

**Disponível em:**

<http://editora.unoesc.edu.br/index.php/race>  
RACE, Joaçaba, v. 16, n. 3, p. 867-884, set./dez. 2017

**DISCUSSING THE CHOICES OF THE CHANGE  
LABORATORY'S PARTICIPANTS: A LOOK INTO THE  
ORDINARY MAN**

*Discutindo sobre escolha dos participantes do Laboratório de Mudança: um olhar para o  
Homem Ordinário*

**Fábio da Silva Rodrigues**

E-mail: [fabiosrod@gmail.com](mailto:fabiosrod@gmail.com)

Mestre em Agronegócios pela Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul; Especialista em Economia e Gestão do Agronegócio pela Universidade Estadual de Maringá; Doutorando em Administração pela Universidade Estadual de Maringá; Professor Assistente na Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul.  
Endereço para contato: Avenida Colombo, 5790, Zona 7, 87020-900, Maringá, Paraná, Brasil.

**Marcio Pascoal Cassandre**

E-mail: [mcassandre@hotmail.com](mailto:mcassandre@hotmail.com)

Doutor em Administração pela Universidade Positivo com período sanduíche pela University of Helsinki no Center for Research on Activity, Development and Learning – Institute of Behavioural Sciences; Mestre em Administração pela Universidade Estadual de Maringá; Professor Adjunto no Departamento de Administração da Universidade Estadual de Maringá.

**Elisa Yoshie Ichikawa**

E-mail: [elisa\\_ichikawa@hotmail.com](mailto:elisa_ichikawa@hotmail.com)

Doutora em Engenharia de Produção pela Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina; Mestre em Administração pela Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina; Professora associada no Departamento de Administração da Universidade Estadual de Maringá.

Artigo recebido em 30 de maio de 2017. Aceito em 28 de setembro de 2017.

### Abstract

*We believe that the ordinary man is a subject pregnant of possibilities in organizations. Therefore, we conducted a qualitative, exploratory approach to the objectives, through bibliographical research, as well as the in loco experience of one of the authors of this paper. We question the selection process of participants in the activity of the Change Laboratory (ENGSTRÖM, 2007), under the perspective of everyday life and ordinary man (CERTEAU, 2002). Our findings indicate that the ordinary man is able to use their own intelligence to re-signify artefacts and symbols, previously given. Although neglected and subjected to symbolic violence, mainly by the political power, the ordinary man plays an important role in the process of change and when ignored or underestimated may compromise the expected results in organizations.*

*Keywords: Activity Theory. Everyday life. Organizational learning. Change laboratory. Ordinary man.*

### Resumo

*Acreditamos que o homem ordinário é sujeito prenhe de possibilidades nas organizações. Assim, realizamos uma pesquisa de abordagem qualitativa, exploratória quanto aos objetivos, por meio de pesquisa bibliográfica, bem como da experiência in loco de um dos autores deste trabalho. Questionamos o processo de seleção dos participantes nas atividades do Laboratório de Mudança (ENGSTRÖM, 2007), sob a perspectiva do cotidiano e do homem ordinário (CERTEAU, 2002). Nossos resultados indicam que o homem ordinário é capaz de usar sua própria inteligência para ressignificar artefatos e símbolos, anteriormente dados. Embora negligenciados e submetidos à violência simbólica, principalmente pelo poder político, o homem comum desempenha um papel importante no processo de mudança, e, quando ignorado ou subestimado, pode comprometer os resultados esperados nas organizações.*

*Palavras-chave: Teoria da Atividade. Cotidiano. Aprendizagem organizacional. Laboratório de mudança. Homem ordinário.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

It is understood that the Change Laboratory (CL) is a learning activity which goal is the analysis and development of a particular productive activity. Such activity allows the practitioners to collectively reflect on their activity system which planning requires a detailed comprehension of processes, tools, models and instruments. However, reflecting on people involved in the application of such interventionist theoretical-methodological tool of labor transformations might make the process of change

involve not only the people directly involved in an activity, but also the ordinary man (CERTEAU, 2002).

Considering the three initial planning phases of the CL: 1) building dialogue with the organization representatives, by establishing a shared idea of the object of intervention; 2) preparing the collection process and gathering of initial data for the beginning and sequence of the CL's sessions; and 3) deciding about quantity, schedule and duration of the sessions, such process is recognized of importance to the application of the CL interventionist methodology in a particular activity (ENGESTRÖM, 2007; ENGESTRÖM et al., 1996; VIRKKUNEN et al., 1997; VIRKKUNEN; NEWNHAM, 2013). This planning contemplates a crucial moment in which we engage in discussing and analyzing in this article: the decision of who will be the participants of the CL.

