THIERRY VERSTRAETE

PROPOSAL FOR A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP:

$EPh = f\,[(C \times S \times P) \subset (E \times O)]$

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Contact the author :

Web site : http://www.adreg.net
Web page : http://www.thierry.verstraete.net

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PROPOSAL OF A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: EPh = F [(C x S x P Ì (E x O)]

Thierry VERSTRAETE

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The English version of the first part of the triptyque (*Essay on the Singularity of Entrepreneurship as Research Domain)* of which this work constitutes the second part, was recognized by *European Foundation for Management Development* which published it in its *Annual Review of Progress in Entrepreneurship Research (ARPENT).*

The ADREG Editions thus meet their objectives, that of the promotion of research in entrepreneurship, that starting from texts apparently heterodoxies in their format in accordance with the editorial policy mentioned on page 2.

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INTRODUCTION

This text constitutes the second part of a research program devoted to entrepreneurship which encompasses three parts (description, theorization, and action-research) of which the first part published, corresponds with the demonstration of the singularity of entrepreneurship as a field of research by at least three observations :

1. The existence of a research community devoting itself to the research and the teaching of entrepreneurship;
2. The identification of objects, notions and concepts, singular to entrepreneurship;
3. The possibility of proposing a real research project for this field.

Here, the objective is to bring precision to point number two by providing the details of the representation that constitutes the heart of a thesis whose first assertions go back to 1995[1]. These precisions are linked to point number three if the proposal is to be perceived as a framework for future research work.

[1] We will be led to draw from our preceding publications.

The second perspective unveiled by this work thus aims at proposing a generic framework based on a theoretical model[2]. In this case, it is a theory, here ours, which is given to scrutiny in scientific debate (according to the expression taken again by Huff, 1999). The model does not bring up to date assumptions, tested or testable, linking variables together and does not fit into any prospective falsification. The use of the term theory calls for some precision in our epistemological positioning, expounded in an accreditation to supervise research defended in 2000.

If, when it is a question of concretely describing the way in which the phenomenon is expressed in particular situations or contexts, it is advisable to propose a model of the corresponding process, a global apprehension of entrepreneurship is necessary so that research projects would not to be governed by a single model whose search would be associated with that of Graal, but to be guided by a relatively shared representation of what entrepreneurship is as a phenomenon.

Our work on the entrepreneurial phenomenon appears inseparable to us from a position that we could qualify as constructivist, taking care to avoid sinking into epistemological dogmatism. Our intention here is not to enter the subtle debate on the principles or the organization of the conditions of scientific knowledge production, a debate in which the controversies and arguments are numerous. Our ambition is less theoretical and our finality more pragmatic. By taking care to

[2] The phenomenon appears too complex to be reduced to a definition.

avoid the pitfalls of any form of epistemic dogmatism, we consider only, after others, that the scholarly sense, at least in the human and social sciences, is inextricable from the existence of acts of interpretation, themselves interdependent on theoretical language. From this viewpoint, the elaboration of this knowledge appears as a constructed socio-cognitive configured by a socio-institutional dimension, in short by the production and reception conditions of the speeches in function of which interrogations are formulated, methods are refined, the scientific standards are defined, even more, demarcation lines are set between possible research and that made impossible (on the basis of the relevance of the exploration, the methodological possibilities, questions of ethical order, etc). By recognizing the legitimacy and the value of other positions, to us, the social sciences seem more committed to a design of a constructed world, in which it is sometimes possible to identify regularities towards which move, rather, hypothetico-deductive work. In other words, it is not in a "pure" constructivism that we manage to place ourselves but in a notion of a world built *via* the multiple interactions between the individuals and the types of collective action organizations (both being at the same time the social source and product). Be that as it may, according to its positioning, and also because our concern joins a dialogue and an exchange, the reader will should consider our representation as a framework, a model or a theory.

The third part is prescriptive. It transfers to practice the knowledge brought. It should be finalized before year 2006; it requires, on the one hand, a council step (the collaboration of consultants is committed) and, on the other hand, a research-action step (in progress within the research team to which we belong[3]).

For the second part delivered here, it was necessary to find a balance between the supply of sufficient details to make it possible for the reader to understand the interest in the drawing up of a theory which they possibly do not know (let us think of, for example, PhD students at the beginning of their studies) and the researcher's risks of lassitude knowing the quantity mobilized. For this reason, we warmly thank the colleagues who agreed to re-read the former versions of the text and who did not spare their remarks.

The first chapter presents the model globally; the following chapters detail each level that composes it.

[3] Equipe E&S (Entrepreneuriat and Stratégie), http://www.ifrege.com

CHAPTER 1.
THREE LEVELS TO BE CHARACTERIZED IN THE STUDY OF THE RELATION BINDING THE ENTREPRENEUR AND THE ORGANISATION WHICH THEY IMPEL: COGNITIVE, STRUCTURAL AND PRAXEOLOGIC

Bygrave and Hofer (1991), like Gartner (1985), among others, adhere to the prospect of entrepreneurship that corresponds to the creation of an organization. It is not new and it is difficult to identify who was the initiator. To a certain extent, it joins a Schumpeterian acceptation from which we dissociate ourselves when entrepreneurship is amalgamated with innovation. In our thesis, entrepreneurship is seen as a phenomenon leading to the creation of an organization impelled by one or more individuals who have become associates for the occasion.

Three levels of study of the entrepreneurial phenomenon can be pointed out in literature: the entrepreneur, (or the entrepreneurs because there can be several to impel the same organization from the point of view of the observer), their actions and the context in which they undertake. But it would be tautological to model entrepreneurship on the basis of these three levels because, for any social phenomenon, one can identify the actors, their actions and the context in which the phenomenon is observed. So that a scientific contribution be noted, it is necessary to exceed this facility.

To understand and represent the entrepreneurial phenomenon, it is possible to consider more precisely:

- a cognitive level (C): this corresponds to the cognitive state leading an individual to undertake, to the knowledge of the entrepreneur as well as to all that contributed, on the one hand, to bring this knowledge to him and, on the other hand, to forge this cognitive state (including his intentions and attitudes). This resulting from a permanent reflexive exercise, learning situations in which the individual was placed and of the vision that they have of their business (his strategic vision). When there are several individuals who join together to undertake, problems relating to conflicts which one could describe as "cognitive" are likely to emerge and, for some, can take them as far as the courts. Conversely, the confrontation of various representations can be enriching, benefiting as much the project as the protagonists (only when obviously these divergences do not harm the constructive interaction of the carriers of the project);
- a structural level (S): this corresponds to the context structure surrounding the acting entrepreneur. Without eliminating too easily the influence of the individuals, one should not however neglect the weight of the structures on the other levels of the model. It is important to apprehend the structural basics of the system, whether they be the rules, conventions, representations, or institutions which define, in part, interplay with which the entrepreneur must manoeuvre to win the commitment of the

stakeholders and to perpetuate the impelled organization (at least, when it is in the objectives of this entrepreneur). Obviously, the entrepreneur can set up a conventional system in which the stakeholders will detect favourable conditions of exchange;

- a praxeological level (P): this integrates the fundamental actions undertaken. These emanate, on the one hand, from the multiple positioning of the entrepreneur and the organization impelled with respect to the competitors and the various stakeholders and, on the other hand, from the configuration formed in order to produce the elements, which will allow the exchange, durable if possible, with these actors. Within this framework, the policies put in place (financial policies, political wage, etc.) aim at optimizing the exchange relations between the stakeholders;

These levels are expressed in a singular way within the framework of the relation binding the entrepreneur (E) and the organization (O) that this entrepreneur impels.

C, S and P are irreducible for analysis requirements, but are inextricable on a practical level, their interactions (the "x" in the model) also constitute research levels of analysis in entrepreneurship. To take an example that binds the cognitive level and the structural level in order to better understand the process of entrepreneurial socialization, it is possible to resort to the culturalist theses to a limited level as well as to theories like that of conventions or that of social representations, may constitute a relevant analysis prism when these theories are articulated with those of the identity.

The content of the following sections more or less explicitly comprises the bonds of inextricability of the levels (the mobilized theories sometimes carry them within themselves).

Thus, the research contribution on the phenomenon relies: on the comprehension of the entrepreneur's knowledge leading him to undertake (C); the singularity of the actions called upon by the act (P); the structure of the contexts in which the phenomenon emerges (S); the entrepreneur (E) as an individual, in particular his life's background and other general aspects (dispositions, affectivity, emotions...) allowing us to better know him; the impelled organization (O). In other words, a research programme in entrepreneurship aims at bringing knowledge on each dimension C, P, and S, on their interactions, and the relation to which they apply, namely the entrepreneur and the impelled organization (E and O). As a matter of synthesis, where PhE = Entrepreneurial Phenomenon:

$$\mathbf{EPh = f\ [\ (C \times P \times S)\ \subset\ (E \times O)\ ]}$$

For Shapero and Sokol (1982) "the entrepreneur" can be plural. Here the E of the model can imply several individuals taking on the entrepreneur status by the urging of an organization with which they are in a relation of a symbiotic type.[4]

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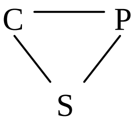
[4] Three types of relations are possible: the symbiotic, the commensal and the parasitic. Let us recall that the commensal lives on its host by diverting part of food of this last but without causing injury to him, while the parasite infects its host and can cause his death. In reverse, in a symbiotic relation, the protagonists profit reciprocally from the contributions of the other.

It is clear that "x", representing the interactions of this systemic model, binds the three levels, inextricable but irreducible one to the other; graphically this gives:



The reader will have noticed the use of the term “impel”, rather than that of “creation”. This semantic choice has its importance in the entrepreneurship field. If the drive does not refer only and inevitably to the suddenness and the brevity of a force exerting a pressure in order to modify a given state, while also considering the development of an activity or a company, it supposes the launching of a dynamic (*cf.* the definition adapted from the Larousse dictionary). When the entrepreneur no longer impels the movement, giving place to the creation of an organization (more or less large, and which takes more or less time), he leaves the field of investigation of entrepreneurship. Thus seen, not every leader is an entrepreneur, i.e. when he is not, or no longer, in this creative dynamic and when he is satisfied with routine. The members of the organization, which he created can nevertheless relay him in this type of task, in particular those taking part in the learning and the implementation of the strategy, if they are invested with the related authority.

This point establishes one of the junctions of research in entrepreneurship and research in strategy. In fact, the passage from an individual strategy to a strategy of organization (Sammut, 1995; de la Ville, 1996, 2000, 2001; Fonrouge, 1999) could constitute the bridge between entrepreneurship and strategic management. Admittedly, the fields cannot be strictly marked out. It is not because the leader does not undertake any more, that an entity born of the entrepreneurial phenomenon cannot relay the initiator in the pursuit of the impelling characteristic of that entrepreneurial phenomenon (thus one will sometimes notice the replacement of certain initiators so that the organization can continue its growth).

If one should not confuse entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial strategy, one can see the latter as the remarked desire of the entity or those which control it to deploy the concerned attitudes of the behaviour that one lends to the entrepreneurs, which can lead them to replace the initiator of the organization by another. One will join, in part, Hitt, Ireland, Camp and Sexton (2001), to see entrepreneurship from the point of view of creation and strategic management in that of the search for competitive edge. One could thus consider that entrepreneurship cannot be concerned with the search of a competitive edge and the field reveals many cases where the battle with respect to the competitors (let us not forget that the term strategy comes from a military origin) is not, *a priori* the concern of the entrepreneur. Obviously, one should not make us say that which is not said, and it seems to us that the entrepreneur turned towards the future may find it beneficial to be a strategist, thus to consider the evolution of his organization on the basis of the use of the tools of strategic management and of what they imply.

One should not all the more confuse entrepreneurship and company creation. On the legal level for example, other forms can be born from the phenomenon (ex: an association) and, as Bruyat (1993) underlines it, the creation of a company can result only from one change of statute (from that of a private limited company to that of the type limited liability company). This case does not always reflect an entrepreneurial reality but it is entered in the French governmental statistics as a creation. On a managerial level, what we call a firm might only be one stage in the impelled organization. Indeed, certain individuals have the ambition from the start to create an organization for which several firms are to be given birth. It should be noted that this creation or this impelling is carried out on a more or less tangible basis (*ex-nihilo* creation, certain company buy outs and, in certain cases: the revitalization of an existing company, "intrapreneurship", etc). Lastly, it is necessary to come to agreement on the term "organization", which is as much the action of organizing as it is an entity resulting from this action (see page 70 and following of the first part of the triptyque which shows that the organization cannot be restricted to these two meanings).

In other words, between the assimilation of entrepreneurship to the creation of a company and a tautological point of view confusing entrepreneurship and taking initiative, it is appropriate to concretely observe a phenomenon before being able to qualify it as entrepreneurial.

The resolutely specific nature of entrepreneurship lies in the centrality of the entrepreneur. Without lapsing into etymology, one could reasonably admit that the entrepreneurial phenomenon originates from the entrepreneur's initiative. The idea here is to not forget the organization, since the phenomenon underlying it gives place to its creation. From a global perspective, entrepreneurship concerns the phenomenon arising from the symbiotic relation between the entrepreneur and the organization, which he impels. One cannot reduce entrepreneurship to neither the entrepreneur, nor to the impelled organization, and one cannot forget the types of action that bind them together. Theoretical foundations coming from various disciplines can highlight each one of these levels. Only those mobilized in our theoretical construction are presented here, exhaustiveness is vain. It is more a question of showing the theoretical architecture.

The sections, which follow relate to each level (C, S, P) and start with a summary of what the reader will find in detail afterwards. While thinking of young researchers, we chose to deliver our conception of theories sometimes interpreted by colleagues with nuances. Thus, in section 4 for example, it is obvious that the presentation of the theory of conventions or that of the social representations could have been summarized, but it seemed useful to us to include some explanations in the text body allowing the reader who does not know them, to immediately understand the foundations so that he can seize the ideas without the intermediary of other reading.

