Unphilosophical Employees

Work ethics in Organizations according to neo-Aristotelian Work Design Theory

(DRAFT)

Abstract

This paper seeks to establish a connection between neo-Aristotelianism and Work Design theory, particularly in addressing the issue of unethical decision-making by employees in autonomous organizational contexts. While Work Design theory underscores the significance of autonomy in enhancing organizational efficiency and personal development, some scholars within this framework have highlighted the need to comprehend how autonomous employees can avoid unethical behavior, especially in the absence of a normative standard for action. In response, we argue that MacIntyre's virtue ethics offers a suitable philosophical framework for addressing this problem within a neo-Aristotelian context. Specifically, it can provide Work Design theory with a structured approach for employees to strengthen their moral judgment in routine decision-making, simplifying the complexities associated with moral philosophy and facilitating the making of ethically sound decisions based on straightforward arguments for action.

Introduction

Neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics researchers have introduced MacIntyre's goods-virtues-practice-institution scheme as a framework for explaining the firm as a community of work, that is, a practical setting—the workplace—defined in terms of virtues, internal goods and excellence (e.g., Beadle & Moore, 2006; Moore, 2004, 2008; Moore & Beadle, 2006). In this context, virtue ethicists have elucidated the nature of business organizations and corporate agency as shared practices, offering employees the opportunity to exercise virtues for accessing internal goods and attaining personal flourishing (Beadle, 2017). Researchers within the MacIntyrean framework have further characterized firms as communities of work, providing a context in which participants can engage in virtuous actions (MacPherson, 2013) and allowing organizations to embrace a narrative of excellence (Moore, 1999, 2005; Collier, 1995). Noteworthy contributions from Moore (2017) and Beadle and Knight (2012) have extended MacIntyre's virtue ethics to develop a theory of work within organizations, connecting his ideas with the literature on meaningful work in organizations (also see Michaelson et al., 2014). According to these scholars, MacIntyre's philosophy offers a valuable framework for elucidating the ethical dimensions of employees' meaningful work. Similarly, other researchers have introduced MacIntyre's concept of personal deliberation to describe the interplay between the concepts of work and autonomy in organizations, aiming to achieve higher standards of excellence and contribute to the common good (Pinto-Garay, Scalzo, Ferrero, 2021).

But even though autonomy and deliberation have been studied in accordance with MacIntyre´s philosophy, we see that new advances can be made towards exploring other dimensions of employees´ ethical decision making in organizations. Particularly, we see that specific theoretical development are possible by means of introducing a MacIntyrean perspective on what non-philosophical organizational theories—such as Work Design—have defined as the problem of unethical acting of employees in autonomous contexts of work.

Work Design theory, indeed, have addressed the way that work is organized through tasks, responsibilities, activities, and work relationships (Knight & Parker, 2019), with special attention to the principle of autonomy and its connection with employees´ ethics. In this vein, Parker (2014) has explained that autonomy is a necessary condition for developing employees´ moral judgement, when the former represents an opportunity for employees to decide by themselves, especially when they are able to resolve ethical dilemmas and act in accordance with their moral judgement. However, despite all its positive outcomes, autonomy might also provide the opportunity for unethical acting in the organization.

In fact, working in autonomous contexts is—in Parker´s (2014) words—an antecedent and a moderator for both ethical and unethical decision-making. Therefore, even when autonomy can enhance moral judgment, it demands from employees an ethical background to reinforce correct decision-making in a way in which both technical and moral standards at work are achieved.

Considering the necessity to reinforce the moral judgment of employees, we claim that MacIntyre´s neo-Aristotelianism can provide a valuable conceptual framework needed to understand how employees, being unphilosophical persons, can decide with simple considerations based on the concept of excellent work. Indeed, according to MacIntyre, giving employees an ethical background cannot be made just by means of teaching moral philosophy. On the contrary, a workplace ethics—like any other practical setting—must be considered from the employees´ perspective in the context of their routine. This means, in other words, considering ethical decision-making in connection with employees´ day-to-day problems, which is usually based on simple and practical considerations.

