

Organizational Routines, Practices and Artefacts. At the Intersection between the Evolutionary and the Cultural Approach

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The aim of the paper is establish whether cultural intra-factors, especially artefacts and organizational practices, have any effects on organizational routines. The cognitive goal is to present the evolutionary approach and the cultural field in management as complementary in the understanding of the evolutionary mechanisms of change. The paper presents a conceptual approach, based on the intra-organizational perspective and intra-organizational level of analysis. The study provides an integrated overview of the latest literature related to organizational routines and organizational culture. The contribution lies in considering cultural factors as dynamic, indeterministic and evolutionary constructs that are strongly connected to the organizational routine in the evolutionary approach. The concluding section presents areas and directions for future research.

Keywords: organizational routines, organizational practices, cultural artefacts, evolutionary approach, organizational culture.

Rutyny organizacyjne, praktyki i artefakty. Na styku podejścia ewolucyjnego i kulturowego

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Celem badań jest poszukiwanie odpowiedzi na pytanie, czy wewnętrzne czynniki kulturowe, zwłaszcza artefakty i praktyki organizacyjne, mają wpływ na naturę rutyn organizacyjnych. Celem poznawczym jest wskazanie podejścia ewolucyjnego i nurtu kulturowego w zarządzaniu jako uzupełniających się w zakresie wiedzy o ewolucyjnych mechanizmach zmian. Przyjęto tutaj wewnątrzorganizacyjną perspektywę rozważań i intraorganizacyjny poziom analizy. Artykuł ma charakter teoriiotwórczy. Dokonano szerokiego przeglądu referencyjnej literatury w obszarze rutyn organizacyjnych i kulturowych artefaktów i praktyk. Wnioski wskazują, że widoczne elementy kultury, artefakty i praktyki, są w rzeczywistości indeterministycznymi, dynamicznymi konstruktami i mają duże znaczenie dla wyjaśniania dynamiki rutyn organizacyjnych w podejściu ewolucyjnym. W podsumowaniu wskazano kierunki przyszłych badań w tym obszarze.

Słowa kluczowe: rutyny organizacyjne, praktyki organizacyjne, kulturowe artefakty, podejście ewolucyjne, kultura organizacyjna.

JEL: A120, O430, Z100

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1. Introduction

The recent research trend of applying evolutionary approach to management and the study of organizational routines in order to better understand change as a process seems logical in view of the dynamic changes in business environment. The apparent volatility of changes compels us to abandon the futile search of rational methods of resource optimisation or resource-based approaches and to turn towards analyses of the dynamics and mechanisms of company development, i.e. to the evolutionary approach.

The most important input in the development of the concept of evolving organizations and the evolutionary approach to management can be found in Nelson and Winter (1982). From that moment, the evolutionary logic as a research area has remained stagnant, with apparent gaps, unstructured methodology and largely fragmentary research studies published both in Poland and abroad. It seems that the above problems are rooted in the specificity of organizational routines typically described and interpreted in such terms as: collective, non-deliberate, self-imposed, stable, dynamic, processual, context dependent, path dependent, embedded, and specific (Stańczyk-Hugiet, Piórkowska & Stańczyk, 2017).

From the viewpoint of cultural studies, it may seem that organizational routines are directly associated with organizational culture, despite the fact that they represent two distinct and separate research perspectives. The cultural approach to management is also characterised by uncertainty of intentional actions, and its inherent association with the indeterministic nature of behaviours and organizational practices, or the unpredictable character of processes involved in the process of shaping cultural patterns. This line of research also places emphasis on behavioural patterns (Becker et al., 2005) which evolve as a result of directional changes or situational factors (Turner, 1988). These behavioural patterns, just as routines, can be shared, reinforced, and inferred from past observations (Schein, 1985).

