Ontoteleological Constitution of Entrepreneurship

Abstract

Entrepreneurship is a pluri-disciplinary phenomenon, object of research of several areas of knowledge. However, studies on this theme present approaches that start to consider entrepreneurship as a field of private knowledge in phase of epistemological construction. In this scenery, the aim of this investigation is to contribute with the discussions on the theme, through studies on the ontoteleological constitution of entrepreneurship, in propedeutic character, deflagrating new approaches. Thus, there is a presentation concerning the study of entrepreneurship, which may emphasize its ontical and ontological aspects. In addition, it is investigated the reason why it is complex to define *entrepreneurship*. The subject regarding the philosophy of entrepreneurship is introduced seeking to present the bases for an ontoteleological approach to the phenomenon. Such approach considers the purpose as the fundamental explanatory principle in the organization, resulting in transformations of entrepreneurial action. Finally it is concluded that man is *an entrepreneur being*, the meta entrepreneur, and his entrepreneurial action is not determined by external factors, but for the condition of the being's potentiality.

Key-words: Entrepreneurship; Meta-entrepreneurship; Transdiciplinarity.

1. Introduction

Obtaining a clear and objective definition of entrepreneurship is a complex task due to the singularities of the area. Lavarde (2004) believes that entrepreneurship is at a stage where there is lack of scientific maturity, needing to recognize the relevance of temporary and social dimensions in investigations. Thus, with this understanding, each researcher may choose their areas of interest recognizing their potentialities.

In function of such situation, the objective of this article is to contribute with discussions on the theme, through studies on the ontoteleological constitution of the entrepreneurship, in propedeutic character, and give raise to new approaches.

To achieve that, phenomenology and the phenomenological method will be used in the elaboration of this paper.

The base this method is on the relation between subjetc/object, without giving emphasis in one or other side. The important in this method is the human meaning and perception concerning specific happenings. It goes beyond the simple description of an event by the human being. It tries to put on clear, light up, to disclosure meanings.

2. Ontic X Ontological Investigations

Why is there a lack of conceptual definition and absence of paradigms about entrepreneurship? Firstly, it must be pointed out that the previous studies focus on ontical characteristics, instead of privileging the ontological characteristics, which would bring other contribution to the debates. When investigating aspects that are connected to the entrepreneur and his characteristics, in detriment of elucidating consideration about the entrepreneur's comprehensive sense as something that makes their multiple existences possible, researchers observe just parts of reality.

ONTIC	ONTOLOGICAL
Relative or belonging to the *being* or to its characteristics. It refers to the structure and to the innate essence of a being; what it is in itself; its identity; its difference in relation to others; its relations with others. It concerns *beings* in their own, real and multiple existences.	It is concerned to the philosophical study of *beings* and to the investigation of concepts that allow to know and determine the ontical modality; what method to use to study each one; what categories they are applied to. It concerns the *beings* seen as objects of knowledge.

Figure 1: Distinction between ontical X ontological
Source: adapted from Chauí (2002); Heidegger (1999)

The researcher that privileges ontical characteristics, after long studies, says: 'The entrepreneur is somebody who assumes risks and innovates'. Such statement, based on rigorous quantitative methods, is unequivocal. It is science based.

On the other hand, the ontological investigator asks: 'What is innovation? What is success or failure? Do such terms exist in themselves and for themselves or are evaluations about human actions? What is courage? What is value? It may be said that the difference is in the way of seeing the phenomenon. For scientists, it is necessary to present a reality, to conceive doubts about such reality and then raise scientific hypothesis. Scientists then, turn to one or more theories and make use of one or more methods to answer the question about the problem. Ontology, on the other hand, is different.

Ontology investigates data, or the *being*'s sense, whatever its nature. It analyzes differences and relations among *beings*, their way of existing, origin, and purpose. 'What does perform an entrepreneurial role mean?' This is an ontological issue.

To achieve a qualitative progress in researches on the theme it is necessary to structure the issue on entrepreneurship, based on a philosophical analysis considering its ontological, axiological and epistemological dimensions, following the example of what has happen in debates on the subject, regarding technology (VARGAS, 1985, 1994; GAMA, 1984, 1985, 1987; MIRANDA, 2002). This is relevant because researches on this subject may serve as reference for the study on entrepreneurship.

