

Adding Life Experience in Giddens' Structuration and Providing it with Empirical Style**ABSTRACT**

This work provides practical impetus to Giddens' structuration. To do so, it drops the implicit assumption that organizations' states of affairs are given, abstract, and external to the "duality of structure". Assuming instead that, like rules and resources, states of affairs enter history, as local situated matters of concern (MoC), I will show how structuration greatly enhances the intelligibility of organization doing. Above all, it will also reveal that structuration can contemplate change as stemming also from the variability provided by the experience at hand. Within such premises, I will undertake empirical research by exploring the Italian Government's failure to sell Alitalia shares and bonds owned by the Treasury Ministry. Such story will allow a first attempt to observe closely the microprocesses of organizing and strategizing. In doing so, I draw on De Cork and Sharp's suggestion to follow an anti-interpretive movement rather than extract generalizable theories (2007). Thus, I will use data as *reminders* (247) and tell about Alitalia micro activities in order to challenge meanings, while exploring "unrealized possibilities within [reality]" (247). By analyzing these reminding data, I will also explore Shotter's claim that organizing and strategizing occur as the "action guiding" function of subsidiary awareness (AGSA) (2005).

INTRODUCTION

Empirical research on Alitalia microprocesses will be the opportunity to embed life experience in Giddens' structuration. However, I will first discuss how "the duality of structure" changes when adding to 'virtual' structures and fields, 'virtual' dimensions of phenomenology, such as strategies and Wittgensteinian teleoaffectivity. This theoretical commitment is consistent with Giddens' attempt to overcome dualism by encompassing structuralism as well as Heidegger's phenomenology, though in the end structuralism prevails, thus generating structuration internal inconsistencies. This theoretical discussion will prepare the way for the step ahead of studying instantiation as materially situated in life experience. By adding phenomena to the subjective human power to do otherwise the "duality of structure" will be able to account for action embedded in

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established organizational practices, as well as for action bound by teleoaffectivity. Thus, structuration will encompass more variability and the possibility to account for continuity as well as for change.

This theoretical change then will allow the removal of structuration overintellectualization and the very possibility to explore how this duality works when dealing with life experience. More phenomenology will take care of structuration inner inconsistencies and reject claims against the primacy of microprocesses of instantiation over structures, fields, strategies, teleoaffectivity, and arenas. By accounting for life experience, structuration will embed the variability of daily interaction among independent actors gathering around local, practical, and evolving matters of concern (MoCs).

To sustain the view that structuration is a perspective of both practice and change, I will take Schatzi Wittgensteinian arguments about the practices-action stratification. Beyond Schatzi conclusions, I will advance Shotter's claim for a "dialogical, chiasmic action" (Shotter, 2005), consistent with a possible empirical style of research within structuration. I will also draw from Dreyfus and Spinoza's Heideggerian arguments about *deflationary realism* to provide arguments for practices' change in changing situations (1999). In dealing with structuration inner inconsistencies, I will oppose critical realism (Bates, 2006; Archer) and institutionalism claims about structure and action conflation in instantiation. My main argument will be that most views on structuration remain biased since they are rooted in the Hegelian difference, which excludes the possibility to explore contradictions. I will argue then that the third place of instantiation draws instead its legitimacy from the post modern phenomenology, which thinks of a middle place of practice and mediation, where the abstraction of 'putative' dimension is overcome by processes materially situated. Critical realism instead accounts only for abstract change mechanisms un-related to reality. Practice then remains out of its reach. Similar issues arise within institutionalism.

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Adding more phenomenology, the work going on in the middle place can no longer be the mere reproduction of organizational practices and structures. Instead, it will encompass the realization of a state of affair which is no longer given, but a binding dimension, which compete a binding structure in providing the “duality of structure” with variability and therefore with the possibility for change.

Within this theoretical frame, I will discuss some methodological roots consistent with a phenomenological view of structuration which will prepare the way to explore life experience.

Dreyfus and Spinoza will suggest that Heidegger's *occurrentness* can be explored by making established practice a temporary way to access strangeness attributes complemented by a research process.

De Cork and Sharp (2007) point to the relevance of exploring life experience as a dialectical tension between what actually happened and what appears to be happened. They suggest researchers to engage in an anti-interpretive work by becoming sensitive to what is outside researchers' presence. Both authors suggest researchers to stay close to immanence without crossing reality diagonally, but widening and deepening its unseen meaning by navigating through all given achievements, whether they belong to the past or the future or are outside the research frame.

Shotter (2005) instead provides the Wittgensteinian focus on how previous events move actions ahead. As De Cork and Sharp assumes what really happens often depends on something that it is unseen. For these authors the unseen is often outside the research site. Instead, Shotter singles out that often the unnoticed is actually present. Shotter therefore claims that what moves events after events are some kind of focal (seen) awareness of the need to go on, but also an “actions guiding subsidiary awareness”. He then makes the point that it is important to see this awareness in order to attribute deep and wide meanings to life experience. Within the phenomenal view of structuration this kind of awareness becomes a ‘virtual’ action binding real action (ABSA).

With this few guiding methodology, I will immerse into the empirical research of how the tender for privatize the Italian carrier Alitalia went on from December 2006 to July 2008.

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This research will draw from the daily and weekly articles the national economic newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore* issued in that period. I will precede the analysis of this data with a methodological

discussion about the role journalism have in research, as well as about the precise circumstance of gathering these data, which can explain How in-depth this information can be.

The outcome of data analysis will mainly explain the role of life experience in a changing situation.

It will be the occasion to experiment what an anti-interpretive approach can be. Above all it will show the consequences of getting rid of the fixed and given Giddensian state of affair substituting it with the dynamic of ABSA evolution and change.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Balancing Structuralism and Phenomenology in Giddens' Structuration

Giddens' structuration is fully rooted in epistemological principles and axioms that make process primary. Most of them are embedded in both Giddens' aim to overcome dualism and the primacy of instantiation over 'virtual' rules and resources. In principle, Giddens claims that dualism is overcome by recovering the subject from structuralism and his/her very decentring (Giddens, 1979: 44). He does it by linking human agency to personal responsibilities, and to a "dominant set of practices which constrain and enable action whilst maintaining human power to acting differently" (Bertilsson, 1984: 343-344). This move away from dualism implies that structure' identity as well as subject' identity are secondary to the practical process of organizing.

Giddens is crystal clear in suppressing determinism. To oppose the dominium of structuralism, in fact, he claims that "there is nothing similar to a category of independent <<structural explanations>> (208). Instead, whether defined in a technical sense - as rules and resources - or in a looser fashion - as the institutionalized features (or properties) of societies - "'structure' is a generic category" (185). It "does not act on anyone like forces of nature to compel him or her to behave in a particular way" (181), but it is implicated in the very freedom of action. Instead, "structure, as organized sets of rules and resources, is out of time and space, save in its instantiations and co-

Adding Life Experience in Giddens' Structuration and Providing it with Empirical Style ordination as memory traces, and is marked by an 'absence of the subject'" (25). Giddens also emphasizes that those resources "might seem to have a 'real existence' ... but their 'materiality' does not affect the fact that such phenomena become resources... only when incorporated within processes of structuration" (33).

A milestone of structuration as a process perspective is also that interaction occurs in daily instantiation as cognitive knowledgeability and practical understanding, according to practical MoCs. Structuration therefore is also thought as practice ontology. Giddens, in fact, assumes that social theory concerns "the illumination of concrete processes of social life" (xvii) since "[as yet] ... there can only be 'explanatory propositions', which should be contextual and aiming at "clearing up queries" (xviii). Here, he refers to lay actors' queries, who are the very "social theorists, whose theories help to constitute the activities and institutions which are the object of the study of specialized social observers" (xxxiii).

