DECISION ENTITY-NESS: TAKING AGENCY SERIOUSLY IN ORGANIZATIONAL DECISION-MAKING STUDIES

Eduardo Guedes Villar[1]   **Karina de Déa Roglio[2]**

[1] PhD, Regional University of Blumenau – FURB, Blumenau, Santa Catarina – Brazil. eduardogvillar@gmail.com
[2] PhD, Federal University of Paraná – UFPR. Curitiba, Paraná – Brazil. karinaroglio@gmail.com

Abstract

Objective of the study: In this essay, we problematize the onto-epistemological assumptions of organizational decision-making theories, focusing on the concepts of action and decision.

Approach: Based on the epistemological perspective of transaction, we propose an understanding of decision as a relational element of action and in action, constructing an explanation supported on the relational ontological understanding of reality.

Originality/relevance: We introduce the concept of decision entity-ness, based on relational sociology from the perspective of transaction and the idea of relational agency.

Main results: The concept of decision entity-ness allowed us to theoretically combine the processual and performative dimensions of organizational decision-making.

Theoretical contribution: As a contribution, we developed an original theoretical-explanatory framework that emphasizes decision, understanding it as an element that distinguishes organizations from other social systems.

Keywords: Decision. Action. Agency. Transaction. Relational sociology.

A ENTATIVIDADE DA DECISÃO: LEVANDO A AGÊNCIA A SÉRIO NOS ESTUDOS DE PROCESSO DECISÓRIO ORGANIZACIONAL

Resumo

Objetivo do estudo: Neste ensaio problematizamos os pressupostos onto-epistemológicos das teorias de processo decisório organizacional, com atenção aos conceitos de ação e decisão.

Abordagem: Baseados na perspectiva epistemológica de transação, nosso objetivo consiste em propor um entendimento da decisão como um elemento relacional da e na ação.

Originalidade/relevância: Com base na sociologia relacional, na perspectiva da transação, e particularmente, na ideia de agência relacional, sugerimos a concepção da entatividade da decisão.

Principais resultados: Esta concepção nos permitiu combinar teoricamente as dimensões processual e performativa do fenômeno de interesse.

Contribuição teórica: Como contribuição, desenvolvemos um quadro teórico-explicativo original, o qual, ao entender a decisão como elemento de diferenciação de organizações em comparação a outros sistemas sociais, permite-nos trazê-la à centralidade de nossos estudos.

Palavras-chave: Decisão. Ação. Agência. Transação. Sociologia relacional.

ENTATIVIDAD DE DECISIÓN: TOMAR LA AGENCIA EN SERIO EN LOS ESTUDIOS DE TOMA DE DECISIONES ORGANIZACIONALES

Resumen

Objetivo del estudio: En este ensayo problematizamos los supuestos onto-epistemológicos de las teorías del proceso de toma de decisiones organizacionales, con atención a los conceptos de acción y decisión.

Enfoque: Partiendo de la perspectiva epistemológica de la transacción, nuestro objetivo es proponer una comprensión de la decisión como elemento relacional de y en acción.

Originalidad / relevancia: A partir de la sociología relacional, en la perspectiva de la transacción, y particularmente, en la idea de agencia relacional, sugerimos la concepción de la entatividad de decisión.

Principales resultados: Esta concepción nos permitió combinar teóricamente las dimensiones procedimental y performativa del fenómeno de interés.

Aporte teórico: Como aporte, desarrollamos un original marco teórico-explicativo, que, al entender la decisión como elemento de diferenciación de las organizaciones frente a otros sistemas sociales, nos permite llevarla al centro de nuestros estudios.

Palabras clave: Decisión. Acción. Agencia. Transacción. Sociología relacional.

1 de 21

Rev. Ibero-Am. de Est. – RIAE
Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management - IJSM
São Paulo, *21*, p. 1-21, e18815, 2022

Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia
Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management

Villar, E. G., & Roglio, K. de D. (2022). Decision entity-ness: taking agency seriously in organizational decision-making studies

Introduction

[When] the mediating sign (the legend) is performative (becomes fact): Take it seriously. Philippe Lorino (2018, p.27).

The difference between action and decision is an issue historically discussed (Brunsson, 1982; Mintzberg & Waters, 1990; Chia, 1994). In the literature on organizations and particularly in studies of decision-making, these terms were sequenced, for example, first the actor (individual, group, organization) makes a decision, and then they act (Simon, 1965; Mintzberg, Raisinghani, & Théorêt, 1976; Langley et al., 1995; Nutt, 2011); or the actor first acts and then, retrospectively, rationalizes the process as a decision (Maitlis & Ozcelik, 2004; Balogun, Pye, & Hodgkinson, 2008; Ericson, 2010).

For Chia (1994), the different perspectives when discussing action and decision generated a sterile debate, disregarding the problems existing in the theoretical assumptions that guide the understanding of the concepts – action and decision (Brunsson, 2007; Tsoukas, 2010). We propose to advance this discussion by problematizing (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011) the concept of agency that decision theories use in the field of organizations, resuming Dewey and Bentley's (1949) levels of analysis: (i) self-action, (ii) inter-action, and (iii) trans-action.

Based on the epistemological perspective of transaction (Dewey & Bentley, 1949, Lorino, 2020), we propose an understanding of decision as a relational element *of action* and *in action*, constructing an explanation supported on the relational ontological understanding of reality (Emirbayer, 1997; Dépelteau, 2018a). In this perspective, the action is no longer an intentional, non-problematic, and consequential result produced by humans .Instead, the action is understood as the endless effect of a system of relations (Burkitt, 2016, 2018) of multiple and heterogeneous participants distributed in time and space (Passoth, Peuker, & Schillmeier, 2012; Sayes, 2014), which we call distributed agency (Rammert, 2012).

In this theoretical paper, we introduce the concept of *decision entity-ness[1]*, based on a combination of the relational, the processual, and the performative dimensions of the decision. We are particularly interested in understanding the active and consequent social life of the decision in the organizational context. That is, how and when a situated decision participates in the production of the reality in question, and what are the effects of its participation. The theoretical-explanatory framework offered in this study represents our contribution to move forward on an agenda of studies on decision (Abend, 2018) in organization studies

---

[1] The word entity-ness refers to the term coined by Abbott (1995), without bringing back the entitative or representationist ontologies (See Laroche, 1995, Lorino, 2018), we will develop a theoretical explanation to decisions participations in the organizacional-social system as relational entities.

2 de 21

Rev. Ibero-Am. de Est. – RIAE
Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management - IJSM
São Paulo, *21*, p. 1-21, e18815, 2022

Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia
Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management

Villar, E. G., & Roglio, K. de D. (2022). Decision entity-ness: taking agency seriously in organizational decision-making studies

Theoretical Framework

Processual-relational sociology

In this section, we present relational sociology as a counterpoint to the substantialist perspectives of research. We will resume Dewey and Bentley's (1949) levels of analysis and, based on the epistemological perspective of transaction, the concept of distributed agency will be detailed. Finally, the developed analytical framework will be used to expose the onto-epistemological assumptions of the different decision theories.

