



How Organizations can Develop Solidarity in the Workplace? A Case Study

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Abstract

The concept of community of persons, which focuses on both persons and the whole, helps understand solidarity. The latter is based on the social nature of persons. Community of persons and solidarity seems to be able to move away from the individualist perspective or the individualism-collectivism dichotomy. Using autopraxeography in a pragmatic constructivism epistemological paradigm, this article aims to explore how organizations can develop solidarity in a workplace. The experience presented takes place in a bank. It shows that communities of persons with employees and customers are both ethical and financially efficient. These communities build a dialogue between persons and organizations. Nevertheless, it is impossible to force solidarity because it could generate derision that is contrary to the wished goal. Finally, while this model is based on solidarity, it focuses solely on internal solidarity.

Keywords Solidarity · Community of persons · Autopraxeography · Dialogue · Derision · Performance

Introduction

Humanistic management is far from individualism (Schlag & Melé, 2020). However, mainstream business literature is based on the standard *homo oeconomicus* assumption of individualist agents (Arjoon et al. 2018; Domingo and Melé 2022). According to Hayek (1946), the word “individualism” is presented in English in a translation of a book by De Tocqueville (1864) in which the author highlights the distinction between individualism

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and egoism. Where egoism is a passionate and exaggerated love of self, individualism is a thoughtful and peaceful feeling that allows citizens to isolate themselves from one another and withdraw with their family and friends. Individualism comes from bad judgment rather than from a reprehensible feeling (as in egoism). It does not belong to one form of society more than another. Hayek (1946) differentiates ‘individualism’ (the continental perspective) and ‘true individualism’ (the Anglo-Saxon perspective). In true individualism, people have to conform to these partially anonymous creations and refuse to obey orders from a superior who plans social evolution. A true individualist prefers the relative freedom that spontaneous action offers, even with the degree of unpredictability it entails (Albert & Lazari Dodeler, 2022).

The autonomy of individuals from one another is the fundamental assumption of individualism (Oyserman et al. 2002). Western cultures are anchored in individual autonomy and one’s separation from others (Oyserman et al. 2002, Brewer & Chen, 2007). According to Hofstede (1980), individualism is a culture where bonds between individuals are strained. In these societies, individuals prioritize themselves and their relatives. Individualism focuses on goals, uniqueness and control of individuals while putting aside social questions (Oyserman et al. 2002). Individualism can be explained from different theoretical and empirical perspectives. Psychologically, individualism is a means of seeing the world focused on individuals (Taylor 1989). Sociologically, individualism is the main basis of our current societies that Bauman (2001) qualifies as ‘individual societies.’ In this kind of society, consumerism becomes paramount and shapes behaviour in organizational settings and elsewhere (Bauman 2007). To conceive human beings as individuals means emphasizing self-interest, private decisions as well as utility maximization. Interaction between individuals is seen as a series of negotiations in which everyone tries to maximize their own interest (Naughton 2015). Individualism places personal interests over the needs of groups. So, individualists may be attracted to cooperation if it benefits them, otherwise they would prefer to avoid it (Wagner III, 1995). Whereas collectivism emphasizes the ‘we,’ individualism stresses the ‘I’ (Brewer & Chen, 2007). Individualism is antagonistic to collective social structure (Oyserman et al. 2002). In Bauman’s words,

‘it is not that the solidary life is in trouble because of the inborn self-interest of “inadequately socialised” individuals. The opposite is the case: individuals tend to be self-centred and self-engrossed (and so morally blind and ethically uninvolved or incompetent) because of the slow yet relentless waning of the collectivity to be solidary with. It is because there is little reason to be solidary, “the others” turn into strangers’ (2000, p. 87).

Indeed, according to Mintzberg (2009), individualism is a beautiful idea because it gives incentives, promotes leadership and fosters development. However, humans are also social animals and need social cement to unite them for their own good. Numerous studies show that team performance is affected by members who are very individualistic (e.g. Gundlach et al., 2006). Thus, the concept of community is positioned between individualistic leadership and collective citizenship (Mintzberg 2009). This perspective is close to the personalist approach, in which persons share common goals and goods belonging to the community while maintaining their sense of individuality (Melé 2009). This humanistic management vision seems to be interesting for the future at work. Even if humanistic management is not a new idea (Follett, Mayo or Drucker wrote on that since many years), management is still influenced by Taylorism and individualism (Domingo and Melé 2022). And these latter do not allow human flourishing (Hinchliffe 2004; Holland 2020).

For these reasons, we wish to inquire into the opportunity of developing solidarity. This article explores how organizations can develop solidarity in a workplace, using autopraxeography. Solidarity is associated to a specific community (Scholz, 2005) that is why this article exposes the concept of communities of persons before that of solidarity. Then, the methodology is described, autopraxeography, a method based on a coresearcher's experience. It is followed by the results stemming from the naïve writings and the reflexive and diffractive works. Finally, a discussion and conclusion are presented.