Notwithstanding the wealth of available theoretical and even empirical evaluations of associations between organizational routines and organizational artefacts/practices which, after all, may be seen as cultural representations, the results are largely fragmentary and presented without the context of various epistemological approaches, such as the evolutionary approach in combination with the cultural approach. The observed associations between organizational artefacts/practices and organizational routines are mainly analysed in the evolutionary approach in the context of the dynamics of change and development, with organizational routines providing no explanation for the mechanisms and processes of evolution, in particular selection (Stańczyk-Hugiet et al., 2019). Detailed evaluations of the common context of cultural and organizational routine factors can be found in relation to such studied phenomena as: (1) design performances (Glaser, 2017), (2) organizational learning (Carayannis et al., 2017), (3) organizational

change (Becker et al., 2005; D'Adderio, 2011), (4) dynamic capabilities (Biesenthal, Gudergan & Ambrosini, 2018), and (5) performative/ostensive character of organizational routines as generative systems (Feldman & Pentland, 2008).

The above determinants are responsible for the apparent and substantial cognitive gap in explaining the specificity of correlations between cultural elements and organizational routines in their proper epistemological context. Despite a fairly limited number of studies of relations between the evolutionary approach in management and the cultural stream, the concept is already present in modern research and management sciences (cf. Bertels, Howard-Grenville & Pek, 2016; Kline, Waring & Salerno, 2018; Stańczyk-Hugiet et al., 2019).

Therefore, the cognitive goal is to show an evolutionary approach and a cultural field in management as complementary for the understanding of evolutionary mechanisms of change. This evaluation perspective is focused on intra-organizational factors analysed in accordance both with the cultural approach, i.e. artefacts and organizational practices, and the evolutionary approach, i.e. organizational routines. The starting point of the analysis is the identification of precursory studies in the field of organizational routines and organizational culture. The selected authors are either those who are most often cited, or those whose work relies strongly on often cited studies.

In this paper, we shall attempt to verify the following postulates: (1) the possibility of applying different paradigms in order to analyse the organizational reality more comprehensively, and (2) the necessity of renouncing the analysis from the point of view of sources of competitive advantage (optimisation of resources) in order to recognise the dynamics and the mechanisms of organizational development (survival). The integrated approach enables us to focus on intra-organizational cultural factors, while considering the dynamic character of routines.

2. Evolutionary approach towards organizational routines

2.1. Historical overview

Evolutionism in management sciences is involved in understanding the nature and mechanisms of change, particularly in the study of conditions that produce change (Stańczyk-Hugiet et al., 2019). In his classification of theories of organizational evolution, Abatecola (2014) included the following: population ecology, universal Darwinism, evolutionary economics, and the associated co-evolutionary approaches, perceived as meta-concepts for the explanation of phenomena observed in the realm of management sciences.

On the fundament of these approaches, researchers employ the principles of universal Darwinism (Abatecola et al., 2016) in an attempt to explain complex organizational phenomena, particularly the evolution of complex

systems, without direct analogies to biological systems. For this purpose, many authors adopt the VSR mechanism: variation, selection, heredity/retention, which offers potential for the study of evolution processes in various contexts and fields of investigation. In this concept, the evolving object, pattern, or system must fulfil three fundamental conditions in order to develop into more adjusted forms: (1) it must possess the ability to survive, i.e., sustain or reproduce, i.e., replicate, to ensure proper propagation and preservation of information stored in the pattern or system, i.e., retention; (2) it must be capable of introducing fragmentary modifications to the pattern, which are propagated through survival and replication, i.e., variation; and (3) it must offer a better prospect to survive and replicate compared to less evolved forms, i.e., selection.

At the same time, great emphasis is placed upon the object of evolutionary changes, as approached from the organizational level of analytical evaluation, namely organizational routines. Depending on the angle of the study, the approach to organizational routines may vary. As such, it may be examined from the viewpoint of standard operating procedures (Cyert & March, 1963), behavioural patterns (Nelson and Winter, 1982; Becker et al., 2005), habits (Hodgson and Knudsen, 2004), or actions (Pentland & Feldman, 2008) and interactions (Becker, 2004; Pentland et al., 2012).