Every researcher has a social ontology (or an ontology of the social). Even if implicitly, nothing can be done or said without considering the nature of the social reality to be examined (Archer, 2000). Substantialism constitutes a dominant current of sociological (and organizational) thinking in which various types of substances (things, beings, essences) constitute the fundamental units and the starting point of all research (Emirbayer, 1997). Therefore, the fundamental assumption of this current is the idea that substances come before the relations among them (Dépelteau, 2013, Dépelteau, 2018b).

Although the substantialist thinking dominates in sociological thinking, there have been efforts to find viable analytical alternatives to reverse this basic assumption and portray social reality in dynamic, continuous, and processual terms (Emirbayer, 1997), which has been called relational sociology (Dépelteau, 2018d). Vandenberghe (2018:38) suggests that relational sociology is "neither a theory nor a paradigm, but a set of theories with selective affinities, inspired by the works of Harrison White (network analysis), Norbert Elias (figurational sociology), Pierre Bourdieu (critical sociology), John Dewey (pragmatism), Niklas Luhmann (systems theory), and Bruno Latour (actor-network theory)".

Despite the dispersion, fragmentation, and heterogeneity among scholars when addressing relationality (Dépelteau, 2018c), there is a common ontological assumption, summarized in the statement "*in the beginning (of any social fact there) is the relation*" (Donati, 2011:65). Thus, substances (things, beings, institutions, organizations) are not antecedent. They first take place *through* and *in* the relations attributed to them (Emirbayer, 1997). Then, one starts to study, perceive, and define social phenomena as fluid processes and not determined substances (Dépelteau, 2018b).

Dépelteau (2018b) presents two commitments of relational sociology studies (i) to expand/enrich the understanding of social life by studying the relations among actors[2], and (ii) to become aware that social reality is the result of relations and, in this sense, relational awareness can improve social life. According to Dépelteau (2018b), these commitments unfold in five principles of relational sociology (Table 1).

---

[2] We use the word actor to refer to human and non-human elements since we have already positioned ourselves ontologically due to the impossibility of existing subjects without previously having relations. In other words, the actor is devoid of the intrinsically human condition since it is the result, consequence, effect of relations. In Relational Sociology, the expressions actant (Callon & Law, 1995), transactors (Dépelteau, 2013), interactors (Burkitt, 2016) have the same meaning. When we refer to a particular type/effect of actor, we will qualify it as such (e.g., human actor).

3 de 21

Rev. Ibero-Am. de Est. – RIAE
Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management - IJSM
São Paulo, *21*, p. 1-21, e18815, 2022

Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia
Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management

Villar, E. G., & Roglio, K. de D. (2022). Decision entity-ness: taking agency seriously in organizational decision-making studies

Table 1

Onto-epistemological principles of relational thinking

Principles	Description
Processual thinking	The reality is dynamic and fluid. It is a process formed of sub-processes, sub-sub-processes, and so on. It emerges and evolves through relations among interdependent entities, which are also processes themselves.
Rejection of substantialism	Substances cannot be defined outside their network of relations, as if they could self-act or inter-act as independent substances or essences. They are interdependent parts of social processes without being determined by these processes since they co-produce them.
Interdependency	Entities are interdependent, which indicates that they "are what they are" and "do what they do" because they are in a relationship with each other. Their identities and actions emerge and develop through relations. They cannot be adequately understood as if they were simply derived from some pre-relational essence, even though they have their own characteristics as distinct entities (e.g., human, non-human)
Co-production	Any natural or social phenomenon is co-produced through relations among various human and non-human actors free from intrinsic substantiality.
Rejection of dualism	Modern dualisms such as body-mind, individual-society, objectivity-subjectivity, and structure-agency are rejected in favor of studying relations among actors (in a broad sense) that transact/mediate in specific realities.

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on principles introduced by Dépelteau (2018b).

There is a moral imperative in Western thought absorbed in social (and organizational) theory that individuals must be active, intentional, autonomous, independent, constantly willing, and able to deliberately make choices in their lives (Burkitt, 2016). For example, instead of saying, "Look at the perpetual flowing of the water" (Elias, 1978), we say, "Look how fast the river is flowing" or "The wind is blowing." We talk about the wind or the river as if they were something at rest and stable that, suddenly, start to – and have the ability to – flow or blow. A process such as the perpetual flowing of the water is reduced to static conditions (the river), which becomes a self-explanatory term and then taken for granted by people who were socialized based on this thought (Emirbayer, 1997). When perceiving the world as being composed of discrete substances, essentially unrelated, science ultimately seeks to find a single understanding of the cause and effect of interactions between different forms (Burkitt, 2016).

Relational sociology challenges this way of conceiving the world, based on Western, instrumental, consequentialist thinking. In ontological terms, the relation prevails over individualistic or holistic thoughts (Emirbayer, 1997), in the sense that neither the individual nor society exists by themselves, except for "mutual co-implication" (Dépelteau, 2018b:39). Without determinisms or co-determinisms (see Dépelteau, 2013 for a review), society is understood as a relational complex that emerges from the relations among multiple actors and is sustained, in precarious and provisional stabilities, through these relations (Latour, 1988; Dépelteau, 2018c).

As for the epistemological aspect, relational sociology challenges theories (such as the rational choice theory) and consolidated conceptions (decision, identity, power) and seeks to explain them in relational, transactional, and processual terms (Vandenberghe, 2018). Regarding methodological issues,

4 de 21

Rev. Ibero-Am. de Est. – RIAE
Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management - IJSM
São Paulo, *21*, p. 1-21, e18815, 2022

Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia
Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management

Villar, E. G., & Roglio, K. de D. (2022). Decision entity-ness: taking agency seriously in organizational decision-making studies

the procedures of linear and/or variance analysis are replaced by others that can reach and explain the relations among multiple actors, which are produced in space and time. The methodology emphasizes the actors' interdependence and the dissolution of substances in processes and relations (Dépelteau, 2013, 2015).

With this relational perspective in mind, in the next subsection, we resume Dewey and Bentley's (1949) (epistemological) levels of inquiry.

Agency as transaction

Dewey and Bentley (1949) suggest three levels of analysis (i) self-action, (ii) inter-action, and (iii) trans-action (Table 2), to understand better the conceptions of agency:

Table 2

Epistemological level of analysis and conception of agency

Epistemological level of analysis	Self-action	Self-action	Inter-action	Trans-action
Ontological position	Substantialist	Substantialist	Substantialist	Relationist
Human nature	Voluntarism	Determinism	Co-determinism	Transactional (Post-humanist)
Action	Individual are perceived as acting under their own power	Structural forces (social standards) are perceived as acting under their own power	A substance (individual) is compared to (or connected with) another substance (structural force) when seeking causal interconnection	Systems of description and naming are employed to deal with aspects and phases of action, without final attribution to detachable or independent elements.
Agency	Human – Free will and intentional	Structural forces – Conformity of actions	Human – Reflective and conditioned	Distributed
Relation	The individual has free will and intention to establish relationships	The causal power of the structure as an objective phenomenon	A direct causal effect between a structural force and an individual is possible	Expanded conditions of inter-dependency in which the individual is a relational effect and is always present in several transaction fields
Authors	M. Weber T. Parsons.	H. Spencer C. Lévi-Strauss	A. Giddens; M. Archer.	M. Emirbayer.
Example of social theory	Action theory	Structuralism	Structuration theory	Transactional pragmatism / Relational sociology

Source: Elaborated by the authors, based on Dewey and Bentley (1949), Dépelteau (2013), and Burkitt (2016).

