

The Deleuze-Guattarian Rizoma in Organizational Studies Research

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Abstract

This article discusses the use of the concept of Rhizome, developed by Deleuze and Guattari, in Organizational Studies. It is a thought-image that opposes the traditional way of thinking and knowing based on an arborescent, organized, and centralized perspective. From this rhizomatic thought-image proposed by the authors comes a broader understanding of life, considering its inherent complexity and processuality. The article presents a brief introduction to the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari, emphasizing the concept of Rhizome. The study attempts to propose two ways of using this concept in research in Organizational Studies, as a rhizomatic perspective and as a methodological operator. While the first proposal refers basically to the researcher's position regarding the research design, the second refers to a lens capable of increasing the degree of intelligibility on the examined objects. The study concludes that the philosophical contributions of Deleuze and Guattari support the complexity and processuality of knowledge production and can be extremely productive for research in the field Organizational Studies, especially for empirical investigations.

Keywords: Rhizome. Deleuze and Guattari. Organizational Studies.

O rizoma deleuze-guattariano nas pesquisas em Estudos Organizacionais

Resumo

Neste ensaio, objetivamos discutir sobre a utilização do conceito de rizoma, desenvolvido por Deleuze e Guattari, no âmbito da pesquisa em Estudos Organizacionais. Trata-se de uma imagem-pensamento que se opõe à forma tradicional de pensar e conhecer baseada em uma perspectiva arborescente, organizada e centralizada. Dessa imagem-pensamento rizomática proposta pelos autores provém um entendimento da vida de uma forma mais ampla, considerando a complexidade e a processualidade que lhe são inerentes. Partindo de uma breve introdução à filosofia dos autores e, especificamente, ao conceito de rizoma, arriscamo-nos a propor formas de utilização desse conceito nas pesquisas em Estudos Organizacionais, a saber: como uma perspectiva rizomática e como operador metodológico. Enquanto a primeira proposta refere-se basicamente à postura do pesquisador frente à construção da pesquisa, a segunda remete a uma lente capaz de aumentar o grau de inteligibilidade sobre os objetos de investigação. Concluímos que as contribuições filosóficas de Deleuze e Guattari podem revelar-se extremamente produtivas quando pensamos na pesquisa nesse campo de estudo, em especial no que tange às investigações empíricas, por sustentar a complexidade e a processualidade também no que diz respeito à produção de conhecimento.

Palavras-chave: Rizoma. Deleuze e Guattari. Estudos Organizacionais.

El Rizoma Deleuze-Guattariano en las investigaciones en estudios organizacionales

Resumen

En este ensayo pretendemos discutir sobre la utilización del concepto de rizoma, desarrollado por Deleuze y Guattari, en el ámbito de la investigación en Estudios Organizacionales. Se trata de una imagen-pensamiento que se opone a la forma tradicional de pensar y conocer basada en una perspectiva arborescente, organizada y centralizada. De esa imagen-pensamiento rizomática propuesta por los autores proviene un entendimiento de la vida de una forma más amplia considerando la complejidad y la procesalidad que le son inherentes. A partir de una breve introducción a la filosofía de los autores y, específicamente, del concepto de Rizoma, nos arriesgamos a proponer formas de utilización de ese concepto en las investigaciones en Estudios Organizacionales, a saber: como una perspectiva rizomática y como operador metodológico. Mientras que la primera propuesta se refiere básicamente a la postura del investigador frente a la construcción de la investigación, la segunda remite a una lente capaz de aumentar el grado de inteligibilidad sobre los objetos de investigación. Concluimos que las contribuciones filosóficas de Deleuze y Guattari pueden resultar extremadamente productivas cuando pensamos en la investigación en este campo de estudio, en especial en lo que se refiere a las investigaciones empíricas, por sostener la complejidad y la procesalidad también en lo que se refiere a la producción de conocimiento.

Palabras clave: Rizoma. Deleuze y Guattari. Estudios organizacionales.

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INTRODUÇÃO

In this article, we discuss the use of the concept of the rhizome, within the scope of organizational studies research. It is an image of thought that opposes the traditional way of thinking and knowing, based on an arborescent, organized and centralized perspective. Coined by Deleuze and Guattari, it is a philosophical concept that paves the way to understanding life – in a broader sense – considering the complexity inherent to it. Considered philosophers of difference, immanence and/or multiplicity, the authors understand the very construction of knowledge as *becoming*. This means waiving the notion that *concepts* are certainties about something and, consequently, recognizing that knowledge is a genuinely circumstantial production.

The joint writing of Deleuze and Guattari began with publication of the classic *O Anti-Édipo* (first edition in French, dated 1972), followed by the works, *Kafka – por uma literatura menor* (1975 and 1976) and *Mil Platôs* (1980), and finalized with *O que é a filosofia?* (1991). In this last book, the authors explain what they understand as the role of philosophy – something which, in reality, demonstrated their signature - the production of concepts: “[...] philosophy is the art of creating, inventing and fabricating concepts” (DELEUZE and GUATTARI, 1991, p. 10). In this context, the concepts unveil attempts to understand circumstances and events, and are not a search to define what things are (concept as essence). As Souza explains (2012, p. 237), “[...] the concept would be responsible for the phenomenon and no longer its pure meaning,” emphasizing individual connections that are established in each situation that one wishes to know about, and the forces that are summoned.