2.2. Organizational routines

Nelson and Winter (1982) perceive the object of evolution in terms of standard operating procedures (after Cyert & March, 1963), by introducing the concept of organizational routines defined as repeatable behavioural patterns. Routines in organizations, much like genetic information in a living organism, are durable, stable, resilient to change, and hereditary, with power to determine future responses and the behaviour of the organization as a whole. However, they are prone to evolve under the influence of changed conditions. Organizations learn from their actions, and this knowledge is stored in routines. For the most part, routines comprise repeatable and foreseeable responses, but they may also serve as repositories of latent knowledge. As routines are not easily observable, it may be fairly difficult to imitate and replicate them in other settings.

Hodgson and Knudsen (2004) define organizational routines as individual habits which, when triggered, lead to sequential behaviours. Routines comprise habitual responses representing the individual level of repeatable behavioural patterns. However, the authors place great emphasis on the use of multi-dimensional space of meta-habits, as habitual responses on the organizational, collective level of analysis.

A major breakthrough in the studied area were the publications of Feldman and Pentland (2003). The authors describe routines as recurrent patterns of co-dependant activities performed by multiple actors. They also argue that the dynamics of macro-level routines are produced on

the micro-level of relations between specific activities and patterns of response, but they can only be analysed on the macro level, i.e., from the viewpoint of the organization as a whole, as a representation of the entire routinized complexity. For the purpose of explaining the systemic character of organizational routines, authors introduce two separate aspects of routines: ostensive and performative. At the same time, actions and responses are seen as the only observable and recurrent elements of routines, since their effects are readily perceptible (Pentland & Feldman, 2008).

Also Becker (2004) perceives organizational routines as constructs of emergent and systemic character. This means, however, that they represent not so much repeatable actions, but rather recurring patterns of interactions. The system of organizational routines, at the level of the organization as a whole, does indeed have an impact on individual routines but, at the same time, it displays characteristics and properties which are not present on the individual level. Furthermore, Becker (2004) expresses his reservations towards equating organizational routines with behaviours or actions of individual participants. In view of the above, according to the most popular approach in recent literature, organizational routines as a holistic system should be examined via interactions, which locates them on the organizational level of analysis (Becker, 2004; Pentland et al., 2012).

Irrespective of the above approaches, it may safely be concluded that (1) organizational routines have been developed as a way of adapting to the environment and to conflicts of interests between members of the organization (Stańczyk-Hugiet, Piórkowska & Stańczyk, 2017, p. 344), (2) the routines are generative systems that produce repetitive, recognizable patterns of interdependent action carried out by multiple participants (Pentland & Feldman, 2008, p. 236; Pentland et al., 2012), and (3) routines apply to the organizational level of analysis and cannot be reduced to the individual level (Hodgson and Knudsen, 2004). More detailed evaluation of organizational routines and their characteristics can be found in Stańczyk-Hugiet et al. (Stańczyk-Hugiet, Piórkowska & Stańczyk, 2017, p. 348).

2.3. The dynamic nature of routines

Much has changed in the perception of routines and their nature since the publication of Nelson and Winter (1982), who perceived routines as stable and reproducible constructs crucial for the reproduction of an organization. Originally, stability was employed as a substantial property of routines (e.g. Nelson and Winter, 1982), suggesting that routines are structured from past experiences but, at the same time, they are improved and refined over time by new experiences. However, while routines may be the source of stability, they may also stimulate changes, as described by the ostensive and performative approach to organizational routines (Feldman & Pentland, 2003) (Fig. 1).

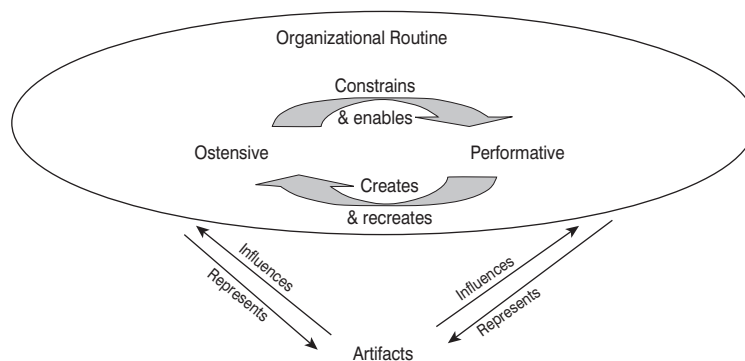


Fig. 1. Organizational routines as a generative system. Source: Pentland & Feldman, 2008, p. 241.