Self-action consists of a thought in which actors – or things, according to Dewey and Bentley (1949) – act under their own power. In other words, the actors' (things) intrinsic capacity to act is recognized. The approach to self-action has repercussions on social (and organizational) studies in two diametrically opposed currents: voluntarism and determinism.

5 de 21

*Rev. Ibero-Am. de Est. – RIAE
Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management - IJSM
São Paulo, 21, p. 1-21, e18815, 2022*

![Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia / Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management](logo)

Villar, E. G., & Roglio, K. de D. (2022). Decision entity-ness: taking agency seriously in organizational decision-making studies

In voluntarism, self-action is recognized as the capacity of agency in which individuals (humans) are inherently considered as having intentionality (Passoth, Peuker, & Schillmeier, 2012). Therefore, it is assumed that individuals can consciously create and control their behaviours and intentionally direct them. In the theory of rational choice, for example, the (human) individual is understood as the elementary unit of social life since they have this unique and non-problematic ability to act consciously and intentionally (Burkitt, 2016). Thus, the social change under analysis emerges as a natural result of the individuals' free and intentional action (Emirbayer, 1997). It is a utilitarian and result-oriented action model that presumes a lonely individual acting to achieve their own individual goals. Thus, agency has an individualistic and calculative conception of action and it is the foundation of Western thought (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998).

As for determinism – almost an opposite understanding of voluntarism – individuals are replaced by self-subsistent entities such as, for example, standards, rules, structures, institutions, social systems, which are considered the sole sources of action. The primary assumption in this line of thought is to establish durable and stable entities as a starting point for sociological analysis (Emirbayer, 1997). This determinism invariably presumes that internal/cognitive forces (for example, the human behavior theory) or external (structuralism) act on individuals who conform to these socially established rules, standards, and roles. In other words, the possibility or capacity for human action (until then called agency) is neglected since processes and structures are taken as self-acting entities (Dewey & Bentley, 1949) and responsible for all the dynamism of social life. The action is guided by norms and structures. The individual only acts according to previously established rules, routines, procedures, which are (more or less) fixed in time and space (Dépelteau, 2013; Burkitt, 2016).

In the second level of analysis, Dewey & Bentley (1949) suggest the perspective of *inter-action* (from now on, interaction). At this level of analysis, substances are connected with other substances in search of causal explanations, in which influences can be measured and separated from each other. Thus, substances (individuals, structures) no longer generate their own action (as observed in self-action), but the "action takes place *among* the entities themselves" (Emirbayer, 1997:285). For example, theories based on variance assume that fixed substances (with variable attributes) interact causally to generate measurable/isolable outcomes in cause-effect relations. These outcomes are then identified as attributes of fixed substances (Abbot, 1995).

The word interaction adopted by Dewey and Bentley (1949) illustrates the possibility of a relationship between the structure (macro) and the agent (micro), in which reality is the effect of the interaction between properties of the social structure and properties of the human agency. In social studies, co-deterministic perspectives developed their theorizations based on this assumption. According to this approach, the substances remain fixed and immutable in the interactional process; i.e., one does not depend on the existence of the other. The structural effects are recognized, but the actors are not merely their carriers, as observed in the deterministic self-action (Dépelteau, 2013). The core issue is,

![Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia / Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management]

Villar, E. G., & Roglio, K. de D. (2022). Decision entity-ness: taking agency seriously in organizational decision-making studies

usually, to find the right balance between agency (human) and structure (macro-social forces) or to explain the connection between these two contradictory forces.

Even though presenting their differences, the proposals of Giddens (1984) and Archer (2003), for example, accept the structure as a substance external to the individual, durable and stable in time and space, able to establish paradigmatic standards regarding human action (rules and resources in Giddens or emerging cultural and structural properties in Archer). In this case, the dimension of agency lies in the conditioned and recursive implementation of structures by human actors, in which the agent (reflective human actor) consciously chooses a course of action in circumstances where they could have acted differently (Burkitt, 2016). The actor does not have the freedom and autonomy, as observed in the voluntaristic perspectives of self-action. However, the agency is still a capacity of the individual (human) – for Giddens and Archer, a *reflective individual*. In short, the concept of agency in the perspective of interaction refers to the effects of social action through which individuals (humans) gain the power to resist restrictive and coercive structures, rules, norms, values, traditions, and cultural standards (Passoth, Peuker, Schillmeier, 2012). As a problem, the terms referring to the structure evoke images of a fixed and stable structure and obscure the reality of constant changes and fluidity of social relations (Burkitt, 2018).

In the third and last level of analysis, Dewey and Bentley (1949) suggest the perspective of *trans-action* (from now on, transaction). In this case, the sociological analysis is carried out without attributing aspects and action phases to independent actors (self-action) or to elements or relations interacting independently (interaction). Thus, the previous assumption that human beings interact with social structures is logically and empirically impossible.

From the perspective of transaction, there is no initial or final attribution to elements or other substances presumably detachable or independent (essences or realities). Nor is it possible to isolate these elements' relations (Dewey & Bentley, 1949). Individuals simply negotiate (transact) with other individuals and non-human entities (Dépelteau, 2013: 184).

In the words of Dewey & Bentley (1949: 185):

> [...] human life itself, both severally and collectively, consists of transactions in which human beings partake together with non-human things of the milieu along with other human beings, so that **without this togetherness of human and non-human partakers we could not even stay alive, to say nothing of accomplishing anything**. From birth to death every human being is a *Party*, so that neither he nor anything done or suffered can possibly be understood when it is separated from the fact of participation in an extensive body of transactions – to which a given human being may contribute and which he modifies, but only in virtue of being a partaker in them (emphasis added).

Therefore, this third level of analysis sees relations as naturally dynamic, as ongoing and developing processes. They are not static connections among inert substances (Emirbayer, 1997). Without accepting the possibility of any causal power of social structures, nothing is or can be isolated. Everything is social and interdependent, and nothing simply emerges from an internal capacity (Dépelteau, 2013). Thus, someone/something rarely acts on their own, as they are "pulled, pushed,

7 de 21

Rev. Ibero-Am. de Est. – RIAE
Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management - IJSM
São Paulo, *21*, p. 1-21, e18815, 2022

Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia
Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management

Villar, E. G., & Roglio, K. de D. (2022). Decision entity-ness: taking agency seriously in organizational decision-making studies

harmonized, agitated, coaxed, pleaded by multiple bonds. In this sense, one could say it is always already coauthored" (Pham, 2013: 37).

So, from the perspective of transaction, the action is more generally characterized in events emphasizing its process's duration (Vo & Kelemen, 2014), and it is inseparable from the dynamics of the situation's development (Emirbayer, 1997). The agency emerges from the relationship with others as social relations unfold through time and space (Burkitt, 2016).