A further key milestone in Deleuze and Guattari’s writing, associated to the idea of creating concepts, is constant interlocution with various areas, such as cinema, literature, music and biology, among others. This overlap of different expertise, although it may seem a risk for many, became a systematic and creative path of thinking about the world, and its complexities for the authors, supporting differences and heterogeneities. A clear example of this position is the concept of the rhizome, the subject of discussion in this article. In a direct reference to the image of underground stem extensions, responsible for the absorption of nutrients, the rhizome is an entanglement of lines, in which neither the start or finish, core or central point, can be distinguished. According to Romagnoli (2017, p. 428) when studying intersectoriality from this perspective, “This network may be followed in various directions, with no fixed entry or exit point. Sliding along a rhizome is taking reinvented routes on each journey, and for everyone that explores it.” Therefore, for all these authors, the image-concept refers to the thought construction process, on which we will elaborate further.

As Souza (2012) discusses, the conceptual multiplicity introduced by Deleuze and Guattari in this exercise of constructing a philosophy of everyday concrete (GALLO, 2003) leads other areas to consult these authors, being a reference, yet without considering fundamental aspects that safeguard an understanding of the entirety of their concepts. Seen in these terms, we discuss the need to recognize the ontological and epistemological implications inherent to a specific theoretical pathway. In the national field of organizational studies research, appropriation of the rhizome, in particular, to expand the understanding of organizations, and their developments, is still quite uncommon, and we consider this an opportunity that needs to be investigated.

Bearing this question in mind, with this article we intend to explore the concept of the rhizome, considering the fundamental aspects associated to it, such as the view of the world adjacent to it. More specifically, we aim to suggest proposals on ways of using the concept in this field of study. They are transient contributions, subject to discussion and transformation, following Deleuze and Guattari’s tradition. Extensive reading of their work, and that of commentators, was carried out for this construction, in addition to dialogue with authors who have made similar efforts, in other areas.

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO DELEUZE AND GUATTARI’S WAY OF THINKING

Deleuze and Guattari’s line of thought is known under various nomenclatures, including: the philosophy of immanence (PRADO JR., 2000), the philosophy of difference, the philosophy of multiplicity (MACHADO, 1990; ROMAGNOLI, 2014b) and schizoanalysis (DELEUZE and GUATTARI, 2011). Basically, these nomenclatures seek to highlight the key points of thought that the authors have developed, and a line of thinking that aims to break away from the logic that pervades the construction of knowledge in modern times. We will now introduce the authors’ main ideas, taking these key points, from which these nomenclatures emerge, as a base, but without any intention of exhausting, or building on, each of these, given the guiding objectives of this article.

PHILOSOPHY OF IMMANENCE

Immanence emphasizes the coexistence of different compositions of reality, which are juxtaposed and not totaled (SCHOPKE, 2004). This means that different forms of reality operate: through organization, in which an attempt to organize, structure, and homogenize prevails; and through immanence, also called intensive, in which pure difference, the absence of models, and heterogeneity, prevail. According to Deleuze and Guattari, reality may be understood as a field of forces in a constant relationship, which, at one moment, are in a state of flux, and then crystallize into shapes (GODINHO, 2007). For the authors, these forms of operating coexist in reality, in a daily construction process. The form of operating through organization corresponds to attempts to reduce uncertainties and instability, which we see in the definition of laws, and the creation of institutions and social groups, for example. It is a dimension of dominant (molar), necessary and visible life. However, for the authors, life is not only organization and reproduction, but also creation, the possibility of invention, and the exercise of difference.

PHILOSOPHY OF DIFFERENCE

For Deleuze and Guattari, the world is a juxtaposition of opposites, which are not necessarily presented antagonistically, since reality is pure difference (MACHADO, 1990). In other words, the philosophy of difference emerges in opposition to the logic of thinking founded on identity, stability, and its continuity. According to Leopoldo and Silva (2017), Western thinking developed through this logic, to the detriment of others. Here, there is a desire for things to remain the same, with the passing of time, and change is undesirable. The author explains that change exists in this perspective, but it is unable to alter the quality of things per se. This form of thinking has existed since the time of ancient philosophy, with this tradition highlighting Aristotelian thought. According to thinking founded on difference, the exaltation of identity is only a convention; in other words, a practical question for the fulfilment of life. Therefore, believing in the identity of things is much more a question of security than the status of how things are. While bearing in mind this basis of thought, founded on difference, it distances itself from dialectical thinking, in so far that it searches to overcome contradictions (MACHADO, 1990). Thus, the discussion on transcendence versus immanence emerges in Deleuze and Guattari's joint work, because thinking in this perspective is seeking the plane of immanence, and not similarities (SCHOPKE, 2004). Operation, in this way of thinking, consists of connecting various elements that have their own dimensions, retaining their differences. It involves bringing fragments together, and diversifying attachments, to construct a plane of immanence (LEE, 2014).