The texture of structuration template, however, partly misses to recognise the process and practice nature of structuration. Therefore, it encompasses some inner inconsistencies and ambiguities. Unfortunately, some research draws on them its main inspiration, which often confirms dualism and therefore determinism. This occurs for instance when Giddens delivers the institutional view of social fields, and when he cuts the process into realms of action, structures, and process. Research then puts aside Giddens' explicit warn that "Concentration upon the analysis of structural properties of social systems ... is a valid procedure only if it is recognized as placing an *epoché* upon – holding a suspension – reflexively monitored social conduct" (30). In this same occasion Giddens explores "modalities of structuration as dimension of the duality of structure in interaction (28), but then underlines that "structure of signification are separable only analytically either from domination or from legitimation" (33).

I claim that one way to reinforce structuration roots as a process and practice ontology is to reconstitute structuration balance between structuralism and phenomenology. By assuming that in instantiation reproducing rules and resources is to do with the MoCs of a living organization will

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clear up most inner inconsistencies. Above all, it will give structuration the power to account for process and practice, as well as for continuity, and change.

A View on Structuration Inner Inconsistencies

In structuration the duality of structure accomplishes the order of society because daily interaction ensures the continuity of society by reproducing generalized rules persisting across time and space. Those rules are embedded as knowledgeability and practical consciousness in the daily repetition of practices. Dualism then is overcome by dealing with misfit stemming from knowledgeability defaults as well as from unfamiliarity of circumstances, which however will be faced by institutions. As generalized procedures, rules allow individuals to reproduce the social system whatever the diversity of contexts of social life. They in fact are formulae which apply over a range of contexts and occasions allowing the methodical continuation of an established sequence (Giddens, 1985: 20-21). Single individual, as well as new situations, will never cause structural principles and properties' change; in other words, they will never change society (176). Rules' knowledgeability, practical consciousness, and self-monitoring will make it happen. According to Giddens, "errors *may* emerge as 'situational improprieties'. But if there is any continuity to social life at all, most actors must be right most of the time" (90). Therefore, day-to-day activity attends first of all to social reproduction through the recursive reproduction of practices. Thus practices are the primary process around which the reproduction of both, the distant interactions of the social totality, and the daily reproduction of activity in co-presence, converges.

In Giddens' structuration variability lays only in the nature of rules, as well as in translating them in sets of rules and resources closer local states of affairs. It also arises in human errors, associated with human bounded rationality. According to Giddens, errors usually are temporary and disappear through human learning. In the end, social systems appear as "reproduced practices in interaction settings" (27). Eventually, in dealing with the possibility of change, Giddens points out that change might stem from contradictions in the intertwining of different modes of regionalization, which

Adding Life Experience in Giddens' Structuration and Providing it with Empirical Style however remains an issue of knowledgeability about rules and structures (245). This is the only kind of variability that makes reproduction relatively problematic, therefore costly (86).

Figure 1. Giddes' duality of the structure

If what occurs in society or within social subfields is only action embedded in practices, however, the relevance to follow lay sociologists while acting disappears. The duality recursion therefore rejects change. Once it is learned, in fact, variability gets lost. Research on instantiation is no longer needed.

A first challenge to this structuration view can be approached through Schatzi's Wittgenstein arguments for an action different from practices. In *Practices and Actions. A Wittgensteinian Critique of Bourdieu and Giddens* (1997), Schatzi argues that the representation of practical consciousness as tacit knowledge of 'virtual' rules, resources and practices is unformulable. He suggests therefore that it "be explained by repeatedly citing actors' knowing how to go on (their senses for the game)" (301). Thus, practical understanding is made "germane to knowing how to carry out actions, such as describing something, asking questions, [...], and following a rule through the performance of such activities as weaving, drawing,...", as well as "to sensitize human action [...] on the ability to identify and recognize phenomena [...] help[ing] fix the significance of the circumstances in which actors proceed (301).

Following these arguments, Schatzi underlines that both Giddens and Bourdieu retreat "from fully embracing Wittgenstein's exhibition of the practical nature of practical understanding" (300), because neither *rules* nor *habitus* can be the basic social ordering phenomena (Schatzi: 285). Drawing from Wittgenstein, he also introduces Wittgenstein's 'teleoaffectivity' (300), as "human orientation toward ends and about how things matter" (302).

Following these suggestions we can now assume that the reproduction of social systems results from the encounter in instantiation of practices and actions.

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Schatzi however maintains that “practices are ontologically more fundamental than actions” (285), opening up to an *input-process-output* approach, he suggests that structuration encompasses three dimensions: practical understanding, explicit rules, and teleoaffectivity (300). Despite so, Schatzi arguments indicate that the duality of structure can account in some way for practice in itself.

To fight Schatzi's arguments dualism I suggest to bring teleoaffectivity and practice-in-itself inside the organizational recursion. This is not necessarily inconsistent with the continuity of totalities, but at least implies that continuity is the result of change. Thus, we can follow Giddens' account for misfits, by adding to the variability stemming from enabling and constraining structures that of life experiences.

Nevertheless, Schatzi's arguments inspire more interesting suggestions for a change perspective of structuration. In fact, he is mostly interested in Wittgenstein's arguments about *game* representation, which underline that representations are only be putative realities. This may suggest that together with ‘virtual’ structures, there are also ‘putative’ contents, which bind action. Teleoaffectivity, strategies and arena's a priori representations then will bind activities not only through structures' knowledgeability and practical consciousness, but also through the needs to relate to a living world which resists to focal knowledge (Bakhtin, 1981). Then, we can justify that in instantiation operates a tension between actions embedded in practices and chiasmic actions, not-embedded in practices (Shotter, 2005). Both make a difference in search of mediation of which research can take care

Fig. 2. Practices and actions difference in Giddens' structuration

Figure 2 is built around the practices-action difference as driven by the management of the matrix of organization rules and the chiasmic actions of living experience. It underlines that Giddens' duality of structure has now embedded the variability of living experience. Change can now arise from the management of rules, as well as from fields' interactions, and teleoaffectivity or strategy,

Adding Life Experience in Giddens' Structuration and Providing it with Empirical Style which are all 'putative' representations. The misfit between practices and action becomes forever unsolvable. Both gather and mediate moving from one event to the next around local uncertain MoCs, which are bounded from putative representations of teleologies and strategies, but also from the 'actions guiding awareness' provided by previous events.

PROVIDING PRACTICAL IMPETUS TO GIDDENS' STRUCTURATION

By embedding different kinds of 'virtual' rules and resources, structuration provides a complex framework of the action-structure interaction (Fig. 2). This embraces a variety of subfields, among which is also strategy, the closest structural representation (Jarzabkowski, 2008) binding the materiality of instantiation. Thus, instantiation will account for how conflicting fields' logics, as well as strategies, enable and constrain microprocesses, which then represent at the same time the work of organizing and strategizing. By embedding daily life experience research will extract from events' materiality the empirical evidence of how strategizing and organizing occur as a flux.

The empirical issue of organizing has recently received a great amount of attention, since "it has become uncontroversial that organizations are but momentary accomplishments that are in continuous flux" (McKinley, 2003 in De Cork and Sharp, 2007: 234). The move towards '*processism*', in fact, has intensified by assuming the primacy of processes over substance (Czarniawska, 2007). This work has been done by embedding in process theory philosophy and sociology's mile works. Researchers therefore have also embraced methodology consistent with process theories.

Drawing from Bergson, Whitehead, Wittgenstein, James, Deleuze and Derrida, for instance, Chia and Tsoukas and Chia address the primacy of '*change its own terms*' over substance, suggesting researchers to focus on "what is essentially unique" (Chia: 12), as well as on 'nuances' and the "understanding of micro-processes at work" (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002: 568). They also point out that, in order to account for the "fluidity, pervasiveness, open-endedness, and indivisibility" of microprocesses (2002: 571), and for the "infinite multiplicity of becomings" (Chia: 219), research ought to "dive back into the flux itself" and "experience reality directly" (571).

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These methodological premises are now widely shared, though actually methodological research still take life experience apart from theorization.