This is, in fact, what MacIntyre describes as the importance of justifying and assessing our personal decisions and acting and those with whom "we participate in the transactions of everyday life … workplaces, and elsewhere, most of them plain unphilosophical persons, able in varying degrees to articulate the commitments presupposed by their judgments and actions." (MacIntyre, 2016, p.214); being the unphilosophical person not a pejorative calcification, but a way to indicate the non-theorist or the practical person, who is usually in need to deal with certain questions such as 'How and under what constraints should I act in this situation, if I am to maximize the satisfaction of my preferences?' or 'How should we act in this situation in order to achieve our common good?' (2016; p.214)[1].

Considerations of this sort are, in fact, the kind of questioning aimed at revealing particulars goods that, implicitly or explicitly, are at stake in routine tasks and deeds. However, at this point, is important for MacIntyre to provide some guide that—without falling into philosophical speculations—will prevent us from just a collection of practical questions. In fact, for MacIntyre, those who are deciding "… badly

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[1] E.g., 'What resources of time, money skill, and/or power should I/we devote to this project?' 'What kind of risks and what degree of risk are permissible?' 'What weight should be given to long term rather than short term considerations?' 'What predictable reactions of others need to be taken into account?' 'What responsibility do I/we have for possible side-effects of our activities?' 'Is this the right time to do this?' and, prior to all of these, 'With whom do I need to deliberate about this?' (2016; p.217).

need a map of those particular conflicts, open or suppressed, within or concerning … workplaces … in which they are or ought to be involved, so that they can identify the particular goods that are at stake in each of those conflicts". (2016; p.214). This is, in fact, the key argument according to which MacIntyre´s neo-Aristotelianism can provide arguments to improve autonomous moral judgment, namely, a map or guide based on the concept of ethical work in terms of excellence, and this, according to MacIntyre himself, can be provided to plain unphilosophical employees a scheme for assessing in a very simple way the goods at stake in their day-to-day work.

Therefore, to develop this guidance for moral judgment we will do the following: in the first place, we will show what autonomy in organizations is in accordance with Work Design theory, with special attention to the problem of unethical decision-making. Secondly, we will explain how a neo-Aristotelian Virtue Ethics theory based on MacIntyre provides a theory of ethical decision-making in terms of work excellence. With this, we will be able to indicate the most relevant features of excellence, especially in terms of work virtues. Finally, we will propose a scheme of simple considerations (a map in MacIntyre´s words) that any employee could do in their regular decision making towards identifying wrongdoings or alternatives of excellency at work. According to this, we will explore in this final part the connection between such systematization and Work Design theory to show the convenience of incorporating neo-Aristotelianism into organizational theory in this particular problem of employees´ ethical decision-making in autonomous contexts of work.

Work Design theory

As mentioned before, Work Design encompasses theories that explore the interplay between production and employees' development, focusing on the organization of tasks, responsibilities, activities, and interpersonal relationships among employees (Knight & Parker, 2019). Over the past century, organizational theory's emphasis on Work Design has predominantly centered on the ethical aspects of work, offering diverse perspectives (Parker et al., 2017). The field has evolved from its mechanistic roots in the early stages (Tsoukas and Cumming, 1997) to contemporary discussions that highlight the importance of personal autonomy within organizational contexts.

Mechanistic organization of work and welfare

In its initial stages, Work Design, represented by Taylor's Scientific Management (Taylor, 1911), was driven by social concerns related to low salaries. Taylor was motivated to devise a method that would enable

organizations to raise employees' salaries and lift them out of poverty. He conceived that compensation increment was viable by enhancing workers' efficiency, thereby making the organization not only capable of affording higher salaries but also willing to do so due to improved standards of employee efficiency (Drucker, 1994). Grounded in the belief that low-skilled employees were largely ignorant and incapable of self-improvement, Taylor advocated for a complete separation between planning and execution. This approach almost eradicated employees' deliberation and autonomy. Consequently, all decision-making within the organization was centralized in a planning department responsible for restructuring all employee tasks, minimizing the need for employees to make decisions about their assignments (Littler, 1978).

