

Models of Value Construction: A Culturalist Perspective



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Submitted: 6/6/2025

Accepted: 4/7/2025

Abstract

Research on organisational culture has mostly been based on two main types of interpretative models: a normative-typological paradigm that identified universalistic cultural types (Cameron & Quinn, 2006; Schein, 1985), and a symbolic-interpretative paradigm based on the analysis of discursive processes and sensemaking (Weick, 1995). However, both perspectives have limitations when it comes to capturing the dynamic, affective and situated nature of culture in organisational contexts. To address these limitations, this paper proposes a theoretical processual model inspired by Semiotic Cultural Psychology Theory (SCPT; Salvatore *et al.*, 2019a; 2019b) and the local culture perspective (Carli & Panicia, 1999). This model conceives of organisations as symbolic fields that shape relationships between actors, institutional roles, and discursive devices. At the heart of this discussion lies the paradigm of Models of Value Construction (MVCs), understood as latent configurations of meaning based on affective polarities and social representations that guide action in organisational contexts. This paper also proposes empirical developments of the model to offer tools for analysing organisational culture as a situated, non-standardisable artefact that generates well-being or maladjustment depending on the congruence between the representations of organisational actors and institutional goals, offering a useful framework for intervention in complex organisational contexts.

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Rivista di Psicologia Clinica (ISSNe 1828-9363), n. 2/2025

DOI: 10.3280/rpc2-2025oa20333

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Keywords: Culture, organization, value construction, sensemaking, affective meaning.

Beyond Taxonomy: Towards Dynamic and Situated Models of Organisational Culture

In the extensive landscape of studies on the functioning of organisations, the concept of culture plays a central role in understanding the processes that determine the identity of organisations themselves and their transformations. This construct of organisational culture encompasses many aspects, including the system of norms and values on which it is based, the discursive practices that regulate it, and the shared representations that emerge from relationships. In observing and understanding organisational change, considering all these aspects plays a strategic role. There are many ways in which organisational functioning and change have been studied; one of the most renowned contributions is the *Competing Values Framework* (Cameron & Quinn, 2006), originally proposed by Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983), which maps organisational culture along two axes: internal/external and flexibility/control orientation. These axes represent value polarities, and the intersection of these axes determines the semantic plane on which the different cultural preferences of an organisation are located. Regarding the initial axis, when polarity is the internal focus, values are attributed to the well-being of members and the internal cohesion of an organisation based on integration. Conversely, the external focus indicates a tension towards the external environment and a proactive stance on the part of the organisation towards subjects or contexts that are considered relevant. The second axis pertains to the mode of regulation, and at one extreme, involves a flexibility-oriented approach that promotes adaptive and transformative logic; at the other extreme, there is an orientation towards stability with the implementation of standardised processes and predictable performance.

Four models of organisational culture emerge from the intersection of these two axes (Cameron & Quinn, 2006): the first model is called *Clan Oriented*, is characterized by internal focus and flexibility, and aims to promote an environment of cooperation and cohesion based on a sense of belonging and emotional involvement; in a similar

model, the organisation is seen as a family and leadership is oriented towards personal development through the exercise of empathy. The second model is defined as *Adhocracy Oriented*, it is an approach characterised by extreme openness to change, which translates into a propensity to innovate but also to take risks; it is therefore a model suitable for highly turbulent contexts, where flexibility and experimentation are indispensable resources. The third model is defined as *Marketing Oriented* and is also outward-looking, characterised by strong competitiveness and a focus on performance. In this case, the focus of the organisation is on achieving results, efficiency standards and market objectives. Leadership is execution-oriented and directive. Finally, we find the *Hierarchical Oriented* model, which is characterised by control and adherence to formal rules. Leadership in this case is administrative, exercised within codified structures and regulated by bureaucratic principles. This model is a typological interpretation of organisational culture.