Theoretical Framework

Communities of Persons

Arjoon et al. (2018) explain the importance for all persons to be recognized in all human activities. The word 'person' is heavy with meaning (Melé 2012; Albert & Perouma, 2017). This word comes from the Greek *prosôpon*. At the beginning, *prosôpon* (Housset 2007) designated the face, then the meaning extended to include the mask worn by an actor, and then became synonymous with a social person. Thus, *prosôpon* signifies a face, a thing, an individual in the flesh, or a concrete individual playing a role (Housset 2007). This is what others see of me and my identity. Latin developed the use of the character, which passed from the mask to the character and from the character to the bearer of a word (Vernant 1996). This concrete individuality, my identity, makes me a unique being. Thus, a person is both unique and multifaceted, different from others. A person cannot be understood by observing only one facet, and while understanding everything may seem difficult, researchers and specialists must keep in mind that a person is multifaceted. A person is not an object that can be divided and be inquired into as such (Mounier, 1952). Indeed, the notion of 'person' relies on personalism. Even if there is no consensus on this perspective, personalists agree on the uniqueness and dignity of a person (Melé 2009). Moreover, personalism is different from collectivism because the person preserves their autonomy and individual choice in a community. A person is not a random individual in a community, but a unique being who cannot be substituted or viewed as an abstraction and does not live a separate existence linked to others only by a social contract. Personalism differs from both individualism and collectivism. In this perspective, a person is a social being bound to others and living an interdependent existence (Melé 2009). 'A community of persons emphasizes both individuals and the whole' (Melé 2012, p. 89). It is very important to distinguish the notion of community of persons from communitarianism, which rejects and excludes strangers from the community, emphasizing the differences to include in the community (Bauman 1993). The community of persons does not have fixed boundaries. It is not a waterproof box and does not exclude persons even if they are not *a priori* included in the community.

Communities of persons are daily challenges for managers (Schlag and Melé, 2020). Naughton (2015) explains that organizations can be understood as a continuum between an association of individuals and a community of persons. Viewing the organization as an association of individuals, an economic or legal point of view, means that there is an aggregate of individuals optimizing their own goals and calculations, and linked by agreements. At the opposite end of the continuum, in a community of persons the 'me' (the aggregation of isolated individuals) shifts to a 'we' (interdependent persons) (Naughton 2015). As stated

by Melé and Gonzalez Canton (2014, p. 193), ‘business as a community of persons is a view of the organization [...] and entails recognizing the organization as a real entity made up by free and autonomous persons. This latter forms a whole, based on common goals, interconnectedness, interdependence, loyalties and even moral commitments.’ When an organization is not an association of individuals, usually there not just on community of persons but some communities of persons (Albert & Lazzari Dodeler, 2022). In this way, organizations as communities ‘providing a safe working environment free from harassment, bullying, and discrimination is necessary but not sufficient for a genuine community. Rather, workers and managers must try, in the course of their common endeavours, to build authentic human relationships that transcend the limits of their employee-employer contract’ (Tablan 2014, p. 12). These human relationships need solidarity, which is rooted in the social nature of persons (Arjoon et al. 2018).

Solidarity

Solidarity is an indispensable attribute for communities (Baker and Lee, 2020). The source of concern for solidarity is located in Roman law. According to the obligation in *solidum*, each person who signed are accountable for the debt of all together (Sangiovanni 2015). The term ‘solidarity’ (*solidarité*) emerged in France after the French Revolution as well as the ideal of a republican fraternity, where individualism generates centrifugal forces in society. In this context, there is a need to create new ties (Sangiovanni 2015). Durkheim was the first to use the concept of solidarity in the social sciences (Wilde 2007). He believes that solidarity is the essential bond to unite individuals in societies: to be united, they have to share beliefs and practices (Evens 1977). According to Scholz (2005), in a descriptive meaning, solidarity is the cohesion of a specific community. It may or may not signifies obligations among members. In a normative meaning, solidarity signifies the obligations of a moral relation. ‘Solidarity is a collective relation that mediates between the individual and the community’ (Scholtz, 2015, p 725).

‘Solidarity is an identification with a collectivity such that an individual feels as if a common cause and fate are shared’ (Hunt & Benford, 2004, p. 439). It works as a balance between individualism and collectivism (Scholz 2015). As stated by Fireman and Gamson (1979, p. 21), ‘solidarity is rooted in the configuration of relationships linking the members of a group to one another.’ Each person has both personal and collective interests (Thalos 2012). Solidarity is the willingness to act founded in the notion of ‘we’ (Thalos 2012). A parallel can therefore be drawn focusing on ‘we,’ which reconciles individualism and collectivism with the idea of community of persons. The concept of solidarity is important for the philosophical school of personalism (Beyer 2014). Solidarity is viewed as the co-responsibility of each person for the moral well-being of all others. In this sense, the other is not considered in an instrumental way, but as an equal partner (Beyer 2014). Solidarity maintains the difference of the other, rather than erasing it. Solidarity suggests a permanent mechanism of coordination by producing and maintaining bonds between persons. In Einwohner et al.’s words, ‘active solidarity requires collective commitment to enable the participation of all’ (2019, p. 6).

‘The principle of solidarity recognizes the awareness of a dynamic interdependence among people who share a common human nature, the need for dialogue, compassion and empathetic understanding in recognizing a common commitment and responsibility in pro-

moting the well-being of others including respecting their rights and beliefs’ (Arjoon et al. 2018, p. 155).

According to Arjoon et al. (2018), solidarity and subsidiarity are two antagonist principles. Focusing too much on solidarity decreases personal freedom and private initiative, whereas focusing too much on subsidiarity increases selfishness and greed. Sangiovanni (2015, p. 343) elucidates what is acting in solidarity with others: I act in solidarity with you when:

1. You and I each share a goal to overcome some significant adversity;
2. You and I each individually intend to do our part in achieving the shared goal in ways that mesh;
3. You and I are each individually committed to the realization of the shared goal and to not bypass each other’s will in the achievement of the goal;
4. You and I are disposed to incur significant costs to realize our goal; and to share one another’s fate in ways relevant to the shared goal.
5. Facts 1–4 need not be common knowledge.