The establishment of a planning department aimed to provide a set of task definitions based on calculations of time, resources, individual displacements, and movements that each employee was required to follow. Taylor dedicated his work to formulating the best method—scientific laws and replicable techniques—for organizing individual performance. But even though the changes introduced in organizations because of Taylor´s principles of scientific management produced a substantial increasement in efficiency and better salaries for employees in many industries—especially across the United States (Drucker, 1994)—they also impacted on employees in a way many times described as mere dehumanization of work or employees instrumentalization (Breen 2012). In other words, the application of Taylorism increased productivity and salaries, but it also caused a setback in workers development.

Indeed, Tayloristic policies that curtailed autonomy and personal decision-making at work led to what, many years later, was recognized as a cognitive separation of employees from their jobs. This condition resulted in frustration, apathy, stress, anxiety, and various workplace-related illnesses (Kanungo, 1992), coupled with physical deterioration and certain mental health issues (Parker, 2014). Consequently, the increasing popularity of Scientific Management eventually spurred a theoretical shift led by researchers who prioritize the human aspects of work while acknowledging the significance of efficiency and productivity.

Autonomous productivity and personal development

The reevaluation of work design in organizations in a different manner from Taylorism was initially advocated by McChesney (1917) and Mayo (1928). Subsequently, other theories emerged to integrate the significance of employees' personal development by linking autonomous decision-making and organizational efficiency in the workplace (Parker et al., 2017). These theories include job characteristic

models (Herzberg, 1959; Hackman & Oldham, 1975), sociotechnical systems and autonomous work groups (Trist & Bamford, 1951), job demands and controls, and job demands and resources (Karasek, 1979; Demerouti et al., 2001), among others.

In this context, personal initiative and autonomy in organizational theory—primarily developed through a multidisciplinary approach encompassing psychology, sociology, and political sciences (Laaser & Bolton, 2022; Bailey et al., 2016)—emerged as a valuable organizational feature within Work Design Theory (Schwartz, 1982). This aspect played a pivotal role in fostering employee responsibility for the organization's performance through increased participation (McCall, 2001) in co-creation processes (Spreitzer & Porath, 2014). Thus, autonomy is not only as a condition for increasing organizational performance, but also as a requirement for employees´ personal development. Autonomy, in this sense, has been connecting with employee's self-esteem (Brenkert, 1992), work identity (Brenkert, 1992), meaningful work (Martela et al., 2021; Pratt & Ashforth, 2003), and self-respect (Hsieh, 2008) among other positive outcomes for workers personal development.

Facilitation and capacity

Organizational theory and work design literature—mainly developed in psychology, sociology, and political sciences (Laaser & Bolton, 2022; Bailey et al, 2016)—set the discussion on autonomy in two general approaches that we could identify as (i) organizational facilitation, on the one hand, and (ii) individual capacity, on the other.

(i) WD theories associated the capacity and convenience for organizations with the provision of autonomy to employees, therefore facilitating workers with effective decision power over their tasks and resources. In other words, this means that employees´ decision-making depends on the organizational conditions, and that, lacking organizational support, is almost impossible for workers to act on their deliberational capacity, achieve their own objectives, adjust their methods and objectives towards optimizing their tasks (Schwartz 1982; Sayer 2009). In this vein, autonomy is much more an organizational condition for deliberative work, or, put differently, it depends on the organization's capacity to provide the space and resources for workers to effectively decide how to perform in their given assignments. Therefore, the role of organizations changes, when, aimed at increasing autonomy, its responsibility is to organize the scope and boundaries for different grades of autonomous

work and to establish what is expected from autonomous employees considering the general purpose of the organization (Melé 2005).