PHILOSOPHY OF MULTIPLICITY

If we look at contemporary life, we can observe that we are increasingly invited to embrace differences. Traditional models have made exhausted attempts to explain life. One example is how watertight are gender boundaries, to define types/profiles, and categorize subjects? Binary models (man or woman; homosexual or heterosexual) omit a series of other demonstrations of reality, precisely because they use limited lenses. However, together with complexity, emerge uncertainties, and the need to deal with them. This scenario requires a different operational logic, replacing **or** for **and**. A clear example refers to the subject itself, often represented in fictional work as good **or** evil, when, in reality, it is more appropriate to consider that every subject is both good **and** evil, and never just one of them. As we will see below, the rhizome is a way of thinking that operates under this logic of complexity (DELEUZE and GUATTARI, 1995).

SCHIZOANALYSIS

In the first book written by the authors, entitled *O Anti-Édipo*, the proposal of schizoanalysis is put forward at the end of the work. It is a body of thought characterized by an opposition to all and any hegemony, providing a new concept of desire, in close association with the social. For Andoka (2012), this book supports a machinic reading of reality, that is produced by movements and connections, moving away from a representational or Cartesian reading. This strand has two fundamental

tasks, namely: *scouring* or *curettage*, as a critique of the current *modus vivendi*, based on tracing the forms of classification, hierarchization and homogenization; and the *production of devices*, which operate to produce new ways of living, and thinking, and act to combat oppressive power, with the aim of invention, based on potent, as opposed to oppressive power. Thus, criticism has always been associated with creation. It is defended that they established schizoanalysis in a proposal to combat structuralism (binary, closed thinking), and to defend a productive and machinic operation of reality (the idea of desiring machines) (ZOURABICHVILI, 2005).

This body of thought enables us to think about the transversal movements that take place in organizations' daily lives, associating heterogeneous elements and producing output. Thus, it favors networked thinking, juxtaposing different ways of reality operating, which support models and forms, but also inventions and forces. As we have observed, the above-mentioned authors support immanence, the productions and processes that escape transcendence, and the binary division of reality, while knowing that this is one of the ways through which the world is presented. As Godinho (2007) reminds us, in this reading, thinking is carried out through movements, escaping reductionism, moving from the realm of representation, of models that encode reality, to the realm of experimentation, of the forces that affect us, and are expressed in situations. Breaking with the modern model, Schopke (2004) confirms that this way of thinking does not seek transcendent molds that (re)cognize reality but, instead, aims to associate thinking with life, investigating difference in inventive activities. Therefore, thinking is experimenting, not matching or imitating. Breaking from representation means that the power of thinking is in its association with life, supporting difference and creative activity, where the challenge is discarding representative models. Quintessentially, the concept that supports this way of thinking is the rhizome, as we will observe below.

CONCEPT OF THE RHIZOME

The term 'rhizome' appears for the first time in the text "*Rhizome*", and was later published as the first chapter of *Mil Platôs* (1980), where it became better known. It refers to a way of understanding life – in the broader sense – as a system of connections, without a start or finish, permeated by lines, strata, intensities and segmentarities. As explained above, the idea of the image of a rhizome originates from botany, and is an underground stem with shoots in every direction, such as bulbs and tubers. Antithetically, is the tree, with a stem and shoots that spread from this central axis (DELEUZE and GUATTARI, 1995).

The authors use the image of a rhizome to explain how thinking is processed, uncovering the bases for understanding what we may call the theory of multiplicity. Basically, this refers to a discussion on the incapacity of this model of thinking, based on the image of a tree (central stem from which shoots appear), to account for contemporary reality, which is multiple, non-binary and permeated by ruptures and uncertainties. This arborescent model of thinking is limited to the search for the essence of things; in other words, for the answer to the question: what is it? Consequently, Deleuze and Guattari base this thinking on the idea of construction, moving away from concepts as essences (what it is) and approaching the circumstances that involve them. Thus, the desired answers are: in which cases? Where, how and when? As Souza (2012, p. 245) explains, "[...] it was essential to leave the arborescent, remiss and essential model, for one that provided a representation that is closer to the surface, and the thinking that spreads in a vastness, and that it why they produced the rhizome model."

In order to gain a better understanding of the rhizome concept, we considered that it was essential to list its characteristics or principles. The first two relate to the idea that all the points of a rhizomatic system may be connected, without a hierarchical or central reference (connection principle). Heterogeneity is also associated with this principle. This characteristic derives from the notion of a complex reality, in which "different statuses of the state of things" (DELEUZE and GUATTARI, 1995, p. 14) coexist in movement, forming various, multiple connections. Thus, one cannot think of one thing **or** another, but of one thing **and** another. An example of these multiple assemblages takes place in language analysis, which is not limited to what is said, and its expressed meanings, but involves "[...] forms of assemblage and specific types of social power" (1995, p. 14).

The third principle is multiplicity. This principle, directly related to the previous ones, refer to abandoning dichotomous thinking, which determines the binary separation between poles, such as good and evil, object and subject, man and woman. For the authors, this way of understanding life is not able translate it, since various lines and connections cross, and there is assemblage and movements. As the authors state, "An assemblage is precisely this increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature, as it expands its connections" (DELEUZE and GUATTARI, 1996, p. 16).

The fourth principle is asignifying rupture, which refers precisely to the impossibility of a rhizome's definitive rupture. As seen above, this system – marked by connections, heterogeneity and multiplicity –, includes, and embraces, the different, with there always being space for reconfigurations. In line with this, the inexistence of perpetuity may be highlighted but, on the contrary, temporariness prevails. "Good and bad are only the products of an active and temporary selection, which must be renewed" (DELEUZE and GUATTARI, 1996, p. 17). Here we can highlight its reference to the ontology of indetermination (which will be covered below), since it involves discarding the essences and taking on its historic and, therefore, temporal determination.