The very notion of agency needs to be redefined in relational terms (Emirbayer & Mische 1998; Burkitt 2016, 2018). According to Burkitt (2016:336), "When agency unfolds, it does so within manifold social relations that are contradictory and between interactants who are deeply dialogical, polyphonic, personal and social." Thus, "the agency is not a basic human capacity, not a precondition of the social; it is a relational, ever-changing outcome of its enactment" (Passoth, Peuker, & Schillmeier, 2012: 4).

The agency ceases to be an eminently human condition/capacity, and starts to be understood as distributed, multiple, and mediated. Rammert (2012) argues that actions are composed of many elements, and performing these actions is a distributed process involving several acts and actors. The isolated and single human actor becomes an illusion. This distributed agency is constituted by the distributed activities of multiple heterogeneous actors (human, non-human, hybrid) and, therefore, is opposed to the traditional notion of human agency, formed of the homogeneous material of human actions (Rammert, 2012; Sayes, 2014).

In the words of Barad (2003: 821), "'Humans' are neither pure cause nor pure effect but part of a world in its open-ended becoming." In this sense, the action is always composed (and the effect) of heterogeneous elements. Therefore, it cannot be restricted to human bodies because it also involves mechanisms that are material and symbolic (Rammert, 2012) or non-human (Rudolf, 2012; Sayes, 2014). Thus, there is deep uncertainty about *who*, or more correctly, *what* is acting (Latour, 2005).

In the transactional perspective, the concept of agency is minimal (Sayes, 2014) since its analysis considers any entity (such as a relational and provisional effect) that makes or promotes a difference in another entity or network of relationships. For Sayes (2014:141), "it is not a causal agency in the strictest of senses that is alluded to under the heading of agency."

When qualifying agency as *human*, which is a central element of all humanist social theory, concepts such as independence, contingency, reflectivity, will, free will, imagination, self-awareness, personality, responsibility are subjected to conflation (Passoth, Peuker, & Schillmeier, 2012). However, in a relational and distributed perspective, agency is decoupled from criteria of subjectivity, intentionality, and free will. In a relational analysis, it makes no sense to consider agency as an attribute of something or someone (Sayes, 2014). "Agency is the enactment of iterative changes to particular practices through the dynamics of intra-activity" (Barad, 2003:827), i.e., it is the effect of the relation.

The subsections above repositioned agency by using Dewey and Bentley's (1949) levels of analysis and offered an in-depth onto-epistemological perspective of relational sociology (Emirbayer,

Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia
Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management

Villar, E. G., & Roglio, K. de D. (2022). Decision entity-ness: taking agency seriously in
organizational decision-making studies

1997, Dépelteau, 2018a). Based on these discussions, we will problematize (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011), in the next subsection, the different decision theories in organizational studies.

Action and decision in studies on organizational decision-making process

It is crucial to clarify how several decision theories in organizational studies differently understand decision and action. In this sense, even if each theory has robust literature with internal divergences and discussions, Table 3 aims to emphasize the main differences in their onto-epistemological assumptions regarding action and decision.

Table 3

Onto-epistemological assumptions of organizational decision-making studies

	(I) Rational choice theory	**(II) Organizational behavior theory**	**(III) Interpretative model**	**(IV) Dialectical**
Epistemological level of analysis	Self-action	Self-action	Inter-action	Inter-action
Ontological Position	Substantialist	Substantialist	Substantialist	Substantialist
Human nature	Voluntaristic	Deterministic	Deterministic	Co-deterministic
Concept of decision	Decisions result from a process of intentional selection carried out by decision-makers	Decisions result from organizational behavior standards	Decisions are retrospective rationalizations of previous actions (explanatory principles) needed to build individual and collective sense	Decision as an element of discourse, subjected to strategic practice
Action	Implementation (after decision)	Standard operational procedures – Following guidelines	Reflection of socio-cognitive schemes	Reflexive activities
Participants	Rational decision-maker	Followers of social standards	Individual and/or collective comprehension	Human agents who follow practices
Process logic	Consequentialist	Appropriation	Plausibility (maintenance of a stable reality)	Mobilization and legitimacy
Theoretical basis	Simon (1965)	Cyert & March (1963)	Weick (1969)	Berger and Luckmann (1966) Giddens (1984)
Example in Organizational decision-making process	Langley et al. (1995)	March (1994, 1997).	Ericson (2010)	Hendry (2000)

Source: Elaborated by the authors, based on the classification presented in Table 2.

In the rational choice theory (I), the elementary and primary unit is the individual and voluntary human action. The actor (individual, group, or organization) is active. They behave intentionally, autonomously, independently, constantly willing, and able to make decisions in their lives, acting under

9 de 21

Rev. Ibero-Am. de Est. – RIAE
Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management - IJSM
São Paulo, *21*, p. 1-21, e18815, 2022

Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia
Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management

Villar, E. G., & Roglio, K. de D. (2022). Decision entity-ness: taking agency seriously in organizational decision-making studies

their own power and demonstrating self-action capacity (Dewey & Bentley, 1949). Therefore, the action is deliberately performed according to strategic situations that the actor (individual or organization) faces (Nayak & Chia, 2011), and after a more or less direct path between problems and implemented choices (Langley et al ., 1995).

In this theoretical perspective, the decision is given. It is non-problematic and stable, i.e., the elements that involve the decision are empirically and objectively observable. Despite the breadth of studies in the area, some of its common assumptions are: (i) researchers can realistically describe the process of making choices as discrete events defined around problems, objectives, and choices, (ii) decisions are ontologically accurate, as they are intentionally constructed (they exist, can be implemented, and are basic tools of organizational activity), (iii) researchers need to identify a global logic in the decision-making process – or several parallel ones – based on the idea that there is a universal form of rationality (Mintzberg, Raisinghani & Theoret, 1976; Langley et al., 1995; Nutt, 2011).

Cabantous and Gond (2011) highlight the strength of the rational choice theory on reality, demonstrating that even approaches that sought to challenge the rational actor model keep the deepest assumptions about decisions, processes, and reality unchanged – despite problematizing the proposal of a direct path between problem and choice and the uniqueness of interests and objectives (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972). In other words, the decision-making process is essentially taken for granted, and the possibility of explaining the object under investigation is excluded from the research projects.

In the second perspective (II), the theory of organizational behavior (Cyert & March, 1963), the assumption of self-action also permeates social thinking. Scholars who follow this perspective (such as neofunctionalists, structuralists, and systems theorists) suggest, instead of autonomous individuals, reified macro substances (such as societies, cultures, social systems) as exclusive sources of action. As a basic assumption, these durable and coherent external entities are the legitimate starting points for action, that is, they are deterministic. Both processes and structures are taken as self-acting entities, which are responsible for all the dynamism of social life. The action is guided by norms (March, 1988), as the individual only acts following rules, routines, and procedures previously established and (more or less) fixed in time and space.

Allison (1971) carried out a classic example of the empirical use of this approach (i.e. theory of organizational behavior) in decision-making studies when analyzing the Cuban Missile Crisis. The author described the behavior of the US government in the face of the impasse attributing this behavior to the established standards of the various departments of the American government. For Allison, "government leaders can substantially disrupt, but rarely precisely control, the specific behavior of these organizations" (Allison & Zelikow, 1999:143). Instead of conscious, rational, and clearly intended individuals (as in the rational choice theory), the action is the result of the coordination of procedures, operating standards, rules of conduct, corporate programs, and previously stabilized routines.