(ii)   On the other hand, the individual capacity approach to meaningful work—even though entails the organizational context—is rather focused on the capacity of employees to deliberate and to do it correctly. In this sense, the goal of an organizational policy aimed at increasing the quality of autonomous work is not so much to organize autonomy, but to support the capacity of employees to optimize their decision-making processes. Therefore, the value of autonomy in this sense is centered much more on the technical, strategical, and ethical capabilities of employees to decide within the organizational context.

In this context, autonomy associated with individual capacity is intrinsically related to individual moral judgements (Parker, 2014). Thus, even when autonomy provides a condition for personal development—autonomy as a *sine qua non* condition for personal flourishing—it does not necessarily cause employees to decide correctly in ethical terms. In other words, autonomy does not provide total guarantees that good decision-making in certain contexts of work will be held properly, demanding from employees an ethical background—moral intelligence, we might say—to reinforce their correct decision making.

However, when the organization takes on the responsibility of enhancing employees' capacity for ethical decision-making, a potential paradox arises. In such cases, when organizations set criteria to improve the ethical decision-making of ostensibly autonomous employees, these workers may, in reality, find themselves constrained by the organization's standards for ethical decision-making. In essence, the insistence on compliance with ethical standards can limit autonomy, as it often becomes a mere 'check of instructions.' The question then arises: How can organizations enhance their employees' deliberative capacities without prescribing what decisions they should make—acting as facilitators for ethical decision-making without impinging on autonomy?

Responsibility for excellence work

Researchers in organizational theory have argued that an organizational theory seeking to delineate the interplay between theory and practice is best characterized in Aristotelian terms (Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Solomon 2003, 2004; Weaver 2006). In this context, an Aristotelian organizational theory is underpinned by the concept of practical wisdom (*phronesis*) (Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics 1140b),

representing the virtue of practical knowledge (Statler et al., 2007). This perspective posits that decision-making should be rooted in the principle of responsibility and excellence.

According to this, autonomy is not an organizational *laissez faire*. Morally speaking, autonomy reflects the opportunity to deliberate in a responsible manner, and this is not a mere compromise, but being personally engaged with better standards of excellence at work. In this sense, we mean by responsibility the capacity of having what is called integrity of character, or, in other words, the personal compromise to both self-constitution and to a common good (Finnis 1980). In this sense, the reinforcement of moral judgment is not a restriction of autonomy, but a way to make employees more capable of recognizing what it means to be excellent at their workplaces.

In the first place, excellency can be said as for the quality of the end product (2016, p. 131). In this sense, MacIntyre sustains that "After, workers became members of teams, each team having the responsibility for making a particular car, taking it through each stage of production, so that the excellence of the end product became the goal of their cooperative activity and their responsibility" (2016, p.130). In this sense, there is a responsibility to be excellent in good craftmanship, i.e., a good product accompanied by the perfection of the craftsperson (MacIntyre, 1994; Breen, 2007). This is, in fact, a particular form of excellence associated with the exercise of skilled labor (MacIntyre, 1981, p.159.) revealed in the outcome of production, like the car for the case of the Japanese factory (2016, p.131).

Moreover, there is a responsibility in producing something on common good terms, that is, in a way in which the goods achieved are mine insofar as they are also those of others (1999, p. 119). Work excellence, in this sense, is essentially a practice aimed to both personal and the common good, that is, "producing goods and services that contribute to the life of the community …". (MacIntyre, 2016; p. 170).

However, these are not two separate forms of excellence at work. On the contrary, both forms of excellence at work must be held in a complementary manner. Indeed, under the scheme of institutions, internal and external goods, skilled work, common good, and practice, MacIntyre conceives that personal work can be excellent when it is characterized as (i) producing and acquiring external goods for the sake of putting them as resources for sustaining institutions and practices; (ii) as having and applying technical skills to serve internal goods; and (iii) as achieving external and internal goods for both personal and common benefit.

