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KAFKAESQUE EXPERIENCES

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Abstract

Trying to enhance the understanding of Kafkaesque experiences that greatly affect organizations and people and aiming to fill the gap in the literature on this topic, this study was developed. A qualitative research allowed a true clarification of how people experience and deal with Kafkaesque bureaucracy. Through the analysis of the performed interviews three responses were recognized: inactiveness, helplessness and meaninglessness, which reflect the attitude's components. Understanding that these findings constitute a mutually debilitating combination, the impact of these experiences both on people and organizations was revealed to be negative, leading three actions to avoid generating those to be suggested to organizations.

Key-words: Kafkaesque, bureaucracy, organization, attitude.

INTRODUCTION

This direct research follows the studies of organizational theory regarding bureaucracy, following as well the increasing consideration of Kafka's works on those studies because of the valuable representation that he was able to do of nowadays' organizational life (Warner, 2007). In fact, there are currently several societies and programs related with Kafka's bureaucracy, formed not only with the intent of studying Kafka's works, but also dedicated to simplifying bureaucracies, with the main goal of improving the efficiency of the services they focus on and making bureaucracies «accessible and fair»[1]. Noticing bureaucracy's growing negative connotation and, at the same time, its key and widely spread common use in nowadays organizations which reveals how greatly it is present in modern societies and organizations and, consequently, how deeply it affects people, the interest and importance of this topic becomes evident. Moreover, the gap in the existent works of Kafkaesque experiences containing a practical base, versus theoretical or descriptive studies of those episodes, encourage this empirical research. As a result, the purpose is to find out what really characterizes these experiences from their *protagonists*' point of view. Accordingly, after looking into the major works of the topic and planning to build on them, and helped by Kafka's writings, who «speaks directly to many of our contemporary concerns» (Warner, 2007), this work tries to answer the missing question: How do people experience the confront with the Kafkaesque bureaucracy?.

Grounded on the obtained empirical data directly related with this question, interviewees' responses were analyzed through a three-step procedure that made it possible to reach, from people's reports, the main features that comprise a Kafkaesque experience. Then those findings were interpreted, implications of the experiences were found and, thus, three suggestions were proposed to organizations to avoid creating situations that lead Kafkaesque experiences. This means that the study's results allow organizations to improve their services, an obvious interest of any organization, constituting a main foundation of this work's relevance and, so, one of the its key purposes.

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[1] www.beatbureaucracy.org

Literature Review

Bureaucracy and its effects has been a subject of study since its introduction in organizations, which can be proved by the number of literary works dedicated to this theme. Although the existence of two different views of it, the supportive (led by Max Weber, 1864-1920) and the opposite one, the negative side of bureaucracy is the most depth one among the studies regarding this topic. Bureaucracy's negative relation with innovation (Thompson, 1965), improvement (Meyer 2007) and customer satisfaction (Sureshchandar et al., 2002) are the strongest disadvantages pointed, existing several others. Therefore, Weber's statement that bureaucracy is «capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency» (Weber, 1947) is not completely supported by reality given that strategies and advices to fight bureaucracy and the benefits of doing so fill unaccountable literary works[2]. Among these, there are some of reputed and successful CEOs such as Jack Welch from GE (2001, 2005), Tom Peters from McKinsey&Company (2001) and Donald Keough from Coca-Cola (2002), who refer bureaucracy as something to strongly avoid for companies to be «winners».

Among the authors dedicated to this theme, there is **Franz Kafka**, a writer from a middle class Jewish family from Prague, who lived from 1883 to 1924 (Harold, 2003). While devoting his daytime to the office work, which was highly valued, in an insurance company, at night he became a compulsive writer, the real essence of his life (Cunha and Rego, 2009).

The number of interpretations and studies based on Kafka's works is huge, which shows how the «questions that raised the perplexity and the anguish of Kafka continue, after almost a century after his death, at the heart of the debate about the bureaucratic society» (Cunha and Rego, 2009). This way, the continuing concern in the field of **organizational theory regarding bureaucracy** is being followed by a growing consideration of Kafka's writings, since «Kafka imaginatively depicted the reality of organizational life and the manipulation of social representations today» (Warner, 2007). Based on Kafka's unfavorable view of bureaucracy, the term «**Kafkaesque**»

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[2] For example: Ahearne et al., 2005; Donald et al., 1998; Osborne and Plastrik. 1998

started being used with multiple meanings, but mainly to describe nonsense situations, which may contain injustices, surrealism, perversions, disorientation, among others. «Nightmarish situation», «meaningless complexity» and «endless interrogations» are some of the expressions often used associated with the term, being mostly used, as cited in the paper entitled *Kafka, Weber and Organization Theory*, «to describe dysfunctional encounters with bureaucracies of various kinds». The allocation of this term to organizations raised the designation **Kafkaesque organizations**, specially related with bureaucracy since it is pointed as the main cause for the referred «dysfunctional encounters». Connected with this, some investigators defend that bureaucracy in itself is not bad, but is rather the way in which people manage it that makes it become Kafkaesque.

The most common approach to this topic concerns the association that these experiences have with **State services**, especially the Portuguese one. As stated in the article *The Expansion of European Bureaucracy*, **«**typical of modern societies is bureaucracy penetration in areas of political power», being the analysis of Kafkaesque experiences in this field a broad one since it is argued, in the same article, that «government bureaucracy essentially restricts individual freedom and power had to be reduced in the name of "choice"». The fact that, presently, «bureaucratic institutions are to be found in every state in the world, regardless of the form of government» (Tierean and Bratucu, 2009) also reflects a research topic about the relationship between the government's forms and bureaucracy.

It may seem that developing the subject of bureaucracy is somewhat a *Kafkaesque action*, given that, as Beetham referred, «the quantity of paper already spent on the discussion of this issue (rivals) in volume even with the reproduction of the own bureaucracy» (Beetham, 1988). However, **the importance of this subject** lies on the fact that, despite the negative connotation it has been subject to for decades and the numerous attempts to fight and even extinguish bureaucracy, it persists a key and common factor in nowadays' organizations and societies. In fact, «Western civilization in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has witnessed an unprecedented growth of bureaucratic institutions» (Liggio, 1980). The inevitability of bureaucracy is explained by the fact

that «people have to follow rules. And wherever rules and standardization are, there is bureaucracy. This is a fact of organizational life» (Charam, 2008). Both perspectives of bureaucracy, strongly represented by Weber and Kafka, understand «the psychological requirements of being socialized into the new bureaucratic order» (Warner, 2007), and the discrepancies between them propose a deeper analysis of its experience, for bureaucracy's functioning to take into consideration its impact. Knowing that everything that has been said and analyzed related with Kafkaesque experiences with bureaucracy is or just theoretically based, or just descriptive, an analysis of those experiences based on real ones is the **gap in the existent literature** that this work tries to fill, in order to advance the understanding of this subject that so greatly affects organizations and people.