DIMENSIONS	STUDIES
Ontology	Ontology investigates the *being* based on itself, considered independently of its private determinations. It is a reflection regarding the *being*'s comprehensive sense, as something that makes their multiple existences possible. Ontology investigates the data before it is a fact of science and after it becomes collocations of difficult understanding.
Axiology	Value theories. The object of study of Axiology is the nature of values and valuable judgments. Value is what is precious for the being; which contributes to its growth. Examples: economical, social, spiritual, cultural values. Man is a cultural *being*, who has a language, habits, techniques and values as bases. Ethics and aesthetics are constituent parts of axiology.
Epistemology	Epistemology investigates the origin and the value of human knowledge in general (concerning his nature, stages and limits). It investigates the sciences (principles, postulates, conclusions and methods from different branches of scientific knowledge), in addition to the verification of criteria and truth, of the value of scientific systems, their structural paradigms or their relations with society.

Figure 2: Possibilities of philosophical analyses
Source: adapted from Chauí (2002); Heidegger (1999)

At this point, turning to Merleau-Ponty (1994) is fundamental. According to the author, the action of contemplating a certain theme in itself, is capable of elucidating a given phenomenon, considering that such consideration starts from what is provided. The reflexion 'level' will be decisive to know how much is known about the subject. It is also necessary to unite the action of contemplating to the knowledge on the theme history and on external explanations, besides trying to put back the causes and the sense of the theme in an existential doctrine.

However, 'does it happen in relation to studies on entrepreneurship?' As far as this research is concerned, the reply to that inquiry is negative. So, why it does not happen, since there have been debates on the subject for decades? The answer to that inquiry is that, apparently, there has not been progress and development to investigations regarding the doctrine of the entrepreneurship existence; moreover, an ontological analysis on the subject was not searched.

3. Entrepreneurship

The inherent complexity of the discussion on entrepreneurship lies on the epistemological phase in which it lies. Being in a pre-paradigmatic phase, the area has room for the most varied studies, which is developed in agreement with contingent aspects (in relation to eventual or incidental character of the investigations) of socio-political-environmental conditions and of the historical moment in which the researchers develop their studies.

Bygrave and Hofer (1991) believe that the main challenge of the area is the development of a theoretical basis. The authors discuss obstacles to establish a formal structure, just as the consensus of investigators in ratifying a general definition for entrepreneurship and the difficult characterization of the entrepreneurial process.

However, in spite of the different ideas on the theme, Raposo and Silva (2000, p. 63) observed that there is a certain understanding among the specialists in some areas:

- Economics: investigates the innovation and development;

- Behavioral Sciences: investigates the entrepreneur's psychological characteristics (creativity, persistence, self-control and leadership);

- Engineering and specialists in production administration: investigate the distributors and coordinators of resources;

- Finances: investigate how to evaluate taking risks;

- Administration: investigates how administrators plan their actions, use resources, and command teams;

- Marketing: investigates how opportunities are identified and how to differ offers, in addition to the adaptation to the markets.

Bjerke (2000) states that the definitions that guide the main themes of research are: entrepreneurship, growth and development; entrepreneur's personality; entrepreneurial circumstances and process. Such researches often result, in successful prescriptive models, which are explanatory.

However, there is also the comprehensive research, which attributes to the entrepreneur and entrepreneurship the following meanings:

1) Actor that executes actions, in agreement with his own symbols, social reality and intentionality.

2) Intrinsic phenomenon to the social reality, resulting from entrepreneurial actions.

Bjerke (2000) also verifies that for understanding entrepreneurship researches may focus three fields, namely:

Level	Individual	Social	Speech
Objective	Construction and entrepreneur's interpretation	Entrepreneur's action inside the social reality	Control of social speech 'knowledge as power'
Referential	Phenomenology/hermeneutic	Social Phenomenology	Post-modernism

Figure 3: Study Levels
Source: Bjerke (2000, p.9)

Busenitz et al. (2003), demonstrate in their study, that there are new possibilities of investigation in the entrepreneurial field, because researches have already obtained a limited progress in search of consolidating entrepreneurship as a subject of knowledge. The authors above mentioned made their studies based on the analyses of articles published in newspapers.

Thus, without a guiding paradigm, specialists investigate several themes. That happens due to the interdisciplinary aspect of *entrepreneurship* that leads researchers, from several areas of knowledge to include the subject in their studies.

Based on the absence of paradigms and definitions of research themes focusing entrepreneurship, an important subject emerges: how do researchers study the subject?