The ostensive and performative routine model describes the role of routine in the internal change dynamics of routines. Feldman and Pentland (2003) conceptualise routine dynamics as a recursive relation between ostensive and performative aspects. Research has articulated a practice perspective on routines, theorizing how routines change. According to Pentland and Feldman (2008, p. 294), ostensive aspects of routines refer to the general pattern of a routine as it is enacted by participants. Their actions are linked with one another and routines are collective regularities of behaviour. Performative aspects refer to the routine as enacted in 'specific actions, by specific people, in specific places and times' (Feldman & Pentland 2003, p. 101) and capture the central role of agency in enacting routines. The performative aspect is viewed as a sequence of events which may be perceivable and rational for some, or latent and incomprehensible for others. Both aspects are perceived as indispensable for the proper understanding of routines (Feldman & Pentland, 2003, p. 94, pp. 101-102).

In practice, both aspects of organizational routines may be codified or indicated by various artefacts (Feldman & Pentland 2008). Artefacts constitute perceivable, tangible and comprehensible traces of behaviours. They may reflect the ostensive aspect of routines, i.e., written or computer-automated procedures, documents, software solutions, etc. or the performative aspect, i.e. transactions and their history, databases. Thus, as a system of symbols, artefacts form the observable representations of both the ostensive and the performative aspects of organizational routines.

Distinguishing ostensive and performative aspects of routines in relation to artefacts is a fairly popular approach, employed extensively in research (cf. Safavi 2014; David & Rowe 2013). Recent trends show a shift of attention to artefacts, with a view to exposing their critical role in routine processes (Stańczyk, 2017).

3. The cultural approach

3.1. An integrative perspective

Evolutionists benefit from the mutual compatibility of idiographic and nomothetic explanations in the study of species and of cultures alike (e.g. Fracchia & Lewontin, 1999; Runciman, 2005). In practice, this offers the possibility of combining a functionalist and an interpretive paradigm (Stańczyk-Hugiet et al., 2019) i.e., organization is culture and consists of cultural elements at the same time (Andrijevskaia & Vadi, 2006).

Taking the functionalist point of view, Schein (1985, p. 6) states that organizational culture is: 'A pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems'. The key organizational culture's elements are shared values (what is important), beliefs (how things work) and behavioural norms (the way we do things around here) (Uttal, 1983). Moreover, values are rooted in the history and tradition of the organization itself (Schein, 1985, p. 6).

An interpretive view or a dynamic-unbounded view of organizational culture is based upon organizational learning and change-related activities over a long period of time. In this perspective, organizational culture is seen as complex, emergent and impossible to reduce to a simple cause-and-effect model. The complex nature of organizational culture makes it unpredictable, but an interpretive perspective allows for explaining how cultures interrelate, change and evolve (Turner, 1988).

From the functional perspective, culture is a mechanism for adaptation and survival (Wilson, 2007), and from the interpretative perspective, culture is an ideational system influenced by external forces (Baumüller, 2007, p. 185).

3.2. Cultural elements

An organizational culture is a multilevel construct, and its structure remains a subject of debates.

D. Katz and R. L. Kahn (1979, p. 108) provide the following list of its elements: the system of norms and values, history of external and internal organizational struggles, types of personalities represented in the organization, work processes and physical settings like architecture, modes of communication, and management practices.

In Schein's model (1985, p. 14), organizational culture is comprised of three characteristic elements, levels of organizational culture, as determined by their perceptibility and durability, namely: (1) artefacts, external and artificial products of culture, (2) the less readily realised and perceptible

level of values and norms of conduct and, on the deepest level, (3) basic assumptions.