To plan a CL is to assign the interventionist the role of managing the circumstances of session's implementation before its beginning. This role becomes more complex as the importance of equally and impartially choosing the subjects involved in the analysis is recognized, as well as the several hierarchical levels of an organization and, above all, the existence of other subjects that comprise the activity – whose speeches and expressions are not always recognized as important in the decisive processes of an organization.

Bearing the choice of participants to CL in mind, we will discuss the potentialities of the “ordinary man” (CERTEAU, 2002) to the CL, as an active character of possibilities, even though he is usually treated as a passive, invisible, second-class actor. This matter carries potentialities of participation in the CL, but giving the unfamiliarity of those who plan, or the determinations and requirements imposed by managers who negotiate with interventionists about the CL, they are not considered and their opinions are subdued by other hierarchically superior subjects. However, in many situations, those people are the ones who know the organization reality and practice thoroughly, and may be of great contribution to change, learning and development of the organization and the subjects.

Thus, we rely on two theoretical perspectives, CHAT - *Cultural-Historical Activity Theory* (ENGESTRÖM, 1987), and everyday life (CERTEAU, 2002), seeking to amplify the reflections about the process of choosing CL's participants, as well as reflecting on the everyday life of those ordinary man.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

Based on the classification of Gil (2007), methodologically, the present research can be classified as qualitative, in which refers to the approach, being able to be classified of the following typology: when the objectives, it is an exploratory research, as it seeks to bring closer the problematic proposal. In this aspect, we perform a bibliographical research on the procedures, to take more proximity to the base theory, since we theoretically approach two contexts of research little explored together, in the analysis of the same research object. In addition, we took advantage of the practical experience of one of the authors of the article, who has experience with the research object of this article to explore their experiences, providing the reader to approach the reality of Change Laboratory. From CHAT perspective, (ENGESTRÖM, 1987; ENGESTRÖM; MIETTINEN; PUNAMÄKI, 1999) we analyze the CL, raising questions about the definition of these learning subjects in the CLs sessions.

Having as a reference, among others, Cassandre's (2012) we reflect upon some of his questionings to discuss the selection of the CL's participants. We explore some potential conceptual gaps from the theoretical-methodological framework.

With reference to, among other works, the doctoral thesis of Cassandre (2012), which in its Finnish experience at the Center for Research on Activity, Development and Learning (CRADLE) can discuss capital issues, both the Theory of Historical and Cultural Activity as of the Change Laboratory, we start from some of these questions and from this empirical experience to reflect on the selection process of the participants of the CL. We believe that the main contribution of this paper is to reflect, both from the theory and empirical experience, about the process of selecting participants in the activities of Laboratory. Therefore, our final considerations raise relevant questions in order to stimulate academia to discuss this theme, usually little analyzed and reflected. Besides, we define the theoretical-methodological framework about everyday life (CERTEAU, 2002) to amplify the comprehension of the potential subjects involved in the activities of an organization, surpassing the conception that only those directly engaged in the work practice are the actual participants in such activities. Certeau's contribution to this article is mainly from his everyday life analysis, which explore practices, actions and consumptions of the ordinary man in his several social realities, from everyday life in the city to other types of organizations. In that way, we mostly rely on the author's tactics concept, and from these theoretical-methodological sources, we focus on the analysis of the common man, Certeau's (2002) ordinary man, in the CL or perhaps the "other subjects" as mentioned by Cassandre (2012).

Considering the fact that CL's participants are chosen to comprise the group that will be responsible for discussions and searching for changes in activities that have developed some type of conflict, problem, dilemma, crisis or contradiction, we suggest reflecting upon the importance that group also considers the ordinary man's role, without disregarding social, cultural and political factors that may influence the choice process.

In this paper we reflect on the theory of CL's everyday life, without necessarily following the daily routine of a specific case. Moreover, our intention is to discuss a theoretical, conceptual and methodological basis that might support a future empirical analysis, in a way that the proponents of the CL may consider such reflection in development process, more specifically, during the choice of the participants.

### **3 EVERYDAY LIFE AND THE ORDINARY MAN**

Michel de Certeau's contribution to the scientific universe goes beyond the limits of research on the ordinary man and the everyday. Jesuit historian, the French Michel de Certeau was a restless spirit who devoted his research to various areas of knowledge, such as anthropology, linguistics, and psychoanalysis. Without exhausting the multiple faces of Certeau, we present some contributions of this author.

