

Summaries

Catherine Delhoume

Rationalization of Management Methods

The Case of the Mexican Sugar Industry in a Context of Commercial Overture

Since the 1990's, Mexico has found itself in a multi-faceted context of overture, caused to a great extent by the phenomenon of globalization. For this reason, the country is particularly sensitive to external norms spread by the western world, and notably to its economic orientations. Based on field surveys carried out among actors in sugar cane producing organizations, we look into the modalities of the spreading of management arrangements issuing from industrialized countries within Mexican sugar organizations, in a country and a sector wherein other organizational arrangements pre-existed them. Thus we witness the emergence of a discourse accentuating the figure of the performant agricultural entrepreneur, backed up by actors who have acquired a high recognition level in the new sugar industry configuration : "scientific experts". At the same time, inherited thought and action patterns show that these "rational" arrangements are well anchored in the social. This article analyses how this double dynamic leads to original practices which might sometimes be described as syncretic.

Sarah Botton

Management Arrangements from One Context to Another : Crossbreeding, Ruptures and Innovations ?

French Water and Electricity Service Groups in the Shantytowns of Buenos Aires

This article looks at the management practices of two urban service enterprises, subsidiaries of the French groups Suez and EDF, who intervened in the 1990's and after 2000 in the privatized distribution of water and electricity in Buenos Aires. The questioning involves the management arrangements that these organizations set up for the inhabitants of the downtrodden quarters, new actors in a "merchandized" service relationship, whose particularity is that they are practically insolvent, often housed informally, or in a clandestine manner, at the heart of a truly "political problem". Thanks to question charts, notably proposed by the sociology of management, we thus ask about the tools set up by these enterprises, *i.e.*, the dynamics of recombining, innovating or crossbreeding management arrangements "imported" from European experiences (training) and about development projects (participative types of intervention). We also investigate the emergence of a new profession of "social engineer" in a particular context of very high social polarization, as well the related analyses involving modes of legitimization and anchorage of this new profession.

Selma Venco

Management Strategies in Brazilian Call Centres : Omnipresence and Visibility

The question of the encounter between imported management arrangements and socio-historical configurations is examined in the case of Brazilian call centres. The article first of all recalls that these arrangements, generally imported from the United States, claim to increase the companies' competitiveness, in basing themselves on criteria deemed universal. Yet, in Brazil, the globalized management models are put to work

by directors wanting to grasp their potentials for intensifying their domination processes in capital-labour relationships. In effect, these management forms have been renewed to try and instill in tele-operators a partisan interiorization of work standards, by applying an administrative and management control anchored in technology. The article suggests that this “hand to hand” system of management also has an effect on the fragility level of salaried workers, caught up in the combined effects of high unemployment levels and similar social relationships.

Elisabeth Longuenesse

Lebanon in Globalization

The Accounting Profession and Modernization of Enterprises

In a poorly industrialized country, opening markets is synonymous with an alignment of management and control standards issuing from dominant economies. The economic reforms have reglementary and institutional dimensions which first of all involve the professionals of finance, accounting and business administration. The changes which have recently affected the professional world of expert accounting and accountability control in Middle Eastern countries, reveals how these reforms are brought in and implemented by the professionals who are their most active and enlightened promoters, and who defend their necessity and interest for the national economy. Yet, in Lebanon’s case, the complexity of the political context and the power of segmentary solidarities (familial, local, communitarian) sometimes weigh in decisions in the area of recruitment of manpower, or the allotment of resources, far from the economic rationality counselled by liberal economic orthodoxy. The usual questions concerning the spread of management models must thus be reformulated in taking differences of context and the stakes involved into account.

Valery Krylov, Jean-Luc Metzger

Organizing Labour in Post-Soviet Russia

What Compromise between Inherited National Practices and Imported Management?

If there exists a particularly relevant configuration for analysing the circulation of imported management arrangements, it is indeed that of a country whose economies are said to be in transition. With this in view, the authors examine, regarding Russia, how decisions of macro-economic policies, called “shock therapies”, have turned out in terms of imported management arrangements, and how the latter cause tension with specific practices perfected during the soviet period. Basing their analysis on empirical inquiries done in six enterprises soon after 2000, the authors show the extent to which the will to implement certain characteristics of neo-management are singularly reminiscent of characteristics of “homo sovieticus”, thus reinforcing “traditional practices”, where arbitrary managerialism, clanism and Taylorism mingle.

Maurice Blanc

The Future of the Sociology of Social Transaction

Response to Bernard Fusulier and Nicolas Marquis

Produire ou reproduire ? (1978) is the foundational work of the sociology of social transaction. Fusulier and Marquis (2008) offer an assessment which calls for discussion. (i) In centring themselves on its origin, they neglect the dynamic which has been set in motion. (ii) Paradoxically, they valorize the supple and adaptable character of social transaction, while reproaching it for being a «dated» paradigm. This article shows that, in the context of the increasing uncertainties of advanced modernity, social transaction becomes an ever more pertinent paradigm.

Bernard Fusulier, Nicolas Marquis

Make Social Transaction a Sociology, or a Sociology out of Social Transaction ?

Some Clarifications in Responding to Maurice Blanc's Reflections

The publication of the article : "The notion of social transaction tested by time" (Fusulier/Marquis, 2008), has engendered a debate with Maurice Blanc, whose argued critique has led the authors to clarify the "version" of social transaction they defend and the role they would have it play in the universe of sociological concepts. This article proposes removing the ambiguity surrounding social transaction when it is simultaneously defined as paradigm and as a form of social exchange. For that matter, the sociological relevance of social transaction does not reside as much in a world it offers nor in the characterization of a type of interaction, but in its invitation to interpret social phenomena through a prism taking their multi-dimensional and processual character into account. In other words, social transaction reveals a sociological perspective which, in the analysis of a situation, invites us to gather the variables or dimensions far exceeding that situation for a finer understanding of both the conditions of its possibility, the play of actors, the social products and their productive or reproductive effects.