Hunt and Benford (2004) distinguish internal from external solidarity. Internal solidarity focuses on the members belonging to a group and external solidarity focuses on identifying with groups to which one does not belong. This solidarity makes it possible to consider other humans as ‘us’ instead of ‘them.’ A frequent aspect of solidarity is the emphasis placed on the poor and the vulnerable (Scholz 2015). Moreover, there is no common human essence that exist and could be used as a base for a potential ethical foundation of universal solidarity (Wilde 2004). So, the principle of solidarity contains a paradox, “on the one hand, it has connotations of unity and universality, emphasising responsibility for others and the feeling of togetherness. On the other hand, it exhibits itself most forcefully in antagonism to other groups” (Wilde 2007, p. 173). The principle of solidarity joins other principles: socialization, participation, primacy of labour (with respect), preferential option for the poor (vulnerable) and restoration (Arjoon et al. 2018). According to Baker and Lee (2020), solidarity is a crucial factor of communities at work. “Solidarity can best be understood as the communal outcome of the altruism displayed by everyone who truly cares about what happens to fellow members of the community” (Holland 2020, p. 41). This solidarity is closely related to human flourishing (Holland 2020).

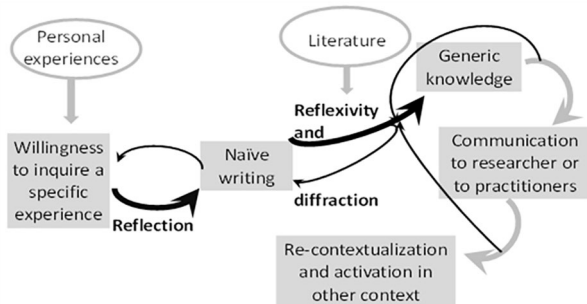
With this in mind, the aim of this article is to explore how organizations can develop solidarity in a work context.

Methodology

Autopraxeography

Autopraxeography is a method based on researchers’ experiences (Albert & Michaud, 2016; Albert & Perouma, 2017). An autopraxeography is different from an autobiography and an autoethnography because it is focused neither on the narrative form nor on character development: there is no intentionally fictional writing. While ‘traditional’ methods based on a post-positivist epistemology aim to minimize the experience of researchers, autoprax-

Fig. 1 The autopraxeography process



eography is positioned in the constructivist epistemological paradigm (Avenier & Thomas, 2015). In this paradigm, one cannot separate the investigator from the phenomenon at study. Thus, the goal is not to obtain reliable representations of reality, but to provide information that improves our understanding of the phenomenon and build generic knowledge in order to create meaning for practitioners.

Although this method's process is not linear and involves many round trips, as shown in Fig. 1, it can be explained in three steps. The first step is to write your testimony in the first person. In our case, we used one of the coauthors' (practitioners') experience as a bank service manager. He was a reflective practitioner on his experience. The other coauthors listened to him and then they carried out a reflection process together. Reflection refers to the metaphor of a mirror (Hibbert et al. 2010), which provides the opportunity to observe or examine one's own actions. In our study, the reflection was confronted to another coauthor's experience (as a volunteer with some vulnerable customers, or with some dialogues with current or previous employees). In the second step, the transcription made it possible to combine reflexivity (Albert & Michaud, 2016) and diffraction (Rae 2016). Reflexivity can be understood as a process of investigating one's own actions (Hibbert et al. 2010) and diffraction allows a change of perspective and the emergence of different models (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2016). During this phase, researchers use multiple sources of scientific writings and write in the third person to encourage this distancing. Moreover, using literature from various fields (for example, management, HRM, sociology, psychology, philosophy) helps get beyond a reductionist view of human beings (Domingo and Melé 2022) to try to understand their complexities (Morin 2008).

In the third step, researchers can build generic knowledge that, to be legitimized, must make sense to other practitioners. Mobilizing alternative theories enables a researcher to take a step back to enrich the construct (Le Moigne 1990; Avenier & Thomas, 2015). This special reflexive process is fundamental to produce generic knowledge, which expresses properties that are considered essential to characterize the studied phenomenon (Prasada 2000; Carlson, 1995). This knowledge is a decontextualized knowledge that may be recontextualized. This way may not seem scientific, but it enables us to step back from experiences and understand situations differently. From a pragmatic perspective, based on Dewey (1938), the problem and the solution proposed by the inquiry are determined by referring to future consequences (Vo 2012). This knowledge is not a construction of the human mind, but a dialogue between researchers and their environment (idem), which can be colleagues, other practitioners, reviewers, scientific texts, and so on.

Helin and Avenier (2016), based on Bakhtin (1984), conceive dialogue as a perpetually embattled tendency between two forces. One is centripetal whereas the other is centrifugal. The centripetal one drives unity, centralization, closure and making room for consensus. The centrifugal tends to move away from the centre, toward openness and decentralization, making room for innovation, creation, multiplicities and fragmentation (Helin & Avenier, 2016). The first one makes it possible to confirm knowledge that is built, whereas the second enables the emergence of new avenues (Morin 2008). The beginning of this dialogue takes place when local knowledge and the researcher's environment confront one another. This dialogue may also be viewed as taking place between a reflexive process and a diffractive analysis.