Most empirical works address the evasive character of becoming. A comprehensive way to link ontology and methodology is offered by John Shotter in *The Role of Witness-Thinking in Going-on Inside Chiasmically-Structured Processes* (2005). Taking a 'from-within' witness-thinking view of empirical research, he suggests to "plunge into [our perception of things] for the purpose of deepening and widening it. Then, he enlightens what goes on within a live interaction. Drawing mainly from Wittgenstein, Bakhtin, Bergson, he claims that within the space of dynamic relations between leaving forms one can experience the feeling of a subsidiary awareness, which provides "an anticipatory sense of at least the style of what is to come next". Shotter points out that subsidiary awareness is rooted in Wittgenstein assumption that "we are victims" ... of "grammatical illusions", a picture of ourselves which "ignores and renders inexpressible the background against which whatever I could express has its meaning" (Wittgenstein, 1980a, in Shotter 2005). Subsidiary awareness represents this background as "something that we know when no one asks us, but no longer know when we are supposed to give an account of it, ... something we need to remind ourselves", that is always before our eyes but unnoticed. According to Shotter, to understand change we should teach ourselves how to reach the understanding of this unique "action guiding anticipatory" influence in daily life. He then suggests that this subsidiary awareness is reached spontaneously, since what occurs in interaction is a reflexive, responsive understanding of an "excess of seeing", which allows the access to "a sense of what it means for a whole to contain (or to enfold) itself as a whole within each of its 'parts' ... and for it 'parts' to be inseparable related to each other" (Shotter, 2005). In Shotter's view, this awareness remains mysterious. Drawing on Bakhtin, Shotter focuses mostly on each other's utterances, describing above all the dialectic of a living dialogue, according to which a "speaker does not expect passive understanding that, so to speak, only duplicates his or her idea in someone else's mind", but is oriented toward ... an actively responsive understanding (Shotter, 2005). This "living dialogue" tacks continuously back

Adding Life Experience in Giddens' Structuration and Providing it with Empirical Style and forth between 'listening to its voice' and 'answering to its call'. It proceeds according to a life cycle from its conception to death. Dialogue therefore is a developmental continuity, which embeds its life style in the earlier phase of the activity. In the end Shotter living interactions account for self-organization of a well defined whole. Life cycle, in fact, draws on a biological view accounts only for a developmental life experience. Shotter's late account of chiasmical interaction opens to discontinuity. However, he does not explain if and how the style of acting could be in this case. Shotter's work remains a mile contribution. The meaning of subsidiary awareness, in fact, can be reconciled with the possibility of transformation. According to the wider view of structuration, the "action guiding subsidiary knowledge" represents a 'putative' abstract essence of interaction, which the power-to-do-otherwise can orient towards continuity as well as change while dealing with the difference between actions embedded in practice and actions not embedded in practices. Then, the ABSA will account also for the fabric of a not-yet existing reality. To allow for change therefore one must account for the evolution of the very AGSA.

To move the chiasmical interaction towards change it might help Cock and Sharp's discussion about exploring transformation (2007). In *Process Theory and Research: Exploring the Dialectic Change* they address the methodological issue from the premise that "all processes exist as interaction of agency with materiality" (237). A further assumption of their discourse is that truth is forever inaccessible and resistant to symbolization (236). According to them therefore empirical claims should focus on how research can escape the tension between "what is actually happening (materially situated social interactions) and what appears to be happening (the symbolic meaning attributed by the participants or observers of an event)" (237).

To do research within this tension, Cock and Sharp suggest being open to many unforeseeable paths. When exploring episodes, for instance, researchers should be aware that events outside them may be contextually significant. Therefore, they are invited first to follow the process through time and space wherever it brings, beyond any given methodological boundaries. Besides, they should always found their research on the materially situated roots of events and avoid "conceptual

Adding Life Experience in Giddens' Structuration and Providing it with Empirical Style monuments" (245). By following the material processes of reality without crossing it, researchers can explore insufficiencies, rather than produce proofs (247). Therefore, De Cork and Sharp suggest engaging in deconstruction, rather than in meaning construction. Drawing from Deleuze, they also point to the search for traces of unrealized possibilities within reality (247). Such kind of research would show the possibility to escape the dominating power of the prevailing reality ... thereby to open up to different and better opportunities" (Hammersley, 1995, in Cock and Sharp: 247).

RESEARCH CONTEXT AND METHODS

The following empirical research will explore Alitalia carrier's story of two tender failures occurred from December 2006 to April 2007. To understand the "actions guiding subsidiary awareness" (AGSA), I will also relate those events to a previous unsuccessful attempt to realize a partnership with AF-KLM carrier, as well as to the subsequent painful, but successful, privatization process and its actual outcome. Today new Alitalia, in fact, is going to take off on January 13th 2009. AF-KLM will most probably be the needed international partner. Media report that this carrier will hold 25% of Alitalia shares, thus becoming its first shareholder. Air One, which has strenuously fought to buy Alitalia during both tenders, has been absorbed in this new Alitalia, which therefore will possess 100% of the Roma-Milano route. The actual industrial plan foresees 2.339 weekly flights in winter 2009 and 2568 in Summer 2009. There will be 23 domestic destinations, 34 for the medium distance, and 13 for intercontinental routes. Only two will involve Malpensa airport (*Il Giornale*, August, 2nd 2009). But the Malpensa issue is actually the subject of intense political actions to assure that it will remain a hub with a brilliant future. Northern Italy political parties are actually asking for privileging a partnership with the German carrier Lufthansa, which applies the multi hub multi brand strategy and would therefore ensure the development of both Italian hubs. But Lufthansa has not a plan but only a declaration for interest. Media argue that it is interested only in routes' liberalization for Malpensa.

Research focus on tenders' failure will help exploring the anti-interpretive work practitioners made from within in both tenders, thus showing how failure events cumulated. This story will tell how

Adding Life Experience in Giddens' Structuration and Providing it with Empirical Style practitioners played as lay sociologists by revealing events that would remain hidden to external observers. External observation of their behavior will add an a posteriori overarching view beyond short term sequence. Thus, each event will be explored from the view of the entire story. This freedom of investigation will show unseen AGSA, their change and evolution, which were not evident after single events. According to De Cork and Sharp, as observer, I will be able to remain in the process perspective, by continually looking “for ... materially situated roots ... restor[ing] the fragile relationship of immanence to the world, and avoid[ing] the conceptual monuments that so often obscure them” (245). According to Shotter, instead, this will happen because researchers can see “at every instant the possibility of a stop [and try] to reconstruct the real movement with ... possible immobilities. The absurdity [of this external a posteriori view] vanishes as soon as we adopt by thought the continuity of the real movement, a continuity of which every one of us is conscious whenever he lifts an arm or advances a step” (Bergson, 1911: 327, in Shotter, 2005). Empirical research then will add to the a priori practitioners' perspective the posteriori observation, thus providing a wide and deep understanding of events, free from the idiosyncrasy of practitioners and researchers' views.

Data Sources on Alitalia and their Relevance in Process Research

The *Il Sole 24 Ore* articles were the object of a line by line coding analysis. Articles were classified per month starting from December 2006 - when the Prime Minister of the Italian Government in charge decided to enact a public tender call in order to bring into the open European carriers' interest for a partnership – and ending in April 2008 – when AF-KLM CEO, Cyril Spinetta, withdrew from the second private tender call, after unions' rejected its plan. To these articles I added all 2008 articles on Alitalia from *Il Foglio*, one of the most credited Italian opinion's making newspapers. In total, I worked on 154 articles.

Besides them, I read daily about Alitalia from other national newspapers. Furthermore, images of workers' strikes and various comments were daily broadcasted by radio and TV networks.

Breakthrough events were also developed in-dept within special programs, through actors'

Adding Life Experience in Giddens' Structuration and Providing it with Empirical Style participation, different kind of professionals and opinion leaders. Those programs can be easily found in RAI archives. For instance, at the address 'annozero.rai.it', we can find the program "Sprechi con le ali" (Wastages with wings), but many other in-depth analyses are also in the archives of all RAI channel, as well as on those of Sky Italy.