Similarly, Lundberg (1990) presents the following three levels of organizational culture: (1) the manifest level including symbolic artefacts, language, stories, rituals and normative conduct, (2) the strategic level covering strategic beliefs, and (3) the core level that includes ideologies, values and assumptions.

The cultural web model of Johnson and Scholes (1999) places beliefs and values at the centre, enveloped by seven inter-linked key elements as routine, rituals, stories, symbols, control systems, power structures, and the organizational structure.

Hofstede (2000, p. 42) in his onion model of culture presents the following elements, arranged by visibility and consciousness: values, rituals, heroes, and symbols/artefacts, at the most readily perceptible level. Observable elements of culture, rituals, heroes, symbols are permeated by organizational practices, i.e. observable behaviours, solidified and rooted in shared values (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minov, 2010; Minkov & Hofstede, 2011).

The fore, or the foundation of organizational culture in the above approaches is located at the level of either (1) values or values and assumptions representing the organizational ideology, or (2) patterns of behaviours and actions. Thus, while some researchers seem to accentuate the ideological dimension of culture and its external determinants (after Schein), others place the fundamentals of culture in observable patterns of behaviour or organizational practices (as proposed by Hofstede). Regardless of the above duality, there seems to be a general agreement with regard to the notion that the system of symbols/artefacts represents the most ostensive and perceptible traces of past behaviours, solidified and rooted in shared cultural norms, values, and assumptions (Gagliardi, 1990). By concentrating on the internal elements of culture, we gain the potential to measure and operationalise this construct, despite its ostensibly indeterministic nature.

3.3. The role of artefacts and practices, and their correlations

In accordance with Schein's concept (1985), members of a culture accept the shared values and submit to cultural norms, because these values and norms are rooted in and shaped by their fundamental assumptions. Those assumptions, in turn, stimulate their involvement in activities which become artefacts at the culture's surface level. Artefacts are representations of the same cultural core that shaped the culture's norms and values. From this model's perspective, processes observed in culture follow an outward direction, i.e. from the core level of less readily ostensive assumptions, values and norms, to the outer layer of artefacts. Vectors of dependencies are, however, aligned in both directions, since artefacts are subject to the same interpretation, i.e. they have the power to shape the very values and assumptions that produced them. This situation stems from the conscious

and creative use of artefacts and norms for the expression of self and for the formulation and pursuance of own goals by members of the culture.

Adopting the Hofstede's perspective (1992), organizational values can be seen as so deeply rooted that their application is generally devoid of conscious evaluation, and largely shaped by national values. Hofstede introduces the concept of organizational practices as a way to differentiate organizational cultures within a single cultural context. Thus, while national culture differences tend to lie in values and less in practices, organizational culture differences reside more in practices and less in values. This approach offers a practical dimension for the study of organizational culture within the context of management sciences.

Margolis (2018) states that organizational practices are the behaviours and actions of members of the organization. They are not the elements of core culture, they are located outside of it and they are the behaviours that convert ideals to actions that keep the culture alive. Moreover, 'core culture principles are meaningless if they are not infused in these work practices (...) When actions match principles, the consistency produces reinforcing behaviours that sustain those core culture principles'.

Hence, practices, as external and observable manifestations of culture, may, just like artefacts, facilitate the identification of phenomena that are deeply ingrained in a particular culture and fully interpretable only by its members.

Figure 2 presents correlations between the outer levels of an organizational culture.

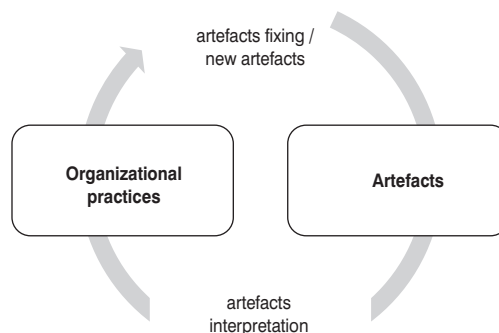


Fig. 2. Correlations between the outer i.e. the observable levels of an organizational culture. Source: own study.