But in a parallel manner, MacIntyre is also quite clear that work can become corrupted (i.e., the opposite to excellence) when performed in at least one of this three ways: (i) when applying technical skills at work just for the sake of its results, that is, a vice of **effectiveness**; (ii) working just for the sake of having external goods or, in MacIntyre´s definition, a matter of **pleonexia** or competitiveness; and (iii) participating at the workplace but aimed at the opposite to a common good approach, which is to decide and act only for the sake of individual benefits or, in other words, individualistically and motivated by plain **self-interest**.

The latest, in fact, is what MacIntyre would define as the problem of individualism, which is the opposite of deciding and doing with a sense of common good. For MacIntyre, individualistic behavior is proper of those who act in a certain manner justified because of considering as goods those that are mine-rather-than-others' or others'-rather-than-mine. Accordingly, the individualistic agent neglects the fact that genuine goods can only be good for me as they are also those of others (1981, p.119).

Also in this line, MacIntyre considers that willing to participate in cooperative and caring relationships with other fellow citizens or coworkers for a common good is, in fact, the path for correct decision-making in ethical terms. However, this intention for attending a common good is restricted—or basically impossible—for those who decide to participate in organizations in terms of what MacIntyre calls effectiveness and acquisitiveness.

Effectiveness is a criterion according to which actions are valued only in terms of functionality. For MacIntyre, this means that, as in bureaucratic systems of work, the goal is to achieve the most effective manner to match means and ends (1981, p.25-26) in an economic, operational, and productive administration of scarce resources. Thus, managers and employees are considered good when they are proven in their technical skills (1981, p.74), that is, when they are known to be capable of transforming in the most efficient manner raw material into final products, unskilled labor into skilled human capital, or capital into profits (1981, p.30). The logic of effectiveness, therefore, is the criterion of optimization held by the application of complex techniques on different available resources, but nothing more.

On the other hand, acquisitiveness is characterized by the sole seeking of external goods, that is, money, power, and status. The point of this form of corruption is not the efficiency in achieving these goods, but simply the capacity to obtain them, no matter how. This is, in fact, a form of commercial corruption as it values, for instance, any form of dealings just for the sake of getting the best amount of money as soon as possible (Dawson, 2009; Moore 2002). Under this logic of accumulation, MacIntyre sustains that

acquisitiveness is a corruption of justice, when having more money, power of status is possible under the logic of beating competitors (1981, p.155), as in a zero-sum game in which a genuine common good does not have any room.

Considering the risk to fall into individualism, effectiveness, and acquisitiveness, work—as any other human practice—needs virtues to overcome the power of institutions (1981, p.194), who naturally tend to foster the corruption in terms of said three vices. Indeed, MacIntyre (1999, p. 112) sustains that "only through the acquisition and exercise of the virtues that individuals and communities can flourish in a specifically human mode". Accordingly, he makes references to the importance of having specific virtues associated with work in organizations, namely, (i) being a practical reasoner able to distinguish genuine from apparent goods (MacIntyre, 2016, p. 189-190) in **shared deliberations**, (ii) acting with a sense of **fellowship**, and (iii) having the good habit of **care**. Emphasizing these three forms of virtues in MacIntyre does not mean, however, that other virtues are not needed to work in an organization. On the contrary, he suggests that justice, courage, or truthfulness are also essential for work as for any other practice (1981, p. 194), but the former three are more directly associated with work performed in the context of economic-productive institutions.

Indeed, these virtues apply to work especially because of the way materialism and especially individualism can affect employees and workplaces. MacIntyre, in effect, considers that a main disposition contrary to excellence in work is individualism. For him, excellence demands for each person to take into consideration the goods of the community to define and pursue his/her own goods, but in a way according to which the goods of the community are also his/her own. Accordingly, the correct way to overcome individualism is to be aware that (i) common goods are not a summing of individual goods, and (ii) that personal goods—even though they are more than the common good—are in fact achieved in the effective capacity to contribute to the good of the community (1999, p.109).