CHAPTER 2.
THE COGNITIVE LEVEL: VISION, LEARNING AND REFLEXIVITY

Beyond what one will qualify here, by convenience, as "the nature of the individual", to undertake supposes a cognitive state leading a person to act in accordance with the types of action which correspond to it (which is developed in a forthcoming chapter), starting from an idea and the detection or construction of business opportunities[5]. Admittedly, other elements concerning the project carrier come into play when it comes to initiating an action (the emotions, affectivity, the history of the individual), but, here like everywhere else, it is impossible to dismiss the problems of methodological reductionism to which every researcher yields.

The cognitive level is subject to many influences, in particular that of the two others. For example, the context (structural level S), can illustrate a situation having strongly frustrated the individual (hierarchical harassment, etc.) and one can thus find certain triggering events described in the literature on entrepreneurship and what Shapero (see Shapero and Sokol, 1982) calls

[5] One usually distinguishes an idea from a business opportunity on the basis of existence of prospective customers that the latter supposes. An opportunity has qualities of attraction and durability creating a proposal of products or services bringing value to the users (Timmons, 1994).

transfers. The cognitive level also endures aspects related to the history of the individual and the situations and experiments having punctuated his existence – his emotions and his affect; that one will arrange in the component "E" of the model because they constitute of what the person is. It is also under the influence of the individual's intentions. In other words, in addition to the interaction between the three levels of the model, one should not forget that these apply to a particular relation between an individual in his natural environment and constructed by his nature, (affect and intellect – his intentions) and the impelled organization. For reasons of analysis, a focusing on the cognitive level brings to light three interesting dimensions – the researcher as much as the expert: strategic vision, reflexivity and learning. Strategic vision is based on the representative illustrations of the individual, on his cognitive mapping, to commit the entrepreneur and his organization to act towards a desired future. The confrontation with reality mobilizes the reflexivity of the entrepreneur and nourishes this vision by the practical competencies of which he shows proof and reveals as many intentions as motivations to act (this reflexivity leads us towards the praxeological level studied further on). An essential interface between the strategic vision and reflexivity, learning results from predispositions or faculties but especially from situations and commitments (sources of experiments) for this impulse characterizing the entrepreneurial phenomenon. All the scientific disciplines can be used in contribution as knowledge on this question, but the theses ensuing from psychology find a particularly fertile ground for their exploitation.

On the practical level, different tools and methods serve the entrepreneur. For example, cognitive mapping can be used to help him develop his vision (Cossette, 2002, 2003) and the accompanying professionals will easily seize them (Verstraete, 1997a and b).

VISION

If the vision is enriched by the action, it is before all what psychologists call conceptual knowledge. Learning and the problem solving approaches are conditioned by conceptual knowledge that the subjects have (Weil-Barais, 1999). Within knowledge of an individual, these concepts enable him to understand and act. They are thus put to the test by the facts. Seemingly trivial, the example conveyed by Weil-Barais is explicit. If an individual has to distribute 28 candies to four children, two types of conceptual knowledge can be required. The first is the concept of distribution, consisting in giving the candies one by one to each child until none of the 28 parts remain. The second is that of division, where the individual implements an arithmetic equation to directly give each child the result of the calculation, that is to say $28 \div 4 = 7$. These two types of knowledge are put to the test by the facts by an effective distribution of candies to the children and can lead to adjustments (this brings us closer to the concept of reflexivity considered later).

Conceptual knowledge can also relate to an object. One would then speak then about a diagram. "A diagram is a cognitive representation which specifies the general properties of a type of object, an event or a structure and leaves aside the details which are not relevant to characterize the type. A diagram is thus an abstraction that makes it possible to assign to general categories some specifications... By eliminating the details, the diagram allows the categorization, then the thought and the action based on this categorization " (Weil-Barais, 1993, p. 391). Let us note that by categorization, the psychologists identify a classification process of the objects in families. For example, "parrot" in the family "bird", " house" in the family "building", etc[6].

In other words, every individual has conceptual knowledge of objects, be they past situations worth being called experience or anticipated future situations or again, objects of material nature or immaterial nature. From this knowledge, a diagram is forged, undoubtedly simplified and source of bias, but which authorizes an action. Compared to the entrepreneurial act, the schemas are multiple and crystallize into what is called "vision" in management sciences. Thus, any entrepreneur has a vision of the sets of concepts relating to his business that are arranged in schemas. With this idea, one can call on Kelley's work (1967; 1972), and more largely those called by the users of the method of the cognitive maps.

[6] This can pose problems as evoked, not without humour, by Umberto Eco (1997) in connection with the discovery of ornithorynque, classable, with difficulty, in the categories of the time.

The concept of vision in entrepreneurial circles is often studied as a criterion of performance [7]. Indeed, while insisting on the incidence of a clear and diffused vision on the continuity of the entities, the studies create bonds between individual schemas and collective or organisational representations. In other words, the vision of the entrepreneur must become, according to the expression of Prahalad and Bettis (1986; Bettis, Prahalad, 1995), a dominant logic, or, to borrow from Johnson (1982), a paradigm, this last terminology correctly translates the idea of an adhesion to the strategic "theory" of the entrepreneur (that this adhesion be that of the employees or, more largely, that of the different stakeholders). Obviously, the entrepreneur's schemas are called up and amended, in particular by the interaction with other actors, for example: close collaborators.

According to an idiosyncratic perspective, the vision is the representation of the leader, which correctly relays Bennis and Nanus (1985) when they say to us that to choose an orientation, the leader must initially have made himself a mental image of a possible and desirable future state of the organization. This image corresponds to the vision of the entrepreneur relative to the business in progress and that to come. The vision term especially puts forward the anticipation capacity of the entrepreneur, in other words, his faculty to think of a future, which he will try to construct. There is nothing magic in this; the entrepreneur simply has a relatively clear and precise

[7] To illustrate, we will consult: Van de Ven, A.; Huston, R., Schroeder, D.M. (1984); Ginn, C.W.; Sexton, D.L. (1989); Bird, B.J. (1988); Career, J.B. (1991); Nkongolo-Bakenka, J.-M.; Amboise, G; Garnier, B (1994); Filion L.-J. (1991); Verstraete, T (1999); Cossette P. (2002).

representation of the organization, which will be born and of the place that it will claim in the environment, at least according to his wishes.

The empirical research by Nkongolo-Bakenka, from Amboise and Garnier (1994) showed the positive influence of this clarity on the profits of the their sample companies. Filion (1991) uses the term "coherence" rather than that of "clarity". We, for our part, speak about "congruence" [8] and have mobilized, like Gartner (1995), the work of Weick (1979), which we will return to later.

The construction of the vision of the entrepreneur is very much related to his learning. On this point, the psychologists can obviously bring to us much to identify the forms and the types of learning nourishing the conceptual knowledge of an individual, which authorize at the same time his actions and his access to subsequent forms and types of learning.

[8] The congruence between the representation of the individual and the structure surrounding him. The entrepreneur tends to want to make the structure (others would say the environment) congruent with the representation that he has made of it for himself.

LEARNING

Argyris and Schön (1978) distinguish between learning in a simple loop from learning in a double loop. Learning in a simple loop has a reproductive character induced by the last experiences and the schemas of the moment. It can, to a certain extent, be brought closer to the concept of "instantiation" used by the psychologists to explain the situations where an individual does not need to reason in order to achieve his goal (ex: leaving on your premises to go to buy bread at the bakery, you then find yourself in front of the bakery without having had to reason over which route to take). Learning in a double loop leads to a questioning of logic or assumptions subjacent with the action, the individual is really conscious of the problem and reasons in a drawn out way compared to the situation met before (here you have moved, and it is necessary for you to reason to find a way to the bakery which you located the day before).

The psychologists distinguish between other types of learning and the consultation of the results of their research led us to retain for our field: associative learning, learning through action, learning by observation, the co-active learning and that by instruction (consult the work of Weil-Barais, edition of 1999, for a generic presentation).

- Associative learning by trial and error was initially used within the framework of animal experiments where the animals, to obtain their food, had to learn from the environment in which they were placed. Success is supposed to play a determining role in this form of learning. In the case of man, the process is more complex, the subject tending to connect the result obtained to the behaviour adopted for the achieving of this result. Several dimensions have an essential effect on the persistence that an individual will develop to reach the goal that he has set and the success or failure of an intentional action depends mainly on the relationships between his aptitude and the effort (personal strength), the difficulty of the task and chance (environmental forces). The first two elements correspond with an internal attribution, the second two with an external attribution. Within an entrepreneurial framework, Gatewood, Shaver and Gartner (1995) are inspired by the work of Frieze and Weiner (1971) who have proposed a two-dimensional diagram which defines four "attributional" factors: the effort, which is internal and unstable, capacity (or the aptitude), which is internal and stable, the difficulty of the task, which is external and stable, and chance, which is external and instable. According to work of Luginbuhl, Crowe and Kathan (1975), success is more allotted to effort and chance, failure with the difficulty of the task and to aptitudes. The subjects in a condition of success mainly allot their success to internal and unstable causes. Gatewood, Shaver and Gartner make the following hypothesis: the individuals whose explanations given for why they entered into business can be categorised as internal and stable (ex: the desire to be one's own boss) are more persistent in their company. The study revealed that women confirm this hypothesis whereas when speaking of men, they are more those whose explanations are categorized as external and stable (ex: identification of a market) which persist more. The entrepreneurial schools (which are a type of learning) could draw from the conclusions of this experiment. Thus, for example, they should make the people tending to allot their motivations to internal causes more aware of market considerations. Conversely, it would be necessary to make the people who have external attributions in their motivations in entrepreneurship think more about their aptitudes.

In the study of the bond between attribution and entrepreneurial persistence, it can be helpful to use the concept of *Locus of Control* (LOC) [9]. Kuratko, Hornsby and Naffziger (1997) reveal that entrepreneurial persistence results above all from the accomplishment of the personal aspirations of the entrepreneur [10]. Thus, the reaching of a goal results in persistence and consolidates this feeling of *Locus of Control.* The LOC is a concept, which covers a field of research aiming at understanding the way in which people explain what happens to them. The authors at the origin of this concept are Rotter (1966), Lefcourt (1966) and Phares (1957). If it had been initially developed in a relatively autonomous way compared to work on attribution, the distinction between the two fields has become thereafter less clear so much so that locus of control is regarded as an integral part of attribution (see Beauvois and Deschamps, 1990). Gatewood, Shaver and Gartner (1995) maintain however a difference by distinguishing the *Locus of Causality* from the locus of control. The locus of causality refers directly to the work of Heider

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[9] One can distinguish between *internal LOC* and *external LOC* of which we will not go into detail here. For the anecdote, we want to tell the reader that we approach the concept of LOC in class with the students on the basis of the first Matrix film, more particularly the scene where Neo announces to Morpheus than he will choose whichever pill because he does not like the idea of not being in control of his life...

[10] On the concept of entrepreneurial persistence, see Davidsson (1991), Verstraete (1997, 1999).

on the concepts of *power, trial, chance* and *difficulty* in his naive analysis of the action, in order to measure the processes of attribution within the framework of task achievement (Jaspars, Hewstone, 1984). Without this lineage of work, Weiner (1979; Weiner and all 1972) was particularly concerned about the explanations given for success and failure. The performance of a person in the task at the same time depends on his personal strength (his aptitudes, his capacities, his intentions and his efforts) and on the environmental forces. In the first case we could speak about internal causality or about dispositional factors, in the second we could speak about external causality or situational factors (Deschamp, Clémence, 1990).

- According to Gatewood, Shaver and Gartner, a whole set of activities exist which, when they are carried out by the potential entrepreneurs, are likely to guide their cognitive orientation (this establishes a bond between the cognitive level and the praxeological level). These activities relate to the collection of information, the estimation of the potential profit, the installation of the structure of the firm, the starting up of the daily operations, etc.[11]. The authors raised only one definitely significant correlation between these five types of activities and the psychological variables: that which binds attribution and the structuring of the firm. The actions consisting in designing the impelled organization are an essential source of learning.

[11] One could also underline the learning caused by the completion of a business plan (Timmons, 1994, 1997; Marion, Sénicourt, 2003) obliging us to explore, amoung others, these dimensions.

In the same order of ideas, Guth, Kumaraswamy and McErlean (1991) undertook a longitudinal study centered on the cognitive processes of an entrepreneur in the midst of creating a business. They came up with a model according to which the success of a creation depends on the degree of congruence between the creator's schemas of representation and the reality with which it is confronted. This congruence depends much on the learning capacities of the creator since, indeed and on the one hand, we should not push aside the idea that certain individuals show an aptitude toward certain types of learning. In addition, for all, this capacity is generally low initially, the creator must apprehend the type of environment in which he evolves because this environment influences the degree of control which he will have, in regards to the resources which he has and his capacity of conviction, of the organization which it initiates.

Let us note, with Piaget, that the actions can have an effect on thought itself, human beings are able to regard their thinking as an object. Within the framework that interests us, a bond is created between action and conscious construction of the vision. Thus, we also study planning and information processing. It is interesting, after reading Nguyen-Xuan, Richard, Hoc (1990), to point out the obvious possible assemblage between what in management one calls strategic planning and what the psychologists call cognitive planning. Indeed, one could see strategic planning as a methodological shoring offering instrumental support to cognitive planning of a decision maker whose rationality is abused by an organization, which, for example, is gaining in size and is becoming increasingly complex.

- In the learning process by observation or imitation, culture and values (in particular through family, schooling, professional context) model behaviour. The work of Bandura (1982) on social learning constitutes an example of research belonging to the forms of learning by observation. As an imitation, it brings to the surface the interaction existing between the model and he who imitates it. As a procedure making it possible to maintain exchanges with the social environment, imitation also has educational virtues. Still it is necessary that these models be accessible. With regard to entrepreneurship, one knows that a close entourage of entrepreneurs, in particular within the family, influences the individual's propensity to undertake.