When using self-study methods in research, we must also consider that there are limits to our knowledge of the past due to subjectivity, and even authors (who are the protagonists of their own story) are subject to these limits (Santos & Garcia, 2006; Hannabuss 2000). While trying to be as sincere as possible, we must acknowledge that everything is not related or even relatable. Moreover, memory can be limited and transform how we view past actions. For this reason, it is important to emphasize the study of the past from the point of view of the present as suggested in Mead's work (Mead, 1934). Given our epistemological choice, the purpose of the narrative is not to represent the truth, but to prepare the ground in which to sow one's epistemic work and produce knowledge to help understand life. The raw material that is the reconstruction of one person's past in the present does not produce scientific knowledge; it is produced by all the epistemic work carried out on it. One of the limits with methods based on researchers' experiences is that they provide only one source of empirical information. Each consists of a single point of view, which is limited and anchored in a geographical and institutional context. Epistemic work based on a large spectrum of literature reduces the effects of this limit. The scientific knowledge produced is not the testimony itself, but the generic knowledge. The academic literature used during this process stemmed from various contexts. Nevertheless, the aim of this article is solely to explore how organizations can develop solidarity with a case study from an autopraxeography.

Case Presentation

The experience presented takes place in a bank branch where a manager (one of the coauthors) took over management a few years prior to the study. We named this bank, BankC. This bank has about 1000 branches. This branch is located in a remote area of Canada, where immigrants were few and experienced difficulties accessing employment (Lazzari Dodeler & Albert, 2017). The manager in question was also from an immigrant background, but was able to get the job he wanted because the branch was in a bind. The work offered to immigrants is often more demanding than the work offered to those born here (De Castro et al., 2006). Indeed, when the previous manager at BankC was leaving, he made it sound like the branch was closing. Note that this person was also President of the local Chamber of Commerce at the time.

Figure 2 presents the organizational charts of this branch when the coauthor arrived as sale advisor and one year after when he became manager. This figure shows the different positions, their hierarchical relationships, the personal experiences in this branch or in the

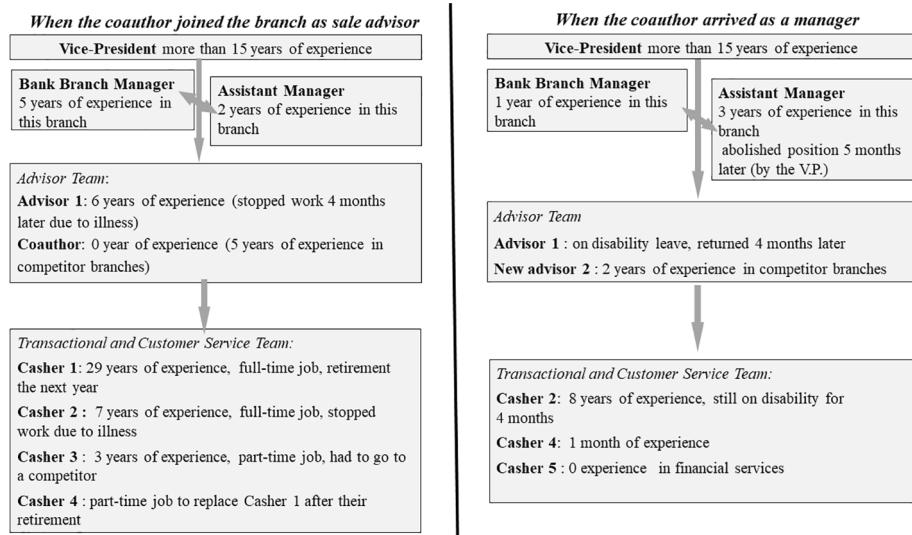


Fig. 2 Organizational charts of this branch when the coauthor arrived as sale advisor and one year after when he became manager

sector, and the reasons several employees left (retirement, illness, join a competitor). So, when the researcher-practitioner became manager, his team was restricted.

The different naïve writings presented below come from the researcher-practitioner (except one wrote by another coauthor). They were highlighted during the reflexivity-diffraction process.

Results

In the results, first, we present the manager as a person, persons management and solidarity. Next, we expose the difficulties in implementing this type of management. Finally, we show the financial performance linked to this management. For each section we start by presenting the naïve writing that is followed by a reflexive-diffractive work. This epistemic work used a literature more varied than the one presented in the literature review (a discussion more in line with this literature will be exposed in Sect. 4).

A Person with a Story, a Culture and Multiple Facets

Naïve Writing

Born to two parents of different nationalities, and therefore of different cultures, I grew up in a family unit where we dealt with cultural diversity successfully. Better still, my father—originally from Togo who immigrated to the Ivory Coast (my mother's country)—was already a model in my eyes; hence my early ambition to also live and found my family in a foreign country. It is with this state of mind that I arrived in Alpha¹ where I had a hard

¹ In this article, for confidential reasons, every name (town, persons, bank) has been changed.

time finding my first job. I had my first job in BankA. I left it because I could not obtain a short-term position as adviser due to the union's rules even though I had the skills. I was told, 'you can leave for BankB. I give you 2 years to become a branch manager or become self-employed in financial services.' I left BankB. My application for the manager's job was rejected. I was even asked at the end of the interview why I had not stayed in Africa. Then, I was employed 1 year and 4 months as an adviser at BankC and was able to obtain the manager position that I wanted in the very city I had requested a transfer to while at BankB. I owe my following success to the difficulties I experienced at BankB; I had taken on four portfolios simultaneously and had acted as director when the previous director left the bank. When I applied for his position, I was refused on the pretext that I had not yet accumulated any experience in human resources. Nevertheless, I still had an asset: I was a trainer and able to transfer knowledge, which I had demonstrated during my career at BankA. My supervisor shared with me that he was told 'hey you hired a black man as manager at BankC in Alpha', which increased the pressure on me.