Alongside this, we also find the approach proposed by Chatman *et al.* (2014), which identifies three fundamental aspects within culture: the *normative content*, which consists of specific values shared by its members; the *cultural consensus*, which refers to the degree of agreement that members reach around the norms; and the *normative intensity*, which indicates how strongly the norms are supported and reinforced within the organisation. This model therefore emphasises the normative dimension and defines an organisation according to the degree of consensus that is built around this dimension. The transformative potential of an organisation is determined by the content of its norms, and if these are oriented towards adaptation and learning, then creative behaviours can be generated that are more effective in contexts of high uncertainty. The consideration of uncertainty levels in contexts is pertinent, as evidenced by numerous studies that underscore the intrinsic interconnectedness between the human need for meaning and the pursuit of reducing uncertainty through narrative construction (De Luca Picione & Fortuna, 2025; Gamsakhurdia, 2020).

The models considered here (Cameron & Quinn, 2006; Chatman *et al.*, 2014), which outline the types and normative structures of organisational cultures, have operated according to a top-down logic, classifying organisations into predefined types based on universalistic and normative assumptions. The approaches of Cameron & Quinn (2006)

and Chatman *et al.* (2014) are fairly classical approaches, which have had the merit of highlighting the implicit dimension of organisational meanings but have remained aligned with a view of culture as a set of relatively stable assumptions (Schein, 1985). Increasingly, critical works have highlighted the limitations of these models and emphasised the need to move beyond the conception of culture as static set of characteristics and to adopt perspectives capable of grasping the dynamic, generative and intersubjective nature of culture itself (Alveson & Willmott, 2002; Ashkanasy *et al.*, 2000; Jung *et al.*, 2009). Such static approaches overlook how culture emerges from the continuous interaction between actors, discursive practices and contexts, and thus require the adoption of bottom-up interpretive models that are sensitive to local processes of meaning construction (Mantere, 2000; Weber & Dacin, 2011).

Attempts to overcome the limitations of taxonomic models include the *Management by Values* paradigm proposed by Dolan and Raich (2013) and the *Coaching by Values* paradigm (Dolan, 2011), according to which culture is understood as the dynamic configuration of three value axes: the first is characterised by *economic-pragmatic values* oriented towards efficiency and achieving productivity standards; the second concerns *ethical-social values* such as mutual respect and compliance with rules, responsibility and integrity; finally, the third concerns *emotional-spiritual values* (such as optimism or intrinsic motivation) that guide action. This tripartite model promotes a balance between pragmatic, ethical and emotional dimensions as the driving force behind an innovative organisational culture characterised by well-being. From this point of view, organisational well-being is not directly derived from performance but is defined as the result of a convergence between system of values and strategic perspective. For example, when organisational members experience what is known as “value congruence”, this means that they perceive a strong match between the organisational culture and their own values; this leads to engagement, greater motivation and positive attitudes towards innovation (Bao *et al.*, 2012; Dolan *et al.*, 2011). According to this integrated approach, organisational culture begins to take shape as a mechanism that can generate well-being or maladjustment, depending on its ability to consider both the material and the symbolic and emotional needs of its members.

A clearer shift towards a processual and contextual paradigm of organisational culture can be seen in Weick's (1995) proposal that it should be understood not as a set of values or norms to be transmitted, but as something that emerges from sensemaking processes. Through these sensemaking processes, individuals shape the reality of the organisation by interpreting events, behaviours and decisions in contexts that often appear unstable or ambiguous. From Weick's (1995) perspective, which continues to be a paradigm worthy of attention for scientific research, culture does not precede action a priori but is constructed during action and changes in organisational interaction. In this view, we can see a theoretical shift in the definition of organisational culture from a rigid structure anchored in immutable values to an interpretive practice that takes place in the interaction between individuals and the organisation. Weick's view represents a break with normative and functional paradigms, his focus on the symbolic and discursive dimensions of meaning construction provides an epistemological bridge to other models that emphasise the affective dimension as a crucial element in organisational life.