As assumptions, we have that (i) organizations are groups of individuals that regularly act with the structure established, (ii) existing organizations and their well-defined procedures and routines

Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia
Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management

Villar, E. G., & Roglio, K. de D. (2022). Decision entity-ness: taking agency seriously in
organizational decision-making studies

restrict human behavior, (iii) organizational culture shapes the behavior of individuals within the organization so that they conform to existing formal and informal norms; (iv) decisions are made by recognizing the situation and matching it with familiar patterns of existing rules and routines; (v) decisions, in an objective and non-problematic manner, have a structuring nature, as they provide standards of conduct for future actions (March 1988; 1994; Cohen, 2007).

We emphasize that, although they seem diametrically opposed, the approaches of rational choice and organizational behavior illustrate the concreteness of the substantialist perspective that permeates Western thought (Emirbayer, 1997; Nayak & Chia, 2011). These preformed substances (in different types) constitute the fundamental unit and starting point of any action. The process is reduced to static conditions, so it is substantiated for people who were raised with this language. By virtue, the decision becomes a self-explanatory term, used to label, and stabilize a wide variety of stories and relations.

As an alternative to analyses based on perspectives I and II, the interpretative model – perspective III – was suggested to deconstruct decision ontologies (Chia, 1994). In this case, the decision-making process is considered a series of predefined acts that, interconnectedly, work to facilitate sensemaking in the flow of human experiences (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obsfeldt, 2005, Balogun, Pye, & Hodgkinson, 2008). In the interpretative model of the decision-making process, the actor connects the momentary with the past experience finding clues to understanding what is happening in the present (Weick, 1995). Therefore, the idea of retrospect plays an important role, as the meaning is constructed based on previous actions and situations that have already happened (Ericson, 2010).

Finally, in the dialectic perspective (IV), Hendry (2000) suggests that the decision is an element of the discourse, operating at the structural level of social reproduction and at the instrumental level as intentional communication. It constitutes the means by which we start, authorize, and acknowledge the choices. This approach is closely related to Berger and Luckmann's (1966) proposal on the social construction of reality. Thus, both decisions and the reasons for decisions are seen as fluid and socially constructed. There is no correct, reified rational decision. Even taking the decision-making process to these prospective abstractions (interpretation; discourse), the decision is still individualized in a substance ontology, and, sometimes, subordinated to other "processes".

In this approach (IV), the entities remain fixed and immutable in the interaction process, which means that one is independent of the existence of the other. In this sense, the conceptions of organizations are combined and incorporated in larger social contexts and recent developments in the study of individual cognition (Gavetti, Levinthal, & Ocasio, 2007). The notion of organization is focused on the dialectic or interplay between agency and structure (Poole, Seibold, & McPhee, 1985; Calabretta, Gemser, & Wijnberg, 2016). Actors, as agents, may influence and alter the structures of which they are a part through intentional actions. They are non-reflective parts of a structure, but (as agents) also act reflectively to influence the structure they are part of (Denis, Dompierre, Langley, & Rouleau, 2011; Merkus, De Heer, & Veenswijk, 2014).

The analysis of these four theoretical perspectives of the decision-making process (I to IV) showed that they did not reach the level of analysis Dewey and Bentley (1949) called *trans-action*. In this sense, we believe that the development of a transactional-relational perspective of the decision can (i) give voice to elements hitherto silenced in previous analyses of decision-making processes (e.g., artifacts, theories, hybrid elements), (ii) find explanations that respect the spatio-temporal dimensions of the processes, without reducing or excluding them, and (iii) give centrality to the decision as a relational element that differentiates organizations from other social systems (Ahrne, Brunsson, & Seidl, 2016), without adopting the assumptions of previous organizational decision-making theories.

Decision entity-ness: a transactional approach

In the study of decision-making in a transactional approach[3], we start from the problematization of its most basic elements (i) the decision-maker, (ii) the decision, (iii) the decision-making process. In Table 4, we present the onto-epistemological assumption of our proposal.

Table 4

Onto-epistemological assumptions of decision entity-ness

	Decision Entity-ness
Epistemological level of inquiry	Trans-action
Ontological Position	Relational
Human nature	Distributed (Mediated)
Concept of decision	Decisions are relational entities forged in a process of mediation of multiple actors distributed in spatially and temporally dispersed trajectories. In addition, they also participate and transform the relational network that brought them into being.
Action	Ongoing experiences
Participants	Heterogeneous (Human, Non-human, hybrids)
Process logic	Endless transformation in open-and-close movements
Theoretical basis	Dewey and Bentley (1949), Emirbayer (1997), Dépelteau, (2018a).

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Based on the distributed agency (Rammert, 2012), this endeavor encompasses non-human actors such as artifacts, texts, and theories in the analysis (Cabantous & Gond, 2011). Readers who are not used to this perspective – from the ontological point of view – are often subject to two misunderstandings or errors of interpretation. First, they may transfer human agency capacity (reflective, intentional) to

---

[3] We kept Dewey and Bentley's *trans-action* label but considering its further development in Processual-Relational Sociology (Dépelteau, 2018d, Lorino, 2020, Morgner, 2020).

12 de 21

Rev. Ibero-Am. de Est. – RIAE
Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management - IJSM
São Paulo, *21*, p. 1-21, e18815, 2022

non-human actors. Second, they may think we are saying that non-human things (machines, tools), by themselves, can act on people, and therefore, making decisions.

From a transactional perspective, we cannot rely on stable identities allocated to humans or non-humans. With the primacy of the relation, there is enormous uncertainty about *who*, or even, *what* is acting (Sayes, 2014). The notion of a single decision-maker, whether an individual, group, or organization, may be expanded. It may be represented by a network of relations that mediate/transact the continuous process of the organizational doing. Thus, thinking, acting, deciding are attributes no longer given to human beings, but, on the contrary, they are generated in networks that cross and branch between multiple and heterogeneous actors.

The decision-maker (the individual – human – of the theories of substantial ontology) would be only one element of the network, although it may appear as the single element. As a rule, this decision-maker is someone who, relationally, takes the voice and speaks on behalf of a specific relational system (Callon, 1986). This relational look prevents jumping to general conclusions that assume that humans are necessarily endowed with the qualities of a subject voluntarily free, autonomous, and active in dealing with consequences.

In the transactional perspective, since no substance is discrete or clearly separated from its relational context, we can state that the action is equally mediated by all elements of the network. From a flat ontology, the social reality is produced by relations between relations (Dépelteau, 2018d). So, these elements do not have well-established borders; they are sets of relationships and, therefore, coexist and coproduce in equality (Lorino, 2020).

In this sense, like any other social phenomenon with relative stability, a decision is not made of relations. The decision has no relation; it is, ontologically speaking, a relation (Donati, 2011). However, when it enters its causal relation system (transactional), the decision can be considered a particle or entity (White, 1992; Abbott, 1996), therefore supporting our suggestion of decision entity-ness. Entity-ness is not related to solidity or objectivity but sustainability and the potential for mediated participation. That is, despite the relational origin (effect) and its fragile and provisional condition, the decision as an entity makes a difference as quasi-subjects or quasi-objects (Krarup & Blok, 2011). These quasi-subjects/objects transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning and the elements they should carry (Latour, 2005).