Cartography and decalcomania are the last two principles of a rhizomatic system. As we have indicated, the rhizome counters the idea of a tree, with a central axis. While the model of a tree's roots is a "tracing", infinitely reproduced, the rhizome is a "map", "[...] focused on experimentation anchored in the real", open, removable, reversible, and subject to permanent alterations, always with multiple entries, to the contrary of tracing, which "[...] always goes back 'to being the same'" (DELEUZE and GUATTARI, 1996, p. 17-22). If the rhizome is a map, there is nothing better than cartography to express it¹.

At this specific point, the authors are critical of psychoanalysis, on account of their explanations, anchored in the obscurity of the unconscious, and setting the positions of a single psychic structure. On the other hand, the perspective of the rhizome, assumes that "The issue is to produce the unconscious and with it, new statements and different desires: the rhizome is precisely this production of the unconscious" (DELEUZE and GUATTARI, 1996, p. 27). To summarize, the rhizome counters the idea of arborescence and representation, and does not get caught by the crystallizing forces that harden and paralyze the power of life, although they are segmentarized and stratified in specific circumstances. It always encourages the new, creativity and heterogeneity, through assemblage. This is the other concept, which is as important as the rhizome, corresponding to alliances and passages between what is established and stratified, and the flows between segments and forces. As the passage between strata and flows, assemblage refers to exteriority, the shifts that are made in the connection with what is outside of the individual and the instituted. Assemblage engenders experimentation, leaving a stratum and achieved in a rhizome, and is "[...] precisely this increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections" (DELEUZE and GUATTARI, 1996, p. 17)². Thus, the rhizome is also where life circulates and assembles, with neither a start or finish, is changing and constantly auto-metamorphoses – it is an experimental field.

Therefore, how does one capture and understand the power of life that is present in the rhizomatic perspective? Necessarily, understanding the concept of the rhizome includes an understanding of the different lines that form it. In an attempt to move away from the transcendent models, and defend immanence, the authors suggest understanding reality and through lines, which have different functions. There are three types of line: *lines of rigid segmentarity*, *flexible lines* and *lines of flight*.

The lines of rigid segmentarity, as the name suggests, are marked by rigidity, and are of an instituted nature. It could be said that they are the easiest lines to identify, since they are usually related to the formation of subjects, such as the family-school, school-work, work-retirement routes. They are the lines that outline classifications: sex, class, and level, among others, operating in a dichotomous and classificatory way (DELEUZE and GUATTARI, 1996). It may be said that the rigid lines refer to the level of reality that is presented as given and naturalized. Its permanent nature tends to remove questioning and criticism. The flexible lines are more malleable and change, although in small proportions, enabling us to capture other forces and to assemble. Lastly, lines of flight are associated to the new, to change and reconstruction, when, in fact, the institution of assemblages takes place. On account of this, they are presented in a completely opposite way to the rigid lines, since they enable escapes, and resistance to what is instituted.

There are other concepts, subjacent to the lines, which allow a better understanding of experience and its dimensions, further expanding the concept of the rhizome and its composition. One of the first important concepts refers to segmentarity, which, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1996, p. 77), is "[...] something that belongs to all the strata that form us". This segmentarity is made up of three forms: binarily, circularly and linearly. The first, binary, related to the dualities that mark our spatial and social context, and are classificatory opposites: woman and man, good and evil, and life and death.

¹ For more about the rhizome, see Lawley (2005) and Souza (2012).

² For more about assemblage, see Dosse (2009).

Circular may be understood as amplitudes – we are referenced by the spheres we take part in, ranging from the most restricted to the broadest (neighborhood, city, state, country and the world). Lastly, linear, consists of defining processes – individual or collective life processes. This means that the segments and strata are formed of rigid lines, which trap life into a specific format.

It is important to emphasize that the authors, when addressing segmentarity, carefully highlight their non-opposition to what is central. That it because one could naively understand that modern society, being in a centralized state, would be less segmented as a consequence. Deleuze and Guattari (1996) disagree with this position, alerting not only to the fact that modern society, clearly represented by bureaucratic apparatus, is nothing more than a specific and particular form of segmentarity, but also of its malfunctions and movements. In this context, the authors open the way for a discussion on the existence of two types of segmentarity: one that is “primitive” and flexible and, the other, which is “modern” and hard.

Returning to the concept of assemblage, presented above, we reiterate its importance, in order to understand the rhizome. After all, if we are talking about lines, forces and strata, it is the assemblages that are the passages that connect the various heterogeneous elements, “[...] be they biological, social, machinic, gnoseological or imaginary” (GUATTARI and ROLNIK, 2005, p. 381). As Souza (2012, p. 246) adds, “[...] everything may be assembled, there just needs to be a willingness, thereby increasing its dimension, changing its nature, and optimizing its heterogeneity in the event, assemblage is a dimension of connections”. Consequently, these assemblages (meetings and connections), form territories – a map that represents its multiple connections. The assemblages enable us to connect with other forces that do not inhabit the strata, but circulate outside of them, for the possibility of us being affected by these forces and being associated with the differences. What possible assemblages do we observe in a specific territory?