The above structure illustrates correlations between organizational practices and artefacts, which jointly represent manifestations of more deeply ingrained modes of thinking and world perception that characterise members of such an organization. Artefacts serve to sustain, develop and propagate

patterns for the interpretation and orientation of organizational practices through patterns of commendable behaviour. These, in turn, serve as a basis for the solidification of past artefacts and for the development of new ones. This structure represents an external and observable manifestations of the cultural impact.

4. Organizational routines vs. organizational practices and artefacts

According to van Maanen (1988, p. 3), ‘culture refers to the knowledge members (“natives“) of a given group are thought to more or less share; knowledge of the sort that is said to inform, embed, shape, and account for the routine and not-so-routine activities of the members of the culture. A culture is expressed (or constituted) only by the actions (...)’. The multilevel nature of this phenomenon, however, does not facilitate empirical examination in the context of organizational routines. Hence, the author postulates the need to concentrate on external cultural constructs, such as artefacts and organizational practices.

Professional literature seems to lack thorough evaluations of culture which would incorporate the perspective of organizational routines and cultural artefacts with that of organizational practices. It may also be worth noting that the proponents of the evolutionary view seem to approach the two cultural constructs as separate entities.

To start with, it may be useful to examine the prevalent perception of the relation between routines and artefacts.

From the evolutionary perspective, artefacts had been primarily seen as external organizational memory / external objects/artefactual representations supporting the process of complex problems solving (Nelson and Winter, 1982). In later studies, artefacts became constructs explaining processes involved in organizational learning, in building new competences and abilities, and in development, within the narrow context of dynamic capabilities (Teece and Pisano, 1994). Lately, artefacts have been deliberated as a primary construct in the context of routine interpretation and as a construct influencing the activation of knowledge, skills, and competences (D’Adderio, 2011).

Artefacts play key roles in routines (e.g. Becker et al., 2005; D’Adderio, 2011). D’Adderio (2011) treats artefacts as ‘either too solid to be avoided, or too flexible to have an effect’. In her opinion, artefacts may stimulate the emergence and persistence of certain patterns of activities. Artefacts serve to transmit and translate the known or unconscious patterns into actions. As such, they fulfil a crucial function as a vehicle of transfer between the latent and the observable side of an organization. This makes relations between practices and their outcomes more or less visible (D’Adderio, 2008).

A relatively broad segment of evolutionist experts shows involvement in the study of the complex dynamics of interactions between routines and artefacts (Turner & Ridova, 2012), as part of what is called 'the second wave' of routines studies (D'Adderio, 2011). Dynamics include relationships between artefacts and the ostensive, and between artefacts and performances (Pentland & Feldman 2005); as well as between 'artefactual representations' of routines and 'actual expressions' (Cohen et al., 1996; D'Adderio, 2011). In addition, Bertels, Howard-Grenville and Pek (2016) place emphasis on the notion that culture is a dynamic construct, deeply integrated with multiple patterns as people perform routines.

This leads to the following conclusions: (1) artefacts play a key role in routines, (2) artefacts can actively influence routinized performances, (3) artefacts can actively shape the course of routines, and (4) artefacts and routines co-evolve in performative struggles (D'Adderio, 2011).

From the above viewpoint, artefacts are no longer perceived within the broad context of organizational culture. Attempts at showing relations between artefacts and organizational practices are equally scarce, although – in the opinion of the author of this paper – they form the context for the proper understanding of individual artefacts and their dynamics in the evolution of routines.

The cultural perspective of the approach also shows a notable emphasis on organizational values rather than organizational practices. Although the latter are addressed as research problems by some authors (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010) and (Minkov & Hofstede, 2011), the concept is only marginally present in the cultural perspective (cf. Ehlers, Helmstedt & Richter, 2010).

