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Research Note :

In favour of training managers to struggle and put up resistance to minimise suffering at work: what can be taken from Axel Honneth's recognition theory

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In favour of training managers to struggle and put up resistance to minimise suffering at work: what can be taken from Axel Honneth's recognition theory

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Abstract:

Recent suicides in French companies have raised awareness about the levels of suffering that sometimes prevail in the world of work. This also affects managers. In recent years working conditions have visibly worsened amongst this group, which has desensitised people to it and led to mental suffering. Setting up and training people to use less distressing management tools is often advocated as a way of minimising such suffering. However, the objective of this piece is to suggest alternative training methods to combat suffering amongst managers. We intend to demonstrate that Honneth's recognition theory favours training for future managers to recognise and struggle collectively against suffering. We will attempt to put this approach into operation by calling on existing literature and our own training experience.

Keywords:

Suffering at work, managers, Honneth, recognition, training to struggle and put up resistance

INTRODUCTION

For some years there has been an increasing number of studies and reports in France about suffering at work (Enquête Santé et Itinéraires Professionnels (SIP) du Ministère du travail, 2007; Gollac, 2009).

Psychological suffering (stress, depression etc.) in particular is now such that it sometimes causes people to take their own lives. The suicides that have taken place in large firms such as France-Télécom, Renault and Peugeot have undoubtedly raised awareness about the extent and gravity of the problem.

Managers are also affected by this workplace suffering. According to the SUMER report conducted by Dares (Guignon, Niedhammer, & Sandret, 2008), 57,9% of managers are subject to strenuous psychological demands and have a large scope for decision making, whereas 11,7% experience tension at work (increased psychological demands but with little scope for decision making).

Indeed, conditions in the workplace have visibly worsened in recent years for this group, in the form of constant pressures around deadlines, quality and performance (Dany & Livian, 2002), a decline in hierarchical authority and a loss of prestige for the group (Bouffartigue & Gadéa, 2000; Roussel, 2007), contradictory orders (Bouffartigue, 2001a; Dany & Livian, 2002; Gaulejac, 2011) etc. Not only have these different factors led to growing pressures on individuals, they have also destroyed collective groups at work, as well as the recognition that there could be a way out for an individual (Bernoux, 2010).

This affects managers' sense of identity; when they are not sufficiently recognised at work, their sense of self is destabilised, their self esteem is undermined and psychological suffering sets in (Dejours, 2005).

Setting up and training people to use less distressing management tools is often advocated as a way of minimising such suffering. Here we will demonstrate the relevance of alternative training options. Axel Honneth's recognition theory will be used in this work. According to this philosophy, the act of recognition is central to social issues. As well as participating in the development of the Frankfurt School's normative and communicational perspective initiated by Habermas (1987), Honneth's work has reinvigorated Critical Theory. Indeed, while bringing the mental experience of subjects to the fore, Honneth shows that recognition, ie the affirmation of positive qualities of human subjects or groups, is the inter-subjective condition that enables people to be independently fulfilled and to acquire self esteem. Whereas there is a growing number of philosophy (Renault, 2003 and 2004) and workplace psychology studies (Dejours, 2009) which analyse and draw inspiration from this thinking, few publications in academic management journals make any mention of it (Alter, 2011; Bernoux, 2010; El Akremi, Narjes, & Bouzidi, 2009).

Furthermore, works on CME (Critical Management Education) actually take more from Habermas (Caproni & Arias, 1997; Prasad & Caproni, 1997; Reynolds, 1998; Samra-Fredericks, 2003).

The sociologist Philippe Bernoux (2010) is one of the rare authors to dwell on what can be taken from Honneth's philosophy in a management journal.

However, most of the time management works that do take from Honneth fail to make the most of a fundamental element of his theory, that of struggling and putting up resistance. Yet this dimension is essential for Honneth, for whom the individual must struggle in order to be recognised. As it can be difficult to confront others alone, individual engagement in collective resistance would seem an essential part of having one's identity recognised.