This is how my story as a manager at BankC began. I inherited a team of two people (myself included) because BankC hadn't prepared a succession plan. The closure of this BankC branch had been known since the manager in place, who had only been in his position for six months, decided to leave. When I told him that I wanted to apply for his job, he told me that he didn't even wish it for his worst enemy. When my manager left, he made it look like the branch would close. So, I had to work hard to dispel this belief, although he became president of the Alpha Chamber of Commerce for a year just after leaving BankC.

I have two children born in Quebec. Charles, now 7 years old, was born a month after my first interview to become a manager at BankB. My second son, Félix, 5 years old, was born three weeks after I got the job as director at BankC. My wife supported me, but I experienced a lot of ups and downs: the failure with BankB at the birth of my first son and the joy of obtaining the position at BankC at the birth of the second. In this way, their births were associated with obtaining a managerial position that I had been striving for, for a number of years. My hobbies are the outdoors, swimming, tennis, soccer, summer festivals and winter sports (cross-country skiing, skating and snowshoeing). I also love reading; I have a thirst for learning. During my career at BankB, I undertook a part-time Master's degree in Project Management. Throughout the program, my manager told me that it wasn't worth it. And when I asked BankB to pay for the remaining fees to complete my degree, I was asked to sign a 3-year contract to guarantee that I wouldn't leave BankB afterward. My ex-manager at BankC also told me that such a master's degree wouldn't lead to anything. Finally, after obtaining the Director's position at BankC, I asked senior manager to bear the rest of the costs for my courses; he agreed to do so without any conditions.

Reflexive and Diffractive Works

The previous naïve writing gives insight into the manager's life story. As the excerpts indicate, he tells his story and talks about his culture and his professional life. As exemplified in the naïve writing, the use of the word 'person' is very meaningful (Melé 2012; Albert & Perouma, 2017). This manager is an immigrant, who has had difficulties integrating into the local labour market and has had multiple experiences with different banks. Many things made him the person he is and how others see him. His sense of 'self' was built on all of his experiences (Mead, 1934). When the manager studied recruited a person, he tried not to

focus on a specific characteristic, but rather on the whole person and their suitability for the position and the team. Seeing people as persons means not emphasizing facets that may be different from others. So, we can understand diversity differently; each person is different and has multiple facets. The thousand ways of representing diversity can help us understand it, use it or learn how to behave with it, but one can never fully know the entirety of a person (Mounier, 1952). This conception of wholeness of the person and human dignity is really different from a resource conception of human being that usually find in management (Domingo and Melé 2022). This way of understanding the person is not only for the manager of this bank branch, it includes the other members of this organization.

Persons Management and Solidarity

Main Naïve Writing

The manager at the time was not focused on innovation and organizational change. Rather, he had a directive and non-participative style. His mode of operation resembled a vertical structure, but I established a horizontal structure in which employees could help one another and contribute their share of knowledge. In such a structure, no one is the unique holder of knowledge; on the contrary, each member of the team has something to contribute. I have never liked the style of management in which the leader is content to impose or seek advice superficially. This is something that really bothered me at BankB. At my branch, my team consisted of people who worked together to move forward together.

Confronted with the ideas and decisions needing to be made, my assistant said to me, ‘you’re open to others too much!’ I made the final decision, but I was open to other proposals. I was always looking for an exchange. I responded, ‘drive me and I will drive you.’ I appreciate when I am challenged. I wanted everyone on the team to be sure that they would be happy with the decision they made.

I always unlocked the door to the branch in the morning. I wanted people to come in like they would enter a living room, welcomed. A director is just a word, I want to help people, make people happy, change the negative dynamic for a positive one. The team said to me, ‘The past director would hide in his office! But you come and unlock the door and welcome customers every morning.’ I did it because it was central to my job. Rank shouldn’t matter. Sometimes I even removed my name tag. I would go incognito to see what people were doing. I wanted to learn about their reality, do their job, bathe in their world and bond with them.

I removed the reception desk. I wanted to have space in the centre to go see the customers who were in line, chat a little, help them make transactions so they no longer had to come to the bank at lunchtime; this would save them gas, remove stress and allow them to have their lunch quietly.

When I was appointed manager of the banking centre, (because I am an immigrant), many customers thought I was from the big city, that I was trained there and then sent to Alpha. I

let customers know that I had studied in Alpha and that I had lived there for several years. They were very happy to know that I was from Alpha and didn't hesitate to congratulate me for having the courage to hire an immigrant.

When I realized that a collaborator had a leadership style in a given field, I would delegate certain tasks to them; not to crush or harm them, but to develop this potential in them. The other employees understood this as separate from their usual tasks. They could also carry out other tasks in order to help one another. For example, I always conducted my interviews (for customer service positions) with the main cashier, that is, the one who is a full-time employee. Sometimes I delegated the questions to the cashier who took over part of the interview with the candidates. This enabled me to observe how the main cashier (who was from Alpha) interacted with the candidates. Then I could indirectly observe the chemistry that existed between them, and between these two and me. Thus, as soon as they returned, the successful candidate already knew that there were two people who were there to help, supervise, support, and protect them if necessary.

Fatou was the first immigrant that I recruited into my work team. Certainly, as an immigrant, I was wondering how my employees and the bank's clients would view this. I started from the principle that anybody (immigrants, Quebecers and Canadians) who has the right profile deserves this position. After analyzing the applications received, this candidate was the one with the best profile.

I had previously worked with immigrant clients as a consultant, but I wanted to break barriers down by giving clients the opportunity to be served by a competent immigrant. With my team, the integration of immigrants² was difficult at the beginning, but we have managed to see the wealth of resources in each of us. In addition, I requested the intervention of an association to support immigrants who joined my team. I was constantly in action, close to my employees and the customers despite my position as manager.