The *Il Sole 24 Ore* articles are a faithful representation of the knowledge I cumulated as Italian citizen during the days of the tenders and afterwards up to now. Articles appeared in this newspaper very often. They provided a step by step a priori view of events, which were blind of future.

Differently from other research founded on journalism (Barry and Elmes, 1997), the gap from reality in Alitalia is similar to that of action research. In fact, in both cases, the information available was gathered from within. Besides, by relying on journalist writings through and broadcasts, I could get many points of view, which decreased the amount of information usually missed in usual journalist reports or in participative action research.

Instead, research on strategy from newspapers usually focuses on the economic side of the story disregarding the social and political implications of events. It does not care for microprocesses of strategizing and organizing, not even when reporting CEOs' interviews. Those stories are accounted as discontinuities. Alitalia events instead were told continuously. They were also full of pathos, especially in TV programs. In this story media actually performed a very active role by connecting Italians to each event, thus allowing them to assess actors' performance and especially that of the Italian Government. Media implicitly narrated the political interaction between governors and governed which would later in some measure affect the outcomes of April 2008 new political elections.

In sum, daily information about actors' performance in the Alitalia tenders' processes provided such a variety of information that made newspapers' articles a sound source for a rigorous research.

73 articles reported the facts of the first tender call and its failure. The mean of monthly articles was about 10. They showed how the first tender was split in three phases: one, which ended with a mere 'interest declaration' from 11 among companies, financial institutions, and financial funds; a second

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one, during which contenders were supposed to build some consortia among them, and eventually through minor external participants. During the second phase, it was not possible to reach this objective. Most contenders soon left the tender race. In the end, only one contender – Air One (AO) - presented a not-binding offer. Then, it asked that tender procedures be modified to create the possibility for Alitalia rescue after the acquisition. Soon, however, AO retreated from the tender since Alitalia CEO did not provide the expected answers. None therefore presented the final binding offer.

81 articles narrated the second tender events, starting from August 2007 and ending April 2008. Their monthly mean was 9. They reported the discussion among contenders occurred soon after the tender announcement, as well as Alitalia three years rescue plan. In September, media informed that the acquisition would be managed through a private tender's call with neither time schedule nor lock-ups. The tender would imply a one month informal contact with potential buyers. The main guiding rule for this search would be that the buyer held patrimonial strength, the capability to finance Alitalia rescue, competence in the flight industry. This month search would inspire the right procedure for choosing the 'right' contender. Thus, the negotiation could successfully end quickly. The media hosted many claims from Italian entrepreneurs' community, as well as from participants of the previous tender, and from low-cost carrier competitors, such as Ryanair, which accused Alitalia to have created conditions fitting precisely AF-KLM plans for Alitalia takeover. In August 2007 *Il Sole 24 ore* issued 13 articles informing that the three years Alitalia plan implied a stop to the flights feeding intercontinental Malpensa routes from all over Italy. It would also eliminate from Malpensa 150 routes and 300 flights moving them to The Leonardo da Vinci airport. The knowledge of the tender and the rescue plans enacted an intense conflicting interaction between Alitalia, potential buyers and all the many institutions and political parties involved in Malpensa economy. Microprocesses provided nuances of different kind of emotional involvements. A great number of articles also appeared in *The Sole 24 Ore* in September and October 2007, as well as in April 2008. In September it hosted Malpensa workers' strikes and layoffs. The news

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showed the strange indifference of federal unions regarding this issue. In April 2008 Lombardia

government and public opinion would know that Alitalia routes and bilateral accord relating to

Malpensa were never handed over to this airport because they had always been promised to AF-

KLM and handed over to this carrier on March 15th 2008, the day after it had deposited its offer for

buying Alitalia.

In October, Lufthansa finally let know its strategy for Alitalia. Articles then compared AF-KLM,

Lufthansa and Alitalia plans. Through the media actors exercised their deconstruction abilities by

analysing advantages and disadvantages of each others' plan. But Lufthansa very soon retreated

because Alitalia's crisis deepened and buying it would decrease its rating. Then, the only left

contender remained AF-KLM, which kept defending its plan against AO accusations that it would

make Alitalia a regional, economically irrelevant carrier and a true attack to the Italian economy.

In April 2008, a big number of articles – 29 – followed the Fellinian bargain between Spinetta and

the federal unions. TV news showed cheering pilots and assistant pilots when Spinetta left the

bargaining table in Rome. Media also showed how disgusted were citizens about pilots and assistant

pilots' battle to perpetuate their undue powers and privileges, despite Alitalia's dramatic situation.

In April media also reported points of view of each actor by publishing letters to the newspaper,

Alitalia history of past glory, and past missed opportunities, as well as the synthesis of Alitalia's

steps towards this inferno. In a weekly magazine (*Panorama*) a journalist conveyed the sense that

no cultural change would ever occur spontaneously among pilots and assistant pilots.

MAKING CIVIC JOURNALISM THE BASIS FOR A RIGOROUS PROCESS RESEARCH

The claim for a research on practice founded on journalism can be justified by the radical move

journalism writing has undertaken from the Seventies (Wolfe, 1973, in Denzin, 2000: 899). This

move was meant to overcome the difference between traditional literature and scientific writing,

according to which literature was associated with fiction, rhetoric, and subjectivity, while science

was associated with facts and objectivity. Then "realism" dominated science and literature. This

new journalism borrowed the methods of ethnography and the contents of sociology. Journalists

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then became social analysts treating facts as social construction. (Richardson, 2000: 926) They started narrating life experience by using multiple points of view and multiple narrative strategies. Often, they produced in-depth narrative accounts of everyday life, lived up close, real-life dialogue, intimate first – and third-person voice, multiple points of view, scene-by scene narration (Harrington, 1977b, Kramer 1995, in Denzin: 899). Most importantly, they cared that narratives were accurate and verifiable, while invoking felt life. Journalist writing for the public today is meant to show rather than to tell; it establishes authorial presence.

Articles on Alitalia, for instance, narrate Alitalia's long history, provide biographies of relevant actors, synthesize international opinions, and tailor actors' interviews. Thus, they produce in-depth understanding of "other's people worlds from the inside-out, to understand and portray people as they understand themselves (Harrington, 1997b, p. xxv).

According to Denzin, journalism intent today is to "build an emotional relationship joining the writer, the life told about, and the reader" (Denzin, 2000: 900). This pragmatic journalism "fuses actors and their troubles with public issues and the public arena. In the end it obtains that readers become participants, rather than mere spectators (901).

Journalist writings about Alitalia story therefore provide a rigorous set of data through which to start the analysis of microprocesses' tenders. Stoll affirms that "the authority of the fact-gathering and – testing procedures of anthropology and journalism in which accounts ... will be treated as ethnographic data that must be processed by more objective techniques of assessment, which, by definition, are not available to the direct narrator (Beverley, 2000: 561).

Journalism narrative derives its scientific authority by being a subject of history because of its capability to "to find a variety of points of view or ways of telling which reflect contradictory, or simply differing agenda and interests (560). The journalist writing anyway is not an end in itself, but the means to advance research interests. Rigor than stems not from 'true' data, but from a clear approach in choosing the data, as well as in providing concepts and methods that illuminate their analysis (Silverman, 2000:828). Data are also relevant according to what analysis can show with or

Adding Life Experience in Giddens' Structuration and Providing it with Empirical Style without them. In Alitalia instance, data are particularly relevant because they show the *minutiae* of actions and discourses. Research from this source is rigorous also because the narrative is easily available to the scientific community. On the other side, charges against absence and incompleteness can be overcome by reminding that completeness is actually an illusion, but also by underlying that research must provide conclusions open to further specifications, because there always are events not recorded even in participatory action research.