By demonstrating that training people to struggle for recognition and collectively put up resistance can help reduce workplace suffering amongst managers, Honneth's recognition theory adds value to the development of management teaching. Part 1 will allow us to justify our teaching project and show the need to favour training for future managers about struggling for recognition and collectively putting up resistance. In Part 2 we will present Honneth's theory in more detail

and reflect on the arrangements necessary to put this into operation. The debate will focus particularly on what might be taken from the case study, based on existing literature and our own teaching experience. Finally, Part 3 will enable us to discuss and draw conclusions about what can be taken from our work and what the limits of it are.

FROM MANAGERS SUFFERING AT WORK TO TRAINING ABOUT STRUGGLING AND PUTTING UP COLLECTIVE RESISTANCE

Work is a source of positive social value, recognition and, therefore, part of the way identity is formed (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992; El Akremi, et al., 2009; Gini, 1998; Sainsaulieu, 1977).

It allows individuals to construct an image of themselves as a result of the recognition they are accorded by others, and to develop self-esteem.

The fact that working conditions have worsened for managers has therefore led to suffering amongst this group, which is a threat to their sense of identity and leads to a loss of recognition (A).

We intend to demonstrate the necessity of training about struggling for recognition and putting up collective resistance to minimise this suffering (B).

Suffering amongst managers: a crisis of identity and diminished recognition at work

Management as a category results from a social construct that began in the 1930s. In spite of how varied the group is, Boltanski (1982) has stressed that cohesion and unity do exist amongst these employees. The group continued to grow in size in the 1980s and 90s, but some authors have highlighted the fact it has become less prestigious (Bouffartigue & Gadéa, 2000; Bouffartigue, 2001 a et b; Bouffartigue, Gadéa, & Pochic, 2011).

Not only has it lost prestige (Bouffartigue & Gadéa, 2000; Roussel, 2007), the worsening working conditions managers have experienced have also led to suffering at work. Indeed, Dany and Livian (2002) have underlined how it has become increasingly difficult to carry out management duties as a result of constant pressures around deadlines, quality, performance or increased workload. Targets introduced by senior management require increased and all-pervasive efficiency, and have developed a fear amongst managers of not always being at the top of their game (Cousin & Mispelblom, 2011).

According to Dejours (2005), this self doubt and questioning of their own abilities might cause depression, as well as new kinds of self assessment that take the form of 'judgement by recognition'.

Also, certain organisational changes (a lower number of hierarchical

levels, more horizontal working arrangements etc.) have led to a decline in managers' hierarchical authority in face of increasingly well-trained colleagues (Dany & Livian, 2002).

Bouffartigue and Gadéa (2000) have highlighted how managers and other employers have been brought closer together, and how mechanisms of control, evaluation and recognition that used to define managers now distinguish them from others less and less radically. The fact that these symbolic distances previously separating different groups have been overcome might taint the way some managers perceive their own station (Roussel, 2007).

Managers are therefore not spared the social suffering experienced when subjects cannot be what they want to be and when individuals are invalidated and discredited by their own position.

Managers also have to deal with contradictory orders (Bouffartigue, 2001a; Dany & Livian, 2002), which put them in a hopeless position as they have to comply with incompatible demands (Gaulejac, 2011).

They are increasingly faced with moral dilemmas (Carballeda & Garigou, 2001), which constitute a precarious balance between professional and personal codes of ethics. According to Dejours (2005), this brings about psychological suffering in the form of confusion syndromes, loss of self confidence and trust in others, depression and identity crises, which can even lead as far as suicide.

Moreover, individual management practices (relating to salaries, working times and training), encouragement by senior staff of competition between managers, as well as work pressure and the threat of unemployment exacerbating all this, have led groups to fragment (Bouffartigue, 2001a and b; Bouffartigue et al., 2011; Dany, 2001).