Naïve Writing from Another Coauthor

I often accompanied immigrants, as a volunteer, to carry out certain operations in this branch. I was able to observe many times the work atmosphere that reigned there. How people seemed to work with each other.

I had the opportunity to see the manager open the door of the branch in the morning and welcome the customers who arrived, greeting them and exchanging a few words with them. The atmosphere was very friendly.

More recently, when the manager had left the branch a few months ago, I had the opportunity to talk to an employee. He was able to tell me how much he felt supported by his manager when he was there, but also by the whole team. When he first arrived, he knew nothing and was very shy. Thanks to the support of others and the fact that he could easily ask for help, he learned the operations and became more confident. Today, even without the manager, this continues. This person, also an immigrant, even feels very supported by John (see 3.3), which demonstrates the changes that have taken place in this branch.

² They were new customers.

Reflexive and Diffractive Works

The previous paragraphs, taken from the manager and another coauthor's naïve writings show how it is possible to draw an analogy between the bank branch and a community of persons. With the previous manager, the kind of leadership that was promoted, was relying on the principal–agent theory. That is consistent with what is usually prescribed in the bank sector (van Staveren 2020), even if this kind of management does not allow good managerial practices and many authors have shown this for many years (Domingo and Melé 2022). The bank's employees can be perceived as a community of persons. Unlike his predecessor, the manager showed his willingness to innovate with a participative management style. He tried to develop a culture of mutual support and dialogue (Helin & Avenier, 2016) between the employees. Every person has different strengths and communities have to be based on these strengths no matter their hierarchical position. Based on the theory of generative interactions, Bernstein et al. (2019) show that to encourage inclusion, the different types of exclusion must be overcome by implementing adaptation practices: having a meaningful organizational objective and ignoring one another's status. In turn, this can contribute to the organization's success and ensure collaborative interdependence, easy interpersonal contact and personal efficiency. Thus, as Follet (1925) points out, each person is necessary for the performance of the organization. Through his management style, the manager shows that there are no superiors and subordinates, but only people who work together for a common good. This is what Follet (1925) calls integration, in which each person must adapt to the work of the others on the team by cooperating. By so doing, the manager acts in solidarity (Sangiovanni 2015). This manager tried to develop bonds with his employees and among them. He described his community of interconnected people, that is, the team, the customers, and himself. Indeed, communities of persons include customers too. According to Albert & Perouma (2017), although management theories promote organizational commitment and team building, they still emphasise on individualism. This manager tries to work differently.

He took part in tasks that did not necessarily fall within his purview in order to support his team. In fact, he opened the bank doors himself every morning, taking care of greeting the first customers, helping them with some transactions when necessary. Persons are members of a team, they make up communities, and customers are also part of these communities. These communities are not only made up of persons working in the same organization like the manager pointed out. This should have a positive impact on persons and on the organization. In the bank branch in question, customers (who are also persons) were part of this community, they felt like they belonged.

The focus is not on differences but on persons (Melé 2012). It is not the management of diversity as much as it is the management of persons. Of course, differences were perceived, but the manager did not highlight them. (Chavez & Wesinger, 2008). Thanks to his experiences, he was willing to be open to differences while avoiding stigmatization. This inclusion of persons (including vulnerable customers) (Arjoon et al. 2018; Scholtz, 2015) is seen in the support provided to them. Of course, they are customers, so it is important to develop their satisfaction. Here the objective wasn't just increased satisfaction, it was recognizing their presence and their needs. Thus, as Sabharwal (2014) points out, we are in the presence of a manager who is committed to setting up an inclusive climate. This is clearly demonstrated in his practices, which are reflected by his employees' actions and certain recognition

from the customers. The procedures were designed collaboratively and used by peers to monitor one another and work together to improve performance. The purpose of this way of working is co-creation and collaboration. Everyone can help, no matter their position. Thus building solidarity. Moreover, humanistic management is not a naïve view of workplace management, there were some practical implementation difficulties.

Some Practical Implementation Difficulties

Naïve Writing

The members of the team proposed ideas, even if I was sometimes closed to some ideas (ideas rooted in individualism and therefore harmful to teamwork) and remained open to others. It was then that I asked John, the adviser, to have each of the financial cashiers recognized on each operation since they were also evaluated weekly on operations of this nature (that is, convince the customer to open a savings account after opening a checking account). But John didn't want to associate the cashier with his operations. I rejected his idea of not associating others with his work. I took the time to help employees understand that we were working as a team and had to get rid of the old way of working. In fact, as a manager, I initiated business development. This means that we were sent clients (around forty refugees a month, for example), so John benefitted from these new customers for his work and his assessment. From that moment on, I found that others too should benefit (at the counter, in this case) since it was a team effort. It took me several months to get John to understand that his way of working could not contribute to the well-being of the team.

Although it's better at BankC, I still had to post an HR complaint against John because he told me several racist comments. John never took the time to get to know me as a person, but he started working on it. When he first saw the refugees, he said: 'do you see the clientele we have?' But as he became more familiar with them, John understood that he was participating in their life, in their integration, and today he can proudly say to his customers that we hold the 7th place for best banking centre in Canada out of 1,007 banking centres.

Reflexive and Diffractive Works

This naïve writing points to the difficulties in implementing communities of persons. For example, the manager had to face the individualism (Oyserman et al. 2002) of a team member to whom he explained, at length, how communities of persons work so that they could understand the issues and get rid of their individualistic way of working. For team members, transparency about the manager's professional career and the fact that he had studied and resided in Alpha, gave him a kind of legitimacy in obtaining his position.