For Filion (1997) the field is dominated by the functionalist-positivist views, thus it is necessary to open new perspectives to understand *who* entrepreneurs are, and *what* they do. Moreover, it is necessary to separate pure research from applied research, with the aim of creating an entrepreneur's theory. The science that would give support to such a theory would be the '*Entrepreneurlogy*' or 'Studies on *entrepreneurship*' (FILION, 1997, p. 10).

It is possible to observe that most of the studies made in the field of entrepreneurship are based on empiricism. Davidsson (1991) and Davidsson and Wiklund (2001) observed that such studies collect empiric data, without studying its meaning, in more elaborated abstractions, instead of establishing models for later verification.

However, the academy has been turning its attention to new forms of analyzing the problem. Cope (2005) observes that phenomenological researches have recently emerged in the field of entrepreneurship, using an interpretative paradigm. In his text, the author analyzes aspects related to both, epistemology and ontology, illustrating the passage from phenomenological philosophy to methodology.

Berglund (2007) reinforces that many researches in the area are positivist. He presents Husserl and Heidegger's philosophies in an attempt to understand how theoretical concepts and empiric events may be treated, with the use of the phenomenological approach.

4. Philosophy and Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship brings in itself the ability to lead to large psychological, social, political, economical and cultural transformations. Thus, studying Entrepreneurship by privileging ontical characteristics, by making use of rationalistic, empiricist or utilitarian approaches, leads to limitations in understanding the phenomenon as a whole.

Understanding that entrepreneurship is explained, based on the entrepreneur's psychological characteristics (in a type of psychology or 'psychologysm'), or based on the context of the entrepreneurial action (in a type of sociology 'sociologism'), or based on the entrepreneurial process (in a type of organization 'organizalogism') means to be stuck on some fragments of the reality.

Entrepreneurship cannot be mistaken as a study of 'undertaking' or performing entrepreneurial acts, because it implicates in obtaining philosophical knowledge, based on ontological , axiological and epistemological dimensions.

Thus, it means that it is likely to think of an 'entrepreneurial philosophy', settled on axiological, ontological and epistemological dimensions.

The present investigation rests upon critical considerations on the theme, so that the Academy may provide contributions of philosophical-administrative nature to the society. Therefore, the subject should be treated as a '*philosophical issue*'. It is expected that this investigation may contribute to narrow the connection between philosophy and administration in an innovative manner, trying to avoid losing the methodological rigidity that such action may contain.

Thus, the contributions that philosophical studies may offer extrapolate the sphere of possibilities and they may become real. The issue is that philosophy may modify the understanding of human reality.

Bittar and Almeida (2001, p. 24-25) illustrate this assertive, by discussing some kinds of philosophy:

- Scientific philosophies: determine the humanity's intellectual course. They exemplify it with Aristotle's formal and analytical logic.

- Abstract philosophies: determine the course of science itself and of philosophy after a scientific intervention. They are exemplified with the issue of modernity, without Kant's thoughts.

- Radical philosophies: of political and social critic character, they are producers of the greatest reflexes on the society and on power structures. They are exemplified with Marx and Engels.

- Spiritual philosophies: form a group of prescriptions that drive the society. They are exemplified with Gandhi and the non-violence.

Therefore, the impact of philosophical studies is observed. The one that Guerreiro Ramos caused with the study about administration was to transpose philosophy for the creation of an administrative sociology.

Nevertheless, in relation to the use of phenomenology in organizational studies, it may be observed that investigations are accomplished for many years and several studies approach such theme.

Burrel and Morgan (1979) make an analysis about the epistemology and methodology on organizational studies. According to the authors, all theories in the field are based on a philosophy of science and on a theory of society. Concerning phenomenology, they present, specifically, the question of reduction in Husserl, the intentionality of conscience, and other themes.

In the classic article '*Phenomenology: the new way of viewing organizational research*', Sanders (1982) talks about the difficulty in finding phenomenological studies in administrative research. He presents and discusses aspects of phenomenology and also a model of specific research for the area, besides making considerations about *paradigms of science* and their connections with the theme.

Moreira (2002) observes that there is an increment in the use of the phenomenological method, in researches made in the administration field, but researchers do not know how exactly to define what *phenomenology* is. He also discusses the difficulty of transposing a philosophical method to empiric research and the necessary adaptations to make it possible, in addition he presents possible variants that may be used in administrative research.

Meanwhile, Gil (2003) seeks to analyze the applicability of the phenomenological method in administrative research. He uses Husserl to discuss phenomenological concepts, and observes that many researches named *phenomenological* researches cannot be defined as such, due to their methodological imprecision.