Whereas managers used to feel pride in their profession, its diminished importance now leads to a loss of social recognition. Fear and loneliness in face of pressure will now prevail, given that collective groups have been destroyed by management tools developed in the 1980s (Bernoux, 2010).

Groups previously played a protective role (Gaulejac, 2011), defence strategies were developed collectively (Dejours, 2009) and solidarity enabled employees to 'bond' (Linhart, 2009).

Yet now we are witnessing pathologies of loneliness develop, and subjects will face workplace realities alone, which will have a destabilising effect on them and pose a threat to their sense of identity (Dejours, 2005).

Indeed, *'mental health is bolstered by a sense of identity. Psychopathological disorders are never without foundation in identity crises'* (Dejours, 2009: 41).

Starting from the premise that existing, feeling valued by other people's opinions and being recognised are major determinants in the construction of a more solid and stable sense of identity, and that what is at stake in symbolic recognition is the coming to term of identity (Dejours, 2005), we believe it is crucial to promote training about the struggle for recognition and collective resistance in teaching aimed at future managers.

In favour of teaching about struggling for recognition and putting up collective resistance

Existing literature points an accusing finger at the destructive effects of management tools and suggests replacing them and using less distressing training practices. It seems undeniable that management tools and practices are at the root of workplace suffering, and different training practices should therefore be developed. In our opinion, training about the struggle for recognition is even more important than identity at work, which depends on being recognised by others and can never be acquired in full. Identity is actually the product of interactions (Mead, 1974) and the interplay of social forces (Sainsaulieu, 1977), of which the outcome is always uncertain. As we will see in more detail, Honneth believes that the feeling of having one's identity recognised and valued in somebody else's opinion (social esteem) results in a conflictual relationship with this other person and in a struggle for recognition. By allowing the other person to acquire social esteem, the individual in question can, in turn, acquire it too. Training about these interactions and this confrontation with others should therefore be developed so that future managers can be recognised and gain self esteem.

However, it is difficult for individuals to confront others alone, especially if their sense of self esteem has been weakened. They therefore need support to feel strong enough to get involved in such struggling. So participating in collective resistance is a chance for them to cease being alone in the search for recognition. Yet the unity and solidarity previously derived from managers as a group have now been eroded. In light of Honneth's recognition theory, we can once again demonstrate the need for training about collective resistance so that individuals, ie managers, can have their identity recognised and gain self esteem.

Some recent works (Courpasson & Thoenig, 2008; Courpasson & Golsorkhi, 2011; Courpasson, Dany, & Clegg, 2011; Dany & Azimont, 2009) have shown how the rebellion of managers displays positive and creative elements. This can be a source of change, new ways of operating together and new plans. The dynamic it brings pushes businesses to act and think up new solutions. Dissenters usually have their own values and ideas for new projects. This is how the concept of 'productive resistance' was introduced (Courpasson, et al., 2011; Dany & Azimont, 2009), demonstrating that resistance can go further than individual experience; beyond the single affirmation of one's own identity, concrete changes to the way organisations work may also come about. Taking Honneth as a starting point, we want to highlight what is at stake for the identity of managers in struggling and putting up collective resistance, in terms of their ability to acquire social esteem and thereby gain self esteem. In no way does this approach call into question the concept of productive resistance, rather it acts in complement to it. Indeed, if acquiring social esteem by struggling and putting up collective resistance reinforces self esteem, it may also help enable managers to think up alternative plans and ways of achieving them.

In spite of the development of works that emphasise the positive elements of resistance within an organisation, it is noteworthy that ex-

isting literature about CME does not deal with the way training about behaviour and inter-personal skills might encourage struggling and resistance, particularly amongst future managers. The concepts of resistance and solidarity are not well developed in this area. The idea of resistance is looked at, but only to highlight the resistance of participants in a teaching programme (notably Cox & Lavelle, 1984; Currie, 1999), the resistance of teachers against the dominant trends in management teaching (Perriton, 2000; Perriton & Reynolds, 2004), and the pressure for conformity amongst this group (Raelin, 2009).