As Morin (2008) points out, a person is a complex being who interacts with other complex beings in a complex environment. As a result, it can be useful to use complex thinking to understand communities of persons. Morin shows that a person can be altruistic and selfish, as well as kind and cruel toward others. It is therefore possible that selfishness lives in a person who nevertheless opens up to others. Instead of denying this phenomenon, it would be better to take it into consideration. Even if one wishes to establish communities of persons, it does not mean that one is capable of eradicating selfishness. John had worked for years in an individualistic culture. He was probably also afraid of the unknown and of

differences (Bauman 1993). In addition, the manager, maintaining his point of view, showed courage (Harbor & Kisfalvi, 2008). The word ‘courage’ is derived from the French word *coeur* (heart). Managerial courage is defined as the will to do what is most appropriate, whatever the risk (Van Eynde, 1998). The manager’s courage is positively linked to performance at work (Tkachenko et al. 2018), so it may facilitate effective management. Suchman (1995) defines legitimation as a generalized perception of a social phenomenon within a socially constructed system. As Ford and Johnson (1998) point out, when the manager explained his legitimacy for occupying the position, he highlighted the fact that he did not necessarily receive the same collective support or the same degree of control over employees; his legitimacy as an immigrant manager was questioned. In addition, the dialogical process that the manager went through with John and the team concerned sharing of common goods (customers) and collective participation (team) (Helin & Avenier, 2016). This type of dialogue can lead to inclusion (Haas & Shimada, 2014).

This naïve writing concerns the same employee, John, who needed the manager to explain his life course to him. John had difficulty understanding the concept of sharing because he had worked for many years with individualistic superiors native to Quebec, and had never worked with immigrants (or not much) and even less with a manager from an immigrant background. John’s perception of the manager is based in the rejection of the other, the foreigner, the different and the singular. Nevertheless, thanks to the manager’s sustained dialogue with this employee, he started opening up to others, little by little (Steinbach, 2015). Openness to others makes it possible to know people better, so the unknown becomes known, which can lessen fears (Bauman 2001; Bauman, 2013) and promote inclusion. So, solidarity cannot be forced on someone because then it would be fake. Openness to others (Levinas 1972) is something the person experiences. If one only seems to encourage openness, one makes a derision of it (Faÿ 2008). Indeed, if it is just instrumental, if the person pretends to be open, but in fact isn’t, others would be disappointed because they expected to be treated as subjects, not considered as objects, a resource or a number. Even if it is common in organizations, a utilitarian solidarity management is not appropriate. It is possible to make the unknown less unknown, reduce fears, encourage exchanges and not focus only on personal results. However, it would not only be derision, it could also be dangerous to want people to become united; the fake culture and derision which would result from this would lead to an outcome which is opposite to what is desired.

Efficient Management?

Naïve Writing

The time I used to open the bank, say hello or show a customer how to use a bank card wasn’t detrimental to my task. My objective was efficiency and effectiveness.

It is with this mindset that we have managed to remain in the top group of the best banking centres. Alpha appeared 40 times out of the 46 weeks during our fiscal year.

The first year I was manager, the banking centre finished in the fourth quartile; this is not good. It was logical considering all the difficulties my team and I had inherited, with only one month of management under my leadership before the end-of-year review. The second year I was manager, we finished in the third quartile, and the third year, we finished in the second quartile. This year marks my fourth year as manager and the Alpha branch

is the seventh-highest-performing branch in Canada out of 1,007 branches. My team of six (including myself) has held the top spot steadily for eight weeks. This is the first time such a thing has happened in the centre's 50 years of existence. I predicted we would have results, but the team members had not believed it could be done. When we came in second, they started believing and we went further to get first place in the weeks that followed.

I gave my employees a Christmas gift: a one-day paid leave. This method, which I implemented and used for four years in Alpha, is being adopted nationally by BankC.

Even if management that focuses on persons seems inefficient and costly (e.g. perceived waste of time to establish relationships), it does not escape an economic rationality (Danese & Di Nicola, 1989). According to Pirson and Lawrence (2010), the combined value models show how the economic system can be reconnected to its humanist root. Mounier (1952) explains that the suppression of what is human in work can lead people to rebel (e.g. when workers are confined to their specialty by a division of labour without a compensatory participation in the administration). When people are cared for without kindness, some costs can increase, like the cost of employee burnout. Hassard et al. (2018) examine the cost of work-related stress, estimating that it represents 187 billion dollars. Between 70 and 90% of this cost is explained by a loss of productivity and has been estimated for American businesses at more than 300 billion dollars a year. In fact, stress can lead to absenteeism, staff turnover, mistakes, lower productivity, burnout, lower morale, increased use of drugs and alcohol, and workplace violence and harassment.

Reflexive and Diffractive Works

Here are some excerpts containing financial and human results related to the management of this community of persons.

Plinio (2009) defines the sustainable performance of organizations as achieving short-term objectives while remaining focused on long-term objectives. Therefore, all results, both short and long term, increase the benefits for the organization, stakeholders and society. This sustainable development of people can also help reduce the (often hidden) costs associated with staff turnover, absenteeism, etc. Brunner et al. (2019) suggest that improving working conditions could help organizations reduce previously undetected productivity losses by implementing programs to improve the balance between work stressors. These authors also show that increased job demands affect employees to different degrees depending on their level of employment and their personal resources, and that not everyone benefits from additional resources. They highlight the need for organizations to take a personalized approach, paying extra attention to the most vulnerable employees. Thus, even if the manager of the banking centre offers advantages to the employees of this branch, the return is higher than the investment. Even if establishing a community of people can seem expensive, especially in terms of wasted time, and seem like a naïve managerial concept, it can in the end increase its efficiency. If everyone feels good at work, the hidden costs (Savall & Zardet, 2015) related to work stress will be minimized. Each member of the bank branch (including the manager) helping one another saves everyone time. Solidarity fosters branch performance, which in turn encourages a positive recursive loop of employee satisfaction and motivation. Nevertheless, difficulties were also experienced while implementing this change.