The symbolic-affective paradigm of organisational culture finds its privileged expression in the model of "local culture" proposed by Carli and Paniccia (1999), an affective and collusive model of meaning construction in contexts. According to this perspective, further developed by Caputo (2013), the construct of local culture goes beyond traditional cognitive or normative conceptions of organisational culture. From Caputo's perspective, the local culture can therefore be understood as based on affective-symbolic processes. These processes refer to the manner in which members of the organisation, and institutional actors in general, construe the significance of their experience. Specifically, by local culture the authors mean a shared and emotionally connoted semantic field constructed through symbolic processes and affective collusion (Carli & Paniccia; 1999; 2002). Caputo's (2013) contribution deepens and extends this framework by highlighting, on the one hand, how local culture can be detected through the emotional analysis of texts. On the other hand, it can be defined as a field of semantic coexistence in which there is no standardisation of thoughts, but differences, tensions and collusive forms that shape the context and give shape to an emerging structure defined by relational trajectories and discursive practices (Carli & Paniccia, 2002). In this

framework, intervening in an organisational context means bringing out and then reorganising the underlying affective models that made the organisation cohesive or dysfunctional. Furthermore, in the Carli and Paniccia (1999, 2002) and Caputo's (2013) perspective, the notion of organisational well-being is far from that of job satisfaction or individual or group performance. In this context, well-being is an expression of a positive relational and affective function between the subject and the context and is expressed in terms of consistency between institutional roles and a shared symbolic representation of organisational goals. In other words, when local culture organises the field of emotions in accordance with institutional objectives, for example when members of the organization feel that there is alignment between the organisational culture, their own understanding of the context and their role, this leads to greater involvement and increased motivation and we can talk about organisational well-being (Carli & Paniccia, 2003).

This theoretical strand is linked to the perspective offered by Semiotic Cultural Psychology Theory (SCPT; Salvatore *et al.*, 2019; Valsiner, 2007; Salvatore, 2016; Russo *et al.*, 2020). SCPT has been shown to link the process of sensemaking – the symbolic-affective activity through which individuals interpret their relationship with the world – to the ways in which interaction between subject and context takes place (Salvatore & Zittoun, 2011). According to SCPT, sensemaking is organised by “semiotic forcelines” (Salvatore *et al.*, 2019), namely hyper-generalised, embodied, and affect-laden dimensions of meaning (Salvatore *et al.*, 2022, 2024; Salvatore & Zittoun, 2011), which represent the fundamental structure by which individuals attribute meaning to reality. Semiotic force lines are defined as primary and elementary dimensions (Zajonc, 1980). The hypothesis is posited that these phenomena are not reducible to simpler units and are not mediated by cognitive processing. This finding suggests that they facilitate an immediate perception of the environment, operating outside of inferential reasoning (Salvatore *et al.*, 2019). The semiotic forcelines are theorised to organise into patterns of implicit assumptions that foster and constrain how individuals make sense of and act within their organisational context. In other terms, the ways of interpreting context are not arbitrary but are structured around “latent dimensions”. These dimensions are based on implicit emotional orientations and relatively

stable affective assumptions (Kerušauskaitė *et al.*, 2023; Salvatore *et al.*, 2019). In this theoretical scenario, organisational culture is not viewed as a static set of norms and values, but rather as an ongoing process of constructing meaning, conveyed through shared symbolic configurations that mediate interaction between individuals and their environment. Organisational culture provides the symbolic grammar through which individuals interpret events, roles, relationships, and purposes. This contributes to the definition of the conditions that make one's own actions possible (Valsiner, 2007; Salvatore & Venuleo, 2013).

Interest in value construction models (VCMs) has developed from this perspective, as a concept introduced to delineate relatively stable and affectively charged configurations through which organisations interpret their context and orient their actions. These “ways of being” in context do not derive from conscious choices or learned norms, but from structures of meaning that organise experience tacitly and in an embodied manner (Ciavolino *et al.*, 2017). MVCs are semiotic patterns that structure the symbolic field in which the organizational actor subject acts and generate distinct ways of conceiving effectiveness, professional identity, customer relationships, mutual expectations, and the organisation's goals (Salvatore, 2018; Salvatore *et al.*, 2019). Studying these patterns enables us to understand how latent patterns of behaviour are established in each organisational context, defining the organisation's culture.

According to the situated and processual cultural perspective proposed in this paper, it is worth noting that other recent models have highlighted the dynamic and co-constructed nature of organisational culture, as in the case of the Agile model of organisations in the context of digital transformation (Babayan & Babayan, 2025) or the “Intelligent Enterprise” paradigm (Kondreddy & Rastogi, 2025), which offers a conceptual framework consistent with the symbolic-affective view of the organisation as a situated semantic field. Also relevant to the present aims is the model proposed by Li (2025), which emphasises the continuous co-construction of meanings between organisational mission and stakeholders, in a perspective aligned with the dynamic visions proposed.