The concept of solidarity is equally absent in literature about CME (Reedy, 2003).

By making the struggle for recognition and collective resistance in order to gain self esteem central to his approach, Honneth's theory can enhance CME. His theory must be presented in more detail to show which conditions would be right for this training project for future managers to come about.

TRAINING ABOUT STRUGGLING FOR RECOGNITION AND PUTTING UP COLLECTIVE RESISTANCE: WHAT CAN BE TAKEN FROM HONNETH

Honneth's recognition theory is very relevant to the construction of a teaching project aimed at minimising the workplace suffering of managers. This theory will first be presented (A), followed by the teaching mechanisms that might result from it (B).

Honneth's recognition theory: struggling and putting up resistance to acquire self esteem

According to Honneth, recognition is the affirmation of positive qualities in human or group subjects. It is the inter-subjective condition that allows people to be fulfilled in an autonomous way. Individuals cannot develop their personal identity without being recognised, ie without being understood and legitimised by the people with whom they interact. Being recognised results in interaction or, more precisely, in struggling (1).

Once this has failed, individuals feel contempt and they must collectively put up resistance in order to acquire self esteem.

The struggle for recognition

The first lines of *The struggle for recognition*, Honneth (2000), highlight the need to draw the foundations of social theory at a normative level from the Hegelian model of a struggle for recognition. He takes from Hegel (1991) the idea that inter-subjective recognition can only come about in conflict, through confrontation in an interaction. 'The mind is

constituted in such a way that it can only be fulfilled knowing it is recognised by others; from the point being recognised, the individual can only feel reassured in conflict, by experiencing the practical relationship by which the other person responds to a deliberate challenge, or indeed to real provocation.' (Honneth, 2000: 40).

Individuals cannot fully identify with themselves unless their distinctive features are met with approval and support in social interactions. A struggle is established between two subjects that want to make their presence felt before the other person. Yet each subject needs the other in order to be recognised. Each one has to accept the other, at least in part, if they are to be recognised in turn. Recognition is therefore made up of a succession of conflicts and reconciliations. Individuals must struggle to be recognised by others as autonomous conscious beings and to prove their uniqueness to others.

Following from Hegel, Honneth (2000) distinguishes three forms of recognition and demonstrates that each one is the result of a struggle: relationships of love and friendship, legal recognition and solidarity. Expectations of recognition are linked to the conditions in which personal identity is formed, and refer to social models of recognition which allow subjects to feel respected in their socio-cultural environment as somebody who is at once autonomous and individual. Each one is a form of inter-subjective protection guaranteeing the conditions of internal freedom upon which fulfilment depends, irrespective of an individual being's personal aims, and works according to its own internal logic.

Firstly, Winnicott's work (1965) shows that a baby's aggressive behaviour towards its mother is a struggle which allows it to recognise her as an independent being and thereby to acquire its own self confidence. Then, with recourse to justice, individuals have a way of seeing that they are recognised as equals by others. Individuals can then gain self respect because they have come to deserve the respect of other subjects. Finally, solidarity depends on social esteem, ie the value attributed to the characteristics of an individual or group by society, upon which recognition is based. In the past, traditional societies were organised according to hierarchical orders, and the group to which an individual belonged determined the social esteem they would be accorded, in the form of collective honour. With the rise of modern societies, individuals remain members of a social group, but social esteem is personalised, ie individuals identify themselves, from their own standpoint, as the recipients of esteem. From then on solidarity is conditioned by symmetrical esteem relationships between individual subjects. Social esteem therefore allows subjects to 'feel their own worth' or 'self esteem'. Yet modern societies do accept a variety of social esteem criteria. Solidarity henceforth assumes a feeling of sympathy for the individual characteristics of the other. Social esteem accorded by society is at stake in a permanent struggle for recognition. Finally, alongside the solidarity that corresponds to society's concept of social esteem, solidarity within the group also exists, based on a '*framework of inter-subjective interpretation*' (Honneth, 2000: 195), which is particular to a group and leads to a shared feeling of not being recognised amongst its members. As we will see, this is a vital condition for a group to be able to put up collec-

tive resistance.