Therefore, territoriality emerges as another important concept, and refers to the plane of immanence of the assemblages – which carry a territorializing force, of organizing the forces that had been connected, generating new territories. As Haesbaert (2006) explains, the concept of territory is a constant doing and undoing, a set of connections, a network of relations that self-produce, by assemblages. Romagnoli (2014a) suggests that forces of inventive nature and stratified and hardened forms coexist in the territories. These forces and forms, in a constant relationship, retain crystallized patterns, through repetition, but also open the way for new dimensions. As Haesbaert (2006, p. 111) explains, “[...] the territory is understood as a process.”

The idea of movement that runs through the territory is associated to the constant assemblages that form it, allowing states of permanence or change. As Deleuze (1989, p. 4) states, “[...] the territory is only worthwhile in relation to a movement through which it leaves.” And continues: “[...] there is no territory without a vector to leave the territory, and there is no way out of the territory; in other words, deterritorialization, without, at the same time, an effort to reterritorialize in another part.” Which forces are able to generate changes (or a deterritorialization process) in a specific territory? There is no single answer to this question, since the notion of territory is, in fact, relational³.

In other words, we could summarize the concept of the rhizome as an entanglement of lines in constant interaction (flows), without a defined start or finish. These lines, at times, stratify in forms and, at others, remain fluid, as a power. As we have observed, the lines may be rigid, flexible or of flight, which form new territories through assemblages. The rhizome is expressed in the territories, which, despite being dynamic and changeable, allow mapping and move by the forces that cross it.

³ For more about territory, see Guattari and Rolnik (2005).

ONTO-EPISTEMOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THEORETICAL SELECTION

One of the fundamental aspects of constructing a career as a researcher and/or professor is defining one's area and field of activity. If, on the one hand, we are talking, above all, about a political-ideological dispute that overlaps with the broad sense of science as a development, and is defined by an alleged struggle for the truth; on the other, within the domain of subjectivity, is also the search for a definition of identity. Who am I as a researcher? Who are we as science? The need for a framework, definition and positioning is a way of reducing uncertainty, but should not, by any means, be used to hierarchize knowledge; in other words, to suggest that one strand is better than the other.

When Paes de Paula (2016) discusses a possible reconstruction of Burrell and Morgan's paradigm perspective, and refutes the theory of paradigm incommensurability, in reality, she is defending the importance of dialogue between the different perspectives for growth of the area. After all, what is the benefit of these "islands of knowledge" within administration? They are like distant points, without intersections. We considered the proposal of epistemological matrices interesting, to the extent that it opens up possibilities of transit, although a long path needs to be covered, so that research incorporates and reflects on these dialogues.

Despite the reductionist risk that determines an attempt at classifications and separations in currents of thought, this is an endeavor that seeks to provide clues on aspects of an ontological and epistemological nature, associated with the concept proposed here. On this basis, Deleuze and Guattari's work has been considered part of the post-structuralism movement: we are now going to explore the justification of this approach⁴. As Peters (2000) clarifies, post-structuralism may be considered an interdisciplinary, multi-faceted movement, with it being difficult to arrive at an unequivocal definition. It is basically a movement in response to structuralism, and its aspirations of being established as a metaparadigm for social sciences that took on diverse tones through different authors.

Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger are considered the founding authors for elaborations by the post-structuralist movement, the first generation theoreticians, which include Derrida, Foucault, Kristeva, Lyotard, Deleuze, Irigaray, Lacan and Baudrillard. Influenced by various areas of knowledge, such as anthropology, sociology and psychoanalysis (PETERS, 2000), it is observed that, similarly, there is great potential for advances in the (de)construction of knowledge in administration. This is because it is a recent field of scientific investigation, and is broadly characterized by a positivist and prescriptive viewpoint, unable to reflect on aspects dear to this research, such as relations of power, knowledge, and the construction of subjectivities. In order to problematize this hegemonic view, there were various lines and research that emerged in the field of administration, called, in quite a broad, and generic way, critical management studies (ADLER, FORBES and WILLMOTT, 2007; SOUZA, PETINELLI-SOUZA and SILVA, 2013). The participants of post-structuralism are found in this broad and diverse group of researchers.

In epistemological terms, clearly, in post-structuralism there is disbelief in relation to the alleged capacity of scientific research to encounter the truth, as a faithful representation of reality. Amid the multiplicity of ideas that mark this theoretical movement, there is a strand that refutes the establishment of absolute truths and determinants of what is real, allowing constructions of partial truths, permeated by fragmentations and differences, which we share. It is essential to clarify that this anti-realist position bears no relation to extreme relativism, a criticism usually addressed to authors of the movement in general. This criticism lies in the understanding that, refuting the great narratives, on the other hand, would be confirming that nothing is true or real. We would like to clarify that it is not about denying the truth, but of admitting that there are *truths*, in the plural. Pelbart (2003) explains that there is a risk involved in this positioning of denial, namely, of falling into a proposal of generalized dissolution: of politics, humanity, history, and ethics, among others. However, what we defend here is the proposal of critical post-structuralism, based on deconstruction, but also on creation and praxis.