Articles about Alitalia therefore provide the understanding about how participants coproduce meaning by formulating research topics as puzzles, and then work back and forth throughout the writings to resolve it (Silverman: 831; De Cork and Sharp: 242).

CODING AND ITS PITFALLS

The journalist narrative showed how facts emerged from within through journalists and actors' association. In other words, this narrative was in no way contaminated by my theoretical phenomenal approach to Giddens' structuration (fig 2). Therefore, it constituted the purest situation for Grounded Theory. I had therefore to start from scratch to explore how life experience and putative strategy, structures and fields emerged in the middle place of instantiation, according to spatial and temporal matter of concern (MoCs).

Through these blank and rich data I focused first on the difference between 'actions embedded in structures' and 'actions not-embedded' in structures. These codes appeared soon of little relevance since change and failures actually underlined that even the most established practices, as appointing CEO and advisors, changed from one tender to the next; besides, they could be accounted through the tender plans and procedures, each CEO was issuing. On the other side, the most relevant actions were meant to neutralise or change plans and procedures. These were also temporary in that devoted to the management of the tender, rather than that of the company. Bargaining actually was meant to create company's rules at the end of the acquisition process. Only then the story would be about the generation of rules and procedures, rather than about actions embedded in structures and procedures. Nevertheless, I believed that focusing on pure change could isolate the dynamics of

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change from any interference from the dynamics of continuity, thus favouring the understanding of change. Besides, the Alitalia story, as made of failure microprocesses, could show the counter-interpretive approach as embedded in on going processes. This approach therefore could be a milestone example of how action research can explore processes from within, when moves and countermoves are towards future events.

The big amount of data suggested accounting separately for each tender. This would show different codes for different situations. In other words, it would show that some codes were used in one tender but not in others. This comparison showed the relevance of absence. Absence of European carriers, as well as of a rescue and development strategy in the first tender, absence of courage and entrepreneurship and absence of transparency in the second tender, and so on.

Line to line analysis showed opposition and inconsistencies. In the second tender it showed that because deconstructive discourses did not produce desirable outcomes, actors' enacted destructive legal actions.

Coding also revealed the many different kinds of pressure actors posed on the process. Nodes also underlined 'Procedures irregularities and defaults', 'Hidden meanings', 'Crisis foundations', 'Opportunistic behaviour' 'Ambiguity', 'Hidden rules of the game' 'Bias against potential buyers', 'Hidden mediation' 'Actions neutralizing opposition, 'Disadvantages from AF-KLM takeover', 'Hiding crucial information'. Interaction showed that much deconstructive discourses were followed by a noisy silence.

In the middle place of instantiation we could see the difference between actions embedded in organizational practices and actions embedded in structured strategies and teleologies. Much of my understanding however occurred by staying close to the process materiality. By regaining the freedom to explore what codes would not tell I could explore unseen ABSA. Under the assumption that actions are always linked to enabling-constraining structures, I could also understand how in radical changes actions are actually moved by instantiating institutions.

From States of Affair To 'Action Binding Subsidiary Awareness' ABSA

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By analysing Alitalia's story, I realized that states of affair (SoAs) do not belong to life experience.

This story instead shows that at the beginning of the first tender there was a previous event, which made it a movement away from the status quo (Latour 2004). This story tells in fact that, before engaging in the first tender's call, the Italian Prime Minister (IPM) had failed the attempt to realize Alitalia- AF-KLM partnership. In other words, behind microprocesses, we find other microprocesses.

The story showed instead the historicity of events. It could actually be explored the same way I will analyse each tender's calls. However, as antecedent to the first tender, it shows how the hidden ABSA that generated it. In fact, it narrates that the AF-KLM had offered to the IPM only the possibility for a takeover, which would made Alitalia a AF-KLM regional operator and a good feeder of its intercontinental routes. From this antecedent the decision for a public tender then appears as a reaction to AF-KLM unacceptable offer, and a way to define independent conditions for a 'reasonable' partnership. By enacting potential EU buyers' competition, the IGPM thought to either obtain from AF-KLM CEO reasonable conditions for a partnership, takeover, or produce acceptable alternative opportunities. The unseen style of the tender processes in the end can be described as a conflicting challenge to AF-KLM offer.

To make IPM's claims unequivocal, these conditions were imprisoned within rigid contents and procedures which made impossible any adjustment to unforeseeable events. Tender's plan were totally opposite to AF-KLM demands. It called for a buyer ready to rescue Alitalia, as well as to boost its international and intercontinental routes, which then would directly compete with the Paris hub. As microprocesses of deconstruction showed, the first tender did not care for the strategic problems a buyer ought to face after the acquisition, despite those problems had dragged Alitalia to the actual point when its survival was at risk.

The tender's ABSA influenced the tender process to such level that all industry carrier leaders deserted from the tender, since the presentation of the 'interest declaration'. By then, it was clear

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that the tender would fail, though it went on through the second phase of potential buyers'

presentation of a not-binding plan.

The first tender story therefore tells that the major ABSA actually was the main obstacle to Alitalia search for partnership. Events of this first tender actually showed how it should not have been. They underlined for instance that in such a crisis situation a tender call could not simply take the form of a bid, but sell the very possibility of Alitalia rescue and development after the acquisition. This and other shortcoming were clearly deconstructed by contenders, as well as by those who refused to join the tender, as AF-KLM, Lufthansa and the many Italian entrepreneurs who, if encouraged, could have made a consortium, allowing Alitalia to call for a partnership, rather than for a takeover.

In the end this first tender call appeared more as a waste of time, except for the fact that it started introducing unions and workers to the possibility of workers layoff, which they had not been able to conceive, being stuck in the ideal strategy that international and intercontinental growth could cover all privileges they had cumulated until then.

The second tender call implies the ABSA change. Alitalia events, from August 2007 to April 21st 2008, tell that Alitalia board of directors pursued the hidden aim to make Alitalia takeover from AF-KLM possible. In other words, under the pressure of Alitalia's crisis, the previous ABSA - that of imposing to AF-KLM IPM conditions - became the ABSA of doing everything that could allow the previously diabolic takeover.

Tender's contents, procedures, and processes then were managed to fit only AF-KLM profile.

Alitalia and the Government in fact called for a partner having a strong asset structure, proofed industry competences, and the financial strength to save and develop Alitalia.

The way for AF-KLM takeover was immediately favoured through the quick approval of the rescue plan which foresaw the cut of 150 Alitalia flights from Malpensa, thus eliminating one of the two Italian hubs, according to AF-KLM strategy for a single Italian hub.

Alitalia rescue plan also avoided the sources of the previous tender failure. Thus, it suspended further workers' recruitment and addressed the issue of Alitalia Service inefficiency. But the ABSA

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to facilitate AF-KLM takeover was the most enacting one since it passed lightly over the many

claims and legal actions undertaken by those who were hit by the plan and the related deconstructed ABSA.

Such ABSA showed, for instance, because media had reported initially that Alitalia shares and bonds would be acquired through capital investment, while later newspapers informed that AF-KLM would simply operate a shares' exchange. Besides, at the end of April 2008, the *Financial Times* revealed that on March 15th 2008, the day after AF-KLM CEO deposited the buying offer, the Italian Government quite secretly had handed over all Alitalia flight rights and bilateral agreements. Thus, the Italian Government could realize one among many AF-KLM binding conditions.

The unidirectional rush towards AF-KLM was not stopped by any obstacle, however big. It slowed down only when Lufthansa presented a multi hub-multi brand strategy plan that best suited the buyer profile. However, this impediment lasted like a wind blow, and soon vanished, because Lufthansa actually withdraw because Alitalia acquisition would jeopardise its rating. Anyway, Alitalia CEO and the Italian Economy Minister often repeated that there could not be other solution but to sell Alitalia to an international competitor who was financially strong and managerially competent.