However, the phenomenological method is a promise for research in administration, and the interest of many researchers in the method, emerged from the preference for qualitative researches, not from recognition of its methodological and epistemological repercussion.

Gibson and Hanes (2003) review the current assumptions of phenomenological research in human resources and they propose a calendar for future researches in the field. They present 'phenomenology', as a methodology interpreted for performing research in the area, however, being essential to have further and complete understanding on the holistic nature and the complexity of experiences that are relevant to the practice of the administration area or sector.

Thiry-Cherques (2004), states that the methods of 'phenomenological root' are convenient to the administration science. Based on Husserl's phenomenology, the author presents his main concepts and several considerations on the phenomenological movement, talking about a program for applying the phenomenological method to researches in administration.

Vergara and Carvalho (2004) argue that the understanding of interactive experiences, and of consumers' essential existences involved with the physical working contexts, are not possible if conventional methodological procedures are used; thus they present forms by which phenomenology may be a suitable methodological option for research in such a context.

Ehrich (2005) makes considerations about the transposition of phenomenological philosophy to phenomenological empiric research. He presents and discusses Husserl's ideas - the founder of phenomenology - stating that such methodology has plenty to offer to the administration field.

As mentioned above, philosophy may, indeed, contribute with administration, especially through phenomenology. Thus, what is intended in this work is to contribute to narrow the connection between both, through a study on the teleology of entrepreneurship.

5. The Ontoteleological Constituition Of Entrepreneurship

In several fields of knowledge the issue of pluri-disciplinarity is discussed. That embraces the constituent and nuclear analysis of human knowledge: '*But, what does it mean, specifically, for entrepreneurship?*'

When stated that entrepreneurship is interdisciplinary, the idea is to demonstrate that there is a establishment of connections between that area and other areas of knowledge, whose performance is common to two or more subjects.

Multidisciplinar, reveals that the area contains, involves and is distributed through several subjects and researches.

Transdisciplinar, on the other hand, indicates that entrepreneurship searches for answers to its inquiries, out and beyond itself, producing data that provide a new vision of its nature and reality. It would be a type of meta-entrepreneurship, based on metaphysical bases (in the sense of being directed to an ontological understanding of reality) and teleological (in the sense of reaching goals, or objectives, by considering the purpose as a fundamental explanatory principle in the organization and transformations resulting from entrepreneurial action).
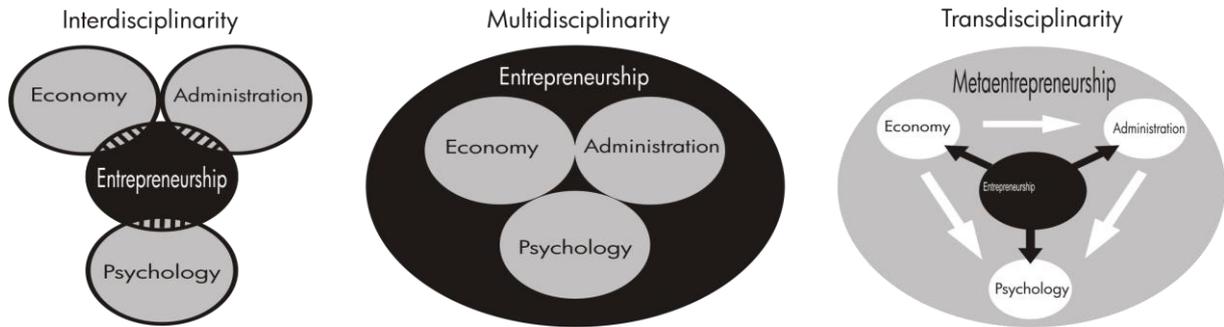
Figure 3: Examples of approaches of entrepreneurship
Source: Boava (2006, p. 37)

Figure 3 reveals the problem found in studies on entrepreneurship and the search for a definition and a paradigm. It happens that, on itself, entrepreneurship is not capable of 'existing', thus, it is necessary the contribution of other subjects. What occurs is that such area is a 'being-in-situation', in other words, an empiric reality that is shown and imposed to everyone. It is given, placed in the world, but it is temporal. This reveals that there will be entrepreneur and entrepreneurship wherever there is human being.

The economical-administrative aspect of this field is one among many, and it becomes relevant due to crescent interests on the part of governments and society. The existing reductionism, which considers entrepreneurship and entrepreneur just as 'objects' of economy, psychology or administration, results in a lack of a holistic understanding on the phenomenon. Thus, in this perspective ontoteleological: 'Who is the entrepreneur and what is entrepreneurship?'