At this specific point, two topics that emerge from post-structuralist thinking are essential for the discussion we are holding. Chia (1999) discusses that the ontology that demarcates this movement, particularly Deleuze and Guattari's work, is process ontology, which understands reality as movement and becoming. Carrieri (2012) agrees with this perspective, highlighting the nature of the indetermination of reality, bringing up reflections, and recognizing the multiple and fragmented nature of reality, which requires us to refute absolute truths and, conversely, to construct and deconstruct partial truths. Seen in these terms,

⁴ Gallo (2003) expressly disagrees with the classification of Deleuze's work as post-structuralist, and argues that the author himself would be critical of the use of these terminologies.

what becomes relevant in the post-structuralist perspective relates to the path through which something becomes true, the *how* and *why*, more than the *what*? (BUENO, 2015; TEIXEIRA, 2015). Specifically, in the field of administration, therefore, the aim of the post-structuralist approach is to criticize the more conventional theories, by questioning the elements that produce the bases. The topic of deconstruction is extremely important to post-structuralist authors, to the extent that it produces the denial of a hierarchization of perspectives, and an enunciation of this criticism, as an expansion of the possibilities in the production of knowledge on management (BUENO, 2015).

The second point is an understanding of some aspects of the philosophy of difference, as put forward by Peters (2000, p. 36, our highlighting),

For post-structuralism, the emphasis on absolute self-consciousness and its alleged universalism has come to be regarded as socially exclusive and, ultimately, oppressive of the other – of social and cultural groups and individuals who operate with different cultural criteria. Instead of self-consciousness, poststructuralism emphasizes **the discursive constitution of self – its corporeality, its temporality and finitude, its unconscious and libidinal energies - and the historical and cultural location of the subject.**

It is observed that difference is the fundamental part of the line of post-structuralist thinking, and is directly associated with the criticism of the self-conscious and rational humanist subject. Specifically, in Deleuze and Guattari's thinking, valuing difference occurs, to the detriment of the Hegelian perspective, where the bases lie in dialectical thinking. As a contrast to identity and contradiction, the operational basis of dialectical thinking, Deleuze's perspective of difference suggests positivity and creation, deriving from difference and repetition. In this context, the perspective of difference is closer to empiricism than dialectics, considering "[...] the concept as a meeting-point, as a here and now [...]" (DELEUZE, 1988, p. 17). In summary, it should be considered that the main object of Deleuze's philosophy of difference is its rebuttal of the philosophy of representation and, consequently, the submission of difference to identity (MARINHO, 2012).

Understanding these implications, it becomes important to problematize the extent to which this perspective and, particularly, the concept of the rhizome highlighted here, may contribute to administration and organizational studies. We have increasingly observed discussions that aim to break paradigms emerge in this field of knowledge, a search to deconstruct normalizing models of reality, and the construction of approaches that support the complexity, and its processes. One example is the emergence and establishment of topics involving the issues of gender, sexuality, race and diversity in organizations, within the domain of organizational studies (they have been a topic of interest in the EOR area of ENANPAD since 2016⁵), which signal this need for new perspectives, in which differences are exalted, and not nullified. The same occurs with studies that focus specifically on management, since the defense of models, as ideas, is deflated by the multiplicity of concepts and organizations that are constituted on a daily basis, making discussions on possibilities and guidelines than formulas to be applied more plausible.

POSSIBILITIES OF USING THE RHIZOME IN ORGANIZATIONAL STUDIES RESEARCH

Bearing in mind the discussions that we have held above: the first on the concept of the rhizome and, the second, on the onto-epistemological characteristics of this positioning, we will attempt to suggest proposals for the use of this concept in research on administration. The first proposal refers to the use of a **rhizomatic position** in research, while the second is the use of the rhizome as a **methodological operator**.

⁵ Until 2015, Topic of Interest 06 of the EOR area was called "Gender and Diversity". In 2016, it became known as "Genders, Races-Ethnicities, Sexualities, Differences and Diversity in EOR", substantially increasing the scope of work.

THE RHIZOMATIC POSITION

Basically, this first proposal refers to the researcher's position, faced with the reality of a general form, research, and the object. As we mentioned above, talking about a rhizome is taking the idea of complexity and multiplicity as an assumption (they are also its characteristics) (DELEUZE and GUATTARI, 1996). Therefore, if we understand reality as multiple and complex, it requires a receptive and flexible outlook from a researcher who intends to approach it in some form. In other words, a researcher who wishes to imprint a rhizomatic perspective on their research, needs to be open to repetition, the unexpected and, consequently, reworking. A clear example of this issue in research in organizational studies is to relinquish models that are applicable to all organizations, or even winning formulas that can be replicated. The rhizome, with its lines (rigid segmentarity, flexible and of flight) and assemblages, unveils a constructed and, principally, dynamic reality.

A further fundamental implication of the rhizomatic position in research is the constant realization of (re)approximations with the research object and subjects. Thus, the starting point of the research does not have prescribed clarity in investigations of an orthodox nature: there will be very few definitions and various possibilities. However, it will not be less scientific or less thorough, in terms of immersion in the field, and of problematizing the knowledge that will emerge from it. Therefore, it is understood, that in epistemological terms, it will be with contact with the field of research that these paths will gain form and color, maintaining a receptive and creative position, also from a methodological point of view, will also be required for this. The rhizomatic position may require an almost *handmade* methodological design, adapted to the context, problem, object and subjects participating in the investigation.