This rush was totally halted by unions who rejected AF-KLM plan. Materially situated microprocesses show that federal unions, as well as carrier professional associations after 9 months of bargaining asked Spinetta to start all over again from their own plan. This implied the merge of Alitalia Flight and Alitalia service and workers full occupation of both companies. Thus, they neither cared that Alitalia Service was one of the greatest source of Alitalia losses, nor accounted for the fact that AF-KLM had their own efficient service structure, which would make Alitalia service quite redundant. Spinetta then offered some minor change with no result.

This outcome however helps understanding a hidden inconsistency. It shows that a hidden ABSA had been in place, which could not be managed. The circumstances of the failure now reveal that

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Alitalia CEO, as well as the Italian Government, and even AF-KLM CEO had assumed that

Alitalia's deep crisis and AF-KLM plan would convince federal unions and professional associations to give up their power and privileges. The third tender and the actual story of Alitalia shows now that when the political power is evenly distributed ABSA must become transparent, as Shotter suggests, but also that such awareness must make ABSA flexible in order to take care of each issue, rather than suffocate it through imperative conditioning.

Meanwhile, the Italian Cabinet in charge lost the Parliament majority and a new election were indicted. The election campaign sheds a new light over never soothed conflicts. The Malpensa issue, as well as the search for an Italian way to rescue Alitalia, became the central issue of the electoral campaign. Then change coincided with the emergence of a political ABSA, which prevailed over all previous ABSA. Under the new Italian Government Alitalia crisis would be managed in view of creating an Italian consortium as a necessary premise to a later European partnership. A new ABSA was also entrepreneurship and innovation. While the previous Government had chosen the best strategy among those already available, now the Alitalia crisis is managed through an innovative strategy. The new Cabinet, in fact, encouraged the formation of a Italian consortium. It also split Alitalia into a good and a bad company. This project went through long and painful bargaining but finally got federal unions agreement. The story of this third tender kept every Italian with bated breath. There was a time when professional association unreasonably used their power to low up the all process. However, the entrepreneurial ABSA prevailed in creating a way out of this strong opposition. Finally, professional associations' power was bridled because the new company was formed despite them, thus creating the conditions for appointing the workers of the new company one by one, without the mediation of the professional pilots and assistant pilots' associations.

Each turning point of this story can be associated to different, more or less unnoticed subsidiary awareness, which binds plans, as well ways of dealing with uncertainties.

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Constraining-Enabling Conditions in the Unfolding Processes of Alitalia Acquisition

Alitalia story from December 2006 to April 2008 is about the search for a new beginning.

Therefore, it reveals the very attempt to create rules, principles properties practices and procedures, rather than to reproduce organizational order from established routines. In fact, it shows that, in situation of turnaround, actors are mainly constrained and enabled mainly by social and political and competitive institutions, such as competition dynamics, EU rules, for instance, about slots European monopoly and how national carriers can dispose of them. Overarching rules of great consequence are also bilateral agreements with not-EU countries about which carrier will use international airport facilities. In the Alitalia story actors will also enact the judiciary system, while the logic of politics always is always hidden amidst most actions. Union logic binds the attempt to rewrite the employment rules. Turnarounds therefore show how unique, most of the time conflicting, well established structural institutional principles gather and mediate.

Focusing on a company turnaround, this story also accounts for company's rules' rupture. One key change will be for instance that new Alitalia managers and executive will be able to regain their responsibilities, which unfortunately had been taken over by Alitalia professional associations.

The tender stories therefore show how institutions constrained and enabled the processes of rebuilding Alitalia. EU traffic rights monopoly, for instance, forced not-EU contenders to retreat from both tenders after they failed to make a consortium with an Italian company. EU rules also forbid the Government to settle Alitalia debts and losses. These rules sustained the possibility for a bankruptcy, which should convince unions and professional associations to accept the acquisition plans. To fight the decision to eliminate the Malpensa hub in the second tender, administrators of both Lombardia Region and the airport board appealed to the judiciary system, pretending a billionaire refunding for the damages which would follow it. The judiciary lever was also used by Air One to oppose its exclusion from the buyer competition.

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Alitalia story provides also the opportunity to compare two opposite tenders, which nevertheless produce the same outcome. Despite situations and microprocesses are unique, a view from ABSAs shows that in both situations actors were forced into a foreseen narrow linear path. In fact, in the first tender the path was pointed by rigid tender procedures, while in the second tender it was bound by the hidden mission to hand over Alitalia to AF-KLM. Besides, plans and procedures of the first tender, together with a lack of strategic information, implied that buyers ought to make a blind acquisition. The second tender abolished plans and procedures, but this did not increase the space for buyers' intervention. Instead, they allowed the Government and Alitalia CEO to act freely in order to realize the best conditions for AF-KLM takeover. Thus, the style of the second tender appears similar to that of the first one. In both cases there was a plan to impose, as well as lack of flexibility and lack of transparency. That a hidden clear plan was in place in the second tender appears immediately from the very definition of the buyer's profile, as every actors and potential buyer denounced. The bias towards AF-KLM was also revealed by AF-KLM spokesperson, when citing circumstances of hidden agreements which were not yet known to the public. Moreover, Alitalia's CEO repeatedly assumed in conference calls that there was no other possibility for Alitalia rescue than associating to this EU carrier leader.

Thus, change in these tender stories follows the traditional path of making a strategy representation the prevailing 'virtual' enabling-constraining condition. Tenders' procedures therefore were only empty formalities, which prevented any possible mediation.

Because of the impossibility of direct mediation, actors could resist only by appealing to institutional rules. Despite this approach, and because of it, after seven months bargaining, the worsening of Alitalia economics made Alitalia takeover the only available solution.

The round table for a final agreement with unions and professional associations would realize it.

This process failed within a few days, showing that Alitalia CEO, the Italian Government, and AF-KLM CEO were guided by an unreal ABSA: that unions and professional association would give up their power and privileges. The gap instead appeared incommensurable and the all process blew

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up. The scene showing Alitalia pilots and flight assistants cheering soon after Spinetta abandoned the negotiating table testifies Unions' immaturity for sharing the cost of resuscitating a dead company.

The second tender story also fails because the Cabinet resigned and new elections were arranged. Tenders' failures and the conflicts they raised then became one of the many reasons for citizen's turning to opposition following a new Parliament and a new Cabinet.

When the new Cabinet took over the style of managing a third private tender changed. The process then was managed in order to encourage Italian entrepreneurs to take the risk of making an Italian partnership, from which to start the search for a European partnership. This time the Italian Government showed the capability to take care of the many issues that could make the birth of a new Alitalia successful. In this third tender one main ABSA was entrepreneurship. It allowed the creation of institutional conditions and the support for the formation of an Italian consortium. This support implied some immediate law modification which would allow splitting Alitalia into a 'good' company and a 'bad' company.

Order then arose from the management of disorder. Above all, it was not generated from established practices, but from a kind of entrepreneurship applied to the very creation of rules, those for instance relating layoffs as well as the alignment of pilots and assistant pilots to the European carriers' standard. Tenders episodes underline that change is more a matter of 'actions binding subsidiary awareness' than of plans and procedures. ABSA actually played an overwhelming influence on microprocesses, whose destiny was followed by the destruction of ongoing ABSA and the emergence of new ones.

The entrepreneurial ABSA in the third tender moved incessantly the Government to creating ways to overcome resistance. The deal between the Italian consortium, on one side, and unions and professional associations, on the other side succeeded, for instance, despite it had initially taken the usual opposing orientation, the Italian Cabinet managed the deal directly the acquisition process, supporting both the Italian Consortium and the four federal unions. A step by step mediation took

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place, thus, agreements arrived first from the more moderate unions which signed relative formal documents. One last federal union remained isolated and stuck in the unpopular responsibility to block the bargain. Newspapers reported the wavering behavior of this union. They also underlined this union close relation to the leftist party, which had just lost the election and was not willing to iron out government difficulties. In the end public opinion as well as other components of the leftist party turned against such boycotting and a full agreement with the federal unions was finally reached. Then the Government and the Italian consortium approached the irreducible associations of pilots and assistant pilots, which did not represent the majority of Alitalia workers but only a caste of a few privileged professionals. Neither rules or procedures, nor institutions could get rid of their blackmail. The way out was found by a creative behavior. In fact, the entrepreneurial style of the new government suggested the Italian consortium to buy the 'good' company despite this missed agreement. Until then it was thought that this agreement could not be renounced. Change occurred then by dropping this assumption, drawing instead from the fact that federal unions had already signed the agreement, thus ensuring that the bulk of workers would not strike. Then, the burden of any further disorder would stay on the shoulders of the 'caste'. Moreover, the 'good' company became free to recruit pilots and assistant pilots from all over the world. It would also recruit each pilot and assistant pilot through a personal contract, rather than through professional representatives.