METHOD

THE RESEARCH APPROACH

Intending to understand how Kafkaesque experiences with bureaucracy are lived on a real basis, rather than on a theoretical one, the gathering of information was based on qualitative research, resorting to *in vivo* interviews. As distinctive of qualitative research, also this one «falls within the context of discovery rather than verification» (Ambert et al., 1995), since this study intends to find what the essence of the practical Kafkaesque experience is, rather than examine if it corresponds with some previously formed idea of it.

In order to realize the desired change from theoretical to practical analysis, the main step was to ground the research on personal view, instead of analyzing those experiences through an *external* view. In order to reach this perspective, people were given time to describe and self-analyze their experience, including the associated feelings, as well as to share and advocate their ideas and point of view regarding the whole process, being semi-structured interviews, with open-ended questions, the chosen tool to reach those. Therefore, interviews had two parts: the description of the entire process people had experienced and an analysis of their own feelings, reactions, opinions (among others)

that characterized it. This way, interview's script (appendix I), according to this type of interview, just introduces the main topics to be further and freely developed by interviewees (Story et al., 2001).

One limitation of this choice of research consists in the influence that the ones investigating, respondents and inquiry settings have on each other, meaning that subjectivity and leaning are threats that are part of any, including this, qualitative research process (Ambert et al., 1995). The validity procedure performed tries to contribute to reduce this limitation.

The data collection included a snowball sampling procedure (Goodman, 1961). Accordingly, in the end of each interview it was asked if the respondent knew someone that also had experienced an episode of Kafkaesque bureaucracy that could be able to share that experience.

Regarding the decision concerning the number of interviews to accomplish, the saturation point was the determinant, meaning that interviews ceased from the moment leading trends became clear in the data collected. It should be taken into account that «making the theoretically sensitive judgment about saturation is never precise» (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), being hard to explain and prove that saturation has been achieved (Morse, 1995, Bowen 2008). This way, it is the partially subjective but theoretically-based confidence in the saturation of the relevant categories that defines the number of interviews, together with the assurance of reaching the aim of the project with the collected reports (Charmanz, 2006). In this work, for the in depth information about «how and why people behave, think and make meaning as they do» to be reached, characteristic of qualitative research (Ambert et al., 1995; Ritchie et al., 2003), a restricted number constitutes the sample, though representing, according to several researchers[3], an adequate number for this sort of research.

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

Twenty three in person interviews were recorded (in Portuguese) and subsequently verbatim transcribed to a computer MS Word document, being all of them used for this study. Preceded by a first mail, Facebook, cellphone or personal contact explaining the request, interviews had an average

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[3] For example, Charmaz (2006), Ritchie et al. (2003) and Green and Thorogood (2009)

of thirty minutes each**.** Its script was mainly directed to perceive how people had experienced and dealt with Kafkaesque bureaucracy, and so respondents had to be people who personally experienced the situation studied. The respondents constituting this sample aged from 17 to 77, being the average 32 years old, varying also in gender and professional activities, which were from both private and public sector: student (in different academic phases), professor, engineer, housewife, psychologist, consultant, doctor, among others.

The lack of restrictions in the referred fields (age, professional activity, gender) is due not only to broaden the possible factors that characterize a Kafkaesque experience, but also because is part of the analysis to find out if those experiences are different between *classes* of each of these fields (for example, if they are more frequent in older people), or if their characteristics are independent from them. According to the collected sample, the second option is the supported one. Regarding the nationality of the organizations involved on the experiences described, they are all Portuguese, being 64 percent of them referred to public institutions. Taking into account «the type of questions posed, (…) the model studied, the availability of informants (…) and the purposes of the study» (Ambert, 1995) the described sample was considered appropriate to the study.

DATA SORTING AND ANALYSIS

Semiotic clustering (Feldman, 1995) was then used to provide meaning to the collected *self-narratives*. According to this method for analyzing qualitative data, by conducting a three-step procedure it was possible to reach, through people's reports, the key features that comprise a Kafkaesque experience.

The first step consists in identifying all of the various emotions and feelings that people refer or show (relying «on the researcher's intrinsic understanding of the experience» – Feldman, 1995) that they had experienced due to the process, during or after it. Hereafter, those concepts are grouped: relations between them are searched for, including similarities, paradoxes, oppositions or other, which results in a smaller number of concepts, since the first ones are gathered in more thematic

categories. Finally, the third order concepts are achieved through a further clustering of the concepts presented in the second order column, attaining more abstract and simplified dimensions with the meanings that form the essential structure of the discourse. It is important to note that in this type of analysis exists the main assumption that «surface signs are related to an underlying structure» (Feldman, 1995), which is the reason why it was possible to achieve these third order concepts.

These three steps are usually represented in a table containing three columns in order to easily perceive the process they constitute. As initially intended, this table helps «not in discovering the concerns but in making clear the connections between them and other features» of the researched topic (Feldman, 1995), allowing to consider relationships and characteristics that could not be directly detected, because were not explicitly available. This way, information not initially achievable in the direct data present in the first column, because it is implicit in the discourses, can be perceived when investigating for common themes through the described process (Clark et al., 2010), once successive levels of meaning are found (Manning, 1987). In the end, is the usefulness of the interpretation done of the clusters found what attributes value to the study.

FINDINGS

Regarding the concepts that emerged directly from the interviews there were twenty two main ones appearing. Their meaning was explicitly referred to or signed by the respondents, and so their nomination required a process that would allow the best definition of what the interviewees meant. Accordingly, during interviews' analysis there were several changes in the denomination given to each first order concept, since that while adding more information from data, similar concepts were found that overlapped each other, new ones appeared and others were left out because of lack of support from further data. These first order concepts are present in appendix II's table, together with some quotations extracted directly from the interviews' reports that support each one of the concepts.

The repetitious work of allocating interviewees' information in some concept led to a knowledge concerning the characteristics of the Kafkaesque experience that allowed the effective grouping that represents the second and third orders. As a result, the key-concepts that constitute the structure of the collected reports became clear as review progressed. In the end, three responses to this experience were recognized: inactiveness, helplessness and meaninglessness, which, interestingly, reflect the three components of attitude: emotional, cognitive and behavioral (Altman, 2008[4]).