In the book "The Writing of History" (1982), for example, Certeau argues that the historian has the function of giving voice to the unspoken; also points out that the ways of making history and the techniques employed will vary according to the cultural context. On the other hand, in the work "The culture in the Plural" (1995) problematizes that the process of democratization of the teaching was being replaced by the process of massification of the teaching.

In partnership with Luce Giard and Pierre Mayol (1998), Certeau researched on convenience. For Certeau, Giard and Mayol (1998), convenience refers to appropriate forms of practices and social relations in a collective group, when the subjects are mutually obliged to give counterparts, manifested by codes, symbols and behaviors that make possible human coexistence in this society through tacit contracts. Thus, "to remain 'convenient' one must know how to play lose-win." (CERTEAU; GARD; MAYOL, 1998, p. 55).

In another aspect, relevant research contributed to the discussion about the daily life from the work of Michel de Certeau in organizational studies: Carrieri et al. (2008) study the subversive strategies of survival against the process of institutionalization in a hippie fair; Sato and Oliveira (2008) investigate the relationship between

psychology and management in an ice cream factory; Murta, Souza e Carrieri (2010) analyze the discursive practices of chefs and restaurant owners in the context of gastronomic tourism in Minas Gerais; Leite da Silva et al. (2011) approached Certeau's approaches to Moscovici (1961) and Reed (1989) to propose a methodology for strategy as a social practice; Oliveira and Cavedon (2013) conducted an ethnography of everyday circus from Schatzki (2006) discussing practical and space; Quaresma and Leite da Silva (2014) studied the urban space management and tactics of the marketers in the reconstruction of a popular market in Espírito Santo. Cabaña and Ichikawa (2017) investigated the daily life of a street market in Paraná and found that the daily practices of the subjects will be changing as the organizational identity of the place where they work changes.

Michel de Certeau's approach to everyday life is one of the greatest references in such studies nowadays. Certeau (2002, p. 37-39) discusses the analysis of the common man, defined by the author as "the ordinary man", considering his daily operations, "supposedly subjected to passivity and discipline" to everyday life. Certeau (2002) examines the study of consumers' production, their practices, uses and consumptions, having as a reference the binomial "representations and behaviors".

The capitalist model of production provides little space to the ordinary man – given that they are considered unimportant individuals – either in the academic or organizational world, only leaving them the open gaps left in the system. However, acting inside the breaches, deviations and dispersion, the ordinary man are developed "another type of qualified 'consumption', in a different way from the one established by economic order, because it does not manifest itself through its own products, but rather through its ways of using the products imposed by a dominant economic order", what Certeau (2002, p. 39) called bricolages of dominant cultural economy.

From a Foucauldian perspective in *Discipline and Punishment*, Certeau admits there is a *modus operandi* in everyday creativity because control mechanisms are in service of those in power, even if in microscopic and disguised ways. Furthermore, it is important to know how the counteraction of the dominated groups takes part in the organization. Also, how consumers deal with mechanisms of discipline, in opposite direction, resisting to this command.

Such practices are constitute in "microbe-like tactics", in which users appropriate space, proliferating across social and technocratic structures, altering its functioning by using social shortcuts, applying shrewd techniques, comprising a network of anti-discipline. Certeau (2002, p. 44) characterized by the "marginality of a majori-

ty”: a heterogeneous mass of consumers that do not produce and do not create, but perform a symbolic activity.

As in a game, players deal with different forces, according to their resources, and the effects of players with uneven relations of power are also distinct. Thereof the necessity to separate and identify consumers, their power and room for maneuver, as well as to identify which circumstances, define the limits of their ‘arts of doing’. Such game develops itself in the field of tension, of violence, and in such context, “the tactics of consumption, the ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong, thus lend a political dimension to everyday practices”. Even though consumers use the words and the substance of the technocratic space, the use and production that derive them from it are distinct, demonstrating cleverness of desires and interests, diverging from the original meaning (CERTEAU, 2002, p. 45).

Certeau (2002), hence, reaches the core of his theoretical proposition about everyday life, defining the concepts of strategy and tactics. Strategies refer to the calculus or manipulation of power relationships, from the moment a subject of will and power can be isolated from an environment and assume a place, which the author calls it “proper”: it is the place of power. In strategy, the question of sight is highlighted because it allows one to see beyond, a panoptic sight, in which control is greater. Power of knowledge manifests itself in the action of conquering one’s own place.

Tactic, on the other hand, is characterized by the “absence of a proper locus [...] the space of a tactic is the space of the other”. It is dynamic and clever, it acts “in a controlled space that is dominated by the other”. It operates “blow by blow”, it is a skilled utilization of time because it acts in the cracks, “it accepts the change offerings of the moment, and seize ‘on the wing’ the possibilities that offer themselves at any given moment”. Opposing the “proper”, which is “a victory of place over time”, a tactic depends on time and explores opportunities to benefit itself (CERTEAU, 2002, p. 46, 100-102).