In this vein, MacIntyre conceives that a sense of common good enable the capacity to identify a variety of goods and excellence that can be made 'for me' (personally) and for others (commonly), as it happens when we recognize the good of others that that are also 'mine' and that can be shared at the workplace. However, this approach to personal and common goods is not simply a matter of a philosophical conclusions, but also what MacIntyre sees in the normal consideration that every plain person can do by simple considering 'How is it best for me to live?' and 'How is it best for this community of which I am a part to live?' (MacIntyre, 2016, p.167).

In other words, even though individuals can conceive the importance of the common good as an essential reason for action—philosophically speaking— it is also important for MacIntyre to safeguard the practical process needed to express the features of the corresponding common goods to that individual. In other words, one thing is to understand theoretically the importance of the common good for being excellent and the risk of individualism to be corrupted, but another is to be aware on how is a common good specifically characterized for me and for others in very practical terms for plain persons.

For this reason, is so important to have the good habit of deliberating at work in a shared manner to avoid the need to be a theorist. MacIntyre (2016, p. 51-52), indeed, sustains that deliberation must be made in a shared manner with whom concerns to that common good. If deliberation is done individually, it is very difficult to know how common goods are to be achieved, when an individualistic approach can hardly overcome partiality and one-sidedness of initial judgments and prejudices. In this sense, he adds that "We live out our lives, both individually and in our relationships with each other, in the light of certain conceptions of a possible shared future, a future in which certain possibilities beckon us forward and others repel us, some seem already foreclosed and others perhaps invisible" (MacIntyre, 1981, p.215). Rational agents through shared deliberations processes with others concerning mutual common goods can share with those others and their deliberations how to give a due place to each good in their individual lives (MacIntyre, 2016; pp. 175).

However, shared deliberations are for MacIntyre, in our own words, just a first stage in achieving excellence in practice. Indeed, excellency is not just a matter of deliberating in a shared manner, especially because the processes of integrating collective deliberations can be limited to mere individualistic interests in cooperation, which is clearly no guarantee for a sense of common good. Put differently, a quite individualistic person can also participate in a shared deliberation process, and just by participating, this person is not in the path for becoming excellent. It is true for MacIntyre that excellent practices depend on other people and on how far they are willing to cooperate (MacIntyre, 2016) and that a certain kind of cooperation is characteristically involved in excellent practices (MacIntyre, 1981). It is also true that no one can individually achieve what is necessary for subsistence and everyone needs the cooperation of others, and this is why Aristotle and Aquinas agree on sustaining thar each person is a social animal, that is, that naturally lives in society (Aquinas, De Regno, I, 1, 2; Aristotle, Pol, 1252b; NE, 1133a). However, cooperation, even when it is operated under shared deliberation processes, does not always fulfill a standard for excellence. Indeed, as shown by Horvath (1995), Macintyre agrees that any form of cooperation can be implemented by individuals that have placed themselves instead of others.

Sociability, cooperation, and shared deliberation processes do not necessarily imply a common good. In fact, an individualistic form of cooperation results in a sort of general good that is valued by individuals *qua* individuals in a way in which any form of cooperation is merely a way to better achieve individual benefits to be enjoyed by individuals *qua* individuals (MacIntyre, 2016).