Minitti and Bygrave's (1999) article is based on the work of Granovetter (1978) and that of Granovetter and Soong (1983) on the models of diffusion and collective behaviour to explain why there can be more entrepreneurs in one region than in another. The comparison between the function of the usefulness in creating a company and that of entering into a paid activity extols in favour of the latter (the fear of adventure and the comfort of a salary rewarding the many years of study can be good common sense arguments to consolidate this idea). The chart of the mathematical development of these authors even shows, for creation, a function of value that was originally negative (departure under the origin on the y-axis). The authors convene the "rate of entrepreneurship", which corresponds to an index reflecting the number of people having created in the entourage of an individual considered, to show that beyond a certain threshold an effect of imitation encourages the individual to step out and act. In other words, some will never create, yet others will in any circumstance and, finally, part of the population will step out as soon as this threshold is reached. This aspect of the entrepreneurship establishes a bond between the cognitive level and the structural level and we could have quoted this work in the presentation of the level "S" of the model.

- As for co-active learning, it is expressed in meetings of individuals who have a collective objective, as is well the case in a company. The social activity updates differences leading these individuals to perceive the diversity of possibilities being offered through experienced situations.

- Lastly, learning by instruction and that by tutor also call on education sciences. In entrepreneurship, the researchers preoccupied by the questions of their teaching can with difficulty throw out related work, even though they are very few, it is regrettable, to refer to them here. Teaching is a fertile field of the research in entrepreneurship domain; congresses are sometimes entirely devoted to it.[12] While basing ourselves on three dimensions of the cognitive level of the model presented here, we will refer to Saporta and Verstraete (2000) to attempt a visualization of the teaching methods adapted to develop the knowledge of the candidates to the company. Learning calls into question the teaching of entrepreneurship. If the entrepreneurship is,

[12] See for example the first congress of the Academy of Entrepreneurship and the corresponding material downloadable from the site http://www.entrepreneuriat.com. In the French language, communications or publications on this subject are multiplying.

amoung other things, a question of culture, and then the education system has a role to play in diffusing this culture. The corresponding teaching aims at optimizing learning according to protocols supporting the whole or part of the work of the cognitive level. Thus, the putting someone into situation privileges reflexivity, the distribution of concepts, conceptual view thus strategic thought; finally a more original work is to be mobilized to provide the student with opportunities of developing his creativity, his aptitudes in terms of communication, etc. Finally and globally, it is advisable to combine theory and practice, heuristic and analyzes, or again, to take the remarks of Hynes (1996), formal methods (theories, concepts and examinations of knowledge and aptitudes) and informal (case study, practical experience, testimonies, creativity methods; as many occasions as possible to articulate concepts and facts). It will also be a question of adapting the forms and the contents according to the objectives, because they differ according to whether one wishes to make aware, accommodate, form, advise or accompany (Sénicourt, Verstraete, 2000).

With these types and forms of learning, it is possible to add the relative problems of memory and acquired experience. In entrepreneurship, it is generally a question of examining the connection with the incidence of performance in the experiment. Should a recipient trust the expert more than the novice? Here one can, again call upon the concept of representation and more exactly what the psychologists call planning.

According to Hoc (1990), in a representation, two types of plans constitute the extremes of a continuum on which we can seat functional plans (which correspond to the definition of functions and the relations between these functions). The first are the procedural plans (a succession of precise tasks to carry out) and the second are the declaratory plans (these correspond to a distant objective). Declaratory plans bring us closer the concept of vision as used by the managers, the procedural plans for the thought process for the concretization of this vision. The conception of a plan corresponds to the choice of the schematic representations making it possible to meet the requirements of a task. The two types of plans are conceived as much before as during their execution.

After having solved the abstract problem, the individual details the solution by successive refinements: "by introducing the defined details into lower level abstract spaces, and so on until obtaining an achievable solution" (Hoc, 1990, p.225). Let us limit ourselves to this approach[13] to assert its obvious proximity with the concept of vision mobilized by managers. The vision can be compared to cognitive strategic planning, and an entire assemblage of schemas, which anticipate a desired future. *A priori* the entrepreneur having succeeded is somebody who knows, or knew, how to articulate declaratory and procedural plans, which is not obvious for the creator undertaking for the first time. The conception of the plan differs between the beginner and the expert. The former generally has difficulties of analyzing diagrammatic problems and goes too quickly into details.

[13] See Hoc's article for details as well as the explicit work of Das, Kar and Parrila (1996)

Hoc explains this by the poverty of the plans available to the beginner and the absence of evaluation criterion of the plans available. The expert is on the other hand capable to make a selection among several plans based on comparative evaluation criteria [14]. The difficulty increases for the "novice creator" if, moreover, he invests himself in a sector from which he does not originate.

While remaining cautious in regards to the studies tending to define the entrepreneurial capacities of an individual by an approach called "character traits", it is advisable to admit that the entrepreneur has particular capacities allowing him to create, or even innovate according to Schumpeter's (1935) meaning, but also to make decisions which escape rational computation in a context of uncertainty (Hayek, 1949; Knight, 1921; Kirzner, 1973), to combine the production factors into an organized and coordinated unit (Leibenstein, 1968), etc. We would be tempted to say, following Bird's (1988) example, that one of the essential capacities of an entrepreneur is to know to use the schemas which he has of the organization that he initiates by their projection into situations not yet existing, that on different temporal horizons and without being isolated from daily management. According to Van de Ven, Huston & Schroeder (1984), that which distinguishes the accomplished entrepreneurs from the others resides in the clearness and the extent of their ideas of their business (to some extent vision). The study of Ginn and Sexton

[14] This approach can easily be crossed with that of Weick (1979), the expert having a "stock of schemas" that the novice does not have.

(1989) shows that entrepreneurs resolutely turned towards the future direct SME with strong growth. This disposition is effective when the individual combines learning in a simple but even more especially in a double loop.

REFLEXIVITY

Obviously, not all these ways of learning are cut off from contexts that favour them and Giddens' (1984) approach particularly interested us by the concept of reflexivity or reflexive control. The major generic interest of work of this author within the framework of research in entrepreneurship resides, according to us, in this concept of reflexivity, since he describes the subject acting like carrier of a practical or discursive conscience of his actions in singular situations or contexts. But another prospect is possible, in particular at the structural level, because it is notably a social structuring theory which the work of this author aspires, without giving to the structure the weight allotted by the structuralist movement, without granting to the individual either the total control of the trajectories taking shape for or by him. Reflexive control highlights the mediator role of the action in the dialectical relation binding the agent (considered like an actor) and the structure. In this way, the action cannot be explained without the intention of achieving a goal (praxeology). Reflexivity is arranged here in the cognitive level because of its intentional consequential character [15].

Simply said (providing that it were possible to give an account simply of the construction of Giddens...), reflexivity refers to the capacity that the individual has to understand what he does while he does it. His actions and those of the others nourish the practical knowledge that his competencies make it possible to translate into subsequent actions. In a more distinctive way, the "qualified" actor becomes aware at the same time of what he does and of the perception that he has of his intentions and of the his motivations for his actions, this is in reference to the resources which he mobilizes within the social structure in which he progresses. Seen in this light, reflexivity makes it possible to invoke the intentions and the motivations of the acting individual. Competence, in the way Giddens means it, is a capacity, which the individual has if he is "able to construct a representation of his action environment and to take into account this same representation in the accomplishment of his action" (Autissier, 2000, p. 209). Interaction feeds the representations triggering the motivations to be acted on; they lead him to act and to enter into the game of interactions amending the representations.

In addition to the theory suggested by Giddens, we will consult with interest all work relating to sociology of action without forgetting to look at the questions related to intentions. Indeed, according to the reflexive principle, the actions reveal the goal. However, "most of the time we do

[15] Concerning intention, the doctoral work of Sandrine Emin (2003) can be consulted with interest.

not form a precise image of the goal of our action" (Livet, 1993, p. 292) and the action is all the more tentative, as the goal to reach is a state (and not an object as in the case of motor activities). Said otherwise, a goal can be only a transitory wish since an action can lead one to amend it. The concept of goal poses, in this context, a problem (we would benefit by replacing it with the concept of strategic vision). According to Koenig: "goals are only one convenient approach to indicate the product of complex interactions between projects (which we should not evacuate all the same), the phenomena and opportunities emerge" (Koenig, 1990, p.15). With respect to this concept of goals, too often mistaken with that of intention, another reserve lies in the reactions of an environment leading the impelled organization towards a trajectory that, to the extreme, can be contrary to the intentions of its initiator. Once started, the action enters a universe of interactions and its initiator is no longer the only pilot. Following Giddens' example, it is advisable to distinguish between the intentional and the non-intentional, the latter being the consequence of a series of events having escaped the initiator's control from the sequence of actions, each event could become an unrecognized condition of later actions (*cf*. Morin, 1990).

From a cognitive perspective, the action can be regarded as the essence or the source of the decision. This is studied in a number of disciplines of which some can appear unorthodox in our field but of which it is wise to know the source, for example while resorting to the physiological nature of a decision. After Damasio's (1995) work showing the importance of integrating the emotions into the study of the decision-making processes, Berthoz's (2003) last work constitutes a plebiscite for a physiological comprehension of decision-making. In his theoretical construction, this researcher opposes the representational design of the brain, which considers that this organ constructs an image of the world that guides the action in question. He defends a design of a brain "which is part of the world, which has internalized the properties and which emulates some but refers them to its own goals, which fashions external reality by projecting its desires, its intentions and its preconceptions there" (p.344). The brain is an elaborative emulator of the scenarios based on what it perceives (or really wants to perceive, paradoxically, consciously or unconsciously). This role of emulation is not disconnected from the remainder of the moving body, which intervenes by other organs, through our senses, in decision-making. This movement binds the action and cerebral activity; the decision is an action. For certain survival activities (ex: to escape a predator), speed is essential. Is it any different, as the author underlines it, with decision-making in an exchange room or a pilot of a warplane in a real hostility context? But the decision does not systematically undergo pressure from a response time revealed mainly in survival contexts. There would be in fact two decision mechanisms. The first ties emotion and perception to indeed trigger a rapid decision. In the evolution of mankind, the latter appeared gradually and calls upon a complex treatment of information delivered by the senses. It is inseparable from the intentions of the actor according to his past, his social group and the culture in which he is immersed or of which he engrossed. In the centre of these two mechanisms, emotion is "a tool for decisions, it is a powerful prediction instrument of a brain which anticipates and projects its intentions" (p.347). Of what interest are these developments for entrepreneurship research (more largely in social sciences)? Essentially, without aiming at specialization, it avoids falling into naive comments by knowledge would this be only basic elementary processes of decision-making, even more still, by a physiological integration of concepts such as intention, intuition, emotions, and memory, these without pouring into the caricature or analogies practising the identity of nature (see the Birmbaum's criticism in the Encyclopaedia Universalis) and without falling into what Piaser (1994) calls pure amusement of the mind, as this has sometimes been the case when the l'autopoïèse (see the remark of Verstraete, 1999b) or the theory of chaos (see Pailot's research file, 1995) are for example invoked. However, can we envisage an entrepreneur without emotion, intuition, etc.? It is not a question of defending the idea of a entrepreneurship research program calling on specialists in neurophysiology, but, for example and in a metaphorical way, to appreciate with which degree urgency decisions are sometimes made by entrepreneurs according to varying degrees of pressure of the context (level S).

CHAPTER 3.
THE STRUCTURAL LEVEL

Any individual and any action, no matter which individual or collective, take place in a social universe combining objective aspects of established or institutionalized rules with subjective or inter-subjective aspects of conventions and more or less shared representations. The social structures play a significant role at the same time in the individual's initiating of an action but more largely in the incentive, they know how to deploy so that their actors behave in an entrepreneurial way. Culture (that is either anchored in history, taught by the educational system, or forged by a personal or professional environment as observed in certain companies), conventions, social representations, exploitable resources, socialization, socio-demographic aspects, etc. are as many components of two dimensions of the structural level presented in this section (one is natural, the other artificial, to again solicit Friedberg, 1993).

The structural level is the context, the situation or the environment according to the terminology as preferred by the different individuals concerned. It refers to a socio-historic temporally located but moving space. It overhangs the two other levels of which it is the fruit, offers order and disorder that each one will want to see there and arranges the individuals and the actions in this constructed space that we will describe as social architecture. This encompasses the mechanisms of regulations structuring exchanges and individual or collective negotiations.

THE ENTREPRENEUR STRUCTURES HIS ORGANIZATION WITHIN A STRUCTURED SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The structure of the impelled organization synchronizes with an existing social structure surrounding it and of which it is a part. Following Friedberg's example (1993), one can speak about "inter-structuration". This author regards collective action as the essence of the social structuring. This results from an interaction between historically and spatially located actors building systems instituted to channel and regulate the processes of exchange and power "that is to say, systems of actors and the constructed interaction which give them cohesion and consistency always structured around "natural" or "objective" uncertainties eminating from the technical characteristics, economic or different problems to be solved. At least in the short term, these uncertainties impose themselves like data to the actors and thus constitute a structuring constraint as for the results of the games through which the latter make possible their co-operation" (p.260). The existence of uncertainties authorizes the actors to recompose the games, which overlap and are conflictual by nature in particular those actors having a capacity of total or partial control of these uncertainties in order to draw advantage from them. In this way, power is a capacity to structure. In other words, certain actors have the possibility, by this capacity, to force others right to the very nature of the problems to be solved and condition in this, the solution to these problems. Any context of actions studied makes it possible to discover the material and immaterial, strategic and cultural, rational and emotional elements taking part in its structuring (see page 228), which is understood, finally, as being the "rules of the game".

From this point of view, the entrepreneur can be the person who makes certain rules, at least in the field where his business operates.