Models of Value Construction (MVCs) and Organisational Paradigms

This theoretical evolution, from normative and typological models to conceptual frameworks based on processes and symbolic-affective models, invites a broader epistemological reflection on the worldviews underlying organisational paradigms. In this conceptual context, the following investigation will explore how organisations embody these general visions, which can be defined as Models of Value Construction (MVCs) and define their mission through culturally rooted frameworks. These general paradigms, as fundamental epistemological frameworks, determine the form and function of the organisation itself, as well as how it conceives its value and mission (Hatch, 2018; Harrison & Carroll, 2021).

It is possible to distinguish between two predominant paradigms that emerge as an outcome of the relationship between the subject and the environment and that characterise organisational cultures by orienting their action (Salvatore *et al.*, 2019c). The first is called the Agent-Centred Model (ACM), and the second is called the Context-Centred Model (CCM). In the ACM paradigm, the focus is placed on the operational and normative conditions of the action, while the context – which issues inputs and receives outputs – does not constitute a regulating principle of the action. It is a technocratic and performative paradigm focused on procedural, efficiency and control aspects. Consequently, the sense of value is defined by performance and adherence to internal standards (Carli & Paniccia, 1999). In an organisation that employs an action-centred paradigm, work dynamics are structured around tasks, hierarchies and objectives of the production process (quality standards, cost reduction, etc.) and demands from the context – such as customer or employee needs – are addressed by organisational mechanisms. These mechanisms serve the exclusive purpose of maintaining organisational efficiency (Thompson, 1967). However, there is a risk of implementing unsuccessful strategies, particularly in cases where environmental variability and instability render pre-established standards unattainable.

The Context-Centred Model (CCM) presents a different perspective by inverting the conventional logic of the aforementioned models. In this paradigm, the environment and its variability are recognised as

the primary determinants of action. In accordance with this theoretical framework, the organisation acknowledges a preeminent normative function attributed to the environment, to which it adapts in response to its demands. In such cases, the actions of the parties involved are subject to regulation by devices that emphasise the consumer's perspective, with the regulatory framework being shaped by the demands that are accommodated and interpreted (Norman, 1986; Salvatore *et al.*, 2019a). This second paradigm emerges from the questioning of the ACM, which has been demonstrated to be a suboptimal adaptive model in contexts characterised by high complexity demand, as evidenced in educational settings or in hypercompetitive markets characterised by low environmental stability (D'Aveni & Ravenscraft, 1994).

In order to transform themselves into systems that are receptive to environmental demands, organisations adapt to these through practices of service customisation and the inclusion of the user (*prosumer*) in a process of co-creation of the service (Ciavolino *et al.*, 2020; Ciavolino *et al.*, 2019), and of the value associated with it (Salvatore, 2016). Consequently, within an organisational framework founded on such a flexible paradigm, value is generated through relationships with others and the collaborative construction of meanings (Salvatore *et al.*, 2019; Russo *et al.*, 2020).

Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge the constraints imposed by the CCM. One limitation is that its continuous adaptation to the environment carries the risk of compromising the organisation's ability to self-organise according to its original vision and purpose.

ACM and CCM, in their respective merits and limitations, represent alternative paradigms, which are overcome in a Dynamic Model (DM) founded on a dialectical and transformative relationship between subject and context, between action and environment (Salvatore *et al.*, 2019a; Salvatore, 2018). The model under discussion is rooted in cultural and dialogic psychology (Salvatore, 2016; Valsiner, 1999) and interprets organisational action as the continuous co-construction of meaning and value within interaction. According to the DM, the organisation does not engage in direct action by means of the imposition of an internal regulatory framework (as in the ACM model), nor does it undergo change and adaptation in response to environmental pressures (as in the CCM model). Rather, the organisation should be

understood as a space of continuous negotiation between intentionality and environmental constraints, characterised by boundaries that are redefined at both the operational and symbolic levels.