For this, MacIntyre is clear in affirming that—willing to overcome such individualistic form of cooperation—the virtue of friendship is badly needed to intend and to achieve a consistent bond of community (MacIntyre, 1981). The virtue of friendship, indeed, enables individuals to be more than just collaborative but aimed at achieving common goods as, for instance, with colleagues at the workplace (MacIntyre, 2016, p.118). Aiming for fellowship, in fact, channels any form of shared deliberation practice into a practical judgment that not only looks towards 'your neighborhood's good', but it also fosters a personal choosing for the best of the community. In line with Aristotle, MacIntyre (1981, p. 229; 156; 2016, p. 56) sustains that friendship is in fact indispensable for common projects of shared goods, as well as for having and sustaining goods that are fully common, because they are, at the same time, goods in a threefold manner, that is, goods of others—coworkers—, goods for me—as a worker—, and goods of each of us who participate in a specific practical setting like the workplace (1999, p. 150)—as colleagues.

Accordingly, friendship is not a matter of simple affection. In line with the Aristotelian ethics, MacIntyre (1981, p.156) understands that affections are important for virtues, but in a secondary role. Friendship is in fact the habit of intending and sustaining a common good without any individualistic consideration, but based on the practical idea that such goods are valued at the same time as being a good for **others,** for **me,** and for **us**.

However, the virtue of friendship cannot be described as the habit of contribution just in terms of making estimations on the overall benefit and mutual benefits in this threefold manner just mentioned. Friendship, in fact, needs another virtue to overcome any form of individualistic calculation, namely, the good habit of caring. Indeed, to care is to give without any calculation about what can be received, that is, to be uncalculating in a way in which we do not rely on strict proportionality of networks of giving and receiving (1999a, p. 126). Caring is the habit that helps us to integrate into a community in a way in which we became vulnerable to loss. In other words, because of care we participate under conditions of uncertainty according to which there is always a potential regret because of eventual harm (2016, p.202).

But looking forward to participating in working relationships featured by uncertainty is not a matter of being reckless. Uncertainty is in fact derived from the intention of helping community members to thrive, or, in other words, to act just for the sake of attending them in what they need to thrive in certain aspects of their life, like the workplace. In this vein, MacIntyre ideas about care can be explained as the need to invest in working relationships, in our associates and employees, but in a realistic manner according to which we know that there is always a chance to lose. Therefore, the essential value of acting with care is not so much the uncertainty, but the importance of caring for my next others and having others to care for me as the only way for achieving better standards of human flourishing. Uncertainty is, in fact, a concomitant feature of being really committed with the common project and betting on it as the only way to fully intend my team and coworkers thriving.

Nevertheless, caring cannot be a matter of romanticism. The virtue of care does not neglect the importance of attending to the external goods required to sustain organizations and communities. Indeed, for MacIntyre (1999, p. 126) a sense of prudent calculation is needed. Indeed, the concept of work in MacIntyre reflects not only the importance of being excellent because of shared deliberation, friendship and caring, but also the importance of achieving excellence because of being skilled and efficient as we explained for being excellent in conformity with the end product. MacIntyre sustains that good working practices must take into consideration the importance of placing the effectiveness of the institutional dimension of any workplaces[2] (MacIntyre, 1981; p. 194) to serve the virtue of work virtues by means of having employees committed with being skilled[3] (MacIntyre, 1981; p. 193) in productive[4]

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[2] Institutions are characteristically and necessarily concerned with what I have called external goods. They are involved in acquiring money and other material goods; they are structured in terms of power and status, and they distribute money, power and status as rewards. Nor could they do otherwise if they are to sustain not only themselves, but also the practices of which they are the bearers (MacIntyre, 1981; p. 194).

[3] What is distinctive in a practice is in part the way in which conceptions of the relevant goods and ends which the technical skills serve—and every practice does require the exercise of technical skills—are transformed and enriched by these extensions of human powers and by that regard for its own internal goods which are partially definitive of each particular practice or type of practice. (MacIntyre, 1981; p. 193).

A flourishing workplace requires workers with relevant skills who understand what they are doing, workers who are able to improvise in those moments of crisis that afflict all workplaces recurrently. (MacIntyre, 2016; p. 177)

[4] After, workers became members of teams, each team having the responsibility for making a particular car, taking it through each stage of production, so that the excellence of the end product became the goal of their cooperative activity and their responsibility.