According to Petersen and Willig (2004), the third form of recognition allows for the study of esteem relationships at work. Feelings and self worth are key here. Honneth's most recent works (2004b and 2008) show how the neoliberal revolution is at the root of diminished solidarity within collective groups and the premium placed on performance. Other authors, to which Honneth (2008) makes reference, have also highlighted the perverse effects of capitalist society (notably Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999; Simmel, 1987).

But Honneth's works allow this phenomenon to be analysed in terms of a denial of recognition, and contempt. In order to regain self esteem, individuals must participate in collective resistance.

The experience of contempt and how participation in collective resistance is necessary in order to acquire self esteem

For Honneth (2000 and 2004a), the feeling of being despised and of missing out on social esteem produces a psychological gap and mental suffering. When the social value of an individual is judged negatively or not taken into account, this bears witness to how little the individual is taken notice of as a social being, which can be hurtful and undermine an individual's dignity. This detracts from a model of self-realisation believed in by the subject and inflicts mental scars when individuals are not recognised in line with their own understanding of themselves. Subjects then lose self esteem because they have lost the esteem of others. *'Subjects who, having experienced the failure of their own actions, are ashamed of themselves and regard themselves as having a lesser social value than they previously assumed they had.'* (Honneth, 1999: 20).

Therefore, emotional reactions relating to disappointment about recognition can plunge individuals into paralysing situations of passively-endured humiliation. Freedom is not only an absence of external constraints, but also an absence of internal blocks and psychological anxiety. Individual engagement in collective resistance allows individuals to exit this kind of inhibitive situation and to struggle to gain recognition of their identity. They no longer face others alone, particularly not if this is demoralising, and find the strength to confront them. When they have overcome this state of powerlessness by engaging in collective resistance, they discover a new form of expression, and as a result of this, they can be sure of their own moral or social worth by obtaining the sympathy of others for their own individuality.

However, in order for collective resistance to take place, the members of the group must share the same feeling of contempt. For this to happen, the group must hold a common framework of inter-subjective interpretation *'... between the impersonal objectives of a social movement and the private offence felt by the individuals who make up the group, a semantic link must exist which is at least solid enough to allow a collective identity to develop.'* (Honneth, 2000: 195).

This establishes solidarity within the group and allows individuals to experience the recognition brought about by solidarity, and to which the members of the group accord a kind of mutual esteem. Therefore, sharing the same feeling of contempt with other members of the group, the

individuals participating in collective resistance incite them to struggle to gain the recognition of their identity and to acquire self esteem.

As we have seen, feeling valued at work is particularly problematic for managers as they suffer from a lack of recognition and social esteem. Furthermore, the fragmentation of the group makes it difficult to put up resistance together with others. In order to encourage self esteem and to minimise suffering, Honneth's recognition theory brings us to support training for future managers about struggling for recognition and collectively putting up resistance.

Training about struggling for recognition and putting up collective resistance in order to gain self esteem

Honneth's recognition theory brings us to a tripartite form of education; this is based on interaction and confrontation with others (1), which is designed to prioritise feelings of sympathy for the other person's individuality and self esteem (2), as well as collective resistance (3).

We will attempt to put his approach into operation, and we will take a close look at how the case study can be used as a primary teaching aid aiming to support the three types of training that emerge from the approach advocated by Honneth. We will use existing literature in our reflections, as well as some of the elements drawn from our own educational experience and, in particular, from our practical experience in the case study (see boxed text below).

CASE STUDY EXPERIENCE

We used a case study to learn more about the struggle for recognition. We did this in a Human Resources Management (HRM) course, which is part of a second year Masters programme in Business Management and Administration, a programme that corresponds to a fifth year of higher education. The unique feature of this programme is that it consists of a wide variety of students that have previously not studied management but want to gain an additional skill, management training, alongside their original discipline (law, literature, science etc.).