In previous models, the environment was understood as a constraint or resource. Conversely, in this model, it is described as a relational and semiotic field in which action takes shape and direction. In this context, organisational practices act as generative devices of meaning (Bendassoli *et al.*, 2019; Salvatore *et al.*, 2019) and organisational action takes the form of a process of continuous re-actualisation of the organisation's identity in relation to the multiplicity of environmental demands. In circumstances where tensions emerge from interaction with a highly unstable and complex environment, the DM interprets this tension as a semiotic resource with the potential to instigate change in the organisational culture. To elaborate, it promotes a process-based vision in which the processes of re-signification of one's relationships with the environment are deemed to be the prerequisite for organisational well-being. For instance, the emergence of conflicting demands from customers, torn between efficiency and personalisation, has the potential to trigger a redefinition of the organisation's value system. Rather than the adoption of measures designed to suppress tension, the organisation could implement reflective practices that would lead to a redefinition of its mission. In this case, the mission could be changed from "providing quick solutions" to "co-creating meaningful experiences". This change illustrates how DM leverages uncertainty as a catalyst for cultural transformation, treating interpretative conflict as a resource for meaning creation and organisational well-being (Bendassoli *et al.*, 2019; Salvatore *et al.*, 2019).

Empirical Applications and Methodological Developments

From a methodological perspective, the SCPT has given rise to the development of innovative tools for the analysis of meaning construction processes. A relevant example of this is the Models of Value Construction Questionnaire (MVC-Q), which has enabled the mapping of implicit semiotic configurations that guide the construction of value in organisations (Salvatore *et al.*, 2019). The items contained within the first part of the questionnaire were designed to elicit perceptions,

judgements and opinions regarding the meanings underlying behaviour within the organisational context. The purpose of these items is to stimulate perceptions of the organisational context, the representation of the environment, and the representation of the role within the organisation. The items in the second part of the questionnaire function as illustrative variables (Lebart, Morineau & Warwick, 1984) and are employed to describe segments of the population defined by a specific meaning model (MS; Venuleo, Mossi & Salvatore, 2014).

Recent applications are founded upon quantitative designs of an exploratory nature, with the objective of identifying those latent dimensions of meaning that represent stable ways of constructing value within an organisation (Gennaro *et al.*, *submitted*; Salvatore *et al.*, 2019). The authors pursue the objective by implementing two analysis techniques. Firstly, Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA; Benzecri, 1992; Benzecri & Bellier, 1973) is used to explore the latent meaning structure of the data collected through the MVC-Q. It is indeed possible to reduce dimensionality by means of MCA, through the identification of factorial structures that synthesise the variability of the data and describe a semantic space in terms of primary meaning structures that shape organisational dynamics. In the context of MVCs, this type of analysis facilitates the mapping of the patterns of meaning by which subjects interpret (attribute value) to organisational practices. It is imperative to emphasise that the dimensions of meaning that emerge should not be interpreted as static psychological factors. Rather, they should be regarded as affectively charged lines of force that organise to experience (Salvatore *et al.*, 2019).

In a secondary step, the authors have implemented a Cluster Analysis (CA; Gore *et al.*, 2006) to identify homogeneous response profiles assimilated to different Value Construction Models. It can be argued that each cluster represents a shared, sufficiently stable cultural profile indicative of how a certain number of individuals interpret experience in each organisational context (Gennaro *et al.*, *submitted*). As part of the empirical study conducted by Salvatore and colleagues (2019), in order to identify latent configurations within organizational contexts, a questionnaire was developed based on the assumptions of the ISO (organisational development indicators) methodology proposed by Carli and Paniccia (1999). This approach does not entail the utilisation of questions that are characterised by clear and defined meanings (e.g.,

satisfaction ratings, opinion/reputation surveys or assessments of past experiences; etc.) (Caputo, 2013). Rather, it involves the examination of a complex set of emotional dimensions and psychosocial patterns that can identify the specific cultural and symbolic components of the respondent.