Entrepreneur: an individual who performs an action capable to produce a rupture with what brings safety and stability to his position (accommodation, alienation, passion etc.). A cathartic-like effect is produced and that generates in this individual, a liberation from what is strange to his essence and, due to that, limits his entrepreneurial capacity. He is therefore, a person that transforms his potentiality in reality, characterized by being temporal and impermanent, embracing the most varied sectors of social life, such as: businesses, politics and sports, among others.

Entrepreneurship: group of activities that provide the entrepreneur, in the course of his action, with full freedom. Such freedom is manifested due to the occurrence of a rupture with all that provides safety and stability. The dependence state, in relation to external factors (existing in safety and stability), is replaced by the possibility of being subject of the action. Its base is transdisciplinary and teleological, being sustained by the search for the being's full accomplishment.

There will be entrepreneurial capacity development in the individual, as long as he develops from the being-in-itself towards the being-for-itself, because the degree of his freedom will be increased. Sartre (1966) stated that the existence precedes essence. In other words, it may be said that man appears in the world, finds himself, exists, and only later he defines himself. Man will be what he makes of himself (the author calls it subjectivity), there are no extrinsic conditionings. The human being is a project that is gradually built. Consequently, they are defined by the totality of their actions. In short, the individual is what he does.

At this point, it is appropriate to explain that to be is not equal to exist. When somebody says: 'I am an entrepreneur', he is behaving in the typical way of all beings, in a passively way, without great possibilities. Whereas when one says 'I am (involved) in 'entrepreneurship', there is the idea of passing from a potential condition to reality. Consciously, the subject feels he is fulfilling himself as an entrepreneur. In other words, the individual chooses to be an entrepreneur.

6. Conclusion

In this study, it was observed that the ontoteleological constitution of entrepreneurship lies on what is called meta-entrepreneurship, which makes use of a transdisciplinar approach.

The purpose is the fundamental explanatory beginning in the organization, and the transformations resulting of entrepreneurial action. The ontological understanding of the reality enables the individual to go further and deepen into the current phase of knowledge on the theme. It was demonstrated that the investigations made, did not obtain success in the search for the 'nature' of entrepreneurship, because of two aspects: 1) the pre-paradigmatic phase in which the field is; 2) the emphasis on ontical studies.

It should be considered that man is somebody 'self-made', and presents limitations settled on the thought, thus, it is observed that any investigation in this field must necessarily consider that every human action is intentional. As the subject develops from the being-in-itself towards the being-for-itself, there will be the entrepreneurial capacity development, because the level of freedom will be increasing.

Man is a human being, ready for acting in entrepreneurship or for undertaking. What will determine the entrepreneurial action are not external factors, but his potential condition. Moreover, with the certainty that entrepreneurship holds a philosophy, based on ontology, on axiology and on epistemology, it was possible to verify that only scientific investigations on the theme are insufficient for a wide and deep understanding of the phenomenon. It is also necessary to carry out philosophical investigations.

Such investigations differ from scientific ones, since they are directed to reach the first principles, the genesis. Questions such as 'what is its essence?' ', what is this that is? ', 'who it this that is for?, and other ones are made in this kind of study.

Entrepreneurship, within a philosophical perspective, is universal. Where there is man and society there will be entrepreneurship. The transdisciplinar ontical researcher starts from certainties, from assumptions that lead him to questionings. The ontological investigator questions the starting point.

Therefore, to consider entrepreneurship as trans-disciplinary it is to adapt to reality, once understanding the answers to man's inquiries are not in the man, himself, but in the meta-entrepreneurship, which has its bases on teleology and metaphysics.

In science, Filion (1997) observed this situation and he affirms that it is necessary to separate the pure research from the applied research, in order to create a theory of the entrepreneur. The area of science supporting this theory would be entrepreneurship.

As observed, the studies in this area are in a maturing phase. The present study contributes with the subject as the inquiries emerge from a new starting point.

It is necessary to carry out further studies, through general reflexion on the nature, phases and boundaries of knowledge on the subject, particularly, in the relations established between the researcher and the theme.

The objective, of this paper is not to drain the subject, but to propitiate the steps for further transdisciplinary studies on the theme. Many of the observations made here need further studies and discussions.

Concluding, a contribution to a scientific-philosophical progress on the subject was made by showing new investigative horizons and putting back the *being'*s primacy when dealing with *entrepreneurship*.

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