The weaker the forces submitted to strategic direction, the more subdued to wit they will be, since tactics are determined by the absence of power. Subjects constantly play with occurrences to transform them in “occasions”, using opportunity and convenience. Tactics are the art of the weak, of those that do not have space, but take advantage of their freedom to play with time and opportunity to obtain small gains (CERTEAU, 2002, p. 47, 100-102).

Tactics are related to a type of “popular knowledge”, it refers to ancient knowledge, which the Greek called *Métis*, as discussed by Certeau (2002, p. 47). Thus, to Certeau (2002), in rhetoric, tactics encounter possibilities of success because

ways of communication, manners, pauses, evasions, represent actions that take advantages from opportunities.

When we consider our contemporary society, ordinary man's tactic actions may be interpreted as subversive, going beyond the borders which such ordinary man are allowed to wander, since they do not have an "ownership", they do not belong anywhere. Certeau (2002, p. 95) argues that tactical actions, considered degrading or of vulgar use of culture, places or products, are, in reality, a retribution of the weak to the dominant power of production. To what he cannot grasp, he traces undetermined trajectories, and in the gaps, those apparently tortuous lines comprise tactical actions, being such practices of consumption "spirits of former times" (CERTEAU, 2002, p. 98).

Discussing space as a practiced place, Certeau (2002), from the 110<sup>o</sup> floor of the World Trade Center, talks about observing the city, arguing that its reality can only be known when one descends to street level. Similarly, it is understood that, in an organization, we can only capture reality when we descend to the operational level, the level of the ordinary man, by knowing their practices. We can only know such reality, its conflicts and contradictions as well as its innovations and creativity, when we enter the breaches that permeate everyday social relations.

Certeau (2002, p. 201-202) discusses the difference between space and place. According to his perspective, there is a distinction between both, which delimits a field, given that place is the order in which elements of coexistent relations are distributed. Therefore, it is impossible for both things to occupy the same place. On one hand, the "law of the ownership", an "instant configuration of positions" that imply an "indication of stability"; on the other hand, space is dynamic and motivated by the crossing of mobile elements, it considers direction, speed and time. Unlike place, space is not unequivocal nor stable, it does not have an "ownership". To summarize, the author states that, "space is a practiced place".

We presume that we only know the reality of organizations' everyday life when we enter the universe of the ordinary man's practices, especially tactic ones. In other words, in the realm of tactical practices there can reside valuable information, which many times escapes the less attentive look of the researcher.

#### **4 THE ACTIVITY THEORY AND THE CHANGE LAB**

The Activity Theory (AT) is a theoretical and interdisciplinary research approach derived from the Russian historical-cultural psychology, initiated between 1920 and 1930 by Vygotsky, Luria and Leontiev (VYGOTSKY, 1978; ENGSTRÖM,



1999; CASSANDRE; BULGACOV; CAMARGO, 2011). Among the philosophical basis of the Activity Theory, we highlight the work of Karl Marx, as he was the first philosopher to clearly explain the theoretical and methodological core of the concept of 'activity'. The inspiration to the development of the Activity Theory is attributed to Vygotsky, even though Leontiev is considered the person responsible for the formulation of its basic principles, proposing a structure of activity based on Marx (DAVYDOV, 1999a; 1999b; ENGESTRÖM, 1987; ENGESTRÖM; MIETTINEN; PUNAMÄKI, 1999).

In this theory, human beings are considered from a perspective of a collective life, motivated by purposes beyond a determined objective. In such way, the AT proposes to analyze the development of subjects inside practical social activities, valuing the fact that it is in those activities that human beings develop their abilities, personalities and consciousness. It is also because of such activities that subjects transform their social conditions, resolve their contradictions, generate new social artifacts and create new ways of living.

Besides, AT has been offering opportunities worldwide, of the amplification of the understanding the subjects inside organizations. It has also been valuing potentialities and possibilities of such subjects, from the moment they constitute themselves and are constituted by their interactions in the work place, using the Activity Theory's methodology of research.

The proposition of the CL is to offer tools for work transformation (VIRKKUNEN et al., 1997). Such methodology has been employed by researchers endorsed by an established theoretical-methodological support that has been developed since the 1980s, led by Engeström (1987). The Change Laboratory® is an interventionist method of research, based on Vygotsky's methods of double stimulation, which holds as a central proposition the idea that education and work practices may develop the object of activity by collective, cognitive and material reconceptualization (SANNINO, 2008).