Groups of between 3 and 4 students carry out a short HRM exercise. This requires them to face an audience made up of their classmates, who are asked to be active and interject in such a way that the group presenting is forced to defend its own position. The audience is asked to counter what is being said by those giving the presentation, as the dynamic and quality of exchange feature strongly in the marking of the exercise. This places the students giving the presentation in a situation of conflict, struggle and resistance against an audience.

Any methods can be used to help the exercise progress as long as interaction is encouraged. The only things specified are the timeframe (one hour) and the way in which the exercise must be structured, consisting of three stages: 1) the facts, 2) a management problem presented as a question (which must not be prepared in advance), 3) how this will be resolved by identifying the problem and putting forward a plan of action.

Education based on interaction and confrontation with others in

order to encourage a struggle for recognition

Beyond the content of training, ie the acquisition of methods and tools, we regard interaction and confrontation with others, enabled by teaching mechanisms, to be very important in light of Honneth's work. As outlined above, training must also encourage behaviour or inter-personal skills that lead people to struggle for recognition. This training about the struggle to be recognised assumes emotional involvement on the part of the pupil (Watson, 2001) and, importantly, their ability to better take into account another person's point of view and feelings (Collin, 1996; Snell, 1986; Vince, 1996).

This kind of involvement helps put the objectivism and instrumental character of traditional management teaching into perspective (Adler, 2002; Dehler, Welsh, & Lewis, 2001; French & Grey, 1996; Grey, 2004; Willmott, 1994).

The case study, which encourages verbal interaction (Christensen, Roland, & Hansen, 1987; McNair, 1954), the active participation of students and their emotional involvement (Mucchielli, 1992; Newman & Sidney, 1955) may be of interest as a teaching aid. It corresponds well with the desire to work on behaviour and inter-personal skills (Schnelle, 1967) rather than focusing solely on tools.

While some may question the involvement of students in such procedures and what kind of management training might come out of it, our educational experience (see boxed text above) suggests that this method could really encourage confrontation and the struggle for recognition. However, one prerequisite is that students must feel free to enter into confrontation with one another. This could be facilitated by 'fun' exercises which could help dispel any fears of unsettling the students giving the presentation. Also, when students know that dynamism and the quality of the exchanges count significantly towards their marks for the exercise, it may prompt them to play along; the students giving the presentation have a good reason to incite the audience, and the audience has a good reason to question them. If teachers refrain from interrupting in order that interactions and confrontations can run their course freely, the exercise will be more successful; this helps the dynamic of the exchanges, but also forces students to get involved. It is then up to the students to make full use of the space and time they are given. Finally, giving students polemical subjects on which to interject can also encourage their involvement. In our case study, we were able to observe that individuals with different profiles (for example relating to their original degree subject) could have virulent exchanges about how to define a 'management question'. When this solution is not provided and those taking part in the exercise have to prioritise how to deal with the problems themselves, individual personalities come to light and individuals strive to set themselves apart from and affirm themselves to others.

In fact, in light of our experience, we suggest that the more confrontations there are, the more intense the emotional reactions become, and the greater the will to affirm one's difference. Seen from this point of view, it is clear that exercise duration is key to whether or not confrontations occur, which raises the question of whether or not an hour is

sufficient for a struggle for recognition to take place and so that each member of the group can confront the others. Equally, we also believe it is important to repeat this kind of exercise so that students can make the most of the opportunities afforded to them for debate and confrontation.

Education aimed at supporting feelings of sympathy for the individuality of others and their self esteem

According to Honneth (2000), the objective of the struggle for recognition is to gain sympathy for our individuality (social esteem).

This allows us to feel our own worth (self esteem).