Figure 1: Data clustering and the resulting essence of a Kafkaesque experience

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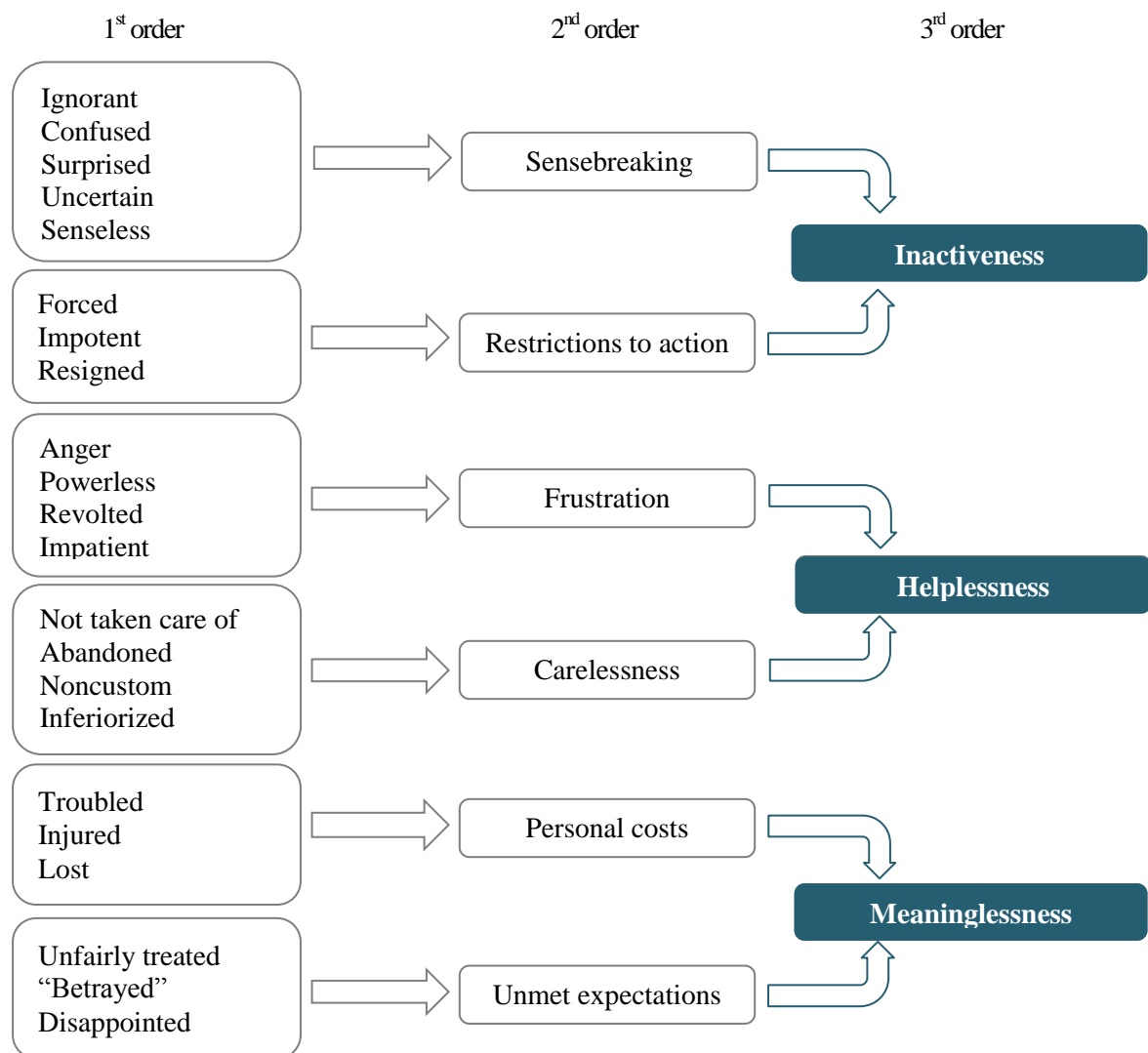
[4] Further support literature to attitude's domains are present on Altman's work and also on Sheriff et al., 1965; Newcomb et al., 1965; Freedman et al., 1970

Six concepts appeared from the grouping of the initial twenty two elements, which, paired, created the three third order components.

INACTIVENESS

<div align="right">

«Even if he wanted to do so, he wouldn't be able because

of the absurdity of the situation» (Kafka, 2009)

</div>

The grouping of the first order elements gave rise to two concepts related with a behavioral response. **Sensebreaking** was perceived mostly because of the ignorance and confusion that the interviewees' speech reflected. The information that respondents possessed concerning their process was reduced and evidence across data comes from surprise towards some functioning, uncertainty regarding several issues and the senselessness that every interviewee referred. Although through different manners, this lack of understanding was clearly present in all the reports, which leads to this dimension of sensebreaking. Based on the notion that sensebreaking is employed to the destruction or breaking down of sense (Mantere et al., 2012), the lack of knowledge of interviewees is what, in this case, constitutes this «destructed sense», given that it does not allow them to totally understand the situation.

Alongside, **restrictions to action** also characterize the experience. People are forced to perform several tasks and to follow a certain path to be able to reach what they want, need or have to. Moreover, impotence is also present, meaning that people not only have to do what are told to, but also cannot do much or anything besides that. This impotence is driven by the lack of means to go further and because people become convinced that their effort will have no impact. This restraint in (re)action is also visible on the resigned posture that respondents adopt, the "quit trying" attitude, because of «tiredness, exhaustion or ignorance» (respondent). This attitude conducts to the concept of «learned helplessness», which has as central premise that «uncontrollability, rather than the averseness of the outcome, is responsible for the deficits associated with exposure to uncontrollable outcomes» (Tennen et al., 1982). According to Seligman (1975), who theorized the concept of

learned helplessness, «an event that is perceived to be uncontrollable (is) any circumstance in which all responses a person has within their repertoire, or their ability to produce, are insufficient to create the desired outcome» (Rotenberg 2012), which in this case justifies the just mentioned actions that people are forced to do or the ones they cannot perform because they feel impotent or conformed. Thus, people in this psychological condition have learned to believe that any effort is helpless (Saxena and Shah, 2008), which is identified in the interviewees' reports through sentences similar to «there is nothing to do» (or that expose this same thought), since he/she believes that «has no control over (the) situation and that whatever (he/she) does is futile» (Saxena and Shah, 2008). Based on this, it can be said that the concept of learned helplessness clarifies the reason of this behavioral response in what action is concerned, grounded on interviewees' perception of the undesired outcome as being uncontrollable (Seligman, 1975).

Both these limitations in knowledge and action were associated to interviewees' behavioral response. The reduced information that respondents had about their process minimized their response actions given that the (consequent) sensebreaking experience paralyzed them. The obligation to follow a certain path in order to solve one's situation, directly related with interviewees' impotence feeling and the learned helplessness concept, also support the fact that their behavioral reaction is restricted. Therefore, these two factors strongly determined respondents' conduct and both narrow their behavioral hypothesis, justifying the inactiveness response.

HELPLESSNESS

> «Everyone got lost, despite all the run, all the effort, all the little and apparent
> successes that had caused so much pleasure» (Kafka, 2009)

Two other second order categories comprehended an emotional response, given the feelings caused by the experience and the affective effect associated.

Frustration was deeply attached to the descriptions collected and was the main notion behind the answers to the question «How did you feel during the process?». Having the «no purpose» sensation as main reason, connected to the uselessness of own actions, a powerless feeling was detected, contributing to the frustration category. Revolt, fury, despair and anger expressions filled the speeches gathered. The protests, the impatient (re)actions and even the willingness to give up contribute to this emotional component.