According to Sannino (2008), the process of reconceptualization is mediated by video materials and theoretical models used as stimulus to the discussion and practice reformulation. Using such process, participants are challenged with contradictions from their practices, which is the result of their own actions, which offer practical transformation in work routine.

The CL is a toolkit of methodological concepts and principles that can be used in collaboration between researchers and professionals to create deep and cumulative changes in labor (ENGESTRÖM et al., 1996; VIRKKUNEN et al., 1997). The CL uses a series of tools that are based in a theoretical-methodological approach of

the Activity Theory: 1) Cultural Mediation Theory of human actions, 2) Method of Double Stimulation 3), Activity System Model and 4) Theory of Expansive Learning (ENGESTRÖM, 1987, 1999, 2008).

In the CL, the participative research processes provide subjects' and activity's development. The activity development is understood as the resolution of contradictions inside and between activity systems. Such development is based in a joint construction, established in theoretical conception, in which development depends on reasons, ideals and cooperation of practitioners. We understand by practitioners, all those involved in an activity: workers, managers, advisors, as well as stakeholders. In this way, the CL can only be implemented if there is engagement of these subjects in activity analysis and in the construction of a model, supported by specific techniques and methods.

According to Virkkunen and Newnham (2013), interventions usually comprises a limited number of representative participants of the activities. The idea is to find people whose knowledge and resources are necessary to the analysis of problems and design of solutions. These must represent different perspectives and must contribute to complementary resources and knowledge.

## **5 ABOUT OUR EXPERIENCE IN CRADLE**

In fact, our manuscript is not an empirical research, at least at this moment, but it reflects the authors' experiences, both empirical and theoretical, with academic universes presented. This is a theoretical discussion that originates from the theoretical knowledge and, above all, from the experience lived by one of the authors of this text (CASSANDRE) in CRADLE - Center for Research on Activity, Development and Learning - in Helsinki, Finland, where it was fulfilled a stage of the doctoral training (internship) in Helsinki under co-supervision of Yrjö Engeström. Our purpose is to reflect on the Change Laboratory practices using the theoretical perspective of Michel de Certeau about daily life, focusing in the ordinary man.

In this experiment, Cassandre could experience the daily life of a Change Laboratory, which is an intervention methodology that was developed by Engeström and Engeström in 1986 in response to the economic crisis scenario that demanded quick solutions to save the companies through transformation of these organizations practices, with the propose of offering tools to transform the job from the learning and development of the activity. This experience allowed Cassandre to know such activities routine in practice, by active participation in classes, seminars, guidance

and interviews with experts, as he showed in his doctoral thesis. In addition to this empirical experience, Cassandre had access to the theoretical framework that supports the Change Laboratory, from the theoretical contribution of Engeström and his collaborators, which gave to this study a significant theoretical background as well as knowledge about the methodology application.

Such concerns have arisen precisely from the daily life of organizations where the tools of Change Laboratory are applied, from the unveiling of these empirical realities, where it was noticed that the ordinary man is treated as a second class individual, at least in what is related to the participation in the activity of the Change Laboratory. So, we start from the understanding that the ordinary man is constituted as an alternative possibility to assumptions of Engeström, an individual perhaps neglected in the Change Laboratory. Thus, as we did not conduct empirical research, we try to encourage discussion as well as consolidate other theoretical discussions, providing support for possible empirical checks on future works about this issue.

## **6 THE ORDINARY MAN IN THE CHANGE LAB**

When the choice of participants and its importance to the CL is valued, it is also valued the diversity of the subjects' knowledge that may compose the laboratory sessions. This means deciding about the subjects, which factors are involved in such choices, as well as analyzing the impacts of such choices in the everyday practice of the CL.

We understand that, more than objectively and critically analyzing the theory, method and practice of the research, decisions about the subjects who will be involved in the CL are also important, given the existence of symbolic elements that involve organizational people and environment: the unsaid, the power, the symbolic violence, the silencing, the place from where one speaks; they all, somehow, influence the practice. The subtleties and subjectivities are difficult to capture, but they are fundamental to the organization and development process of the CL.

Regarding the insertion of Certeau's analysis of the ordinary man to the CL, we consider that such ordinary man are present and integrated in this organizational universe, even though they are not always noted and explored. The maid, the doorman, the apprentice, the cooks, the carriers, the woman, and the elderly: they are the minorities, the typical example of ordinary man.