Associated to this, we need to go further than a discussion on scientific objectivity. This issue refers to both understanding that practicing science is a relentless search for the truth of things, and believing in the adoption of the researcher's allegedly neutral position in this scientific endeavor for clarification. Both are refuted here. The statute of scientific truth becomes incompatible with the rhizomatic perspective, in which reality is marked by multiplicities (DELEUZE and GUATTARI, 1996) and, principally, by the denial of the existence of an essential historical start – defining identities, as Foucault (1979, p. 18) states, “[...] we like to believe that, in the beginning, things were in a perfect state; that they emerged dazzling from the hands of a creator...”

If we look specifically at the researcher, the assumption of this position is that the research itself is taking place in a context of the production of life; in other words, there are meetings and affectations that enable the work to be constructed at any moment. It is distanced from any subjectivist label, understanding that the power of life takes place in these multiple experimentations, which is not necessarily associated with physical contact between subjects. As Neves (2009, p. 197) states: “It is in the meeting, in this means of proliferation, that bodies express their power of affecting and being affected”. Thus, the researcher's investment in an experimental process is undeniable, which, at the start, requires vigilance of what is already crystallized in it, since, as Bocco (2006, p. 56) explains: “[...] it requires being available and willing to not be affected.”

A further fundamental implication of this position is related to the research results. One needs to consider that these results are always provisional and that, by its very nature, research is unfinished, and able to address new issues. Once again, we return to the idea of the researcher's receptive outlook, and remaining open to the emergence of new questions, issues and fresh starts. This openness becomes unviable when the central concerns revolve around discussions on validity and generalization: how to validate research with results that cannot be replicated and understood in other contexts and realities? We agree with Matos (2011) about how inconsistent this questioning is when epistemological, theoretical and political choices are clear and defined.

METHODOLOGICAL OPERATOR

The second proposal that we are presenting here is appropriation of the concept of the rhizome as a methodological operator. Basically, this means making use of the rhizome as a powerful lens to investigate organizational objects. While the rhizomatic position appears as a broader proposal, of conducting research processes, we understand that the rhizome may, more

specifically, open the way to understanding objects and their territories, since their onto-epistemological characteristics are observed. But how would this concept be operationalized, while bearing the organizational object in mind?

The keyword that seems more appropriate to us when we choose to use the rhizome as a methodological operator is **tracing**. Returning to the definition of the concept, and its constituent elements, the possibilities for analysis start to gain form. We have selected the lines, assemblages and territories as the elements, which may be traced, while considering a specific organizational phenomenon. Taking these elements into consideration, we provide the following list of questions:

- Which territory do you intend to investigate? Which limits – although transitory – demarcate this organizational territory?
- Which elements – human and inhuman/material and immaterial – form the territory in question?
- Which assemblages (relations and connections) are dominant in this territory?
- What are the lines of rigid segmentarity? Which types of rigid and naturalizing determinations emerge in this territory?
- What are the flexible lines? Where are they more present?
- Which lines of flight may be identified? Which forms of resistance do the organizational agents undertake?

These questions suggest a path of possibilities, to read the organizational phenomena through a rhizome lens. It is important to highlight that cartography is presented as one of the main forms of conducting research within Deleuze and Guattari's proposal. Traditionally, cartography belongs to the field of geographical studies, and is guided by the search for mathematical precision and statistics: the science of maps. Traditional cartography, on account of its potential, was adapted by social sciences, in order to contribute to understanding the objects from this field of knowledge (PRADO FILHO and TETI, 2013). However, we understand that, if reality is made up of forms, forces, assemblages and relations, analytical cartography needs to be identified – much more than a method – which is able to handle these intersections (SOUZA and PETINELLI-SOUZA, 2014). We are limited here to merely citing the existence of cartography, but without exploring it further⁶, given the objectives of this article.

Although cartography, as a specific analytical tool, is not incorporated into research, what is proposed here is that the rhizomatic perspective can maximize a reading of the reality that supports differences and, furthermore, that conceives it as a power of creation, as becoming. In international literature, we find authors who have already appropriated the rhizome, as a tool to read organizational reality, by different measures, and with various proposals (BALL, 2005; CHIA, 1999; CLEGG, KORBERGER and RHODES, 2005; LINSTEAD and THANEM, 2007; LAWLEY, 2005; SORENSEN, 2005; PICK, 2016). For example, Bougen and Young (2000) use the concept to analyze the context of bank frauds, and the failures experienced in auditing and regulation processes. Precisely on account of the dimension of movement and becoming provided by the concept, based on real cases, the authors discuss how ineffective the regulations methods used were in past fraudulent events, and, therefore, they disregard the constant changes that mark organizations, their agents and contexts. On the unusual use of the concept of the rhizome, they argue: "Rhizomes rather than schemes. Irreverent? Perhaps. But we did it to help us think movement. Different words helping us think different thoughts" (BOUGEN and YOUNG, 2000, p. 424).