In parallel, **carelessness** appeared, not only as a driver of frustration but also in an independent perspective. Although considering the powerlessness that attendants could have to solve one's problem, the lack of interest and proactivity from employees proved by quotes as «I've nothing to do with it» or «that's not my task» upset respondents. Related with this, the successive routing that interviewees underwent seemed senseless and useless to them, creating a perception of lack of attention, support and worry. This includes one of the key pointed negative aspects of bureaucracy: the operation not being guided by people, but by rules. Based on this, rigidity is the way organizations deal with the process - «here this functions this way», - which is directly related with the lack of personalization of the service. Being dependent on people that have «power» to act over them and that do not do it carefully is what mostly supports the inferiorized sense, attached to a perception of abuse of power. The disrespect or devaluation of one's issue, the lack of effort in helping and the indifference toward injuries caused (for example, by providing wrong information) or towards the resolution of the problem itself are what mostly drives the sense of not being taken care of, feeling abandoned and the perception that the service was not customized to own necessities, making respondents feel neglected.

These two categories are attached to the emotions experienced during the episodes. In fact, both the direct feelings reported and/or expressed and the carelessness felt validate the existence of an affective effect of the experience on interviewees. Then, this connection between frustration and carelessness led to the recognition of a second component of attitude: the emotional one.

Meaninglessness

Besides the behavioral and the emotional constituents, a third one was identified also embracing a pair of themes from the second column of the model: a cognitive one.

Personal costs arose from the fact that people are troubled or bothered by the process, because of the time, papers, sometimes money, patient and «courage» needed to go through the process. The repetitive explanation of own situation and the necessity of going to several different places to solve the same issue are two examples of what *troubles* people and explain the lack of convenience involved. Interviewees consider that they are «paying the price» (interviewee) for something that is not their fault, such as the incorrect functioning of the system. Consequently but also alongside, injury happens, since these experiences not only require effort or *work* from respondents (the referred «trouble»), but they also hurt them because of the damages brought by those troubles. Assertions from the reports reveal decisions or will of not resorting to that service/organization ever again, which in some cases is included in the desire to «payback» the harm felt and in others in the wish of forgetting the experience, which is a clear evidence of the injuries involved in the process. Also connected with this category there is the lost sense testified in the reports, which is related with personal costs because of the clear damage that it makes people experience and because it involves an additional effort to try to find a «way out» of that situation.

Finally, **unmet expectations** is the gathering of three main first order ideas: unfairly treated, «betrayed» and disappointed. During interviewees' *trial*, false, mistaken or contradictory information was received, and frequently employees did not act as agreed or supposed to, leading respondents to feel "betrayed". Also often, the perception of not being treated in an unbiased way was exposed, sometimes together with the opinion that some compensation should be received, which revealed the mistaken expectation of being attended in a fair manner. Disappointment is clearly also supporting this category, given that it inherently contains a difference between what was expected and what was lived. «Not being able to achieve something that apparently is simple in

other places» (interviewee), together with the not expected dissatisfaction with the treatment received are the main ideas stressed by respondents that constitute the mentioned disappointment.

Both these domains, personal costs and unmet expectations, directly involve a perception of the situation different from the expected one. Therefore, lack of meaning becomes attached to these episodes, given that interviewees are not able to understand why in so many aspects reality does not correspond to what they expected, or even if they understand, they do not agree with it. This way, this mismatch with the firstly formed idea on interviewees' minds regarding the system, people attending them or the organization brings meaninglessness to the judgment of the experience, which thus makes the information process, the cognitive component (Milman and Drapeu, 2012), to be mainly characterized by this lack of meaning.

The findings from the data analysis also include a decomposition of what most characterizes, from the client's point of view, these bureaucratic systems. These are the functioning factors that drive the experiences reported, composing their main causes. The table in appendix III reveals some of these factors, disclosing also with which second order concepts they are essentially related with. This analysis was directly based on interviews' reports, some explicitly referred in the interviews and others deducted from them, and was performed in order to reach comprehension regarding the objective reasons of the found negative experiences with organizations, so that improvement suggestions grounded on real evidence could be included in this work.

VALIDITY

In order to find out if these results were reliable, ensuring the «meaningfulness of research components» (Drost, 2011), a validity phase was undertaken. The intent was to find out if the third order concepts just described were truly the meanings that form the essential structure of the discourse, which was the purpose of the model chosen. As explained in the method section, by

further clustering the concepts initially found, more abstract and simplified dimensions appeared. Therefore, to validate the findings it was asked to half of the sample interviewees if they agreed that those dimensions could be considered the basic structure of their experiences, as well as to review the respective interpretation and the conclusions and examine if, according to their episodes, they made sense. The explanation of the relationship between the third order concepts and the three components of attitude was followed by an assertive surprise, given that respondents «discovered» that, unconsciously, they indeed responded in those three manners. The validity procedure ended proposing that our findings can be accepted and considered reliable.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings presented above, it will now be addressed not only the respective interpretation that was derived concerning the Kafkaesque experience found, but also the implications of the findings to organizations and, based on those, key-suggestions will be proposed.

INTERPRETATION

As discovered, every response that characterizes the Kafkaesque experiences collected can be included in one of the three simplified dimensions reached: inactiveness, helplessness and meaninglessness. The fact that these classes reflect the three components of attitude constitutes the primary stage of the interpretation. According to Dawson (1992), attitude «refers to a disposition towards or against a specified phenomenon, person or thing», constituting a response to it (Altman, 2008[5]). Understanding that the three constituents of attitude were, not intentionally, achieved through the analysis done proposes that interviewees' experience of a Kafkaesque system deeply influences them, since their response is as complete as it can be: as the evidence suggests, they are as «multi-dimensioned» (Hayes & Darkenwald, 1990) as possible. This means that it is not an

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[5] Based on Beatty, 2000; Carlson, 1992; Emerson, 1992; Nelson; Ochsner; Sanders, 1993; Small; White- Taylor, 1992

experience indifferent to them (at all). Joining this to the information that attitudes have numerous and diverse consequences and that people «are predisposed to act in a certain manner» given a certain attitude (Altman, 2008) helps understanding that the Kafkaesque experiences that people have **influence their attitude towards organizations**, which consequently influences organizations through people's affective, cognitive or behavioral responses.

The second interpretation topic regards the similarity of the three responses. It is clear that every attitude component encountered came out with a negative perspective, meaning that behaviorally, emotionally and cognitively respondents were affected in an unfavorable manner. This tells that, based on the evidence, Kafkaesque experience in no way constitutes a pleasant experience: it does not have a beneficial effect on people. By this, it appears that people may avoid these situations as much as they can and, when already in them, try to end them as soon as possible. Grounded on this finding, the three third order dimensions create a **debilitating combination**: it is precisely the opposite of «facilitating» that occurs in these episodes.