Yet for Reynolds and Trehan (2001), management teaching tends to ignore the concept of difference; individuals or groups must bow to pressure to conform or be marginalised. Assuming that difference must be central to critical teaching as a particular result of debate and confrontation, what is at stake in teaching, according to thinking that stems from Honneth, goes beyond the meeting of distinct individuals, which Mucchielli's case studies enable (1992).

Interactions that happen when an exercise is being prepared and presented can be very revealing for each participant about their own point of view and that of the people with whom they are interacting. The case study can therefore help students to discover another person's individuality, difference and uniqueness. However, Honneth's theory suggests moving beyond merely acknowledging difference between individuals. The struggle he advocates must lead to recognition, and recognition is more difficult to obtain. Often, and particularly when the struggle and confrontation taking place have been sufficiently intense, exchanges can depart from the original content of the exercise to focus on more personal issues. For example, during one exercise, a student in the group presenting was pushed to her limits and was actually verging on the irate, unsettled by the sheer number and variety of rebuttals, interpretations and contradictions that were calling her own point of view into question. Suddenly, she moved away from a debate about a candidate's future performance in a recruitment process (her group's subject) to talk about herself and reveal personal issues. This student's reaction stemmed in part from the fact that the subject matter revived memories from her past. The emotions she expressed seemed to encourage some members of the audience to enter into an exchange with her about traits that she felt were an important part of her identity (her legal training and other associated events).

Nevertheless, while she expressed suffering and individuality, the interaction process failed to provoke any feelings of sympathy or self esteem. The student won no sympathy from the audience, largely because the point of view she was defending was quite strange and her 'reaction was quite extreme'. In other words, the case study might allow for initial interactions and confrontations between individuals with different points of view, but this study alone will not suffice to teach us about the sympathy that is needed for the act of struggling to result in recognition. Complementary forms of education will no doubt be of use, particularly those looking into the acquisition of empathic abilities (Rogers, 2005).

The crux here is having students succeed in grasping the internal references and emotional constituents of other people, having them understand other people as if they were them. In order for struggling to generate recognition, the relationship with the other person must be based on consideration and acceptance of that person's uniqueness. Some works in the field of medicine about education to develop empathy in future doctors might also inspire the education of future managers, and this is worth exploring further. DasGupta and Charon (2004) asked medical students to write about an experience and then to discuss it in small groups with other students, recounting it with real emotion. Training about empathy could therefore be used alongside one of our exercises, which would bring the individuality of other people, social esteem and self esteem to the fore.

Education about collective resistance

According to Honneth (2000), the struggle that an individual puts up to gain recognition of their identity and the sympathy of other people for their individuality must also take place within collective resistance. In other words, the experience of struggling for recognition will be even stronger if all group members share the feeling of not being recognised. Once again, the case study seems suited to this end, as group work is an integral part of it. As underlined by Mucchielli (1992), this kind of educational pursuit is best suited to group work. The group exercise in our case study brings a collective dimension to confrontation with others, while also allowing each group member to interact with the audience alone.

Our teaching experience shows that the audience can play an active role in forcing all individuals in a group to defend their own position. In our experience, the more varied the participants outside the group, the more varied the points of view and the range and number of questions and rebuttals that arise.

Faced with such questioning, support from the group is not uncommon if a group member is in difficulty. Our experience shows that in these exercises, communal debate, more than anything else, helps to bind group members together. However, it is debatable whether or not this kind of support can allow for a struggle for recognition to take place. To begin with, the group acts as a buffer and in this way helps its members to come forward and express themselves in front of an objectionable audience, which is also an opportunity for individuals to enter into a struggle so that their individuality can be recognised. But after that, if other members interject it can get in the way of the process of self esteem being acquired by accessing the esteem of others. If someone jumps too hastily to the defence of the group, there is a risk that interjections intended to support a group member in difficulty can cut the emotional element of the exchanges short, and reduce the chance of one's identity and individuality being recognised. To avoid this potential pitfall a communal group identity must exist, which helps the group intervene emotionally but not in matters of debate, express a shared feeling of not being recognised, and encourage group members to struggle to be recognised as individuals.