Abbott (1996:836) suggests that the element that "matters" within a relational process or space can become an entity. However, the element has to present particular characteristics: (i) coherence, or internal regularity to allow recurrence, and (ii) causal authority, i.e., to be independent as a place of causality, with the capacity (through the relationships that support it) to create an effect on the rest of the social process that goes beyond its own effects. In this sense, the coherence of the decision, as an entity, comes from being a self-explanatory and objectively accepted term in Western organizational society (Cabantous, Gond, & Johnson-Cramer, 2010). Its causal authority consists of having the capacity

to erase the trajectories and relations that originated the decision while representing these same trajectories and relations in a non-problematic way (Villar, Roglio & Rese, 2020).

White (1992) suggests that some transactional sets can be considered entities, but not all. For the author, an entity is any source of non-intrinsic action and cannot be explained by bio-physical regularities, to which observers can attribute meaning. The term comes close to the idea of discursive non-humans employed in relational sociology by Rudolf (2012:54), to whom "discursive non-humans are involved in sense-making processes in the medium of meaning." In this sense, each so-called entity is, ontologically speaking, "a social field and a process of its own", evolving though a chain of transactions (Dépelteau, 2018d:513).

In an extended space-time perspective, the element produced by a heterogeneous network of relations (i.e., "decision X") affects this same network. In other words, the element is performative; it acts on the means that brought it into being (Lorino, 2018). By suggesting decision entity-ness, we can again bring the phenomenon of decision to the center of organizational studies, differentiating organizations from other social systems (Ahrne, Brunsson, & Seidl, 2016), without reifying the phenomenon or excluding it, and without taking for granted the assumptions of previous theories.

The concept of decision entity-ness reveals three philosophical principles: (i) relationality, (ii) processuality, and (iii) performativity. According to Vandenberghe (2018:47), "what appears as a solid particle is also a wave." Like a wave, reality is an open and continuous process that can be stabilized in things and beings only partially, momentarily, and precariously. And then, we integrate the particle (*thing-ness*) into space and time.

Table 5 presents the principles when proposing the concept of decision entity-ness:

Table 5

Principles of decision entity-ness

Principles	Assumption	Description
Relationality	*Decision-in-relation*	Decision as an entity is the result of the relationships of which it is part. It does not exist independently and before any relation and has no internal capacity (even if it appears to have), as its effects are defined relationally.
Processuality	*Decision-in-view*	Decision is a precarious and provisory effect of relations, in an endless open-and-close movement. Instead of fixed and absolute times, represented by arrows, the action is a temporally incorporated process.
Performativity	*Decision-in-the-making*	Decision as a relational entity affects the network once it participates on the relationships that brought it into being. Decision is not an "empty" element, once it also makes a difference (it matters) and transforms through relations the ongoing organizational reality.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Based on the assumption of relationality, the idea of **decision-in-relation** allows us to understand the decision as a relational entity. In other words, the focus becomes the relationships that brought it into being and sustained it, as well as its participation in the relational plot. Therefore, there

Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia
Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management

Villar, E. G., & Roglio, K. de D. (2022). Decision entity-ness: taking agency seriously in organizational decision-making studies

is no previous, objective, and stable existence of any decision (or whatever element) that lasts outside the relational situation (Lorino, 2018). The relation is the given phenomenon, it is the raw material (Morgner, 2020), and therefore, the unit of analysis starts from the relations, and "the making of a decision" consists in the transformation of this relationship.

We can illustrate this assumption with the well-known example about the hunter, the hunted and the hunting presented by Dewey and Bentley (1949). The authors suggested that "No one would be able successfully to speak of the hunter and the hunted as isolated with respect to hunting" (Dewey & Bentley, 1949:141). Similarly, the decision must be analysed in its social and situated use (Abend, 2018). Thus, there are no decision-makers without the participation in a decision process and without the relation to something to be decided. Besides, a decision(-in-relation) cannot be reduced or isolated. Just as hunting has its history, its weapons and technologies, its procedures (Dewey & Bentley, 1949); "the made decision" carries (and is carried by) other relational entities labelled as theories, tools, texts, procedures, ceremonies, etc., which are also connected and intertwined in spatio-temporally distributed relations. As Rorty (1999:53) explains, "Everything that can serve as the term of relation can be dissolved into another set of relations, and so on for ever".

Regarding the second assumption - **decision-in-view** -, the processuality is related to the permanent transformation of participating relationships and entities, without a final attribution to fixed-elements. The decision is a precarious and provisory effect of relations, not an external social thing. Although the flux of becoming never goes away, past experiences and future perspectives need to be cut from the continuum of experience to become relational elements of the present experience (Chia, 1994, Hernes, 2014). It is a permanent open-and-close movement (Lorino, 2018), once even limited and fragile convergences are achieved to keep communication and cooperation, it opens new possibilities of differentiation. The decision produces the ground for new realities that would not have emerged without the decision. Through fixing one meaning, multiple new possible meanings can build on this fixation thereby opening up meaning again, endlessly.

In decision theories (see Table 3), space and time are treated as an absolute, fixed, or formal framework and, at times, apart from the process itself. The perfect evidence of the exclusion of space and immobilization of time in well-defined stages can be observed on the substantialist decision-making perspectives. As a rule of thumb, the decision-maker starts from a problem (which is well-known), establishes a goal (eminently clear), and creates multiple alternatives (paved paths) to achieve her/his planned goal. Then, the decision-maker chooses the alternative that is likely to maximize or satisfy results and achieve the goals, which will later be implemented in a non-problematic way. In the transactional perspective, the decision as an unfinished and undefined process cannot be taken as a beginning or an end, a starting point or a result, as it is a relational flow (Dawson, 2014; Cabantous & Sergi, 2018).

Using Latour's (2012) example, the best proof that the decision is a highly peculiar entity in the organizational context is that we meet in a specific room to decide how to bring that organization to time

t + 1. Usually, this is not done "for stones, for mugs and for mats…" (Latour, 2012:166). There is a large gap between time t-1 (past), time t (the reference point of the present), and time t+1 (tomorrow) that come together to take the organization a step further, beyond the gap. The organization does not go by itself; it does not jump the space-time interval by the force of its own inertia. "Contrary to celestial bodies, there is no inertial at all in an organization. You stop carrying it on: it drops dead." (Latour, 2012:166, emphasis added). In this sense, the decision is one of the entity-ness elements of transport, as it carries meaning in time and space together with the network of relations that gave rise to it (the whole set of actors that gave life to the meeting in this example).

In the third assumption, we explore the performativity as a philosophical dimension of analysis. So**, decisions are *in-the-making* as resources and not sources of organizational action (Lorino, 2018). Their performativity comes from the view that the situated decision transforms the action by enacting meanings (mediating) and it is itself transformed in the process (mediated).

