead of its prescription.

As this alone could not be enough to get to a new theoretic perspective, we argue that the practice lens approach shall explore social projects in school, where local community is working through School Management tools and for their contextual purposes. Metaphorically, this represents the shifting of the practice lens to a third level of analysis, that of practice’s effects, Gherardi (2009), On which the effects of a set of activities represents the everyday canvas in analysis.
4 COULD THIS BE THE END?

As we can already guess, this is far from an ending. We need to look on how social community does it with School Management tools yet, and, that would be our first suggestion to field research. Once School Management tools have their limitations and their management models, social groups have their own doings and this encounter between different ways of organizing may define what in social projects involves Public School Management.

Meanwhile, for the goal of this essay: to propose the study of School Management looking upon the practices in the organizing of Artistic and Cultural Projects, we are done. Although an empirical work will still be necessary to cleanse our lens, we argue that research on practice perspective; organizing and social projects are vast to its application.

Under such assumptions, relied on the contributions of the critical power of practice, we adjust the lens to a level of analysis that provides the interrogation of school management in return for the orthodox attempt to prescribe it, as Abdian, Nascimento and Silva (2016) suggested it.

We then ask, “Is this adjustment of the lens a possible way to think everyday doings involving macrosocial phenomena?” Well, we believe it is possible. It is more, this approach can be align to Abdian, Nascimento and Silva (2016) searching for new theoretical horizons for understanding the complexity of educational / school administration / management on which, the contextual aspect, the specificity of such view is respected.

Nevertheless, this is a work on the going; this research is part of a bigger project where we aim to apply our assumptions to a local Public School on which we have been collecting the data that gave birth to the core of this essay. That implies that this essay does not aim to settle the discussion regarding Public School Management and Practice Theory, although this piece of method is a result of long-term observation, practice concept suggests things and people are changing so there will always have further grounds to fill and our lens will always need some cleansing.

REFERENCES