In this way, collective action composes with an objective dimension leaving to the actors' rationality (thus their subjectivity) the role of defining and redefining the social problems. Friedberg speaks about "artificial" uncertainties making it possible to thwart "natural" uncertainties. It is a way of recognizing the structural level as being made up of a subjective and an objective dimension.

Articulating the work of sociologists always remains delicate, so much so, that their position can, sometimes, be either radically different (on the epistemological, methodological, or political level...), or the distinction so fine that the non-specialist can find it hard to make a distinction. Here, to speak of Durkheim after Friedberg could appear incompatible, but it is just a question of considering that if the social facts are like things, then the objectivity process can be seen as a way of transforming uncertainties to put them into the order of the things. We also partly link the dialectical question binding order and disorder. Disorder is opposed to the natural order of things (or then, is disorder that which is natural ?...).

The organization is the conjunction of the organizing action and the organized form resulting from this action through the intervention of the vaster structure surrounding the phenomenon circumscribed for the goal of comprehension. This systemic approach is mobilized in a number of disciplines. The question is not to present it in this section[16] except to recall, with Atlan (1979) that "any disorder appears complex but only compared to an order which one has reasons to believe exists, and that one seeks to decipher it. In other words, complexity is an apparent disorder where one has reasons to suppose that an order is hidden; or again, complexity is an order to which one does not know the code" (p. 77). The entrepreneur has a code that he tries to establish by "his" local organising, of which he can profit[17]. The level of order is for this reason difficult to measure because it is relative to the finalities of an actor or interpreted by an observer. Indeed, a person can interpret as disorder what is order for another. Atlan (1979) takes as an illustration, the documents apparently piled up in a mess on the desk of their owner, who can find his way through it perfectly, but anyone else would be lost if they tried "to put order there". Order and disorder are

[16] See chapter 6 of Verstraete (1999) for a use of this prospect in entrepreneurship.
[17] the term profit can be reduced here to an economic acception or can be extended to the satisfaction drawn by the individual who profits from it relatively in regards to his expectations or aspirations.

relative to the observer and not a natural state of a situation (Balandier, 1988). The entrepreneur observes a field of the social structure and projects an order there (which will be disorder for others...) by organizing the natural elements as well as the artificial elements. By impelling an organization, he constructs the order that he wishes to establish in the social structure that he invests in.

Another reading of this phenomenon would consist in leaning on the theory of interstices, or that of structural holes (Burt, 1992; 1995), or further, the Leibenstein's theory which sees the economy like a network of knots and paths that present imperfections (what pushes aside any adhesion with the model of perfect competition) exploitable by the entrepreneur. This joins a rather widespread acceptation in entrepreneurship: "*an entrepreneur is someone who perceives an opportunity and creates an organization to pursue it*" (Bygrave, 1997; p.2), a quotation joining what, in 1959, E. Penrose defined (the entrepreneur is he who is able to identify an opportunity and who develops a small company).

This is also not without evoking the proposal of Bougon and Komocar (2003) who see organizations and change like a dynamic system of loops. A loop consists of bonds of non-linear causality or more largely of influence between elements of the system and the bonds themselves are able to influence themselves. The positive loops have an amplifying effect and are the essence of change. The negative loops have a stabilizing effect (*cf.* the principle of homeostasis) and preserve the identity of the system. Thus, the positive loops change the structure whereas the negative loops maintain it (they are structuring and stabilizing). The locating of the loops allows the identification of a social organization freeing itself from arbitrary divisions and borders that are confered to them by common sense or law. On the methodological level, Bougon and Komocar propose to scan the cognitive universe of individuals to update the representations that these latter have of the elements of the system and the interactions between elements. The way in which the individuals collectively adjust their representations founds the organization of the social sphere.

What can we draw from this in the construction of an entrepreneurship theory?

The creator forges a vision of the order that it wishes to found, of the organization that he is going to impel. He acts on the elements of the system to try to make them congruent with the representation that he has made of them. He interprets the lacks of the system, creates an organization to fill them, provokes and changes factors and relationships between these elements. Within these, certain factors not inevitably *a priori* tangible, can lead the system to evolve according to his aspirations, at least that's what he believes. These factors influencing its evolution can in a pragmatic way correspond to the key factors for success (FCS), of which the materialist notion here is largely exceeded by a more cognitive meaning, or is sensitive to the interpretative process leading to the retention of a series of factors. The success of the company goes through a materialization and control of some of these factors (for the FCS), by the parries found to the possibly harmful influence of other factors called here strategic factors of risk [18]. Finally, from this point of view, a FCS is to some extent a convention or must become one. Besides, the theory of conventions plays a significant role in our representation of the entrepreneurship. Articulated with the theory of the social representations, it makes it possible to understand entrepreneurial socialization and the exercise of conviction that the entrepreneur must deploy in a permanent way (for more on socialization we will also consult Pailot, 2002, 2003).

SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS AND CONVENTIONS TO UNDERSTAND, TO LEARN AND TO CONVINCE

The theory of conventions articulates the individual and the collective by the recognition of a symbolic universe that establishes the rules of the economic game and constitutes a place of shared representations making it possible to set up standards of economic and social behaviour. First, a convention refers to the adopted behaviour by an individual who expects that all the other individuals conform to it as well. At least, at a given moment because a convention is a progressive form of regulation.

[18] An SFR is *a priori* a non-controllable factor nonetheless susceptible of having a strong influence on the evolution of the organization. Ex: weather conditions for an agricultural company.

Gomez (1994) distinguishes the American approach from the French approach in the conventions theory. Firstly, it is the genesis of conventions, by way of mathematical formalizations and in the prolongation of the game theory, which is an object of research. In the second, the convention is studied as a social practice. Research relates to its use at the moment when choices are made.

With the rules and parallel to contracts, convention constitutes a means of adjustment of the inter-subjective behaviours (Gomez, 1994), a means of coordinating the actors based on collective cognitive procedure (Munier, Orléan, 1993). It is a regular procedure of collectively established problem resolution calling upon a procedural reasoning; nevertheless, it is presented to the actors in an objective form (Dupuy, 1989). It must "be apprehended at the same time like the result of individual actions and as a framework which obligates the subjects" (Dupuy and *all*, 1989). It makes it possible to understand how a collective logic is constituted and how the behaviour of the members of a population can prove a certain regularity in a recurring situation (Orléan, 1994). It supposes fixed conditions of conformity and beliefs controlled on a basis of common knowledge in regards to the behaviour of the others. To come back again to the situations of uncertainty evoked with Friedberg (1993), a convention makes it possible to find a solution on the basis of competence, of expectations and of supposed confidence of the actors of the situation (Salais, 1994). The reduction of uncertainty can be done for example by a rule, which can be seen as a "collective cognitive procedure making it possible to face unforeseen events. It is a synthetic and concise indication, limited to the essentials, not excluding neither interpretation nor the tact. A rule is never a ready made solution, it is always heuristic... at the centre (and the service of) collective learning process" (Favereau, 1994, p.132); it is a treatment of the conflicts of interpretation procedure (Livet, Thévenot, 1994). Within the framework of an action, the rule constitutes the reference frame axis of the interpretative debate; it brings congruence between the interpretation of the actor and that of the observer (Livet, 1993). Nevertheless, it leaves a room for manoeuvre and can be followed in a more or less zealous way. The observer will draw from the conventional register to be able to formulate criticisms for the actor, who possibly follows the rule. With this convention, the observer seeks to know the intentions of the actor [19].

The company can be seen as a convention of effort structuring the practices of the actors working for a common goal of efficiency (Gomez, 1996). Transgressions are possible; an actor can be more convinced by another conventional register that that of the firm which employs him and finally adhere to this other register. In this case, he no longer shares the conviction representing the normality of implication in the company (*ibid*). According to Gomez, the entrepreneur of a conventionalist model successfully builds a common objective of efficiency.

[19] It is interesting to consult the theory of corresponding inference. Jones and Davis tried to conceptualise the way in which individuals make inferences about the intentions of others, it is how they infer that effects result from these intentions. For a summary, see Jaspars and Hewstone (1984).

In other words, the entrepreneur is he who can convince so that the stakeholders adhere to the conventional register that he proposes (one should rather say even, that which he presents because one cannot have the guarantee that the presentation reflects his real intentions) relative to the project that he defends. This register can lead, therefore, to negotiations and the establishing of contracts. Except for postulates different from the rationality of the actors, the contractualist approach is closely akin to the conventionalist approach on this point. It appears difficult to support that convention can be explained by the logic of implicate contract without calling into question the bases of the contractualist standards of the firm. And if it appears easier to recognize the contract as a particular form of convention, like a convention clarified by actors be it formalized or not, this evacuates the constraint which a contract can impose on the actors without them wishing it whereas a convention implies its adhesion. A contract can be conventional then no longer be. A convention can be contractual and to keep the statute of convention or lose it.

From a legal point of view, according to article 1101 of the French civil code, a contract is a type of convention. In Law, a contract is distinguished from the economic meaning in the sense that it is an agreement of wills (explicit, qualifying which does not necessarily characterize the convention) which creates rights and obligations whose non-observance can be sanctioned in reference to a system of standards enacted by the legal institutions (the law, jurisprudence). The contract is thus initiated by a meeting, that which expresses the assent of the parties in order to give to their relationship a legal framework structuring their exchange in reference to constraining procedure created and actuated by material institutions (Parliament, government, justice...) of which is their function. The Law is not the only regulation mode, thus conventions, in a complementary or competitive way, intervene to coordinate the exchanges between the actors. As regards to company creation, to take the most spectacular demonstration of the entrepreneurial phenomenon, the Law offers a reference frame making it possible to structure the relations between the entrepreneur and the company (ex: the patrimonial relation), to register a creation and the entrepreneurial activity in a public or social order[20]. The conventional framework refers to the following:

- To a perception of this legal framework (a greater sensitivity to the legal aspects of creation, or a rejection of these like the interest to choose a given legal structure, like the perception of masses of administrative red tape, or patrimonial stakes),
- To a positioning relative to this legal framework (the respect or disrespect of the legal constraints);
- To "standardized" behaviours or attitudes about company creation (sensitivity to risk, the company's spirit, culture...).

If the convention created from the law (ex: commercial practices), Law created from conventions (ex: obligation to carry out the contracts in good faith). For research in entrepreneurship, the legal meaning is interesting, but the conventionalist approach of the

[20] the link is thus established with the concept of order developed previously.

economists and the sociologists offers the advantage of highlighting the exercise of conviction that the entrepreneur must deploy.

To use the exercise of conviction in order to obtain the adhesion of the stakeholders can be useless if a contract prevents this adhesion. If this constraint does not exist, then the respect of a convention will depend on the existence of other conventions, which for him are contrary, hostile, or, as Gomez underlines [21], which are more convincing. In this way, according to the author, the multiplicity of conventions promotes opportunism, which would only be one particular case of the general case of adhesion to the rules.

We think that the stakeholders (employees, leaders, owners, lenders, customers and suppliers, public authorities) with whom the firm works have their own conventional registers. Those having adhered to that of the company have a common point: the survival of the organization. But this

[21] Gomez systematizes the concept of convention by all that makes it possible for the individual to act by giving him reference marks (customs, habits, practices, rules, uses, etc.) indicating normal behaviours, that is to say, normalized. Nevertheless, if the conviction is a criterion allowing a judgement in a collective decision, it is still nonetheless an "individual conviction on a collective behaviour" (Gomez, 1996, p.174), a convention is not forced, it is adopted. It is undoubtedly this position which leads Gomez, in a text of 1995, to retain of the meaning of convention only the implicit dimension of rules of thought or behaviour (rules built socially and not imposed by nature) and to push aside the arrangement made between two parties. It however seems sometimes possible for us to see a contract binding two parties like a convention. This remark is obviously minor.

shared interest takes on different forms, according to Gomez, and is carried out with different objectives.

We also think that the entrepreneur, i.e. he who impels the organization, is at the heart of the conventions implicating the firm that he creates (when the phenomenon leads to the emergence of this type of entity and which is what interests us most) and knew how to make the stakeholders' convictions progress favourably towards his company. In this approach, the entrepreneur more or less disturbs the status quo. He could also be seen as using his conviction to justify his dedication to the current register; the adhesion of the stakeholders sometimes supposes the demonstration on behalf of the creator of his respect of their conventions. A bond could thus be established between convention and justification (in reference to Boltanski and Thévenot, 1991).

Certain conventions are contractual (concession of distribution, opening of a bank account, statutes, etc.) others are not. So conventions, especially those that are not contractual, are not the subject of opportunism, it is necessary for the creator to be particularly convincing on the one hand, and to acquire the confidence of the stakeholders on the other hand. This confidence is durable only under the condition that he provides them convincing results as well, i.e. based on the criteria that the stakeholders consider relevant as regards to evaluation. And this all the more important as the young firm does not have a significant past which makes it legitimate (for this reason, wasn't it said that bankruptcy resulted only after the impatience of a creditor, who having lost confidence, claimed his due, which the company cannot return within given deadlines...). These results constitute an evaluation of value by the category of stakeholders concerned, whose fidelity is dependent on a value considered to be appreciable. In certain cases, the creator must use, even misuse his convictions in order to try to convince certain shareholders be patient or they might otherwise turn to another exchange relationship. This exercise is facilitated by the knowledge of shared representations about the way of doing things, and about how to behave. This field of the shared representations is not restricted to the economic field and constitutes a privileged object of study by psychologists working in the field of the social representations, which Jodelet (1989) summarizes remarkably. His thoughts serve ours here:

> Social representations guide us together in the way we name and define the various aspects of our everyday reality in the way we interpret them, or take a position in their favour and defend them. They are connected to ideological or cultural systems, to a state of scientific knowledge, social conditions and to the sphere of the individual's private and emotional experience. They are the expressions of individuals or groups who forge them and give the object that they represent a specific definition contributing to the construction of a consensual vision of reality. The study of social representations offers a particularly broad field. The representation is a form of practical knowledge, which connects a subject to an object. It is always the representation of something (the object) and of somebody (the subject). It is with the object in a relation of symbolization … and of interpretation, that confers connotations to him. It is a form of knowledge and presents itself in the form of a modelization of the object. It is used to act in the world and on others; it occupies a position in the practical adjustment of the subject to his environment, like a psychosocial compromise. The articulation of the whole leads to three problematical types: the production conditions and circulation of the social representations (SR), the processes and states of the SR, and the epistemological statute of the SR.