The ultimate point of interpretation concerns the relation between the third order dimensions and constitutes a key step for understanding the experience being investigated. Building on the existent connection between the first order concepts and between the second order ones too, and considering the entire process that lead to the third order column, a **reinforcing relation** was found. This implies that the three components are at the same time cause and consequence of each other, and that if one *gets stronger*, the others are affected by it in the same direction. Analytically, there is a positive correlation between the attitude's components: they move in tandem and as one variable becomes stronger, the others, with more or less variation, become stronger too, and vice-versa (Curran-Everett, 2010). The data of this study did not explicitly exhibit this relation, but the analysis performed allowed its clear perception. The main implication to this work is that the three components come together: one person does not respond only in one of the three ways: he/she responds with the three components found. Concretizing, when, for example, one person is

responding the experience with inaction, helplessness feeling and meaninglessness will be part of his/her experience. Moreover, if, for example, meaninglessness increases, helplessness feeling and inactiveness will also be reinforced. Thereby, the relation between the three dimensions is not only debilitating, but **mutually debilitating**.

IMPACT ON ORGANIZATIONS

The debilitating combination found suggests that this type of experiences, because unpleasant, are strongly avoided by people. In fact, during the interviews it was frequently formulated the decision, or at least the willingness, of not resorting to that service/organization ever again. Resentfulness was, then, deeply present on the reports, including a desire to «payback» the bad treatment or prejudice caused, by waiving organization's services, as well as to forget the experience. Appendix IV exposes some interviews' extracts that support this resentful notion.

Building on this evidence, it becomes obvious that **a negative impact occurs on organization's image**, the «perceptions, mental pictures or impressions of an organization that reside in the mind of individuals» (Balmer, 1995), **and reputation**, the «customer's overall evaluation of a firm based on his or her reactions to the firm's goods, services, communication activities, interactions with the firm and/or its representatives or constituencies (such as employees, management, or other customers)» (Walsh and Beatty, 2007). Knowing that both these dimensions include a customer attitude, associated with thoughts (cognitive) and feelings (affective/ emotional) connected to the company[6], that can lead to behaviors (Walsh et al., 2011), aligns with the judgment that if Kafkaesque experience constitutes a debilitating one and involves the three attitude's components, then the image and reputation of the organization are consequently debilitated. Proving this there are the answers from the data to the question: «Did that episode change your image of the organization?», which were consistently deteriorative. Some extracts of these answers are shown in appendix V, that help understanding the impact on firm's image and reputation that this study has been referring to.

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[6] Supported by several researchers, such as Bernstein, 1984; Dowling, 1986; Keller, 1993; van Riel, 1995

One further implication related with organizations' image is connected with the fact that it is also influenced by the way others speak of the organization. In fact, the reports collected included several remarks about the sharing of one's episode with others, and one even explicitly disclosed this negative effect: «Of course that I told this to several friends that stopped going to (the organization) because they thought that this was unbelievable». Thereby, the negative image that remains in people's minds is easily spread out, which increases the unfavorable view of the organization.

Coming back to the «resentful» concept, the willingness of avoiding contact with the organization as much as possible (because of the created unfavorable image) has a practical negative implication: people, if not forced to, stop resorting to that organization. As proved by Bansal's and Taylor's model (1999), «the lower the perceived satisfaction with the service provider, the stronger should be the consumer's intention to switch service providers», having service quality and customer satisfaction important roles in the switching decision. Especially in the private sector this is deeply prejudicial: dissatisfied customers tend to choose other companies (Jessy, 2011), which deeply damages the previous organization. As Bergdahl stated, «If you treat your customers well when they have problems, they'll reward you by returning to make future purchases. If you mistrust your customers, and make them feel like naughty children, they'll leave you, and spend their money elsewhere» (Bergdahl, 2008). It can be said, then, that **customer attraction and retention of one organization decrease as Kafkaesque experiences with it occurs**.

Suggestions to organizations

From this investigation it was possible to find out that the Kafkaesque situations experienced are not isolated. When asked if that was the only similar situation that the interviewee ever had or if there were more, people consistently replied that they have had several of these confusing and nonsense situations, both with the same organization or with others. Some refer that this type of situations are typical in Portugal, and the idea that it is a characteristic of the public sector is also stressed by several. Taking into account the number of these experiences that organizations provide and the

verified negative effect on them, the benefit of avoiding creating them becomes evident: not only the negative impact on customers is prevented, but also a positive one can be generated by the differentiation factor that appears from not neglecting clients' treatment as they are used or expecting to. In fact, and as approached in this work's literature review, *deskafkization*, which «aims to turn the bureaucratic systems less Kafkaesque, although possibly not less bureaucratic» (Cunha and Rego, 2009), is a growing process nowadays, which supports the prevention of Kafkaesque experiences. Therefore, based on this study the **suggestions go towards the avoidance of generating Kafkaesque experiences** to the customers.

As previously said, from the reports gathered it was possible to derive the exposed systems' main features responsible for their Kafkaesque characterization (some are enumerated in appendix III's table). Composing the experiences' primordial causes, those are also foundation of the suggestions presented in this work. At the same time, each suggestion directly intends to tackle one of the three dimensions found that characterize the Kafkaesque experience, in order to prevent or at least reduce the negative effect that they reflect.

According to these guidelines, there are **three areas of action of this proposed improving plan**: flexibility, personalization and justification, to confront inactiveness, helplessness and meaninglessness, respectively. An outline behind all these proposals involves a different training and guidance (management) of company's human resources that directly interact with customers, indicating that efforts that ensure high levels of quality service must be made to result in increased satisfaction (Bansal and Taylor, 1999). This outline is also supported by the fact that some investigators defend that bureaucracy in itself is not bad, but is rather the way in which people manage it that makes it become Kafkaesque, which makes the way of dealing with this «highest degree of efficiency» (Weber, 1947) machine what leads the proposals, instead of changing the system itself.

One of the main complaints from interviewees is the lack of **flexibility** faced, along with an absence of alternatives. A strict conduct must be performed, rules have to be fulfilled, no deviation of what is planed is allowed - even if it makes no sense in that specific situation. Expressions similar to «here we function this way» and «no, things do not happen that way» are frequent answers to people's requests. Thereby, providing flexibility for the ones attending clients becomes crucial. «Is not the inexistence of rules; is the existence of rules, but then have *sub rules* that allow by some way to surpass a problem that can come out» (interviewee). The fact that there are people attending instead of a machine should facilitate this measure, since «automatic execution of processes as a general rule» does not mandatorily have to occur (Rese et al., 2009), avoiding common sense to become nonsensical (Nasir, 2012). Moreover, also supporting this action is the notion that employees' performance is positively related with their attitudes and behaviors towards their work, which is assisted by flexibility in work (Stavrou, 2005). The learned helplessness condition that reports testified, that «results from being trained to be locked into a system» (Saxena and Shah, 2008) where people feel passive with respect to it, would also decrease with this measure, given that flexibility opens alternatives and opportunities which allow people to reduce passivity. Thus, through this procedure inactiveness would be faced and reduced, consequently reducing the Kafkaesque characterization of the episode.