Discussion on Solidarity

After, presenting the results (the naïve writings and the reflexive-diffractive works), this section discusses them with the literature on solidarity to answer the article's aim to explore how organizations can develop solidarity in a work context.

Solidarity as communities of persons (Melé 2012) allows a dialogue (Helin & Avenier, 2016) between individualism and collectivism. Solidarity enables us to consider the needs and the acknowledgment of each person and the needs of the organization. Helin and Avenier (2016), based on Bakhtin (1984), see dialogue as a perpetual embattled tendency between two forces: one centripetal and the other centrifugal. The first drives unity, centralization and closure, making room for consensus. The second tends to move away from the centre, toward openness and decentralization, making room for innovation, creation, multiplicity and fragmentation. In this sense, persons and organizations are not opposed in a dialectical way, but interact in a dialogical one (Morin 2008). The dialogical principle means that two or more logics are united without duality being lost in the unity (Morin 2008). Each person and the organization are important and bring something to the other (the centripetal force) even if they could experience difficulties together (the centrifugal force). This dialogue between persons and organizations is seen in literature on diversity management conceptualized by Stahl et al. (2010). The taxonomy distinguishes convergence (with cohesion and groupthink) and divergence (with creativity and conflict). Bauman (2001) explains that difference could be viewed as a source of pleasurable experience or the fragility and uncertainty of the human condition.

The dominant managerial discourse is based on individualism, emphasizing individual results and apparent efficiency. Even if this promotes collaboration, it is false sociability (Faÿ 2008). Developing a culture of communities of persons fosters solidarity between employees and customers. Sincere acknowledgment and mutual support can help to create a healthy workplace that has an impact on customers' feelings and employee performance. However, wanting to develop performance through sincere acknowledgment and mutual support is not possible. It is impossible to promulgate solidarity within organizations. Even if it seems attractive to move away from individualism, imposed solidarity risks developing derision which makes persons feel like an object (Faÿ 2008). This is the opposite of the goals of persons management (Melé 2012). In a practical way, this means that in the future at work, it would be interesting to promote (not impose) solidarity values in order to be sincerely humane. According to our results, there are persons who influence others. The manager's behaviour is very important. Change is possible even at a local level.

Referring to internal and external solidarities (Hunt & Bendford, 2004), communities of persons in the bank branch includes everyone no matter their differences. But these communities do not include persons outside these communities (e.g. from other branches or other banks). There is even competition with other branches and banks. So, it is possible to say that persons outside these communities are excluded from solidarity. There is no external solidarity. According to Cronk (1973) interpreting Mead (1934), there are two models of consensus-conflict of social relations: intra-group consensus – extra-group conflict; intra-group conflict – extra-group consensus. In the first model, as we see in the bank branch, the members of the group are united in opposition to other groups that are assimilated to common enemies. The emphasis on internal solidarity fosters branch performance and renders external solidarity impossible. However, it is possible to develop other communities

to include persons that were not in the initial communities, for example with persons from another branch. Indeed, solidarity binds members of a community, so it is possible that the dark side of this solidarity is the exclusion of others (Wilde 2007), and there is no universal solidarity (Wilde 2004). A manager has to develop multiple communities in the organization to facilitate solidarities and support a culture based on openness to others. Thus the multiplicity of communities, where persons belong to several communities, makes it possible to avoid to reject someone and it is more realistic when an organization is not too small. And the culture based on openness to others (Albert & Perouma, 2017) could be open to the person even if they do not belong to the same community. The culture of mutual support could allow a person (as John in the mentioned experience) to become less individualistic and wish to belong to a community too. The importance is not to manage diversity, but to emphasize the openness to others and the personal contribution of each person.

It is possible to move away from individualism and the individualism-collectivism dichotomy, to another model that focuses on solidarity. This model, even if it promotes ethical value, is not naïve. It enables us to develop financial performance. It is a dialogue between individual and collective needs and goals. Nevertheless, imposing it on someone may generate derision. Even if this model is based on solidarity, it focuses only on internal solidarity.

Conclusion

The aim of this article was to explore how organization can develop solidarity in a work context. We used an autopraxeography method based on the experience of one of the coauthors as a bank branch manager to inquire this objective. The results were presented in four times. First, the manager is viewed as a person in his wholeness and his dignity, and this way of understanding the person is not only for the manager of this bank branch, it includes the other members of this organization. Second, the presence of a manager who is committed to setting up an inclusive climate, a persons management. Everyone can help, no matter their position and build solidarity. Third, some practical implementation difficulties were exposed. They make it possible to explain that a utilitarian solidarity management is not appropriate. The fake culture and derision which would result from this would lead to an outcome which is opposite to what is desired. Fourth, this persons management is not naïve. Solidarity fosters branch performance, which in turn encourages a positive recursive loop of employee satisfaction and motivation. Nevertheless, difficulties were also experienced while implementing this change. Then, the discussion shows that this model based on solidarity focuses only on internal solidarity.

Thus, solidarity based on communities of persons offers a non-naïve alternative to individualism. While it is not a panacea, neither is it just a utopia! If managers really live the values promoted by this humanistic management, it would be a good way to consider the future at work: good for business and good for human flourishing of persons.

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