Social psychology (which includes the study of SR), is defined by certain as the science of interactions (Palmonari, Doise, 1986) or the scientific study of the attitudes (Thomas, Znaniecki, 1918) starting with the concept of attitude, makes it possible to understand how an individual defines the situations with which he is confronted and thus works out "his" social reality. Social cognition is the process by which an individual constructs and maintains his knowledge of reality and in doing so, produces it or reproduces it socially [22]. Thus, it is not a simple reflection of reality; it is a significant organization (Abric, 1994). It is under influence of contingent factors (the nature and the constraints of the situation, the immediate context, the finality of the situation, the social and ideological context, the history of the individual and his place in the group, the social stakes, etc). The prospect is socio-cognitive; social because it is governed by interactions between social actors building and transmitting a representation, and cognitive because the representation is the work of an active subject. Moscovici (1976) speaks for this reason about the "psychological texture" of representation. The representation is the perceptual tool that makes it possible for the individual to understand the world, "to understand always means to interpret" (p.42). This is not done without a certain rationalization, which Moscovici proposes calling "objectivation". As for what he calls "anchoring", it is what allows the interpretation of the object by registering it in a network of significations authorizing his positioning according to social values. According to Abric (1994), this comes back to socio-cognitive rules which structure

[22] *Cf.* Treaty of Cognitive Psychology Volume 3, Dunod, 1990, p.4

information, the beliefs and attitudes in connection with a given object and give place to a hierarchical structure and an organization around what he calls the central core of the representation [23]. The core is composed of the social representations; its periphery comprises more personal elements such as history and experience but also by new objects. The core seems to show great stability: "only events of sufficient gravity succeed in affecting the mental strength of the company" [24]. The degree of gravity or importance of an event depends on the way in which this event enters the reference frame of the group and not by its objective importance. This inscription is likely to generate new practices. The potential consequences of the event on the environment are examined by the individuals who modify proportionally their representations.

The economic school of conventions and the psychological school of the social representations can be compared in particular in that they connect the individual and collective via the symbolic. In social representations, the psychological composition of the individual induces the representation; itself induced from the social context, which also brings us back to the socialization of the individual[25]. This same composition (perceived interest, ethics, etc.), guides

[23] The theory of the central core will not be detailed here.
[24] Durkheim quoted by Moscovici 1976, op cit. p 65, see also Guimelli (1994, p172)
[25] Socialization theories have at least a double origin: sociology, which studies the relations between social groups, the institutions and the behaviour of the individuals which were socialized there; and Freudian psycho-analyse which underlines the determining influence of the family on the mental structures of the child and the adult. See Cherkaoui (1992).

the individual in his choices, when he is in a position to act on them, from a conventional register. The idea of choice is interesting in that it promotes conviction. The entrepreneur must convince the others to adhere to the conventional register that he proposes. He will manage here all the better because he is induced by the representations of the individuals that he seeks to convince. In this way, the theory of the social representations stresses the congruence that must exist between the creator's representation and the reality with which he is confronted, the reality made up of actors sharing the social representations. Let us take the case of the creator of a company. He undertakes in a world where a conventional register exists and where the individuals in that world have a representation of the world and its components, of which they share certain aspects. Admittedly, the creator can convince them to adopt a new conventional register, but the job is all the more delicate since he does not come from the social sphere into which he is trying to enter. In other words, the creator does not share the representations at work in this sphere because he does not already occupy a position there allowing him to induce these representations. The learning process is therefore longer and it is essential for the creator to fit in (in order to interact with the actors of the integrated environment), to position himself in the social sphere enabling him to saturate himself with the representations [26].

[26] Among the entrepreneurs that our work led us to meet, the case of two students in an University Institute of Technology for Marketing Techniques "U.I.T. MT" who had, within the framework of their studies, carried out a project on a business plan for a company that they planned to create. To compensate for their lack of experience, each fortnight they invited one of the potential stakeholders in their project (suppliers, customers, etc), sometimes even one of the competitors, to lunch in order to

Without going into more detail about the possible articulations between the theories of conventions and social representations, here is the generic meaning retained for each one of them.

A convention is seen as a more or less explicit rule to which a subject possibly adheres, persuaded that others adhere to this rule, or that they will adhere in the future. For example, a banker is even more sensitive to a creator's project if he believes that the customers will adhere to the rules of the game put in place by the conventional register, which this creator proposes. Adhesion can be conscious or unconscious, voluntary or involuntary and can answer a simple phenomenon of imitation.

A social representation corresponds to a representation, which the subjects of a social sphere have of certain objects of this sphere. There is no principle of choice. The social representation of an object underlies the existence of a sharing of this representation by a substantial number of the subjects of the social sphere occupied by the given subjects. Not all objects are necessarily objects

build relationships and discuss their sector of activity. They presented themselves as two students from the "U.I.T. MT" who had a project and had even succeeded in obtaining a budget to invite the interested party to lunch, between 12h and 14h close to their place of work (in fact, they had to ask their parents for an increase of their pocket money). This pleasant presentation was never refused. They thus learned much about their sector (the individuals liked so much to speak about what they knew... and about the others...). The business plan was finished, and convinced of its potential, the two future businessmen contacted their interlocutors again announcing: "you know, we finally believe in the project and want to launch out! Can we meet again to discuss it?" Their order book was immediately filled, and continues to be, for almost twenty years now.

of social representation. More than the imitation, it is the concept of learning and especially of socialization, which should be mobilized from this point of view.

Convention seems to be described above as a given object, it obviously does not act however to evacuate the idea that it is built on. The psycho-sociological prospect makes it possible to specify that construction processes of a social image are individual: "although subjected to psychosocial determinants, perception-interpretation and the inference process are based on singular individuals" (Moliner, 1996, p.146). The inferential activity intervenes as soon as there is information processing. It is this capacity which the human being has to work out, starting from environmental information, from other information on the state of this environment through completely interiorized activities (Politzer, 1990) on the basis of his experie nces, from its affect, from his history thus of his journey, i.e. various positions that he occupied during his existence.

All of an individual's actions are likely to act on his existential trajectory and lead him to live new experiences. Admittedly, the structural level is not neutral to this wish (it is a way of reading the Shapero's concept of displacement). Any experience gives place to new interpretations making it possible to modify the image that the individual has made of an object as a whole (Moliner, 1996). One easily notes in regards company creation with the technique of cognitive charts (even if they are not mobilized to reveal a social image as it might, using Moliner's ideas). Indeed, we were given the opportunity to appreciate the influence of the experiment on cognitive charts through a longitudinal study where four charts of an entrepreneur were drawn in four years.

The social position occupied by the individual provides him certain information. If this individual acts in order to modify his position (for example by creating a company), he receives other information, in particular those relating to the conventional registers or the representations in force in the environment in which he is positioning himself (for example, relative to the way business is carried out in a sector of activity). If he integrates himself here, then the representations which he has of the objects are likely to change, just like the conventional register to which he adheres or that which he is proposing (an entrepreneur can indeed try to propose a new register, as he would when he seeks to socialize an innovation). The interpretation diagrams are under contingency of the actor's position and his actions. They provide in return, through the vision that he forges, a framework of action in the reality invested in. Still is necessary to agree on what this reality is, on what the social nature is, without believing that a consensus is possible on this point.

A LEVEL WITH THE MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

Our idea of reality was initially based on work of the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. In the social world of objective structures may exist, independent from the conscience and will of the actors, structures able to direct or restrain the practices or the representations of these actors[27]. Two geneses cohabit: one results from the diagrams of perception, thought and action of the individuals and is constitutive of what Bourdieu calls the "habitus"; the other is a genesis of the social structures carried by fields. A field is part of the social sphere that has become relatively autonomous, according to the logic and hierarchy that are his own. One can, for example, distinguish the cultural field, the economic field, the sporting field, the artistic field, etc [28] and one could, in the business world, proceed by analogy to parallel this concept of fields to that of industry sectors (it would be another way of defining the latter). The existence of a field supposes a certain acceptance by its actors of the rules that are established there. A field is to some extent a specific market in which the actors wrestle relative to the distribution of the forces, i.e. with the distribution and the redistribution of the different capital: authorized capital, economic capital, religious capital, symbolic capital, etc [29]. To capitalize these confers a relative power and the

[27] Berger and Luckmann (1986) approach reality in a different way: "the social order does not form part of the nature of the things, and it cannot be derived from the laws of natural. Social order exists only as a product of human activity" (p.76). Although they distinguish a subjective reality from an objective reality, the latter does not have an ontological existence and results from the construction of the men through an exteriorisation process objectifying reality. As for subjective reality it corresponds to that which the individuals interiorize.

[28] We will not speak, except here, of the three types of capital that Burt (1982) distinguishes: financial capital (money, credit limits, etc), human capital (charm, intelligence, health, competence, etc.) and authorized capital. This later brings us back to the relations with the other actors, relations that provide opportunities to use the other types of capital.

[29] Moingeon and Ramanantsoa (1995) summarize the types of fundamental capital in the thoughts of Bourdieu:

actors form strategies for their possession. The specific volume of capital possessed, treats the relations in the related field on a hierarchical basis and positions the agent in the social sphere, composed of a plurality of fields (in competition and/or imbricated).

Bourdieu warns about physicalism that, while being based on the Durkheimien precept, treats social facts like things. Conversely, one should not fall into psychologism, where the social world is reduced to the representations that are made of them by the actors, even if objective social reality is: "…also an object of perception. Moreover, social science must take this reality and the perception of this reality as an object – the prospects, the points of view that, according to their position in the objective social sphere, the actors have on this reality... Sociology must include a sociology of the perception of the social world, i.e. a sociology of the construction of the world perspective which contributes itself to the construction of this world" (Bourdieu, 1987, p.154).

- Economic capital is well-known to managers and economists;
- Cultural capital can take on three states. The built-in cultural capital returns us to the concept of "habitus"; the objectified cultural capital corresponds to cultural goods possessed (tables, literary or musical works,...); institutionalized cultural capital can, for example, take the form of scolarly titles;
- Authorized capital: this brings us back to the concept of relations, "the authorized capital is the whole of the current or potential resources which are related to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relations of mutual knowledge and mutual economic understanding".

These three types induce a fourth particular type, namely the symbolic capital: this corresponds to prestige and the reputations that in this field the possession of a significant volume of capital confer.

From here by saying that, it is advisable to scrutinize the perception of a creator to understand his company...

Bourdieu confers a certain primacy on objective sphere because the perception of social reality by the agent depends on the position of this latter in this sphere. This explains the different "points of view" of the actors, the construction of their perception of the world being operated under structural constraint and dependent on their "habitus", this, corresponding to the mental structures resulting from the interiorization of the structures of the social world. Built based on social position, the "habitus" is a system of diagrams perceiving, appreciating and producing the practices.

If it seems reasonable to admit that the perceptive provisions tend to being adjusted to the position of the individual, and except by making the habitus a tautological principle, we are forced to recognize this individual, also, as carrier of his own cognitive structure, that is to say part of his diagrams are independent of the social structure and the position that he occupies there. Moreover, his affect and his emotions are likely to influence the order that he perceives or proposes. The entrepreneur composes with the dialectic of the objective and of the subjective, of the natural and artificial, while using of the different capital that he has and his conviction to position himself by the introduction of a company structure within a social structure. As he will not know how to do everything alone, the impetus of an entrepreneurial organization, implying other actors within the social organization, is started.

Our concept of reality, more precisely, of what an organisational phenomenon is, was then based on the Weick's model (1979). It is by convenience that one often translates the phenomenon in which this author is interested by organization. It is true that the term "*organizing*" that he uses does not have its equivalent in French.

Three processes resulting from the theories of evolution (variation, selection and retention) inspire Weick in his modeling of the socio-cultural dimension of the organization (*the organizing*) that he bases on four elements:

- Ecological change: the reality to which the individual is confronted is more or less ambiguous, i.e. likely to provide multiple significations[30]. This ambiguity does not inevitably result from a disordered environment, undetermined or chaotic but rather rich with possibilities. In this way, ecological change translates into possibilities that are offered to the individual to give meaning to his invested reality, in particular when the lack of experience places him into a relatively new situation.
- Enactment: Weick uses the term of "*enactment*" rather than that of variation[31]. "*The term enactment is preferred over variation because it captures the more activates trant we*

[30] On this precise point, see Weick, 1979, op cit. p.170. For the definition of the four elements of the model see p.130 and following.

[31] See also the utilisation as made by Daft and Weick; (1984; 1994); Corner, Kinicki, Keats (1994).

presume organizational members play in creating the environments which then impose one them... Enactment is the only process where the organism directly engages an external environment" (p.130). Weick distinguishes two forms from enactment. The first corresponds to the delimitation that an actor operates of the situation in order to focus his attention on the changes in progress in the act to organise. The second occurs when the actor's actions start an ecological change, which force the subsequent actions of this actor, which will cause new ecological changes, etc. By his commitment, the individual modifies reality. The process of selection will reduce the ambiguity resulting from the enactment:

- Selection: to reduce the ambiguity, the individual will select the variables considered to be important in the situation met. These variables, present at his spirit or newly aquired, interact within interpretation diagrams likely to reduce the ambiguity. These diagrams take the shape of cause-effect charts superimposed on the situation in order to give him meaning or, as Weick puts it, a reasonable interpretation. "*These maps are like templates that reveal configurations that make sense gold may not*" (p.131). The process of selection thus tends to retain the charts likely to give meaning, and to discard the others;

- Retention: corresponds to the storage of the diagrams (or the cause-effect charts) selected, i.e. those which made it possible to give meaning. The experiments are thus memorized and, thereafter, are mobilized to apprehend future situations that the individual will face.