Simply put, the decision, like any human or non-human element, also participates in the ongoing production of reality. Thus, the assumption that the decision comes before or after the action is sterile and limiting since it also implies the action. In a performative way, the decision has a non-intrinsic action power on the individuals, artifacts, and routines that are organized around them. We stress once again that it is necessary to decouple the precepts of intentionality, reflectivity, rationality from the concept of agency to understand the distributed agency. In this perspective, action is an effect of the multiple relational. The agency capacity comes from this relational process in which humans and non-humans are interwoven and relatively committed.

Thus, the agency's explanation could not occur without including the entire relational arrangement in the analysis (Burkitt, 2018). The decision as a relational entity that feeds and is fed by a heterogeneous network – that maintains such decision for more or less time – cannot be just a product, a result. In a flat and symmetrical ontology, the decision (entity) is on an equal footing with humans and non-humans, who, through mediation movements, "produced" and sustain this entity. Thus, the decision itself (quasi-objective entity) has an agency capacity (relative and relational) over the network. The decision, inserted in the system of relations, participates in the process of mediated production of the action.

Final considerations

In this theoretical paper, we explored in-depth the concept of agency to elaborate an understanding of decision as a relational element *of action*, and *in action* differentiating our proposal from prospective and retrospective approaches to decision and decision-action dualism. We used the relational sociology and the analytical perspective of transaction to introduce the concept of decision entity-ness, which is based on the principles of relationality, processuality, and performativity.

16 de 21

Rev. Ibero-Am. de Est. – RIAE
Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management - IJSM
São Paulo, *21*, p. 1-21, e18815, 2022

This study advances in relation to theories of the organizational decision-making process by explaining action beyond an exclusively human capacity. We present a transactional concept (in onto-epistemological terms), which differs from voluntaristic, deterministic, and co-deterministic proposals in the field. Also, in line with the proposal to bring the element of decision back to the center of sociological (Abend, 2018) and organizational (Ahrne, Brunsson, & Seidl, 2016) studies, the decision entity-ness establishes a theoretical-analytical framework, which allows to understand theoretically and methodologically the participation of the phenomenon in the organizational reality, without objectifying or reifying it.

References

Abbott, A. (1995) Things of Boundaries. *Social Research,* 62(4), 857–82. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40971127

Abend, G. (2018). Outline of a sociology of decisionism. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 69(2), 237-264. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12320

Ahrne, G., Brunsson, N., & Seidl, D. (2016). Resurrecting organization by going beyond organizations. *European Management Journal*, 34 (2), 93-101. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2016.02.003

Allison, G. T. (1971). *Essence of Decision* – explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis. Harper Collins Publishers.

Allison, G. T., & Zelikow, P. (1999). *Essence of decision:* Explaining the Cuban missile crisis (extended version). New York: Longman Publishing.

Alvesson, M., & Sandberg, J. (2011). Generating research questions through problematization. *Academy of Management Review*, 36(2), 247-271. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5465/AMR.2011.59330882

Archer, M. S. (2000). *Being Human*: The Problem of Agency. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Archer M. S. (2003). *Structure, Agency and the Internal Conversation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Balogun, J., Pye, A., & Hodgkinson, G. P. (2008). Cognitively skilled organizational decision making: making sense of deciding. In Hodgkinson, G. P., & Starbuck, W. H. (Eds.) *The Oxford handbook of organizational decision making*. Oxford University Press, USA.

Barad, K. (2003). Posthumanist performativity: Toward an understanding of how matter comes to matter. *Signs*, 28(3), 801-831. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1086/345321

Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality*: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge. Penguin, UK.

Brunsson, N. (1982). The irrationality of action and action rationality: decisions, ideologies and organizational actions. *Journal of Management Studies*, 19(1), 29-44. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.1982.tb00058.x

Brunsson, N. (2007). *The consequences of decision-making*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Burkitt, I. (2016). Relational agency: Relational sociology, agency and interaction. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 19(3), 322-339. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431015591426

Burkitt, I. (2018). Relational Agency. In F. Dépelteau (Ed.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Relational Sociology* (pp. 523-538). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cabantous, L., & Gond, J. P. (2011). Rational decision making as performative praxis: explaining rationality's éternel retour. *Organization Science*, 22(3), 573-586. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1100.0534

Cabantous, L., Gond, J. P., & Johnson-Cramer, M. (2010). Decision theory as practice: Crafting rationality in organizations. *Organization Studies,* 31(11), 1531-1566. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840610380804

Cabantous, L., & Sergi, V. (2018). Seeing the potentialities at the intersection: A reflection on performativity and processuality mindsets. *M@n@gement*, 21(4), 1229-1243. https://www.cairn.info/revue-management-2018-4-page-1229.htm

Calabretta, G., Gemser, G., & Wijnberg, N. M. (2016). The Interplay between Intuition and Rationality in Strategic Decision Making: A Paradox Perspective. *Organization Studies*, 38(3-4), 365-401. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840616655483

Callon, M. (1986). Some elements of a sociology of translation: domestication of the scallops and the fishermen of St Brieuc Bay. *The Sociological Review*, 32(S1), 196-233. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.1984.tb00113.x

Callon, M., & Law, J. (1995). Agency and the hybrid collectif. *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 94 (2), 481-507. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822382720-006

Chia, R. (1994). The concept of decision: A deconstructive analysis. *Journal of Management Studies*, 31(6), 781-806. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.1994.tb00639.x

Cyert, R. M., & March, J. G. (1963). *A behavioral theory of the firm*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 2.
Cohen, M. D., March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (1972). A garbage can model of organizational choice. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 17 (1), p. 1-25. DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/2392088

Dawson, P. (2014). Reflections: on time, temporality and change in organizations. *Journal of Change Management,* 14(3), 285-308. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/14697017.2014.886870

Denis, J. L., Dompierre, G., Langley, A., & Rouleau, L. (2011). Escalating indecision: Between reification and strategic ambiguity. *Organization Science,* 22(1), 225-244. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1090.0501

Dépelteau, F. (2013). What Is the Direction of the 'Relational Turn'?. In: C. Powell & F. Dépelteau (Ed.). *Conceptualizing Relational Sociology*: Ontological and Theoretical Issues, Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 163-185.

Dépelteau, F. (2015). Relational sociology, pragmatism, transactions and social fields. *International Review of Sociology*, 25(1), 45-64. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/03906701.2014.997966

Dépelteau, F. (Ed.), (2018a) The Palgrave Handbook of Relational Sociology. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. 686 pp.

18 de 21

Rev. Ibero-Am. de Est. – RIAE
Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management - IJSM
São Paulo, *21*, p. 1-21, e18815, 2022

Dépelteau, F. (2018b). Relational Thinking in Sociology: Relevance, Concurrence and Dissonance. In F. Dépelteau (Ed.), The Palgrave Handbook of Relational Sociology (pp. 3–33). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Dépelteau, F. (2018c). The Promises of the Relational Turn in Sociology. In F. Dépelteau (Ed.), The Palgrave Handbook of Relational Sociology (pp. I - XXI). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Dépelteau, F. (2018d). From the concept of 'trans-action' to a process-relational sociology. In Dépelteau, F. (Ed.). (2018). The Palgrave handbook of relational sociology London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 499-519).

Dewey, J., & A. Bentley (1949) *Knowing and the Known*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Donati, P. (2011). *Relational sociology*: a new paradigm for the social sciences. London: Routledge.