The tool was subsequently administered to Italian operators and managers, selected according to convenience criteria, of eight disparate organisations in the fields of education, social welfare, financial brokerage, real estate brokerage, commerce and e-commerce, tourism and transport sectors. A total of 139 questionnaires were completed (with equal proportions of men and women, 50% of participants being aged between 40 and 59 years old, and an average age of 42.85, with a standard deviation of 10.84). Regarding geographical distribution, the overwhelming majority of questionnaires – precisely 136 out of the total 139 cases – were completed in southern Italy. Distribution was determined by strategic or operational role within the sample, with 68 and 71 individuals, respectively (Salvatore *et al.*, 2019).

Authors identified five MVCs, in the form of clusters, which refer to five MS (Venuleo, Mossi & Salvatore, 2014) that guide experience in the organisation and act as real devices regulating organizational culture. One cluster, designated as *Strategic partnership*, pertains to an organisation that is regarded as a resource for the customer. In this context, the customer is not merely a recipient of needs or a mere consumer, but rather a genuine partner, a contributor of skills, and an active participant in the design phase. The model under discussion is predicated on co-design and mutual investment, with the relationship itself being conceptualised as a space in which shared values are generated. This cluster suggests a model for understanding the phenomenon of mutual recognition and collaboration as a central element. This concept is reflected in a symbolic representation of the organisation as a network of alliances, with value being attributed to collaborative responsibility and horizontal trust. Another cluster, defined as *Symbolic power*, concerns the organization's ability to intercept and shape customer expectations; organisations guided by this vision act as symbolic mediators between customer representations (perceived as desiring, non-expert subjects) and institutional goals; the customer is presented with a proposal that “captures” them and contributes to defining their identity. Another cluster focuses on *Aknowledgment of technical*

quality; customers are regarded as competent, and value is derived from external perceptions of the technical quality. In this output-oriented vision, the organisation does not incorporate the customer into the production process; rather, the customer is regarded as an external evaluator of the organisation's technical effectiveness. Fourth cluster has been defined as *Dependency on the autonomous client*, and involves recognizing a customer as autonomous, with their own projects and capable of evaluating the organization's actions. Consequently, the latter is dependent on the customer's vision, which it uses to justify its own intervention, based on the trust that the customer, regarded as an external regulator, bestows upon it. Finally, the authors identified an additional cluster defined as *Intrinsic quality of performance*; in this cluster, there is a sense of value that is intrinsically connected to internal technical competence and the quality of organizational action, regardless of the judgment of the customer, who is understood as the object of the intervention. This is an executive and self-referential model in which value is contingent on adherence to technical and operational standards.

The five MVCs described outline a highly intricate symbolic domain, distinguished by diverse interpretations of the relationship between representations of the organization and customer, and operational methodologies. The approach delineated herein eschews the classification of MVCs in purely descriptive terms, but rather as symbolic configurations that can be placed on a semantic field with two latent dimensions. These dimensions represent two axes of symbolic-affective differentiation that delineate the cultural meanings attributed to organisational action. The first axis concerns the locus of value regulation, which can be regulated internally, i.e. generated by technical, procedural or symbolic processes within the organisation, or externally, i.e. attributed on the basis of recognition by external actors, in particular users or the social context of reference. The second axis pertains to the representation of the customer/user. This can be conceptualised as a entity passively receiving organisational action, the recipient of services and rules defined autonomously by the institution. Conversely, it can be conceptualised as an active partner in the co-construction of value involved in a dialogical and cooperative manner in the definition of objectives and actions. Whilst the *Strategic partnership* and *Symbolic power* models attribute a significant role to the

customer in the co-construction of value, models such as *Acknowledgment of technical quality* and *Intrinsic quality of performance* are characterised by a procedural and self-referential perspective of action. The *Dependency on the autonomous client* model, while acknowledging the value attributed to the customer who is external to the organisation, does not exercise any action on it. The analytical approach delineated in this study is proposed as a means of interpreting organizational culture as a dynamic field of symbolic devices. In the emergence of a model based on strategic partnership, it offers a glimpse of a desirable evolutionary trajectory towards dialogic and co-constructive forms of cultural richness, in line with the theoretical framework of DM.