For Weick, individual and collective levels cannot be the objects of disjunction for the comprehension of the organisational phenomena. It is necessary to put the latter into thinking process of the individuals' interaction, in particular in the symbolic interaction and the collective construction of meaning (Koenig, 1996). For example, an entrepreneur maintains contacts with his environment, he acts there physically, knowing certain aspects of them, is unaware of others, he discusses with people about what he sees and does there. A fabric from bonds and the whole of the environmental variables results from this and appears more ordered to him. This order corresponds to a mental chart that the individual builds in order to sort out ambiguity. This is an example of enactment. Information that the leader obtains from this environment tends to confirm or revoke what he believes is true. If everyone seems to be in agreement on something, he tends to confer, on the one hand, to this thing an existence and, on the other hand, a veracity to the shared agreement. In this way, the enactment can be seen as a limitation, because to change the environment, the individual needs to change himself and to change his actions (he can also change environments by changing positions). The collective images provide the individual an explanatory framework (convention...), which is possibly distorted by socially shared representations.

According to Weick's model, the retention that the individual activates of reality having become (or made...) significant corresponds to a cause-effect chart, or causal diagram, recorded in his memory [32]. This retention corresponds to the putting in memory of diagrams, which will enable him to represent the situation by a process of meaning attribution. The idea of representation is thus linked to the existence of interpretative diagrams, as much *a priori* established by the system of thought with which the individual approaches and evolves in the situations with which he is confronted (Abric, 1989). Within the complex structure that these diagrams constitute, we are more particularly interested, as Weick, with the idea of cause-effect charts [33].

In entrepreneurship, Gartner (1985) leans on Weick to make a distinction between the phenomenon and the entity being born. According to him, the field of entrepreneurship must be focused on the phenomenon of organization creation: "*new venture creation is the organizing (in the Weickian sense) of new organizations*" (p.697). He prefers to speak of organisational emergence rather than of the creation of an organization (1995) [34]. With what Weick calls

[32] Work on memory can usefully be called upon in the entrepreneurial field, mainly to tackle all the problems concerning the generic question of experience.

[33] We will not stop for the types of diagrams that return to the concepts of framework, scenario and diagram of oneself, noting however that it can interest the research programs more on the experienced entrepreneur than those focusing on the novice entrepreneur. It is not very probable that the latter has the diagrams of scenarios relative to his company, these return to the familiar task achievement whose sequence of actions were stored in a detailed way, thus avoiding the complex cause-effect reasoning (see Jaspars and Hewstone, 1984).

[34] For about the same reasons that lead us to prefer the term impulse, which cannot however amalgamate with that of emergence.

selection, Gartner defends the idea of organisational emergence appearing before the organization (here entity) exists. In other words, there is organizational action before the entity resulting from this dynamics can exist because the meaning given by the individual to the situation guides his subsequent actions in the process of organization for which he is at the origin.

This prospective, registered *a priori* in a methodological individualism, grows rich by work resulting from the ecology current of an organization's population. For Gartner, the consubstantial question is: "How new organizations came to be born in the first place" (p.72). In this way, the new organizations are the result of the vaster organisational emergence process of which the historical elements have a significant explanatory part. Gartner quotes Aldrich (1990): "*foundings occur within a space-time context in which the order of events is a critical part of the process* " (p.20).

In the current of the ecology of populations, one is interested in the organization as a common species to a given environment [35]. The isomorphism principle supposes that, for a type of environment, organizations converge towards an identical form; a process of selection eliminates those that do not fit into the optimal evolutional form. Thus, an environment is seen as a "whole of populations" of different organizations of which one (population) is called to dominate the others, even if it is led to cause the disappearance of that environment. From this point of view, the entrepreneur would not have any other role but that of having impelled a movement

[35] The key references of this current are: Hannan and Freeman J. (1989); Aldrich (1990; 1995); see also de Bruyne (1980).

crystallizing the elements of an organisational structure which escape him because it is modelled by an environment and pulled by an effect of inertia, resulting mostly from the initial creation conditions. Finally, the environment does not retain more than the starting configurations within the framework of a self-selected population according to the resources that it makes available. If the selection is not optimal because the environment does not have a conscience evaluating *a priori* the populations, these populations must be optimal compared to the evolution conditions imposed by this environment (in particular by their faculty to collect and exploit the resources which the environment makes available).

Within an entrepreneurial framework, this deterministic vision presents an interest that Romanelli (1989) formulates in her first publication, and then details it in a second (Romanelli and Schoonhoven, 2001) by a whole of proposals used to understand from where the new organizations come and how the new populations of organizations constitute themselves in a particular context. This work raises very interesting questions but treats them in a too distant way from our epistemological positioning so that we can draw from it. We invite you however to read it because it offers at the same time a different, serious and coherent regard once one adheres to authors' positioning. Thus, in Aldrich's approach (1995), aiming to show the role of the institutional forces in entrepreneurial behaviour or at embedding the entrepreneurial activity in a social context of legitimation (we could also consult Granovetter on this subject), we would substitute a sociological neo-institutional regard in which the entrepreneur is the carrier of a project that defies the existing institutions by trying to redefine the rules of the game. We will not evoke this reading grid here but send you back to the synthesis that Bensendrine and Demil (1998) propose.

Before closing this section dedicated at the structural level of our model, let us evoke, without any doubt too summarily, four other elements of which it is composed.

The two first are the culture and the territory. The latter can give place to the study of the geographical sphere where we could study the rate of entrepreneurship and what would be necessary to improve it. One will include work of demographic nature here, i.e. the study of the populations of individuals or companies created and others (take overs, etc). The difficulty of statistical studies concern their incapacity to know how to qualify a case as entrepreneurial since they work with great numbers; they bring nevertheless invaluable information that can be exploited. The rate of entrepreneurship of certain territories (Silicon Valley, road 128 in Boston, etc.) has led to particular studies understand the initial conditions or the contingent factors. We refer to the specialists in territorial questions, for whom a territory is an object of research, with which researchers specialized in entrepreneurship can work in particular to serve, in the noble meaning of the term, policy therefore the city.

Culture and the territory are linked by the theme international entrepreneurship. Indeed, one can study the way in which the phenomenon emerges in various countries of the world or the way in which entrepreneurs invest international markets. In the first case, culture is a contingent element and a comparison variable that can to lead to the update of ideal-types for example (see on this Torrès point, 2001). In the second case, the idea is to ask the generic questions of international management and of highlighting the advantages and the difficulties of going international for the young and/or the small structure or, more singularly, of being interested in the *International New Venture* (in this field, the work of MacDougall and Oviatt is a reference). One is also interested in the immigrant populations, which seem more inclined to undertake than the natives do. Market globalization is not without incidence on businessmens' behaviour and we approach, with this theme, the prospect relative to entrepreneurial strategies and *corporate venturing*, the cultural component thus concerning the company itself, the employees and the leaders who comprise it (Verstraete, Filion, 2001; Verstraete, 2002).

The angles of attack are numerous, but culture is far too little studied in the field of research in entrepreneurship whereas it appears crucial, for any more or less circumscribed territory (city, area, State...), to its population more entrepreneurial. The problems, of what is usually called the entrepreneurial spirit, are put forward. They intersect with other concerns, of which some were evoked herein, for example: the role of the institutions and the socio-historic conditions of their constructions, including how dynasties are sometimes durably influential in entrepreneurial behaviour (on this point, we will consult Pinçon and Pinçon, 1999; the work coordinated by the ESC Lille: Debourse, 1992; or Marseilles, 2000). The family plays a significant role, all the more in the family companies, but it is possible to again call on the theory of *the stakeholders* to underline the importance of the entourage in initiating an action and the development of an entrepreneurial culture. More the stakeholders are close, for example the collaborators, to refer to the theme of the entrepreneurship team[36], more they take part in the expression of "entrepreneurial sphere". We propose this terminology to imbricate territory and entrepreneurial culture, in the middle of which, information as much as the availability of resources (sometimes natural) play a mediating role (Julien, 2000). This availability largely profits institutional efforts, the education system being the archetype of the ideas given here [37]. Lastly, the question of the entrepreneurial

[36] Not to confuse the entrepreneur and of the stakeholders who may be particularly close in certain contexts, see Philippart (2002). As Shapero has already claimed (see: Shapero and Sokol, 1982), the environment can be very present, but there is always one or several individuals in the center of the phenomenon to truly undertake.

[37] See the acts of the first congress of the Academy of Entrepreneuriat on this subject (Fountain, Saporta, Verstraete, 1999), in the special issue of the review "Gestion 2000" (Fayolle, 2000), Béchart (1998), Schieb-Bienfait (2000), Sénicourt and Verstraete (2000) to refer to the distinctions of awareness, training, council, accompanying. It should be noted that the main part of work relates to higher education and we are cruelly missing studies in an earlier context, in particular secondary education.

heritage is put forward, to understand how the related values are transmitted between generations [38].

The third is the temporal variable, which leads this time to the processual prospective to study how the elements of the various levels and their interactions are arranged and evolve in time. Thus, knowledge can be brought on the forms of expression of the entrepreneurial phenomenon in "areas" of the world: African continent, Asian continent, and country in a transition phase, but also within the same country. In addition to this geographical prospect, the situations (to again take an expression used by Fayolle and also by Pailot) can relate to the project itself (creation, take over, high-tech...) or the nature of the circumscribed context (humanitarian economy, particular sector...). The contexts being different, the process that models the expression of the entrepreneurial phenomenon in their midst must be distinguished (see the explanations given on this point in the first part of the triptyque).

Lastly, the fourth element brings us back to the concept of authorized capital, advanced by Bourdieu. We mobilized it before to understand the importance of the relational network of the entrepreneur (1997).

[38] It is necessary to distinguish the value as an expectation (which is awaited by stakeholders, that is necessary, durably satisfy as far as possible) as well as a culture (statutory value, ethical value, etc).

Other authors have borrowed it to understand entrepreneurial groups, in the absence of being truly able to qualify this whole of economic actors of a social class. One thinks of the work of Boutillier and Uzunidis (1995; 1999). These authors, although recognizing the virtues of the business spirit, have a rather deterministic vision of the evolution of the entrepreneur's projects in the sense that success depends more on the entrepreneurial environment than on the individual. The position of this latter in the company plays a role all the same in this determinism since the resources of which he disposes (financial resources, theoretical or empirical knowledge, personal and institutional relations...) are not without effect on the future of the business project. "In short, all that one can call an authorized capital, to again take P. Bourdieu's formula. Thus, one can answer the question of the entrepreneur's place in the societal structural chart, of the bases of his behaviour (personal enrichment, a game, create his job, etc), of his capacity to innovate, and one will understand that his actions fall under into a determined social and economic sphere" (Boutiller and Uzunidis, 1999; p.110).

CHAPTER 4.
THE PRAXEOLOGICAL LEVEL: POSITIONING AND CONFIGURATION

The praxeological level links the two precedent levels. One could simply say the action, but the term praxeologic carries in itself this idea of finality, dear for the manager. At this praxeological level, one finds two key management dimensions: the position of the entrepreneur and the organization, which he impels within the invested context and the configuration of this organization necessary for this. If these two dimensions are present whatever the stage of evolution of the firm, it is because they constitute the fundamentals of the company (in the dynamic sense of the term).

The entrepreneur and the impelled organization position themselves with respect to the multiple competitors and the stakeholders. The latter await a value in the exchange and base, more or less consciously, the evaluation of the company on criteria referring to this value (it is in this sense that entrepreneurship can be seen as a process of value creation, a dimension on which Bruyat, 1993, leans in his matrix). Thus, the customers await the execution of a request, a desire or a need, prices, terms of payment, quality... The suppliers can expect a regularity in orders, a contribution to the image of the product or service, and short terms of payment... The shareholders hope for dividends, an added value when they sell their stocks, the valorization of their share of the capital... The employees await good remuneration and working conditions, job security, career promotion possibilities... etc. In order to satisfy the stakeholders durably, the entrepreneur structures his organization, configures it in a way to be able to manufacture the products and to offer the services but more largely to optimize the value exchange with these parties through the implementation of policies. If the company grows, the need for specialists in the relationship with a category of stakeholders leads to a departmentalization and the birth of the traditional functions of organizations (human resources management, marketing services, financial services, etc). The role of these functions is to deploy the policies aiming at optimizing the value exchange with a category of stakeholders (ex: a function, and a HR service, to deploy the wage policy aiming at optimizing the value exchange with the employees).

Throughout the life of the company, its evolution requires action in regards to these two dimensions and to adjust the positioning and configuration actions towards the desired future. According to a Sénèque's maxim well known to managers: there is no favorable wind for him who does not know where he wants to go! The entrepreneur can act intuitively, but he will gain from using the tools and methods of strategic management to reach the desired future.

POSITIONING

Positioning takes place with respect to actors (people or entities, institutions, etc.) belonging to the multiple environments that composes the structure (level S of the model). For this reason certain remarks in this section will cover others previously given.

Positioning also concerns the entrepreneur himself [39]. However, it mainly evokes the policies deployed in order to optimize the value exchange with the various categories of stakeholders to build, from a strategic point of view of management, a competitive advantage.

Already at the cognitive level, what Filion (1991) calls the central vision, refers to the place of the company's products and services and can be described as positioning. We broaden this design, because the entrepreneur and the organization impelled by this entrepreneur position themselves in multiple environments, which we will regroup here into two categories regularly evoked by the tools of strategic diagnosis [40]:

- Macro-environment;

[39] Besides, the accompanying organizations delimit the candidate individual to the company to establish the life trajectory which he wishes and, when the business plan is established, appreciates the compatibility between the carrier and the project not only on the basis of competence criteria.