Elias, N. (1978). *What Is Sociology?* New York: Columbia University Press.

Emirbayer, M. (1997). Manifesto for a relational sociology. *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(2), 281-317. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1086/231209

Emirbayer, M., & Mische, A. (1998). What is agency? *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(4), 962-1023. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1086/231294

Ericson, M. (2010). Towards a sensed decision-making approach: From déjà vu to vu jàdé. *Management Decision*, 48(1), 132 – 155. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1108/00251741011014490

Gavetti, G., Levinthal, D., & Ocasio, W. (2007). Perspective—Neo-Carnegie: The Carnegie school's past, present, and reconstructing for the future. *Organization Science*, 18(3), 523-536. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1070.0277

Giddens A (1984) *The Constitution of Society*: Outline of the Theory of Structuration. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hendry, J. (2000). Strategic decision making, discourse, and strategy as social practice. *Journal of Management Studies,* 37(7), 955-978. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.00212

Krarup, T. M., & Blok, A. (2011). Unfolding the social: quasi-actants, virtual theory, and the new empiricism of Bruno Latour. *The Sociological Review*, 59(1), 42-63. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2010.01991.x

Langley, A., Mintzberg, H., Pitcher, P., Posada, E., & Saint-Macary, J. (1995). Opening Up Decision Making: the view from the black stool. *Organization Science,* 6(3), 260-279. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.6.3.260

Laroche, H. (1995). From decision to action in organizations: Decision-making as a social representation. *Organization Science,* 6(1), 62-75. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.6.1.62

Laroche, H. (2014). La décision comme production d'ordre dans les organisations. *Connexions*, 1, 11-18. https://www.cairn.info/journal-connexions-2014-1-page-11.htm

Latour, B. (1988). *The pasteurization of France*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the social*: An introduction to actor-network-theory. Oxford University Press.

Latour, B. (2012). "What's the story?": Organizing as a mode of existence. In Passoth, J., Peuker, B., & M. Schillmeier. (Eds.). *Agency without Actors?* New Approaches to Collective Action. London: Routledge, pp. 163-177.

Lorino, P. (2018). *Pragmatism and organization studies*. Oxford University Press. 347 pp.

Lorino, P. (2020). Trans-Action: A Processual and Relational Approach to Organizations. In Morgner, C. *John Dewey and the Notion of Trans-action* (pp. 83-109). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Maitlis, S., & Ozcelik, H. (2004). Toxic decision processes: A study of emotion and organizational decision making. *Organization Science,* 15(4), 375-393. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1040.0070

March J. G. (1988). *Decisions and organizations*. Oxford: Brackwell.

March, J. G. (1994). *Primer on decision making*: How decisions happen. New York: Free Press.

March, J. G. (1997). Understanding how decisions happen in organizations. In: Shapira, Z. (Ed.). *Organizational decision making*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 9-32.

Merkus, S., De Heer, J., & Veenswijk, M. (2014). Decision-making as performative struggle: Strategic political-executive practices influencing the actualization of an infrastructural development. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, 3(2), 224-245. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1108/JOE-12-2012-0058

Mintzberg, H., Raisinghani, D., & Theoret, A. (1976). The structure of 'unstructured' decision processes. *Administrative Science Quarterly,* 21 (2), 246-275. DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/2392045

Mintzberg, H. & Waters, J. (1990). Studying deciding: An exchange of views between Mintzberg and Waters, Pettigrew, and Butler. *Organization Studies*, 11(1), 1-6. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/017084069001100101

Morgner, C. (2020). Reinventing Social Relations and Processes: John Dewey and Trans-Actions. In Morgner, C. *John Dewey and the Notion of Trans-action.* Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, pp. 1-30.

Nayak, A., & Chia, R. (2011). Thinking becoming and emergence: process philosophy and organization studies. In: Tsoukas, H.; & Chia, R (Ed.). *Philosophy and Organization Theory* (Research in the Sociology of Organizations, v. 32). London: Emerald Group Publishing Limited. 281 – 309.

Nutt, P. (2011). Making Decision-Making Research Matter: some issues and remedies. *Management Research Review*, 34 (1), 5-16. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1108/01409171111096441

Passoth, J., Peuker, B., & Schillmeier, M. (Eds.). (2012). Introduction. In Passoth, J., Peuker, B., & M. Schillmeier. (Eds.). *Agency without Actors?* New Approaches to Collective Action. London: Routledge, pp. 1-11.

Pham, Q.N. (2013). Enduring bonds: politics and life outside freedom as autonomy. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 38(1), 29–48. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0304375412465676

Poole, M. S., Seibold, D. R., & McPhee, R. D. (1985). Group decision-making as a structurational process. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 71(1), 74-102. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/00335638509383719

Rammert, W. (2012). Distributed agency and advanced technology: or how to analyze constellations of collective inter-agency. In Passoth, J., Peuker, B., & M. Schillmeier. (Eds.). *Agency without Actors?* New Approaches to Collective Action. London: Routledge, pp. 89-112.

Rorty R. (1999). *Philosophy and Social Hope*. Penguin Books. 288 pp.

Rudolf, F. (2012). Questioning the human/non-human distinction. In Passoth, J., Peuker, B., & M. Schillmeier. (Eds.). *Agency without Actors?* New Approaches to Collective Action. London: Routledge, pp. 54-66.

Sayes, E. (2014). Actor–Network Theory and methodology: Just what does it mean to say that nonhumans have agency?. *Social Studies of Science,* 44(1), 134-149. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312713511867

Simon, H. A. (1965). *Administrative behavior* . New York: Free Press.

Tsoukas, H. (2010) Strategic decision making and knowledge: a Heideggerian Approach. In: Nutt, P. C. & Wilson, D. C. *Handbook of Decision Making*. United Kingdom: Wiley, 2010.

Tsoukas, H. (2017). Don't simplify, complexify: from disjunctive to conjunctive theorizing in organization and management studies. *Journal of Management Studies,* 54 (2), 132-153. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12219

Vandenberghe, F. The Relation as Magical Operator: Overcoming the Divide Between Relational and Processual Sociology. In F. Dépelteau (Ed.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Relational Sociology* (pp. 35-57). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Villar, E. G.; Rese, N.; Roglio, K. D. (2020). (Trans)Formative Trajectories of Decisions: An Analysis from The Translation Perspective. *BASE - Revista de Administração e Contabilidade da Unisinos,* 17 (3), 361-391. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4013/base.2020.173.01

Vo, L. C., & Kelemen, M. (2014). John Dewey (1859–1952). In Helin, J., Hernes, T., Hjorth, D., & Holt, R. (Eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Process Philosophy and Organization Studies*. Oxford University Press.

Weick, K. E. (1969) *The social psychology of organizing*., Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations* (v. 3). Sage.

Weick, K. E., Sutcliffe, K. M., & Obsfeldt, D. (2005). Organizing and the process of sensemaking, *Organization Science*, 16 (4), 409-421. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1050.0133

White, H. C. (1992). *Identity and Control*: A Structural Theory of Social Action. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

21 de 21

Rev. Ibero-Am. de Est. – RIAE
Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management - IJSM
São Paulo, *21*, p. 1-21, e18815, 2022