In the end this third tender shows that in changing situations there is little place for procedures and practices. Instead, it is now clear that boundaries are provided mainly by institutions. They are instantiated according to the renewal and evolution of ABSAs as well as to local matters of concern, which provide process with materiality. The extreme case of Government involvement in a company's change story adds that change may be supported by the very modification of institutional principles.

The Alitalia story also tells that moving Alitalia from AK-KLM embrace and from the rapacious power of professional associations was a present strong drive to which the new Government took

Adding Life Experience in Giddens' Structuration and Providing it with Empirical Style expressly care. The previous experience instead had left untouched power centres, thus ignoring the very causes of Alitalia's managerial inefficiency.

Some Words on the First Tender Microprocesses

It is now clear that turnarounds draw from overarching, highly abstract frames of social and political institutions; besides, that these frames are enacted by single parties while dealing with local MoCs. A game goes on in order to deconstruct differences between parties. This deconstruction should then accumulate actions for a successful gathering and mediation, while removing resistances. The Alitalia first two tenders' story showed that gathering actions were unsuccessful because both ABSA and plans and procedures disregarded the incoming need for mediation.

Failing microprocesses can be best understood within this frame. They show, in fact, that actors deconstructed plans and procedures as obstacles to mediation. But also that resistance could not be managed because there was no space for mediation. As primary over rules and substance, processes then determined the only available solution, that is, failure.

The coding work was of great help to understand some minutia of microprocesses. It helped separating and analysing two kind of actions: those moving towards the realization of plans and procedures, and those resisting these same plans and procedures. Thus, in the first tender, codes showed that, under the given procedures, positive mediation occurred only as Government assurance that would let entrepreneurs free to take rescue decisions, namely free to decide about layoffs. They also showed the relevance of absences, those of European players to whom the tender was directed. Above all, they underlined that a demand to rescue Alitalia suitable for European leaders could not fit the possibilities of Italian contenders or international funds, though for different reasons. It should have been clear then that tenders' plans and procedures must fit the targeted buyer because each buyer had different rescue capabilities. Thus, failure occurred through the silence of European leaders, as well as the retreat from the race of non-European carriers, since they could inherit neither traffic right nor the hundreds bilateral accords made by the Italian

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Government with non European countries, and finally the retreat of Air One because this carrier

was not capable to face all the burden of the Alitalia rescue and development.

Alitalia first tender shows that actions for a successful ending could never balance the impedimenta driving it towards failure. The unseen but present and devastating ABSA imprisoned plans, procedures, and actions. Government silence in face of actors' deconstructive work emerged immediately. In fact, those who wished to join the tender race deployed their understanding of what problems should a tender address. For entrepreneurs and investors, in fact, Alitalia situation was clear enough, since it had been around for fifteen years.

Deconstruction kept addressing the same issues in the hope that reason would prevail over hazard. However, problems were never faced, so that one by one bidder left. Even the last bidder was not able to change the rules of the bargain; therefore its retreat became the only left alternative.

These deconstruction microprocesses make it clear that a tender plan moving the entire burden of Alitalia rescue over the buyer's shoulders could never succeed.

Deconstruction also underlined that lay actors' played a sociological task by making their reasons play a role in the tender game while searching a way out of the tender rigidity. Their work was done from within, not only against plans and procedures, but also in order to explain why the tender could not work. Actors then enacted the political ABSA, which allows citizens to assess Government capability in performing its role.

Microprocesses of the second tender show instead how one-sided ABSA survives to the formal appearance of apparent open-ended, flexible procedures.

How One-Sided Approach to Acquisition Survives Beyond Open-Ended Procedures

The second tender is a turnaround within a turnaround. The Government and Alitalia CEO still pursue Alitalia privatization but this will occur now through a private tender. According to these new tender rules, the final buyer ought to possess patrimonial strength, industry experience, and be capable to sustain Alitalia's recovery and development. However, tender's procedures will be extremely flexible since it will not define plans, procedures, and steps. Instead, Alitalia will engage

Adding Life Experience in Giddens' Structuration and Providing it with Empirical Style in a private search for a suitable buyer, without time constraints; after comparing will buyers' plans for Alitalia a final choice will be made. Then, the buyer procedure can be tailored around known and accepted conditions, making acquisition quick and unproblematic.

Since its announcement, however, potential buyers engaged in an endless fight in the hope to influence the race conditions. It was more than a matter of deconstructing and denouncing hidden ABSA. In fact, as soon as Alitalia actions touched vital interests and possibilities, deconstruction turned into a fierce political and institutional battle.

Indeed, only AF-KLM and Lufthansa carriers possessed the demanded attributes. Only them could inherit Alitalia's slots, according to EU monopoly rules. Their rivals – the Russian Airflot, Air One and the American fund Tpg - instead lacked some of profile's attributes or could not inherit Alitalia's slots and Italian bilateral accords. The Italian contender offered its stand-alone internationalization strategy that would save Alitalia from a takeover, and make it the fourth EU carrier. A range of four financial institutions would provide financial support to this strategy. On the other side, the American fund kept calling on Italian investors in order to form a consortium which could make it possible to inherit Alitalia slots and bilateral favourable conditions with non-EU airports.

After the screening, Alitalia CEO, as foreseen choose AF-KLM carrier as the only Alitalia buyer. Researchers could jump to the conclusion that events occurred from August 2007 to March 2008 were just a waste of time, because actually tender's conditions could fit only AF-KLM, while Alitalia CEO was very determined in following this direction. However, such quick conclusion would be an abstraction. The story of the second tender instead is about the *due process* of a battle. It tells that actors believed in the possibility to subvert Alitalia's original orientation. Assessing the failure as inevitable is also a mistake because the battle was important in itself. It tells, for instance, that besides deconstructing the hidden Alitalia project, it brought into light the shortcoming of this project for the Italian economy. Moreover, since in the Malpensa issue the stakes for the Lombardia Region were very high, it showed how creative could be the opposition. In fact, it meant not only

Adding Life Experience in Giddens' Structuration and Providing it with Empirical Style strikes, nor only discourses, but also the appeal to the EU institutions, and finally the very engagement in legal actions. The SEA airport's CEO, in fact, undertook a suit asking 1.2 million euro as a refund for the losses Malpensa would suffer after Alitalia retreatment from its original commitment in the hub development. These microprocesses showed that excluded actors opposed Alitalia and AF-KLM plans by enacting a political ABSA. Northern Italy citizens, in fact, would oppose parties that had not defended the Malpensa hub. This battle therefore had to be fought. Anyway, this battle became later the many issue of the election campaign, since, while AF-KLM was conducting the final deal with Alitalia federal unions, the Government in charge had to resign. The political ABSA had slowly taken the place of the hidden plan to sell Alitalia to AF-KLM. Microprocesses also showed that procedures' flexibility was not made, as it could initially appear, to let buyers' competition influence the outcome, but on the contrary, to provide Alitalia's CEO with the power to overcome any *impedimenta* by ignoring them. Thus, in the second tender, as in the first one, procedures halted human power-to do otherwise. The difference between the two styles stems only from a different ABSA content. In the first tender procedures were meant to force AF-KLM to accept Alitalia's demands, while in the second tender they were meant to fit the procedures to AF-KLM wishes.