[40] It is hardly surprising to propose that the entrepreneur gains by being a good strategist, all the more as in the origin of these tools were designed for him.

- Micro-environment, which we will break up, on the one hand, according to the spheres of activity and the markets, and on the other hand, the competitors and stakeholders.

Some of the elements of these environments can fix quotas for organisational strategies and forms, but never completely, even when their influence is strong. It is not a question of lapsing into deterministic theses. To believe in entrepreneurship could otherwise result in thinking the opposite (Noel, Sénicourt, 2003), namely that a discretionary power would authorize the entrepreneur to impose his views. Here still, one can never believe to be able to make the environment completely congruent with the representation that he has made of it. More reasonably, certain environments are more malleable than other environments, (Zarka, Jarrosson, 1995), from where the importance comes of taking the precaution to analyze the types of context in which a business is envisaged [41].

The elements of macro-environment and micro-environment presented below belong to the level "P" of the model, but their delimitation is of essence managerial so that the action allows a

[41] The reader should refer to the works in strategic management and theories of organizations to make note of the currents stipulating, on one side of the continuum, that the environment models the companies (ex: the contingent current), on the other side, that these companies have the capacity to model the environment (ex: the voluntarist school). As an example, see Astley, Van de Ven (1983); Bedeian (1990); de Bruyne (1980); Desreumaux (1994); Hrebeniak, Joyce (1985); Lawless, Finch (1989).

company positioning with respect to them. They thus directly give to the *praxis* at least a double title. The first regroups the activities of analysis, including the related day before, of these environments; the second corresponds to the activity of strategic segmentation on the one hand, with that of marketing segmentation on the other hand, which aims at optimizing the positioning. We thus chose to present this division of level “S” in this chapter because it corresponds to a managerial reading calling the company into action initially by segmentation, technological surveillance (pointing to the elements heralding possible changes in the environment), and projection (to anticipate the possible state of the studied environment in the more or less short term and the incidences which the changes can have on the company).

“Macro-environment” or general environment

The “macro-environment” encompasses general factors likely to influence business. One of its possible divisions is to consider it as made up of five key dimensions to evaluate on a more or less broad geographical territory according to the space dimension covered by the activities of the company or those of the competitors susceptible to affect operations that are more local. The more the organization is vast, when it addresses international markets, the more the macro-environment dimensions must be the subjects of detailed attention particularly in regards to positioning:

- The first is the socio-economic dimension. It comprises the conjuncture elements of the social, demographic and economic situation. Very concretely, one could raise examples there such as the factors of inflation rate, the evolution of purchasing power, international exchanges, the elements of growth, the company concentration, the population pyramid, the population evolution (growth or demographic decline), the social climate, the globalization of business, etc.

- The second dimension we will name the "institutional environment". In addition to all the policies of a more or less circumscribed territory on the one hand, and the formal institutions with which the entrepreneur can compose on the other hand (Chartered Accountants, the Chamber of Commerce, organizations that train, accompany or advise...), while borrowing, and certainly by somewhat sidestepping the terminology of researchers in néo-institutional sociology (Di Maggio, Powel, 1983) [42], one can distinguish there between material or immaterial elements assembled in 3 categories (see the reading that Bensedrine and Demil make of it, 1998): the cognitive institution corresponds to the conventions and the ways of thinking that lead to the behaviors expected in a given field. There can be, in an environment for example, a manner of behaving that is relatively respected by the actors [43]; the coercive institution legislates and orders, even sanctions in

[42] According to Di Maggio and Powel, an entire assemblage of institutional factors influence social practices and tend to converge company modes of management and coordination.

[43] One will combine the proposal of Hinnings and Greenwood (1987) with those of Abrahamson and Fombrum (1994) to highlight a certain convergence of company image that the leaders of a sector can have. This image is based on the beliefs

order to regulate the activities within an environment. Examples: tax authorities, national and international courts, laws, etc; normative institutions set up, as their names indicate, norms or standards. They do not sanction, but isolate the actors not yielding to the standards. Examples: standards of quality (ISO standards), quantifiable behaviour, technological agreements (like the VHS), etc

- The third dimension is technological. In a broad sense, it describes not only the bonds between research and technology (which is of a current issue in France with the law on the innovation of July 12, 1999), but also the modes of management or coordination. Examples: the level of fundamental research, co-operation research-industry, patents, manufactoring processes, modes of management or payment, etc.

- The fourth is cultural. Any environment, whether it is a nation, an area, even a branch of industry, inherits a history and composes with a cultural system present and called to evolve. Examples: the level of education, art, manners or morals, emancipation of certain categories of actors, research on safety, etc. The question of the entrepreneurial culture is also asked.

- The fifth dimension is ecological and, to a certain extent, ethical. It is of increasing importance, in particular with the diffusion and exploitation of the concept of sustainable

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and the values of these leaders functioning in the sphere of activity, the organization mode and criteria to retain in order to evaluate performance.

development. Examples: respect of the environment, pollution, exploitation of certain raw materials, climatic aspects, nature of the use of new technologies, etc.

To undertake supposes the appreciation of this macro-environment and to anticipate its evolution. Whether the prospect is regional, national or international, any project composes with five dimensions evoked previously, ineluctably related to the structural level.

"Micro-environment" or singular environment

As a question of positioning in the "micro-environment", it is necessary initially to recognize the dimensions of which it is made, for example : spheres of activity and markets, competitors, and *stakeholders*.

The spheres of activity correspond to the generic activities of the company (SBU of strategic management or activity sectors of the industrial economy). We will not delay here on this well-known concept, except to ask ourselves the question of its connotation for the company creator. Indeed, the concept of the business portfolio is to be relativized for two reasons. First of all, the majority of the projects fall under one activity only, which poses obvious problems but sometimes impossible to circumvent. Then, the concept of SBU itself is abused if one refers to the approach RBV (*Resource Based View*) since a competence can lead a company to invest in a sphere that does not enter, *a priori* into a coherent strategy in terms of synergies. The reader will turn to the handbooks and work of strategic management for the details. For what interests us, the question remains: must the entrepreneur be a strategist and mobilize the related tools? On the first point, our answer is positive and we see strategy as a field of research and application having initially had as objective to bring methods and tools to entrepreneurs, as the first texts from the famous Harvard Business School testify. On the second point, it is advisable to nuance the idea. Research in entrepreneurship must be, to some extent, pragmatic by developing research-actions or research-interventions. He, who goes out on the field, is forced to accept that, in entrepreneurial situations in general, the case of company creation in particular, the mobilization of strategic management tools generally taught is quite relevant. The bases of the strategic segmentation, and those of the marketing segmentation, are within the range of any entrepreneur for whom one took a little trouble to make their use relative (they are sometimes either of no use, or inappropriate). Initially, the relevance of a strategic approach or a marketing approach depends not only on the tool itself relative to the case where one wishes to deploy it, but especially on the capacity of the entrepreneur to know how to make use of it. A real challenge still faces researchers in entrepreneurship in bringing the steps to the entrepreneurs knowing how to combine the essentially strategic analytical steps and those that are essentially strategic heuristic steps (*cf.* Desreumaux, 1993) tested by research-action which most would like to see more of. A firm of a significant size is led towards an organization that reveals a departmentalization each equipped with the services of specialists who have mastered the most sophisticated tools. The problem is different for the company in emergence where these experts are not assembled. In other words, one awaits the adapted tools, when it is possible, or created to serve novice entrepreneurs.

Obviously, it is not a question of throwing the baby out with the bath water, as many tools remain relevant.

Strategic and marketing tools have the primary objective of positioning the company and its output compared to the competitor's products and services. But within an entrepreneurial framework, perhaps more than elsewhere, the concept of *stakeholders* [44], in our eyes, has to be mobilized (Verstraete, 1999a; 2003). It appeared in the middle of the 1980's, in the Freeman's text (1984), amongst others.

As Freeman and McVea (2001) point out, one owes the term of *stakeholder* to the work of the *Stanford Research Institute* during the 1960's, the approach more specifically originates in the work of Mason and Mitroff (1982), and in that of Emshoff (1978). It aims at providing a framework of analysis to the problem of the management of the multiple relations with individuals and groups that induce the strategic activity. The central idea is that any management must implement the processes that make it possible to give satisfaction to the various actors who have an influence on the business, in particular those committed to the success of the company in the long term. From this point of view, an stakeholder corresponds to any individual, even through them any group, entity or institution, interested *a priori* in the company and who influences its

[44] If it is advisable to distinguish stakeholder from shareholder, for the convenience of presentation, the second is included in the first.

future. According to Freeman and Reed (1983), they are the actors on which the company permanently depends for its survival (employees, customer segments, suppliers, distributors, shareholders, bankers, etc). In a broader sense, the concept of stakeholders brings us back sometimes to all the actors susceptible of affecting the evolution of the firm and the reaching of the objectives that they assign themselves. Others take a place there then, for example, competitors and various other special interest groups or other actors not directly intervening in the purchase-manufacture-sales process. This second idea is less widespread and dilutes the conceptual force of the first.

From this point of view, finally, the business model built by the entrepreneur corresponds to the model planned to satisfy the various stakeholders on the long term and binds, from the start, i.e. at the very moment of the design, undertaking and strategy.

Seen from this angle, the positioning cannot be univocal. It is multidimensional and relates to each stakeholder. The entrepreneur and the organization he impels positions itself not in an environment, but in at least as many environments as there are categories of stakeholders. It is advisable to set up real policies for each one of them in order to optimize the exchange of value [45]. These policies are dealt with through functional strategies declined in the organization (salary

[45] The nature of the value is relative to the expectations of the category of stakeholders for which a policy is put in place like for the company itself.

policies for positioning in respect to the employees deployed by a service for human resources management, purchase policies for the suppliers in a purchasing department, etc). Beforehand, the entrepreneur must identify the stakeholders who are able to adhere to his project, because he needs customers, financers, employees, suppliers, etc., each one of them possesses valuable resources for creation and continuity of the organization. So that they offer these resources in compensation for the value that they bring or will bring to the impelled organization, the entrepreneur must convince them [46] and obtain their confidence [47], which amounts to minimizing the risks that they perceive or to offering them of the interesting returns on investment. This exercise of conviction constitutes the concrete actions that the entrepreneur must carry out in particular to assemble the resources necessary for his project (the gathering and organization of these resources are as much constitutive for the act to undertake). It is more difficult for a creator undertaking for the first time than for the representatives of a well-established firm. The theory of conventions, even the theory of the social representations, seen in the proceeding chapter, can be called on to explain this difficulty.

[46] We mobilized the theory of conventions to exploit this exercise of conviction theoretically.
[47] Confidence was set up into an object of research, as was shown in 1998 in an issue of the Economy and Society review, in a series on Management Sciences. In this issue, consult the text of Marchesnay (1998) particularly.

In addition to the entrepreneur himself, in essence an stakeholder himself, it is easy to identify, without being exhaustive here, at least seven categories, which have different expectations [48]. Value for a customer is not the same for a shareholder or a supplier. Failing to provide them the value they expect, they will go over to the competition or other projects. For this reason, the entrepreneur's negotiation capacities are of major importance when it is a question of making a *stakeholder* be patient when he cannot be satisfied immediately. Thus, it is advisable to appreciate the contribution of value or the creation of wealth in entrepreneurship, value which cannot be reduced to a purely economic meaning [49] and which can also comprise what is called the shared values in a more ethical connotation.

The customers represent the first category of stakeholders. How can one design a perennial firm for example, without its customers drawing the value from the products or services offered in the

[48] Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson, (2003), on the basis of Freeman and McVea's text (2001), propose a graph (p.26) regrouping the stakeholders in three categories: "*the capital market stakeholder (shareholders and the major suppliers of a firm's capital), the product market stakeholders (the firm's primary customers, suppliers, host communities, and unions representing the workforce), and the organizational stakeholders (all of has firm's employees, including both nonmanagerial and managerial personal).*" (p.24).

[49] Although unreduced to this meaning, the "creation of value" dimension of Bruyat's matrix (1993) could thus be rearranged which would make it possible to go beyond the criticism of which it is sometimes the object.

exchange? Moreover, other stakeholders (ex: shareholders, bankers) question themselves above all on the attitude of the customers or, in a more prosaic way, on the turnover estimates.

On the other side of the cycle of exploitation, the suppliers undoubtedly are not often assimilated enough as stakeholders. They constitute the second category. In a world where the customer is king, the risk is to confuse relations with the suppliers and the balance of power aiming at obtaining the best prices. This stakeholder takes on a particular character when the relation is encompassed in the franchise context. If the franchiser cannot be in relation with the supplier whom one will describe as "classical", he no less constitutes in many cases the contributor of services, products and methods.

The third category of stakeholders is made up of the various lenders of capital. Here one would regroup the shareholders. It can include members of another category (family, sometimes customers or suppliers, and even a competitor in certain cases of partnerships, etc).

Fourthly, another category of stakeholders which has to occupy the thoughts of the entrepreneur consists of the employees, and more still, in phase of emergence, that of the team of close collaborators (*cf*. all work on the entrepreneurial team). It is not rare to meet entrepreneurs who wish to do everything alone (which Greiner translates in his way, 1972, with leadership crises). The growth of their company will be stopped if they do not manage to lean on a team, get its support and competences that one man alone cannot possess. This team is of capital importance in the high technology companies, besides, the team has generally taken part actively in the project, and is regularly associated with it. The capital lenders closely study not only the technical, but also the managerial capacities of the leadership team before committing themselves. Who has never heard said that these lenders prefer an average project with a good leadership team than a good project with an average team. The concept of the entrepreneurial team has not yet been the subject of research in France. In Anglo-Saxon work, questions remain in connection with its delimitation, its formation process, its operating modes and its influence on the performance (Cooper, Daily, 1997).