Towards a reduction of the helplessness feeling comes the second suggestion: **personalization**. Dissatisfaction from interviewees came deeply from the fact that rules were not only strictly followed, but were put above people, meaning that when clients' interest did not aligned with the pursuance of a rule, the rule *won* and people's satisfaction was disregarded. As one interviewee referred, «is a system centered on the rule, and not on the person there», which brings the impression that «they do not truly take into consideration my request» (a second interviewee), being the individual «subsumed under a generality as only a file label in an unknown file» (Nasir, 2012). This impression is also supported by the successive forwarding between departments, offices or services

that customers are subjected to, which made them infer the lack of customization we have been referring to. In order to prevent this, training regarding personalized service must be provided, so that employees act according to company's main interest: to satisfy customers. This training would basically regard the clarification of the fact that rules are created to better serve customers (and not the other way around) and, based on this, provide attendants with capacity to understand when it does not make sense to apply some rule, and know how to act on those situations so that customers' needs can be satisfied as fast and simply as possible. Customers' commitment created through personal interaction, reciprocity and trust (Alshurideh et al., 2012) can be taken as a clear measure of the positive impact of this action.

Justification is the last field of action proposed and intends to tackle the meaninglessness sense so present in the collected reports. This knowledge's subject has three main components: the lack of information from the ones attending, the contradicting information received and the absence of communication between the different areas of the same organization or between organizations that should be *aligned*. As easily perceived, the three can influence each other and all form lack of clarification in interviewees' minds, together with lack of answers, false responses and not useful ones. A better understanding about how the process works would undoubtedly make interviewees experience less sensebreaking, given that the senselessness so strongly experienced in those situations could be reduced if some explanations were provided, contributing for «the operative image of organization (to be) one in which organization emerges through sensemaking, not one in which organization precedes sensemaking or one in which sensemaking is produced by organization» (Weick, 2005). In fact, this frequently seems to occur from interviewees' point of view, given that, just like K, the protagonist of Kafka's book *The Trial*, they persistently seek for «meaning in a mechanized world which runs for no reason except its own perpetuation» (McDaniel, 1979). Furthermore, «instead of describing the helplessness of these struggles» (Nasir, 2012) people would know why they become that way, making these experiences surely less negative. Given the

exposed importance, clear and relevant information must be provided to attendants, so that they can answer any question from customers. Also, to favor an increase of internal communication should also be included in this action plan, so that even if information is not owned by attendants, an easy and fast access to it is possible and clarification of customers' doubts is ensured.

Attaining these three actions implies that **empowerment** is provided to employees, for them to be able to facilitate the process that leads to the resolution of people's issues, in order to avoid the feeling of «always ending talking with people that have no power to make a decision» (interviewee), that sometimes want to help but are not allowed to or do not know how.

The three suggestions go along with the **pursuit of an equilibrium** that takes into account what needs to be procedural so that a flow of people exists and the higher number of them can be attended, but at the same time does not neglect the individual care, so that people do not feel like being *processed* by a machine that does not see them. Furthermore, one respondent said regarding a more careful service: «I think it makes all the difference, even if then I had to – and in this case I believe I would have to – go through exactly the same process». This means that, even if in procedural terms the more efficient way is being implemented, commanded by hyperrationality and ultraefficiency[7], a higher customer satisfaction can be achieved with simple further actions, such as the proposed attendants' training, that would highly benefit the company. This focus on organizations' internal Human Resources as the key-instrument to the proposed actions, to consequently avoid generating Kafkaesque experiences, is due to the belief that «achieving an effective internal exchange between organizations and their employee groups (is) a prerequisite for successful exchanges with external markets» (George, 1990). As defended by Varey (1995), ensuring the best possible treatment of customers requires ensuring that employees are committed to that goal, being the training and guidance what compose the three suggested fields of action the means to achieve so.

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[7] Supported, among others, by Gulick and Urwick, 1937; Mayo, 1933; Taylor, 1911; White, 1926.

CONCLUSION

Through the finding of the essential responses that a Kafkaesque experience instigates on its *victims*, an interpretative phase allowed the perception of their impact. Because the discovered structure of the discourses was characterized as being not only debilitating, but mutually debilitating, meaning that the three responses reinforce each other, its impact was featured as inevitably negative. The creation of a Kafkaesque experience by an organization to someone influences his/her attitude towards that organization in an unfavorable way, since the negative impact that affects people is transferred to organization's image and reputation, and this perception changes customers' behavior towards them. Therefore, these episodes make customers avoid recurring to those organizations, which is the significant implication of the findings of this study to organizations, disclosing that both organizations and customers are harmed as a result. Based on this, on the other findings and on previous studies, three fields of action are considered to heavily contribute to the reduction of those incidents: flexibility, personalization and justification. According to this investigation, action towards these three factors will undoubtedly reduce the negative impact that those experiences have on customers, while positively differentiating the organization. Taking into account that an increase of attendants' empowerment is required to allow the achievement of these three movements, this constitutes a ground step of the proposed improvement plan. According to this work, the management of bureaucracy is perceived as the pursuit of an equilibrium: standardization *vs.* customization, given that the highest degree of efficiency must be achieved without neglecting individual care. Knowing that to be the more efficient possible the procedures become rigid, is the way of handling them that must be tackled, specifically through a change in human resources' performance, so that the characteristic negative impact of these experiences can decrease and a better performance from organizations can be achieved, together with a consequent higher customer satisfaction.

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A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Masters

Degree in Management from the NOVA – School of Business and Economics.

KAFKAESQUE EXPERIENCES

MARTA DA COSTA OOM DE SOUSA | 945

APPENDIX

A Project carried out on the Management course, under the supervision of:

Professor Miguel Pina e Cunha

January 7th, 2013

1. Provide framework

Explanation of the interview's objective: try to understand in detail what is a Kafkaesque experience, through the description of a frustrating/ exasperating/ senseless/ complicated/ confused (…) episode, directly related with bureaucracy.

2. Basic information

Interviewee's name, age and profession.

3. Episode's description

Ask for a description as rich as possible of the «surreal» episode that has passed dealing with bureaucracy.

Note: Try to get the complete description of the process, ensuring that each step of it is referred.

4. In depth analysis of the experience

How did you feel? (during and after the incident)

How did you react?

Did the people who answer you tried to help you?

Did you ever, during the process, put yourself in doubt? Meaning, did you ever think that they could be right, or it was always something senseless?

Have you done something «extra-episode», something related with the process but not included in it? Namely write on complaints' book, try to reach someone in a higher position…

Did that episode change your image of the organization?

Did you ever feel in the place of one person that attends someone and is not able to truly help him/her because is limited to a set of tasks that can't reach the resolution of someone's need?

5. Additional information

Was that the only similar situation with bureaucracy that you ever had, or have you had several?

Is there anyone that you know that have experienced an episode of Kafkaesque bureaucracy that you think that could also share that experience?