If "space is a practiced place" Certeau (2002, p. 202), we consider the CL as an arena, an environment of dispute, conflicts and manifestations of power relations between the subjects, the interventionists, the organization owners, the managers and

the ordinary man who, in the absence of the proper, employ tactics' clever practices to they own maintenance and benefit.

We notice that there is a possible discrepancy between strategies, owned by the subjects of power, and tactics and its clever practices, which are left to the ordinary man. Fluid, diffuse and intangible, tactics are difficult to be perceived, especially when one relinquishes sensibility of action over a posture focused in formal experience, knowledge and practice, that comes from subjects who hold the power, represented by the position the scientist-researcher occupies in the CL's space.

The question that emerges regards the participation of such ordinary man in the everyday life of the CL from the choosing of the learning subjects and their participation possibilities in this space. Questions about how they participate, how they act and how such subjects are chosen, before they begin the activities in the process of change, are dear to us.

The deliberate intentionality in the choice of the research subjects, sustained in managers' decisions – which can decide in a utilitarian way, especially those with power of agency to influence other participants in the process of change – are our concern lest there is a biased choice.

It is our interest to denounce a reality that can disdain the ordinary man, suffocating his voice, considering them as invisible man, one that exists, but is not perceived; one that participates, but such participation is not reflected in his everyday practices. How does this seemingly egalitarian insertion of the ordinary man in everyday practices of the CL signify only an engineered strategy by the organizational summit to ensure legitimacy to the process of change or innovation, to jointly distribute responsibilities shared by the effects of such changes, or to justify a participative management process?

When Engeström et al. (1999) attribute to CHAT the mission to answer new social and historical demands, and discusses the dichotomies of internalization and externalization, the author states that this theme interests inasmuch as he observes that the analysis must come from how the subject of action innovates, creates, recreates, and signifies the organizations' uses and consumptions. In Certeau's perspective (2002), this reframing process is depicted through tactical activities, bricolages, and creative uses, giving new meanings to actions and innovations, escaping strategies proposed by the subjects of power, since ordinary man will act elements will not always be what the planner thinks.

Along these lines, Engeström et al. (1999) proposes that the elaboration process to search for solutions to problems comes from the group, its reality, and its

everyday life. People responsible for the intervention attempt to conduct the process, *a priori*, without guiding themselves in a rigid mechanism of action control, but directing the group's actions. We understand that, even when researchers theoretically and technically know the theme, in Certeau's perspective (2002), the one who genuinely knows the practice is the practitioner, who might be the ordinary man.

Relegating such knowledge, not considering a look from another angle, and despising the richness of historical information constructed by the ordinary man, are difficulties that can emerge in the CL. Thus, the matter presented here is in itself a challenge to be overcome by the CL's practice as well as organizational studies.

In this regard, we can reach some plausible considerations, as suggested below:

- a) Ordinary man are full of possibilities and owns potentialities not only in CL's sessions, but also in the moment of gathering initial data to the questioning framing in the ethnographic phase;
- b) Ordinary man are considered as supporting role in the process of change, from the choice of the learning subjects to the consideration of their 'arts of doing' and their discourse;
- c) By contemplating the ordinary man, we recognize the use of their own bricolages and intelligence to re-signify the artifacts and symbols originally defined by strategists, which can influence activities' results;
- d) When only those who are considered are the ones with power of agency and usefulness to the process of change, the idea of introducing the ordinary man's perspective refutes standardization of actions. In that way, the "unequal", those who do not own formal knowledge, are considered in their particularities, in their potentialities of effective contribution to the learning and development of the activity analyzed in the CL;
- e) The exercise of political power, represented by symbolic violence coming from "the place from which one speaks" inhibits the ordinary man from expressing themselves and contributing to the learning and development process. Exposed or veiled manifestations show individuals' interests to the maintenance of the *status quo*, as they consider change a threat to their acquired position;
- f) Creating proper conditions, so that the ordinary man can exercise their potentialities, contributes to the reflection process about the question.

The negligence in not contemplating the ordinary man's perspective, since the process of the utilitarian and functional selection, going through the nonobservance of their potential contribution to the CL's reflections, may signify severe failures in the CL process, compromising its results.

It is important to highlight that these considerations do not drain the subject, but indicate possible pathways for future research. Thereby, as future possibilities, we highlight the challenge to investigate the theoretical efforts exposed in this article. By performing the fieldwork of organizations, we could empirically verify everyday life in the CL under the perspective of the ordinary man: to know what they have to say, what they think, their critical view about the intervention process. Thus, it would be coherent for researchers to follow such proposition. This article could present a considerable theoretical-methodological contribution to both the Change Laboratory, in the context of Cultural-Historical Activity Theory, as well as in researches working with Michel de Certeau's approach to everyday life.