The family, even when it is not in the category *love money*, ineluctably constitutes the fifth category of stakeholder. Any entrepreneurial career gains by having the support of the people who are supposed to be closest. If exceptions exist, the family provides the first support most of the time and often takes part in the business (as the family company testifies on the landscape of businesses). Any business consultant will advise the carrier of a project to discuss it with his family. They bear the consequences, be they the good sides but especially the bad (availability of the entrepreneur, financial sacrifices in the early phases...). This stakeholder establishes a bridge between the field of research in entrepreneurship and the field of the family company (see Amann, 2000 and the chapter of Saporta in Caby and Hirigoyen, 2001).

It would be a little broad to consider the government, through its policies in favour of company creation, as the sixth category of *stakeholders*, though with the law on innovation and the allocated subsidies or any other provision in favour of company creation in particular, it tends sometimes, in excess, to take this status[50]. Locally however, the policies come in a variety of forms and many actors acquire the statute of *stakeholder*. Thus it is of the French Anvar Agency[51] for example and all the other local actors in territorial development such as the incubators, the business nurseries or "pépinières", the Chamber of Commerce, the various associative regroupings, etc. The importance of identifying them lies in the subsidies or the support (counsel, assistance...) that these actors can bring at the various stages of the process or for certain types of project (for example innovating or internationalisation projects). But more globally, a particular look will be taken at the current and future policies of the authorities, whether they are the texts legislating certain dimensions of the markets, establishing taxation rules or liberating subsidies in favour of entrepreneurship, or whether it is a question internationalizing from the start by measuring the political risks for a firm of establishing itself in a given country [52].

The seventh category gathers all the other stakeholders, not referenced here in detail, that the singular project study would reveal. For example, in certain cases, a competitor can be an stakeholder, either by endorsing the role of a party already evoked (acquisition of stocks to thus

[50] See also the recent French law "Dutreil".
[51] National Agency for the valorisation of research (http://www.anvar.fr).
[52] We will consult the work of Oviatt and MacDougall for the questions asked by the firms internationalizing from the start (the INV: *International New Ventures*.) For example: Oviatt, McDougall (1995); Oviatt McDougall (1997); McDougall Shane, Oviatt (1994). See also the special number of the review International Management, 6(1), October 2001.

become a shareholder), or because the markets conditions lead to relations of a corporatist nature [53] or with activities profiting from a joint effort (ex: lobbying). Various associations or special interest groups can have either a positive, or a negative effect on the evolution of the company (ex: ecology movements). It is difficult to be exhaustive, because each case can reveal parties likely to bring resources in compensation for various services or products offered by the company. In entrepreneurship, one will think of all work relating, for example, to *joint ventures* [54].

Any entrepreneur must identify the stakeholders for his project, to identify their relative importance, measure the expected values of each one and what they bring to the company. A table can be developed for this purpose in order to have a synthetic perspective to help reflection.

In order to preserve the fidelity of the various stakeholders, real policies must be put in places, which suppose substantial thought about the organization making it possible to deploy them. Each stakeholder having his own criteria of performance evaluation, a functional policy must point out the expected value and optimize the exchanges with the stakeholders to which they are addressed. The resources available, which are all the more limited, generally when the company is young, makes it difficult to satisfy each stakeholder all the time. Painful arbitrations are frequent. Without

[53] See the text by Olivier Torrès on the Mondavi case (the research file can be downloaded from the ERFI Montpellier site).
[54] More generally, see the three column table (*Stakeholder, Stakeholder Management Tactics, Stakeholder Partnering Tactics*) established by Harrison and St John (1996) p.53.

approaching the problems of control in this work, we will raise with the concept of value, some key elements that have to have their place on the control panel of the leader.

Too often regarded as the initial phase of an evolution whose subsequent stages are the subject of more comprehensive attention, a creation deserves that we linger there more. Let us recall that we are speaking about "impulse" here, which does not reduce the initial phase at the birth of a firm. Moreover, by exceeding the initial stage only, positioning with respect to multiple stakeholders and the configuration put in place constitutes the two key generic actions of the entrepreneurial phenomenon, whatever the stage of evolution of the organization.

ORGANISATIONAL CONFIGURATION

For example, in a mature organization, each time that revitalization is considered, it is advisable to touch these two dimensions. What certain models name "revitalization entrepreneurial" (ex: Masuch, 1985) can be seen as an entrepreneurial act. It is not astonishing to consider that a firm must undertake and the entrepreneurial phenomenon can be expressed within the framework of a large firm when one identifies the symbiotic relation that an individual (or a group of individuals joining for the occasion) maintains with an incipient organization, this individual is able to lean on an already existing entity (in fact the firm, that it is advisable not to amalgamate with the organization created as we specified at the beginning of this text).

If some work related the importance of the first moments of the life of a firm in its process of evolution, by often considering that the latter supposes the passage through crises [55], we are forced to note a lack in this field. The globalization of the economies, the rapid diffusion of technologies and the speed with which information circulates now leads to a hyper-competition [56] that requires a configuration calculated beforehand. For example, to study how modern entrepreneurs structure their creation to insert them into these brisk environments can provide invaluable information for the young companies internationalizing themselves now more and more quickly, even sometimes at their creation. To go where he wants to go (in reference to the maxim of Sénèque), the entrepreneur acts through positioning and structuring. There entrepreneurship joins the strategy, which: "consists at the same time of an external choice of positioning and organisational layout which constitutes a base of implementation and a springboard for future adaptation" (Desreumaux, 1993, p.13). It is all the more true in our design that the impelled organization does not have any true borders since it is a structural layout finalized and closely related to the vision that is made the entrepreneur of it. So that this vision

[55] One will think of Greiner's text (1972), evoking a leadership crisis, to align with what Adizes (1979, 1991) calls the trap of the founder, i.e. a difficulty of delegating.

[56] The term of hyper-competition is employed more commonly since the work of Aveni (1994).

becomes indeed paradigmatic (*cf*. Johnson, 1988), the configuration must allow for variation. It is a question of setting up a configuration taking over for the entrepreneur in multiple positionings evoked previously, with all that comprises in task allocation, coordination, competencies, learning, control of the performance, etc. Although using his network and relations, the entrepreneur can not do everything alone and the performance, therefore the continuity of his organization, he cannot be satisfied with himself only, especially when he pilots it so that it will grow in size. The company calls for collective action and not to be aware of it can be extremely prejudicial to the organizations recently created. It is one of the significant problems explaining the causes of failure; so many entrepreneurs are not sufficiently prepared with collective management. This deficiency is particularly critical in innovating companies [57]. Within this latter, you will agree to recognize the need to develop the creativity of the employees so that they will not only be in phase with the state of that should prevail in their organization, but to be capable of recognizing, like the entrepreneur, business occasions.

The configuration must favour the deployment of the evoked policies (wage, product, financial, and purchasing policies, etc), i.e. those making it possible to satisfy the stakeholders and to negotiate the conditions of the value exchange with them. In the case of an *ex-nihilo* company creation one could think that it is not a question of priority, most important being that of doing

[57] Remark: entrepreneurship does not necessarily imply innovation.

sales turnover. Nevertheless, to neglect the importance of the structure can lead to dangerous situations. If it can appear obvious in the companies manufacturing the products, which they sell, and where the manufacturing process calls for a thought organization from the start, service firms have the same requirements as revealed in particular by logistics specialists. Some *start-ups* have paid the price, by resorting to plane structures not knowing how to support growth. For certain authors, in particular Yofie and Cusumano (1999), one of the answers to fast growth is to conceive an organization from the start that is broader than the initial project requires. However, in the majority of the cases and not only for questions of resource availability but also simply for reasons of the entrepreneur's capacity, he sets up a basic configuration in order to satisfy the present operation of the organization. But, the anticipation of the requirements produced by the growth in size can prove to be a decisive criterion. The structuring of the organization also constitutes a source of learning. One finds an illustration of it in the work of Guth, Kumaraswamy and McErlean (1991), whose preceding section was of the interest.

The concept of organisational design (or company structure) will express itself here and it is not unreasonable to draw there at the same time elements of the connections between the levels of the model and research ideas, because the field of entrepreneurship reveals a lack of study focused on the question of the structure. We would like to fill it by offering some examples:

- By retaking the distinction, certainly seemingly simple but whose experts still largely appreciate the relevance, from Lorsch (1973) between structure and management system, one can raise a first family of occupation. It would first of all seek to raise the most manifest elements of the structuring of the entity created. These elements relate to the division of the labour, the differentiation of the tasks and the total global coordination bodies, of which a flowchart is undoubtedly the most widespread representation. Then, it would surround the entrepreneurial phenomenon through the “management systems”. Indeed, what happens to the planning, control and information systems, which incorporates the most modern tools of communication? We had the occasion to note the lack of recourse to systemized and formal control procedures (Verstraete, 1995). Without preaching the need for these, which of course a creator does not always need at the very beginning, our experiences of accompaniment and subsequent research revealed the danger and the drifts resulting from a lack of control (Verstraete, 1997a). The forms of this can either be adapted, or built singularly for the organization.

- A second family of study could serve to provide typologies of the organisational forms adopted by the entities created. It is a question of either locating everyone’s place and the role in a process of interactions between actors brought together to reach a seemingly common objective of efficiency, or then to qualify organizations by complex locating systems, as Mintzberg (1982) could do in his work. In an entrepreneurial context, longitudinal studies can reasonably be limited to the first years following the initial impulse in order to locate the structures and different evolution that allowed the development of the sales turnover and the recruiting (to take only two basic performance measurement criteria). One cannot be satisfied to qualify the initial phase of the organisational structure of "entrepreneurship" as does Mintzberg (1982) although this can easily be understood in regards to the broad object of his work. Moreover, the author already points to the central importance of the leader in this configuration. This configuration is not univocal, in particular in the phase of revitalization generating a new organization; Aplin and Crozier's approach (1980) considers firm evolution as a succession of alternate periods of maintenance and creative or "entrepreneurial" periods (see also Masuch, 1985).

- a third family of study could establish a bond between the appearance of a service, in a department or a function in the company and the effective need for this creation in comparison with regards to the value to be brought to the stakeholders concerned. Temporal beaconing is not obvious here because one does not know, in the evolution of the firm, when a marketing or HR service etc. must appear. The generic idea is to answer a question of the type: in what does the appearance of a function serve the entrepreneurial phenomenon. In other words, it is through the entrepreneurial prism that the function is studied.

- Lastly, and to establish the link with the structural level of the model, it is useful to appreciate the structural contingencies surrounding the impelled organization and of which this one is a constituent part as soon as it appears. For this reason, in entrepreneurship, a processual approach would identify the variables *a priori* exogenic to the organization and intervenes in a impregnating way in the process. For example, universities intervene particularly in the process of company creation through researchers.

In short, most recent schools on the concept of organization insist on the importance of organisational networks when the longest standing trace the functionalist character of organizations (or fundamentally fixed quotas by endogenous or exogenic variables if in as much we can define its border). We think these schools can be revisited to bring knowledge on the entrepreneuria l phenomenon, which is seen here as the essence of the organisational realities, particularly studied in this work. These must go beyond the idea of a hypothetical border to answer the fundamental questions of law to the concepts of responsibility and property (which set up the autonomy of the entity that only the systemic approach, by the concepts of order of disorder among others, does not allow "operationalization" in a managerial design of the organization). The entrepreneurial phenomenon exceeds the conception of an organization hemmed in by its border(s). From a pragmatic point of view, it is a question of controlling the impelled organization. Since it is imbricated with the vaster organization surrounding it, the researcher in entrepreneurship, following the example his theories of organizations colleagues, is brought to consider various levels of analysis, with, in the centre of his reflection, an articulation between a presupposed individual action and a collective action which is, essentially, orga nisational.

The same concern for the action is found in Organizational Science, in particular by the privileged regard of the interactions between the levels of organization (Belhing, 1978; Chanlat, 1990; Desreumaux, 1992). We return to the first part of the triptyque of our program (Verstraete, 2002, p.70 and following for the version in French; p.68 and following for the version in English) to appreciate the levels of analysis that seem relevant to us in the study of the collective action.

CONCLUSION

The next stage of our research programme in entrepreneurship rises from a prescriptive objective served by clinical studies[58], a research-action as well as a work with consultants. While focusing us on the cognitive level, more precisely on the strategic vision, we have managed to propose a model from it, in essence prescriptive, updating six dimensions that should appear in representations of the entrepreneur [59].

This construction corresponds to the third part of the triptyque about which we speak in the introduction. It updates a certain number of bonds between the three levels of the model via the intervention of the strategic vision of the entrepreneur. If the various sections of this work clarify some of these bonds, it rests with the subsequent programs to set up, according to protocols, hypotheses about them, research orientations or to expand on them by more in depth research going into the details of a particular bond. The process approach of singular situations is welcome to complete the generic framework proposed for the entrepreneurial phenomenon.

[58] We will agree with Friedberg (1993), which recommends this methodological approach.
[59] The first versions of the strategic vision model were published in a summarized form (2001; 2003).

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Alain DESREUMAUX and Thierry VERSTRAETE

PROPOSAL OF A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: EPh = F [(C X S X P Ì (E X O]

Thierry VERSTRAETE

After having some to show the singularity in a preceding publication, the other delivers its representation of the entrepreneurship. The model comprises three levels of analysis (cognitive, structural, praxeologic) applying to the symbiotic relation binding the entrepreneur (or entrepreneurs joining for the occasion) and the organization impelled by this one.

Thierry Verstraete, Professor at the University of Bordeaux (http://www.u-bordeaux4.fr), is a Doctor of Sciences of Management and holder of an Accreditation to supervise research. He directs the E&S (Entrepreneurship and Strategy) research team within the IFREGE (Federative Institute of Research in Business Management ; http://www.ifrege.com) and the Master Program in Entrepreneurship. He devotes his research work and his lessons to this. He is in association with the Bordeaux Business School in the development of Entrepreneurship Programs (http://www.bordeaux-bs.edu).

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