Microprocesses also provided the time dimension by showing moves and countermoves path, how slow they are. It took 9 months, from August 2007 to March 14th 2008 for AF-KLM to make a offer.

In March the possibility for success appeared very high. In April however it vanished because of unions' opposition. Failure than showed that Spinetta, as well as Alitalia CEO Prato, had proceeded under a wrong ABSA, by assuming that unions would finally give up some of their historical power. CEOs of both companies thought that Alitalia extreme situation would be a good deterrent for unions' resistance; instead, unions thought that Malpensa sacrifice should suffice to maintain everything else. Unions therefore asked for full occupation in Alitalia Flight as well as in Alitalia Service, though Service was inefficient and a source of losses.

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In the end, the tender failed because the search for a buyer prevailed over all other strategic issues.

In both procedures, we can see in fact how Alitalia CEO and the Italian Government did not manage them. Alitalia story of both tenders tells that unions felt that the Government would embrace their demands because of their political convergence. On the other side the Italian Government believed that for the same reason unions would embrace the conditions for AF-KLM takeover.

A process perspective shows therefore mistakes that could have been avoided. By going back and forth across all the events that brought finally to Alitalia acquisition, it appears that success in October 2008 arose around the formation of an Italian consortium, the dismissal of Alitalia's carrier and the distribution of Alitalia assets and debts between a 'good' company and a 'bad' company. This positive outcome shows that it was actually possible to find a third way to avoid Alitalia melting into AF-KLM. During the second tender instead Alitalia's CEO claimed that there were no other possibilities than joining an international carrier as it was being done. The story of the third tender instead tells that this third way was entrepreneurship and innovation. It won every *impedimenta*, while the previous two tenders were managed through a bureaucratic style, according to perspectives that were already available.

The bureaucratic style was underlined by Ryanair carrier's CEO, who through media and in *conference calls* denounced the many factious ways in which the Lazio Regional administration attempted routinely to jeopardize its success in the Region. The same style appears in the second tender when the *Financial Times* revealed that Alitalia slots and each bilateral accord were silently handed over to AF-KLM. Since the tender beginning, the Lombardia administrators had asked to get them in order to face Alitalia's retreat from Malpensa hub. Alitalia CEO instead obeyed to AF-KLM demands. It was the price for a difficult rescue as well as way to silence a strong competition Malpensa would conduct from Northern Italy.

In the end, the second tender story shows that, for Alitalia CEO and the Italian Government, competition among buyers was a mere formality. Besides, the choice for private tender and for

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flexible procedures was providing Alitalia CEO with the power to oppose any *impedimenta* to a hidden project.

During September, October, November, and December 2007, as well as January and February 2008 events of the second tender showed the conflict between the not-so-hidden project to let AF-KLM takeover Alitalia and the Regional administration. Whether or not this decision was unavoidable, by silencing this conflict, the Italian Government favored AF-KLM carrier.

The Italian Government was presumably balancing the political cost of abandoning Malpensa with the political reward of saving Alitalia. Since the Malpensa issue was addressed immediately in September, it is now clear that this move discounted a firm faith on a successful tender outcome. Deconstruction was the fighting weapon of the Italian carrier contender, who proposed a stand alone recovery and development strategy, as well as the weapon of those contenders forced to abandon the tender. Not only they revealed the Government hidden project, but also kept addressing the pitfalls of AF-KLM plan, to which it was always replied by reaffirming its advantages.

As we have already seen, the story tells that in a changing situation an ABSA is always in place. Change also comes along a new ABSA. The story also tells that there can be a multiplicity of ABSA relating actors and issues. Microprocesses showed that the work of deconstruction is done from within by the actors involved. Fighting a strong oriented project revealed that processes are always primary over plans and procedures, but non over processes. Alitalia's second tender story has showed that ABSA count more than plans and procedures, which then were nullified.

Microprocesses however are always a strong challenge for plans and procedures as well as for ABSA. In the second tender, a change in ABSA opened the way to a third procedure which unfolded around quite different and various ABSAs.

A final outcome of this analysis tells that entrepreneurial community showed only after its cooperation was specifically addressed by the new Government. Despite so, the third tender confirms that no project is safe if *impedimenta* are not properly faced. In the second tender ABSA about unions remained unseen. In the third tender many *impedimenta* issues were already learned,

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but nothing would assure that process would be able to take care of all of them. Instead, there were moments when success was jeopardized by pilots and assistant pilots' professional unions. The entrepreneurship style rescued the process in that moment. The move to buy Alitalia despite this opposition was a risky, unforeseen choice, which might have not occurred. The outcome of a two years struggle suddenly depended on this single choice. From then onwards, a radical event happened: for the first time in Alitalia history the power of pilots and assistant pilots unions were definitively counterbalanced. Then, the possibility for Alitalia to become a private company became real.

This event confirms the primacy of process, as the place where ABSA, structures, procedures, and representation must fight for their survival whether or not they are accurate, scientific, or simply reasonable.

Conclusions

This work aimed at providing empirical impetus to Giddens' structuration. However, I was aware that this template had to be revisited in order to open it to this opportunity. I did it on Giddens' premise that sociologists must follow actors while they act how they do. But I also had to find in structuration a place for practitioners' doing, which has actually been removed from the template, making it an overly intellectualized theory. This work therefore does not start with an oversimplified account of Giddens structuration, which is the strategy most researchers follow to dedicate their analysis to empirical research. I found that such kind of synthesis never accounts for the consequences of Giddens' commitment on dualism. In their synthesis therefore researchers tend to use structuration inner inconsistencies, which have the advantage to allow them to affirm that they are engaged in a process perspective while actually they are doing traditional research. Thus, the premise to the empirical research in this article is a rather deep analysis of how the structuration template becomes when life experience is internalized in the duality of structure recursion. As a first strategic outcome, then I made the premises to show later that there never exists a state of affair, but

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only events binding incoming events, which inspire actions not embedded in practices, but in what occurs in the words.

The view of structuration as a practice perspective of companies practically engaged in the world then became the starting point for providing structuration with empirical drive. Since this related to organization acting in the word, the paper actually engaged in understanding how life experience explains daily situadeness in instantiation.

To do this work we compared Dreyfus and Spinoza's *deflationary realism* (1999), rooted on Heidegger's *occurrentness*, with Bacharach, Bamberger, Sonnenstuhl's *Logics of Actions* (1996) and with Shotter's account of '*actions guiding subsidiary awareness*' (2005), drawn on Wittgenstein (1953). Dreyfus and Spinoza confirmed that practices actually exercise a putative influence on actions and are changed through a research process in order to meet the unknown attributes of strangeness. Logics of actions instead appeared unsuitable for deepening the research about logic inability to realise alignment. This research anyway contributed to the understanding of what goes on as micropolitics. Shotter's ABSA finally became the main reference in the attempt to provide structuration with the style of empirical research. In fact, it singled out that at the core of change there is not cognition, but a reality which is at the same time unseen but most relevant. It is unseen just because it is not immediately knowable without searching for it. This invisible reality is not a mere trace.

The idea of ABSAs has become the key issue of creating the empirical commitment of situadeness. It showed that among 'virtual' dimensions, ABSA are the 'virtual' dimension binding, though not determining, actions not embedded in practices. ABSAs are different from teleologies and strategies because they are not represented. In fact, they are felt experiences. They emerge mysteriously from wherever or from nowhere. Despite so, they guide and bind actions. They play a strong power on processes even when they remain unseen.

The Alitalia story of two tenders' failures showed how ABSAs emerged and evolved, as well as how they encountered surprise. Microprocesses of failing episodes, however, showed lay actors'

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sociological activity that made them visible. Deconstruction was therefore the main activity to face failure and to move beyond it. Failure, instead, arose because this activity did not cause ABSAs' change during the process. But, the entire process showed that this work finally became relevant in changing the situation when actors became aware of how ABSAs drove their behaviour.

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