(MacIntyre,2016, p.130), cooperative[5] (MacIntyre, 2016; p. 110), and profitable activities[6] (MacIntyre, 2016; p. 91). In this sense, we may add to MacIntyre´s Japanese factory, that each team member is both responsible to make an excellent car and in a shared, friendly, and caring manner.

In this sense, any ethical decision-making done by employees in autonomous contexts of work is, considering MacIntyre, a way to be responsible for the excellence of the product and for the common good of the team and the organization. Therefore, the plain person—the unphilosophical employee—when deciding correctly should be in capacity to consider some very applicable features of excellence and corruption, no matter the organizational circumstances of work. In other words, there is a need to consider how can we reflect unphilosophically and in a simple manner on regular questionings such as "why should I not cheat my clients to improve the company´s sales?", "Is there any reason for not allowing forged products to be sold through my company´s retail platform?", "Is it correct just to follow instructions, no matter what my superior is telling me to do?", "should I earn more?", or "Why I shouldn´t use the company car for my Uber work at night?", among others.

Unphilosophical systematization for excellent work and wrongdoings

As we have said before, MacIntyre suggests that rational agents, like employees, need a map of those conflicts at workplaces over which such agents need to decide on. This is, for MacIntyre, to identify the particular goods at stake in those open or implicit conflicts associated with decision-making. A map, in our opinion, is not a matter of mere simplification for unphilosophical employees. Even though the introduction of some moral principles into regular decision making of employees must be made in a very simple and appliable manner, it is also true that these moral principles must be consistent with a moral philosophy (such as MacIntyre´s neo-Aristotelianism), needed to argue (maybe in other less practical or more philosophical circumstances) that such principles are not mere opinions, emotions or fluctuating desires, but correct reasons for action based on a philosophical stance (MacIntyre, 1981, p.264).

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[5] All of them involve commitments to making and sustaining institutions that provide for those practices through which common goods are achieved, practices of families, workplaces, schools, clinics, theatres, sports, institutions that characteristically, although not always, take the form of cooperative enterprises. (MacIntyre, 2016; p. 110).

[6] "We are to grow wealthier by being more productive … Agents need to understand that the acquisition of money is no more than a means to the achievement of and the acquisition of goods and that such achievement and acquisition is to serve common goods" (MacIntyre, 2016, p.91).

Therefore, such a map, as we will show, must be a way of asking ourselves in a simple manner about regular situations at the workplace, but considering what constitute the goods of excellence and risks of corruption associated with day-to-day deliberations. In this vein, if we follow MacIntyre´s (2016; p. 170) idea about deciding ethically because of excellency at work, we could resume three ways to recognize wrongdoings (i.e., individualism, effectiveness, and competitiveness) and three ways to recognize of excellence in work decisions (i.e., shared deliberation, fellowship, and care) as it follows:

- Is this decision made only for my individual benefit (viz. **individualism**)?
- Do I value this decision just for the sake of making things work (viz. **effectiveness**)?
- Do I value this decision only for a matter of money, power, or/and fame (viz. **competitiveness**)?
- Is this the result of a shared deliberation process with my co-workers (viz. based on a **shared deliberation**)?
- Is this a good for other co-workers, for me, and for us (viz. the virtue of **fellowship**)?
- Is this a way to foster the organization's development (viz. the virtue of **care**)?

In this sense, the organization who fosters ethical decision making is not channeling individual decisions, but it is moving employees to consider the goods at stake—in conflict—in their decision-making.

Has organizational theory addressed these features in a way compatible with such neo-Aristotelian approach? If so, can the former theory play the role in connecting neo-Aristotelian ethics on decision-making with empirical research on these matters?

Individualism, effectiveness, and competitiveness in Organizational Theory

Shared deliberation, fellowship, and care in Organizational Theory

Ideas about future research

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