Ignorant	«I don't understand the reason of more this formality (…) I don't understand» «the request was denied (…) not giving any explanation about the reason of refusing it» «I don't know how the information is then transferred» «I didn't know how my process was, I didn't know if I had done things rightly or not, until at a certain time I understand that my papers are missing and nobody knew where they were. (…) I never got that confirmation, never. So I never knew if my information arrived there» «Then there is no way of (…) understanding what is there. So until today (…) I do not know which movements are behind it» «Now I know it functions this way, but I still don't understand exactly how, or why»
Confused	«she said she already investigated which version is the true one» «that part is also a little bit strange» «I think it would be useful to explain "the request was refused because of this, this and this", so that the issue could be well clarified» «it was a set of mechanisms that didn't work together, with two variables that couldn't align» «In one place I was told something, in other I was told differently, etc.»
Surprised	«and suddenly they don't let us go, something surreal» «it was unbelievable that I, that was a client for more than ten years, and a good client from my point of view, wanted to change a DVD that was immaculate and they didn't allow me» «I've had several of these situations that make us arrive home and say "I'm not believing in what I'm hearing"» «I didn't think that changing those two courses would be a problem» «When I received the letter it was the biggest surprise ever, I really wasn't expecting»
Uncertain	«I felt that I wasn't sure of what was going to result, this is, with so many successive requests of new documents, one person stays unsure about what the final result will really be» «meanwhile my doctor asked for the retirement, so I don't know if I will be able to get the appointment, because since then I will be in the same situation» «it would be very difficult; just in the end of September and it was not guaranteed» «I haven't received yet, we'll see if it is solved» «a big feeling of uncertainty»
Senseless	«It doesn't make sense, it's not logic. (…) what I went there to do has no sense»

«to have everything that is necessary and because of details everything is lost, for really insignificant things, that doesn't make any sense»

«they ended creating a situation which they can't answer»

«having the manpower in one place and the material in another is not functional»

«(They asked us) to prove the income that we were going to receive, but since we were not going to receive any, how could we prove it?»

«so it would be a situation in which everyone would win if there was the digital extract, and it was not possible»

«it does not make any sense how the process was done»

Forced	«I had to wait about two hours to do something that, in my opinion, I shouldn't have to (…) I don't have to pay for this organization's incompetence»
	«we were doing everything (…) to do something that is an obligation»
	«and the problem is that there is no other way»
	«we built (the company) in Brazil just to unlock a set of processes, since we could not receive the money from a big client»
	«but I have to follow all the bureaucracies, all the procedures, every paper, and so I have to wait»
	«without the hypothesis of choosing: I had to do what they told»
Impotent	«People feel very small to fight a machine so big that exceeds them. Is that feeling of impotence (…) that stays in the end»
	«There is nothing to do»
	«my request is not even considered to people that could take a decision that goes against the rule»
	«I couldn't do anything. (…) Since the beginning it was impossible to reach the director. It was impossible.»
	«He always told me this: it is impossible, it is impossible, that does not exist, and also he did not give me a way out»
	«the feeling of impotence in the sense of not feeling that there was openness or flexibility so that, doing those suggestions, it would have an impact»
Resigned	«Meanwhile we ignored that inefficiency, that was just one more, and we continued deciding what we were going to do»
	«each time people argued with us and we fought their arguments, they got another argument, and they were always inventing new ones until a certain moment in which we, because of tiredness, exhaustion or ignorance, quit»
	«I first did what they told me to - I thought it was ridiculous but sometimes there are things that require effort»
	«In this morning's case what I understood was that the process is assembled this way. (…) I thought that it would have no impact, meaning that even if I complained, in fact I will have to go through all these steps»
	«maybe we could have continued arguing with the woman, but we left already tired of the entire situation»
	«I just wanted to end this so I ended doing everything they told me to»

Anger	«and we were really upset with this penalization because it made it seem that it was our fault» «we were somewhat upset because they didn't answered us» «I got angry (…) it's annoying» «the word with which I can describe (the organization) is "irritating"»
Powerless	I went away and arrived home furious: it wasn't possible - once again, wasted time» «it's not going to change much» «this email also didn't have any effect» «I already wrote two complaints to (the organization), two times in the complaints' book (…) but they've never said I was right, although I still think I was»
Revolted	«I freaked out, because I'm there losing my time» «"you must be kidding me" (…) I left completely irritated (…) because it is really despairing» «I was revolted knowing that there was an easiest way» «we were revolted and protested» «Revolt, and rage, and sadness, yes. It's a set of emotions»
Impatient	«(I felt) impatient (…) with the unavailability of people» «Maybe we could have continued to argue with the woman, but we left already tired of the entire situation (…) we were really out of patience»
Not taken care of	«they do not worry» «it was indifference (from them), that I consider that in this case it shouldn't exist, it doesn't make sense to exist» «I automatically got the idea: "every time I go there this is the treatment I will receive, they will not be worrying with my issues; I'm the one who will be there working six days or nothing will happen» «they just wanted to prove that they were right, instead of trying to understand what I was talking about» «as they think that my situation was not a priority in the moment maybe they ended putting it aside and not developing the necessary efforts because they thought that it was not necessary at that time»
Abandoned	«they didn't try to help in looking for other options and try to be informed to give answers to our needs» «There was never an attitude like: "ok, come with me, I'll explain you everything that you have to do". It was always: "this is what you do here, the rest you handle there". (…) there was not worry nor will from them»
Noncustom	«we do not want to know about the rules, this is a specific case» «They perform the job in a very mechanical way. (…) when they are doing it to the client they *dispatch* it» «is a system centered on the rule, and not centered on the person there» «there's no way that we arrive there: "look, I need this, it is not exactly how you've defined it"»

«but these are rules and we have to follow the rules»

«Not feeling the responsibility or the interest in students' personal situation (…) Not feeling personalization of the issue, not feeling that they are really taking care of me as they should»

«"is just one more", that feeling that they don't individualize the process»

Inferiorized	«I felt there was an abuse of power» «we are dependent of people that have power to act over us, but that are inefficient and that are ignorant» «they thought we were younger and didn't have the attention to explain us»
Troubled	«this then also got me troubled» «it always involves moving between places, in waiting lines and with papers» «when I arrive there I see that it is not one further step, there are two, three, four, five, and I don't know how long and how many steps I'll have to give until I can complete something so simple» «the system (…) causes a trouble so big to me and to the professors also»
Injured	«I, as a client, can't be waiting or have to go there for something that they told me that, and that I paid, would be send by post» «Conclusion: I was two hours waiting for a car to transport a piece of tube from one hospital to the other because things were not minimally organized» «It's unacceptable that they don't know the services they have. One person can pay less and they don't know it, don't say it» «the time we spent (…), the cost of our time and then the investment in services to *uncomplicate* these situations, it was really high» «the process is not being done in the right way and I end up paying for that, when it is not my fault»
Lost	«We stop to think, and we say: "wait, what are we doing?"» «I felt a little unsupported and also without knowing who to resort to. (…) without knowing who could help me with this» «they were discussing opinions and we, at six am, with the bags on our backs, without knowing what to do» «and so at a certain time, in the middle of this, nobody knows what is what»
Unfairly Treated	«I don't think it is fair, I don't think it is balanced» «We start feeling an enormous injustice. We start feeling that we were really target of a huge injustice and that we have to be able to recover the money and that in some way this injustice must be compensated» «I went there, not because of the tickets, but for justice to be made» «Marta had exactly the same situation but she was able to do it»
"Betrayed"	«We have confirmed that the theory of expatriation was not true, but it was what the man had seriously told us» «revolt against them, because supposedly it is an institution that must defend the psychologists' rights»

«(they tell me) that I am right, and that maybe the rule doesn't make sense, which brings me hope (…). What always happens is that, after giving me those hopes, I always receive an information that my request was denied without any justification»

«After all it doesn't take one hour, after all it is really complex to create a new firm, and very little flexible, and it doesn't help at all.