Existing literature shows that some teaching mechanisms can help

build collective identity within a group. For example, Sainsaulieu (1987) studied learning processes about common representations and collective identities within groups. From this study of interaction and debate being favoured in training groups (Sainsaulieu, 1982), we see that for new collective identities to be built, multiple exchanges and intense debate are required in a safe place where they can take form progressively and reveal new identities. This analysis and the problem of work lead people to be thrown off centre, reproach others and find mutual identification. However, the duration of this training is key, as it can be transformative of collective imagination (Sainsaulieu, 1987).

We therefore believe, in light of this work, that the length of time students have to work together is essential. For Piotet and Sainsaulieu (1994), framing the training as a form of collective identity within a group may also ensure that change will come out of it, accompanied and followed by the learning processes experienced by each group. The teacher should therefore play a facilitating role and help build this collective identity.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

We hoped to demonstrate in this paper that Axel Honneth's recognition theory can help in a rethink of the educational mechanisms used for future managers. The idea is to equip these people to minimise the suffering at work that they may well face throughout their working lives by putting them in training situations about struggling and collectively putting up resistance. We have attempted to determine how the case study could contribute to this kind of learning, while acknowledging that it cannot act as a substitute for real life experience (Mintzberg, 2004).

Accepting that this method may be reductive and offer participants a simplified representation of the reality of being a career manager, we have nonetheless attempted to identify the conditions in which learning about struggling for recognition and entering into collective resistance might be encouraged. We want to use this method to break with positivist, objectivist, instrumentalist and universalist outlooks (Dehler, et al., 2001; French & Grey, 1996; Grey, 2004; Willmott, 1994) by placing value back on the expression of different points of view, emotions and struggling. At the end of this process, we concede that this kind of training is demanding. It requires time for confrontations to bear out and emotional processes to come to term, but also for collective identities to be forged, not only as a form of defence against some arguments, but so that the personal identities of group members can be recognised. Groups also need to be supervised in such a way that potentially difficult confrontations are not damaging to individuals. An ethical demand therefore exists here, as this kind of training might put students ill-at-ease and even cause psychological suffering. In our opinion, the 'resources' used in training about inter-personal skills and the con-

struction of identity are even more important because they are key to whether or not this kind of training can happen; indeed, they lift the burden of institutional and intellectual reluctance which could impede the best intentions of implementing training about struggling and resistance. Reluctance may also be felt on the part of the students or even the rest of the university, although the case study presented here was quite well accepted by students.

The thoughts outlined here about the educational methods that allow for the kind of training advocated in Honneth's theory invite further experiment, which could then be analysed in detail. The observational process employed would have to be adapted to the study of collective actions and social processes that could then be captured through direct interactions; the direction in which students take these would not be set in advance (Chapoulie, 1984).

Particular attention should be paid to the emotional dimension of exchanges and to the expression of individual and collective identities when there is a change in register from one of debate to one of identity and emotion (on an individual but also on a collective, group level).

In order to do this, attention must be paid to behavioural or verbal elements, or even the way space is used. These elements must be observed within the group doing the exercise in order to record the presence or absence of shared feelings, frameworks of common reference relating to identity and the ability of the group to encourage the struggle for recognition. These things must also be observed within the audience to get a more precise idea of their feelings about the distinctive features shown by the group; in other words, how and in what conditions the discovery of other people's individuality becomes a feeling of sympathy.

In conclusion, we hope to underline how innovative Honneth's thinking is. By emphasising the communicational dimension of Critical Theory he helps to develop the normative perspective of the Frankfurt School. However, he revitalises this by highlighting the emotional dimensions of human behaviour. Despite the limits of our work, we hope to have shown that training about struggling to gain respect for what we are is possible. It could be aimed at managers, but more generally at anyone who feels under-valued in the eyes of others.

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