Despite the relative lack of organizational practices in organizational culture overviews, this notion has been addressed in the context of the selection process, in the form of practices as routinized types of behaviour or routines-as-practice (e.g. Whittington, 2006; Parmigiani & Howard-Grenville, 2011; Uli, 2018). Kostova and Roth define an organizational practice as 'an organization's routine use of knowledge for conducting a particular function that has evolved over time under the influence of the organization's history, people, interests, and actions' (2002, p. 216). According to Cohen et al. (1996, p. 662), a fundamental feature of routines is their context dependence, so their effectiveness is not measured by what is achieved in principle, but by what is achieved in practice. This sheds new light on the role of relations between ostensive 'artefactual representations' of routines on the one hand, and routines in practice, 'expressions', or simply organizational practices on the other hand (D'Adderio, 2011).

From the above viewpoint, practices, just like artefacts, are not only manifestations of routines, but also factors playing an active role in their dynamic development. This leads us to the conclusion that practices as inter-organizational cultural factors can be considered important for

organization's survival in the evolutionary approach, and that they form a context for the understanding of organizational routines. By combining the evolutionary and the cultural perspectives of the approach, the studied object, i.e., organizational routines, can be more easily interpreted and understood in the context of their dynamics.

5. Conclusions and inputs for future research

On the one hand, artefacts represent useful and easily accessible traces of the performative aspect of routines. On the other hand, they are burdened with multiple, often ambiguous interpretations. Also, while the performance of a routine may be the result of standard procedures, it may also be the consequence of departing from it. Participants of routine actions have their own views on the interpretation of artefacts, and no external observer can possibly fathom the real reasons behind the solidification of certain artefacts over others (Feldman & Pentland, 2008). Artefacts can only be understood if we know the context in which they originated and were put to use or, at the very least, the general assumption behind their origination and application. It seems that organizational practices, as an external and observable dimension of the organizational culture, may provide us with such contexts without the need for additional studies and examinations of further constructs, which are becoming increasingly difficult to operationalise.

From the viewpoint of further research on the dynamics of the constructs under study, the following types or relationships seem to offer interesting insights: (1) relations between 'artefactual representations' of routines and their 'actual expressions', (2) relations between the cognitive artefact and actual practice, and (3) relations between formal, visible artefacts and performances known as routines-in-practice. The relationship between artefactual representations and expressions or routines in practice can provide explanations of the evolution of organizational routines (D'Adderio, 2003) (Fig. 3).

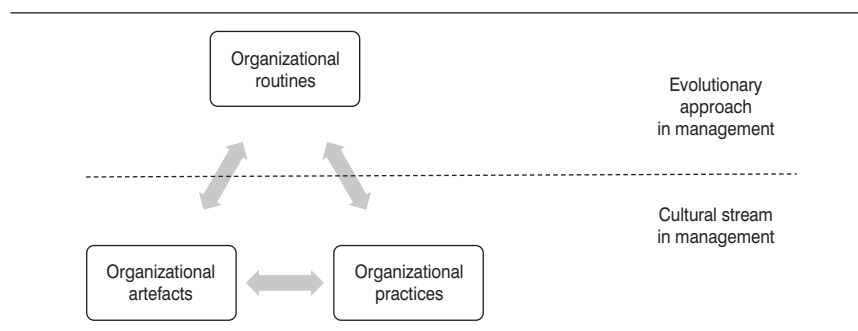


Fig. 3. Contexts of research on the dynamics of organizational routines. Source: own study.

The cultural perspective, through the constructs of artefacts and organizational practices, provides us with visible and material objects for the scientific examination and study of the dynamics of the emergent and often unforeseeable organizational routines.

Both evolutionary and the cultural perspectives of approach seem to be fairly complementary in this context in explaining the mechanisms of evolution. Moreover, they allow us to understand the structure of the phenomenon of evolutionary change and the context of organizational routine dynamics.

From the viewpoint of this paper's general assumptions, it may be stated with clarity that organizational routines and organizational practices, despite the apparent epistemological differences between the two constructs, are both related to patterns of behaviour and action/performance, and as such, they are solidified in the form of artefacts. This proves that combining different epistemological perspectives may provide an interesting context for further examination of the studied phenomena.

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