## **7 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The Change Lab allows that the subjects involved, both researcher and practitioners, to be capable of expanding their comprehension about everyday tactical research and their implications towards the object of their work, despite of favoring a more comprehensive understanding of relations involved in the interactions with other subjects of work.

According to Virkkunen and Newnham (2013) the CL's potentialities relate to the expansion of the researchers' role in their opportunities to amplify capacities. Such capacities stimulate the reflection of other subjects, inside the research space, contributing to: a) the researcher, who has practical knowledge in conducting the research, and can become the agent that holds tools of mediation capable of awakening the subjects' capacities for action; b) stimulation of practitioners' potentialities to create tools and solutions to overcome their contradictions in activities; c) space for practitioners to be able to reflect upon their conditions and, possibly, change their lives beyond labor activities; d) in such a manner that these subjects can make it differently, they can become activists engaged in the necessary change to improve their reality comprehension; e) new forms to free themselves from unpleasant situations,

and to understand that the learning process is continuous, full of, but necessary, contradictions.

It is known that the choice of the CL's participants does not happen in a harmonious scenario; it is an adverse process that occurs in a troubled environment, which comprises in itself several problems related to questions of power and submission. The political factor, which can be observed through the exercise of power, whether material or symbolic, can be evident in the moment of choosing the participants, when managers' interests, as well as workers, intervention teams and others – those that one way or another see themselves at the edge of losing their status quo – may influence the selection of the subjects of learning as a way to mitigate the impact of the change and innovation process, avoiding the disruption of what is established.

Cultural factors can decisively interfere in the process of choosing the subjects of learning. Letting the choice of such subjects be guided by only formal or functional aspects (answering to objective criteria such as capacity of expression, places from where they speak or the possibility of influence in other workers' behavior) homogenizes the varieties of perspectives about everyday life in the work place and ignores a rich and infrequently explored facet of organizations: the informal environment and, in such context, the ordinary man.

The expression “other subjects”, mentioned by Cassandre (2012) when reflecting upon the selection process of the Change Lab's participants, drove us to reflect upon the association of these “other subjects” to the ordinary man proposed by Michel de Certeau (2002). The other subject, usually marginalized by society and organizations, is the ordinary man. When the ordinary man has their participation suffocated or neglected, there is a significant loss. Only those who seek to maintain their status quo are the ones who gain with such practices, those who do not intend to change the current state of things, those who aim to maintain the functioning conditions in organizations, because they profit from this pernicious process: they have rewards – either symbolic, or material.

The careful look we took must consider the ordinary man not only as a number to the sample definition or as an appeal of a pseudo democratic management. In the same direction, cautions must be taken so that their participation is not manipulated, in the sense of appropriating their tactics and bricolages, and transforming them in strategies to those who detain power. Should this occur, all efforts to a real democratic Change Lab will be in vain.

## REFERENCES

CARRIERI, A. P. et al. Estratégias subversivas de sobrevivência na “feira hippie” de Belo Horizonte. **Gestão.org**, v. 6, n. 2, p. 174-192, 2008.

CASSANDRE, M.; BULGACOV, Y. L. M.; CAMARGO, D. O conceito de prática a partir da perspectiva da teoria da atividade. In: COLÓQUIO DE EPISTEMOLOGIA E SOCIOLOGIA DA CIÊNCIA DA ADMINISTRAÇÃO, 1., 2011, Florianópolis. **Anais...** Florianópolis: ORD/UFSC, 2011.

CASSANDRE, M. P. **Metodologias Intervencionistas na Perspectiva da Teoria da Atividade Histórico-Cultural: Um Aporte Metodológico para Estudos Organizacionais**. 2012. Tese (Doutorado em Administração)–Universidade Positivo, Curitiba, 2012.

CERTEAU, M. de. **A cultura do plural**. Campinas: Papyrus, 1995. (Coleção Traversia do Século).

CERTEAU, M. de. **A Escrita da História**. Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária, 1982.

CERTEAU, M. de. **A invenção do cotidiano – Artes de Fazer**. 7. ed. Tradução Ephraim Ferreira Alves. Rio de Janeiro: Vozes, 2002.

CERTEAU, M. de; GIARD, L.; MAYOL, P. **A invenção do cotidiano: 2 – Morar, cozinhar**. 2. ed. Tradução Ephraim F. Alves e Lucia E. Orth. Rio de Janeiro: Vozes, 1998.

DAVYDOV, V. V. A new approach to the interpretation of activity structure and content. In: CHAIKLIN, S.; HEDEGAARD, M.; JENSEN, U. J. (Ed.). **Activity theory and social practice**. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1999a.