Another study that makes use of the concept of the rhizome is by Munro (2015), who investigates power relations and resistance demonstrated within the context of WikiLeaks network activity. In this work, the aspect that stands out the most in the concept of the rhizome is the networks' imagetic aspect, and the constant deterritorialization and reterritorialization process that permeates it. In the specific case of this article, the author problematizes how a networked organization is able to destabilize existing power relations, to the extent that it attacked systems and organizations considered hegemonic in all senses, acting through peripheral networks. It is interesting to observe that various characteristics of this empirical object demanded a different outlook from the author, due to the difficulty in defining it, in terms of the traditional molds of organization, and can be recognized as a frontier organization, or even "disorganization." Throughout the article, the author discusses the network's resistance tactics, in order to explore specific vectors of deterritorialization, threatening pre-established positions of power⁷.

In terms of national literature, an example of this type of application can be found in the article entitled "Immaterial labor, rhizomatic control and subjectivity in the new technological paradigm," written by Carmem Lígia Iochins Grisci, published in the FGV EAESP Revista de Administração de Empresas (Business Administration Journal) in 2008. This is the only article found

⁶ For cartography, see Guattari and Rolnik (2005); Passos, Kastrup and Escóssia (2015).

⁷ These are examples of studies that have appropriated the concept of the rhizome, in order to understand an aspect of organizational life. We are not focusing here on the extent to which the authors draw on Deleuze and Guattari's thinking as a whole.

in searches conducted on the SPELL database and in A2 strata (Qualis Capes classification) in the area of public and business administration, accounting and tourism periodicals, and using the term 'rhizome'⁸, whether as part of the title, keywords or abstract.

In this article, the author analyzes two management models introduced by a Portuguese banking institution, from the perspective of immaterial labor, and the new technological paradigm mechanisms. Basically, focusing on the subjective mobilization characteristic of the emergence of this new technological paradigm, one of the main arguments of the research lies in the level of sophistication of the control exercised in this context. In the author's words:

Following Deleuze and Guattari's (2000) inspiring discussion on the rhizome, we suggest that it is called **rhizomatic control**, in order to understand it in its multiple forms of expression and changing nature. **This suggestion is supported by the fact that control is no longer limited to fixture on rigid structures, to reproduction as tracing, the binary logic of the watchman and the monitored, or the certainty of surveillance with punitive purposes, which are characteristic of the panopticon. To the contrary, control, today, is associated to seduction, mobility, global and characteristic aspects of synoptic.** Previously associated to paper files and management, in an organizational logic that favored verticalization with the new technological paradigm, control has been taking on **shifting directions**. (GRISCI, 2008, no page number, our highlighting).

Based on the characteristics of the rhizome, it can be observed that the author is seeking a use similar to what we suggest calling the **methodological operator**; in other words, the concept as a lens to expand the level of intelligibility on a specific subject. Among the conclusions of the research, it was evident that rhizomatic control results in increasingly standardized subjectivities and that, under a positive discourse on management itself by the employee, this standardization becomes consented. According to the author, exceeding expectations, rhizomatic control affects not only the construction of labor forms, but also ways of life. The use of the concept of the rhizome in the job at hand has shown another, rich possibility of thinking about a complex organizational issue.

Generally speaking, a use similar to what we propose calling the **methodological operator**, can be observed in these studies. Whether from the imagetic and functional perspective of a network, whether from the question of the movement that takes place between the deterritorialization and reterritorialization processes or, even, from the multiplicity of elements that coexist and overlap in a reality (complexity), there appear to be various possibilities for using the concept in the field of organizational studies. We have noted that this use is tentative, particularly within the context of national production, which we hope to encourage, in terms of the production of new research, and also new perspectives of the organizational object.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE NOT FINAL ...

Whether as a **rhizomatic position**, or **methodological operator**, we reaffirm how productive Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical contributions can be, when we consider research in the field of organizational study, particularly with respect to empirical investigations. Throughout this article, we have drawn attention to aspects that should be observed when this positioning is adopted, such as ontological indeterminacy (multiplicity and historicity), and epistemology based on the construction of knowledge, established on an empirical reality. The importance of these connections, indicated by authors, such as Lawley (2005), Linstead and Thanem (2007) and Cavalcanti (2016), encourage us to open an increasing number of opportunities for dialogue that facilitate new ways of thinking about organizations and their daily activities, although they are provisional.

We understand that the complexity that determines not only the objects of organizational studies, but administration in general, requires other ways of reading reality, such as other perceptions about social and institutional processes. Thus, on the one hand, the invitation to engage with these authors within this field of knowledge includes insisting on experimentation, bringing rhizomatic relations to the forefront, in which assemblages are made, tracing what is produced among (and with) institutions, among (and with) professionals, among (and with) teams, and among (and

⁸ Search carried out in the period between 20/01/2018 and 20/02/2018.

with) subjects, on a daily basis. In particular, aware of the lines and forms that make up a rhizome, the proposal is to problematize the aspects and situations that insist on remaining, such as norms, regulations and standards. On the other hand, it is following processes that indicate spaces of invention and resistance, and destabilizations that favor passages. In addition to identifying these forms of reality operating, it is important to understand that they overlap, and there is no attempt in this process to say what is good, and what is bad, but what it favors, or otherwise, in that context, a space for the productive force of life.

Encouraging the use of these concepts is also offering the researcher more tools, so that they are used in the knowledge construction process, appropriating to reflect, learn about, and to recreate. Thus, we will also continue in line with what the authors, Deleuze and Guattari, believe in relation to thinking; after all, they are calling on us, so that we are able to think with them, favoring creation, rather than the mere reproduction of knowledge.

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