«I felt somewhat betrayed»

«She was someone that have always been so available (…), but then also left us with a debt and without really knowing what to do.»

Disappointed	«I was a little disappointed for not being able to achieve something that apparently is simple in other places»
	«we were a little disappointed with the way it was handled and we made them see (that)»
	«it should exist that worry with the students in their exams, and there was not»
	«she seemed to be almost doing us a favor for registering us, which is ridiculous»
	«regarding the attitude, the help, I think that it could have been a little more, that there wasn't»

System feature	Data support	Related 2nd order concept
Rules above people	«more important than the rule was not losing a client (…) and that is not on the rules, or if it is on the rules it was not fulfilled» «people fulfill rules but don't fulfill the more important thing which is to satisfy clients» «they live from clients, but clients don't matter when there's a little rule that says *something»* «it's a system centered on the rule, and not on the person there» «she didn't want to know, she followed the rule strictly»	Carelessness
"Rule by the rule"	«one rule - as stupid as it may seem - has to be followed» «his head was only directed towards one point: it was that way, was that way that it should be done.» «but these are norms, and we have to fulfill the norms» «because the rule was defined that way» «I asked and what they answered me was that it is how it is planed»	Frustration
Lack of alternatives	«so they didn't give me a way out» «the problem is that there's no way around, I do not have another way» «What do we have to do? We leave, we don't have other option» «I didn't have an alternative besides waiting or quitting» «there's never the hypothesis of handling things in a different way» «so there were no alternatives to go through the situation»	Restrictions to action
Lack of information	«they were not even informed about something that is basic» «one person that is there, attending others, must have a minimal base of knowledge about how it works» «is always this answer that they give, and if I ask other questions they don't know the answer» «they did not even informed me, I did not even know» «I asked and they answered that it is how it is planned, with no further explanation» «None of the employees was informed regarding the	Sensebreaking

	ticket that was still in force until the end of the year»	
Wrong expectations	«Until now I thought that (…) it could be solved easily, and now I have the idea that it is not that way» «a process that theoretically was simple (…) requires very complicated contracts» «not feeling that they are really taking care of me as they should, since I am part of the institution» «I thought I would benefit from it. Never happened.» «it's really difficult because I didn't expect to find so much tipification» «I was a little disappointed because couldn't do something that apparently is simple in other places»	Unmet expectations
Negative consequences	«This then also brought me problems» «I know that the process is not over» «This is not over, because then we have (…) everything you can imagine, that will force to more steps, to more processes, to more papers, to more validations» «I paid taxes when not working because of their delay in sending the code» «we built and destroyed business plans because that information varied» «so until today I have omitted the extract of that month»	Personal costs
Transfer the process to other	«he forwarded us» «I'm always jumping from one office to other» «she told me it was better if I spoke with someone from other building» «Everything is always very difficult, everything requires going to two or three places» «I went there and they told me it was not there that information was given, that was elsewhere. I then went to that place and they forwarded me to another one.» «I was moving from office to office because they told the information was not there, that "that" person could help me. I went to the other person and they told me that there they couldn't do anything, for me to go elsewhere»	Carelessness
Lack of flexibility	«even reclaiming, in fact I will have to go through all these steps» «it was very difficult to change that rule» «I felt really angry because women were really inflexible» «I didn't feel that there was openness or flexibility so that (…) it could have an impact» «they tried to help, but they have so rigid processes that the help ended up being small»	Restrictions to action

«there was not any flexibility»

Lack of communication (between the different departments/areas of the same organization or between organizations that should be "aligned")	«I thought it was weird because if they already have in (one office) and it was supposed to be in (other office), how didn't they communicate with each other» «I was handling all this when it should be them to communicate from one office to the other» «in one place they said one way, in another other way, etc.» «I have had a different information previously» «for a long time the information we received was wrong in several sources, and it was normal» «they start discussing between them regarding what is the real truth about this situation»	Sensebreaking
Takes time and *papers*	«we lost one morning (…) we also lost one afternoon (…) several lines, etc.» «it always requires moving from one place to another, in lines and with papers» «they take one month and a half analyzing three documents and one thing that I put on the internet (…) I have to wait (…) and wait» «three hours waiting (…) between the several documents that were necessary» «lines that are always everywhere» «I had to take a certificate, two photographs and two forms (…) three hours and a half waiting in the line»	Personal costs
Powerlessness of attendants	«I know she is only an intermediate, she can't change anything here» «is someone that is there and has to strictly follow those rules, so she's not there to think or to facilitate» «I was there talking with a person that can't change any of that (…) does not have any power in that company» «I always end staying with the ones that do not have the power to make a decision» «I think that person does not have that decision power concerning how the process is done (…), her/his role is only to do what is asked by the superiors» «always recurring to my patience to try to understand that (…) the rules were not her fault»	Frustration

«We are completely against (the organization), we never traveled with them again»

«Since that I stopped going to (the organization)»

«They can be completely right, but I don't want to buy things in a store that puts rules above the relationship with the client and clients' satisfaction.»

« I never went there again (…) I'll never put my feet there again.»

«My will was to say "look, I don't need you for anything, I'll handle things other way"»

«When it was over (…) we only wanted to forget the experience.»

«That was so confused to me that I didn't even came home to get it, "I don't want it after all", I said. (…) I'm not coming back here anymore»

«I think that if now we needed another (…) we would hesitate a little (…) and we would make sure that we knew, "this had happened once so let's be careful"»

«The image that I have after this is of complete incompetence and slowness: they don't know how to accelerate, don't know how to answer, don't know… Terrible, is the idea that I have.»

«After that I stayed with an awful idea of the process, of course.»

«I was disappointed for not being able to achieve something that apparently is easy in other places»

«the lack of clarification (…) changes my image of (the organization)»

«I thought that the firm had respect and attention towards its clients. With this episode I now think it does not.»

«I thought that (the organization) represented well the interests of the citizens. There it did not represent well at all.»

«(the image) was already bad»

«(the image) got worst. It was already bad, but became even worst»

«Yes, of course. (…) For what I understood, it extends and that institution functions really poorly»

«A lot, I think they are completely retarded»

«I had the idea of a normal office, now I have the idea of an office that is completely retarded»

«Yes, it changed. I think that a firm with this dimension and that has so much influence (…) should function much better.»

«Each time (I go there) I think they are more incompetent»

«The public services of which I have a good idea are few, and in this case I thought it was more like the others»