DAVYDOV, V. V. The content and unsolved problems of activity theory. In: ENGESTRÖM, Y.; MIETTINEN, R.; PUNAMÄKI, R.-L. (Ed.). **Perspectives on activity theory**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999b.

ENGESTRÖM, Y.; MIETTINEN, R.; PUNAMÄKI, R.-L. (Ed.). **Perspectives on activity theory**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

ENGESTRÖM, Y. **Learning by expanding: an activity-theoretical approach to developmental research**. Orienta-Konsultit Oy, 1987.



ENGESTRÖM, Y. From communities of practice to mycorrhizae. In: HUGHES, J.; JEWSON, N.; UNWIN, L. (Ed.). **Communities of practice: Critical perspectives**. London: Routledge, 2007.

ENGESTRÖM, Y. From teams to knots: activity-theoretical studies of collaboration and learning at work. In HUGHES, J.; JEWSON, N.; UNWIN, L. (Ed.). **Communities of practice: Critical perspectives**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

ENGESTRÖM, Y. Activity theory and individual and social transformation. In: ENGESTRÖM, Y.; MIETTINEN, R.; PUNAMÄKI-GITAI, R. L. (Ed.). **Perspectives on activity theory**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. p. 19-38.

ENGESTRÖM, Yrjö et al. The change laboratory as a tool for transforming work. *Lifelong Learning in Europe*, v. 1, i. 2, p. 10-17, 1996.

GIL, A. C. **Como elaborar projetos de pesquisa**. 4. ed. São Paulo: Atlas, 2007.

LEITE DA SILVA, A. R.; CARRIERI, A. P.; JUNQUILHO, G. S. A estratégia como prática social nas organizações: articulações entre representações sociais, estratégias e táticas cotidianas. **RAUSP – Revista de administração**, v. 46, n. 2, p. 122-134, 2006.

OLIVEIRA, J. S. de; CAVEDON, N. R. Micropolíticas das práticas cotidianas: etnografando uma organização circense. **RAE-Revista de Administração de Empresas**, v. 53, n. 2, p. 156-168, 2013.

QUARESMA JÚNIOR, E. A.; LEITE DA SILVA, A. R. Explodindo com a gestão: estratégias, táticas e resistências na (re)construção do Mercado da Vila Rubim. In: ENCONTRO DE ESTUDOS ORGANIZACIONAIS DA ANPAD, 8., 2014, Gramado. **Anais...** Gramado, maio 2014.

MURTA, I. B. D.; SOUZA, M. M. P.; CARRIERI, A. P. Práticas discursivas na construção de uma gastronomia polifônica. **RAM – Revista de Administração Mackenzie**, v. 11, n. 1, p. 38-64, 2010.

SANNINO, A. From talk to action: experiencing interlocution in developmental interventions. **Mind, Culture, and Activity**, v. 15, i. 3, p. 234-257, 2008.

SATO, L.; OLIVEIRA, F. Compreender a gestão a partir do cotidiano de trabalho. **Aletheia**, v. 27, n. 1, p. 188-197, 2008.

VYGOTSKY, L. S. **Mind and society**: The development of higher mental processes: Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978.

VIRKKUNEN, J. et al. The Change laboratory®: a tool for transforming work. In: ALASOINI, T.; KYLLÖNEM, M.; KASVIO, A. (Ed.). **Workplace innovations**: a way of promoting competitiveness, welfare and employment. Helsinki, Finland: Ministry of Labour, 1997.

VIRKKUNEN, J.; NEWNHAM, D. S. **The Change Laboratory**. A Tool for Collaborative Development of Work and Education. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2013.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq) and the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES) by the funding support.

### Como citar este artigo:

ABNT

RODRIGUES, Fabio da Silva; CASSANDRE, Márcio Pascoal; ICHIKAWA, Elisa Yoshie. Discussing the choices of the change laboratory's participants: a look into the ordinary man. **RACE, Revista de Administração, Contabilidade e Economia**, Joaçaba: Ed. Unoesc, v. 16, n. 3, p. 867-884, set./dez. 2017. Disponível em: <<http://editora.unoesc.edu.br/index.php/race>>. Acesso em: dia/mês/ano.

APA

Rodrigues, F. S., Cassandre, M. P., & Ichikawa, E. Y. (2017). Discussing the choices of the change laboratory's participants: a look into the ordinary man. *RACE, Revista de Administração, Contabilidade e Economia*, 16(3), 867-884. Recuperado em dia/mês/ano, de <http://editora.unoesc.edu.br/index.php/race>