In accordance with the assumptions of SCPT, it is important to interpret the results presented herein within the framework of a situated and context-dependent perspective, and it is essential to refrain from interpreting them in a nomothetic sense. Indeed, an empirical approach centred on MVCs aims to capture symbolic configurations latent within local organisational cultures, rather than producing universally applicable categories. The value of the theoretical framework presented here lies in its interpretative potential rather than in statistical generalisation. This limitation presents several promising prospects for future empirical developments, including comparative studies across sectors and on organisational change processes. For instance, Gennaro *et al.* (*submitted*) are employing the present approach to explore symbolic dynamics in novel organisational contexts.

Conclusions

The theoretical path delineated above underscores the mounting significance of culturalist approaches in the domain of organisational studies, particularly in highly intricate domains. In this study, the transition from taxonomic and normative models to symbolic-affective models is traced, and it is demonstrated that a paradigm based on MVCs serves as a true *hermeneutic device* (Salvatore & Freda, 2011) for interpreting the processes of meaning through which organisations delineate their actions. The MVC perspective is predicated on models that do not presuppose values as pre-existing and normative; rather, it emphasises the affectively connoted essence of organisational culture,

which regulates forms of belonging and identity construction. From an epistemological perspective, the conceptualisation of three paradigms – the Agent-Centred Model (ACM), the Context-Centred Model (CCM), and the Dynamic Model (DM) – has sought to underscore the fallacy of perceiving organisations as monolithic entities governed by immutable rules. Notably, the DM has advanced a dialectical interpretation of the nexus between internal motivation and contextual limitations, accentuating organisations' capacity to transform tensions into symbolic resources that can be instrumental in catalysing change.

From a methodological perspective, the MCV Questionnaire (MCV-Q) was presented as a tool to elucidate the affective-cultural grammar of an organization. Indeed, it was designed to empirically map value construction patterns, with the objective of guiding interventions aimed at organizational development and well-being. While the primary aim of this study was to delineate the theoretical and epistemological underpinnings of the MVC paradigm, it is imperative to underscore the potential applications and interdisciplinary utility of this model from an empirical standpoint. This approach would be beneficial for mapping practices in various professional fields where there is a necessity to comprehend behaviour not solely as a response to exogenous variables, but chiefly as the consequence of symbolic-affective processes.

In the domain of clinical-organisational studies, for instance, an MVC-based approach facilitates the exploration of the symbolic representations that are characteristic of care contexts. This is particularly evident in the establishment of the doctor-patient relationship and the regulation of the climate within healthcare organisations (Caputo, 2013). In general, within a clinical context, MVCs can be utilised to map the implicit representations of care, patients, and roles that affect team functioning and user experience.

In the domain of education, the MVC paradigm is expected to primarily enable an examination of how various stakeholders within the school environment (e.g., teachers, support teachers, students, and families) and institutional bodies interpret concepts such as school success, inclusion processes, or learning difficulties. Secondly, it is anticipated that this paradigm will facilitate a deeper understanding of how these interpretations influence the structuring of educational relationships (Salvatore *et al.*, 2019; De Luca Picione & Valsiner, 2017). For instance, within these contexts, it is possible to observe how

parents and teachers interpret learning disorders within the context of deeply culturalized symbolic horizons. These interpretations can influence the organisation of the educational relationship; in these situations, an MVC approach facilitates the discernment of symbolic tensions between institutional and contextual mandates and pedagogical identity, allowing professionals in the field to understand the demands coming from families and institutions and to integrate them into an educational intervention consistent with development goals.

The field of marketing represents a further context in which an MVC-based approach can furnish suitable criteria for comprehending the symbolic-affective models on which the dynamics of service production and communication practice design are predicated, and the way consumers are conceptualised and engaged (Ciavolino *et al.*, 2020; Ciavolino *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, in this context, MVC-based approaches can be useful for both understanding and enhancing the symbolic dimension of the offering. These approaches can assist stakeholders in recognising that products and services are desirable not only for their cost or function, but also for the identity positioning they offer and promote (Zott *et al.*, 2011).

When considering these and other contexts of application, the MVC-centred approach can be defined as a cross-cutting conceptual and operational device capable of capturing the structures of meaning that guide action. Furthermore, it can be defined as a tool for promoting practices that align institutional mandates with subjective and environmental demands.

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